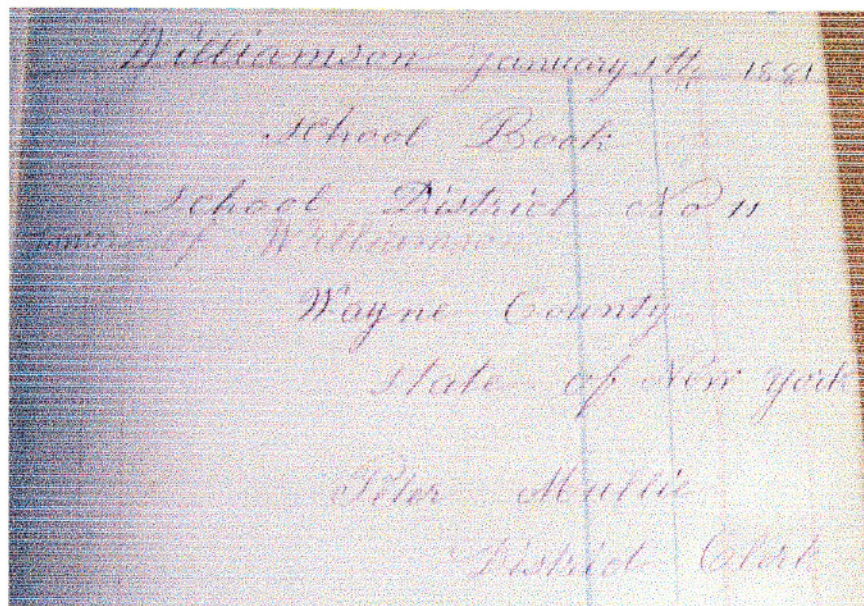


Koetsville

The epicenter of a community



Lisabeth Hoffman
3507 Ridge Road
Williamson, NY 14589
April 21, 2002

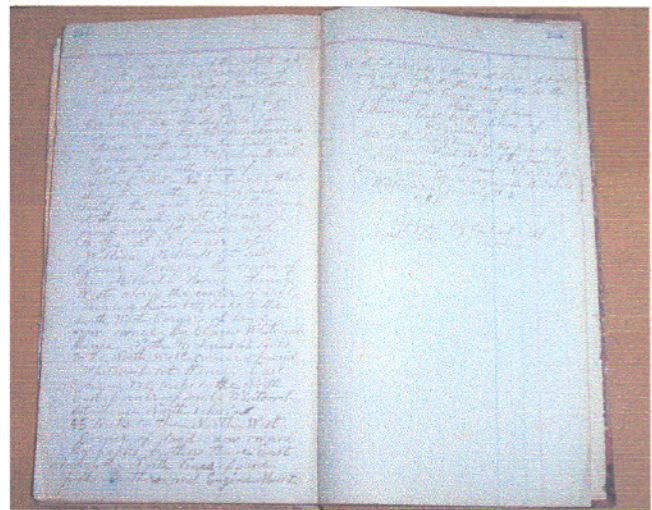
Spring was almost over and summer was fast approaching. Baby birds had just hatched and summer bugs were beginning to appear. Robert and some of the other boys knew that Mrs. Bookale was deathly afraid of bugs. Being typical young boys, they proceeded to find two caterpillars and place them in her desk drawer. All Mrs. Bookale needed was to catch a glimpse of those creepy crawlers and she screamed and fainted right there in the classroom. Thanks to Robert and his accomplices, school was cancelled for the remainder of the day (Valore).

Was school ever cancelled because a teacher became ill when you attended school? No? This was the case at School Number Eleven in Williamson in the year 1920, however. This simple event is only one of many differences that distinguish this one-room schoolhouse from schools today. This schoolhouse, Koetsville as it was called, was one of many one-room schoolhouses in the town of Williamson. Koetsville received its name in the early 1800's when the Koets family lived on the North East corner of Stoney Lonesome and Shepard Road. This family was fairly well known throughout the town of Williamson and, therefore, many people began to refer to the area around this homestead as Koetsville (Peters). School District Number Eleven operated from 1850-1931. Like many others during this time, Koetsville's community was one of close-knit kinship and great interdependence. In fact, the Schoolhouse was the epicenter of this community. It was more than a school to its community. It was a meeting house, a community project, a source of ethnic pride, and the center of an intricately woven human web.

Located on the corner of Stoney Lonesome Road and Shepard Road, this small one-room schoolhouse was not in the geographic center of the entire district. The actual district boundaries are not clear in terms of today's surveying measurements. According to the Koetsville School Board Minutes, the descriptions of the boundaries of District Number

Eleven were in terms of farm fences, directions such as North West Corner and measured in terms of chains and links, instead of feet or yards. Mr. M. Davids of Williamson did a survey on the land that comprises Koetsville on January 10th, 1883. The land was divided up into many farms and therefore the land is spoke of in the survey using family names. For example, the description of the land enclosed within District Number Eleven, that is included on the last two pages of the District Number Eleven School board minutes begins with the following:

Commencing at the N E
Corner of the old Sheffield
farm now owned by Abraham
Cornelius Hence South along
the East line of said lot and
Abraham Hast lot... (Minutes
234)



Last two pages of District Number Eleven School Board minutes holding the Description of The Boundary of School District No. Eleven of the Town of Williamson

There are no other formal descriptions of the boundaries of School District Number Eleven, however, a map printed in 1874 shows that the schoolhouse itself was located in the north section of the district and that the district extended southward from it for about 1.5 miles (see appendix).

Perhaps the community's unity derived first from its common heritage. After stepping off the boat that arrived from Holland, it seems many Dutch people migrated to a little area of Western New York. Williamson was a town that was full of Dutch heritage and Koetsville was no exception. Examples of the Dutch heritage within Koetsville lie in the

pure Dutch names; VerDow, Lawrence, Fox, Sheffield, Valore, Dunning, Peters, VerHow, and Lucier are all last names that came straight from Holland, present in this small community. Enclosed in the 3.5 square miles that comprised Koetsville, there was a blacksmith shop located on the Sheffield Farm, a general store on the Fisher Farm, and of course, Schoolhouse Number Eleven. Just as the people of Koetsville interacted at the Blacksmith shop and the general store, the schoolhouse was also a connecting factor among them. The Schoolhouse was the meetinghouse for the entire community. Not only was school held in this building, but also school board meetings, community picnics, traveling church services, and, until 1899, Sunday school classes (Minutes 41).

The people who lived in this area of Williamson farmed throughout their entire life. Practically everything that was needed was grown or made on each individual farm. If however, a farm could not produce everything that was necessary for it to continue, the neighboring farms in the community would help meet these needs. Since almost every household farmed during this time period, there were many helping hands living in each house. Grandfather, Grandmother, Father, Mother and all of the children would work together. In fact, it was common to have families with 4 or 5 children, because many hands made light work. For example, one of the Fox children, Ida Leenhouts, remembers living with 13 children under one roof.

Picture of James Fox's Family: Grandmother, Father, Mother and 13 children. All lived at the Fox homestead at the time picture was taken, around 1920.



During planting or harvesting time, the boys of most households were not allowed to attend school for the entire year. They had a responsibility to their families to help put food on the table. Therefore, they could only attend school from November to May (Peters). The main source of income for these families was trading and selling what was produced on the farm. This method however, did not bring in a large sum of money. Farms would trade among themselves so that every family had the necessities that were needed. For example, if one farmer had an exceptional harvest of potatoes, he would trade with another farmer who had a bad harvest of potatoes but an excellent herd of pigs. Everyone in Koetsville worked together and depended on one another for the necessities of life (Peters).

The interdependence that occurred between the farms and the households was also the lifeline of the Schoolhouse. If there were not a community to hold School House Number Eleven together, there would have been no school at all. From young children to grandfathers, everyone was involved with the activities of the school.

Children ranging in age from 5 to 21 attended the school each day. Children were allowed to attend school until they were of the age of 21 because some children had to farm for part of the year. This caused a problem regarding instructional time and the completion of grade levels. Since there was only one room in the schoolhouse, each child would essentially hear each grade level's lessons every year. The younger children were able to sit through the lessons that the older children were being taught, and when the older children were done with their lessons for the day, they would help the younger children complete their assignments (Peters). Although there was only one teacher for twenty-two to thirty children, it was not as if this one woman had to teach all of the children at one time. The older children's mentoring and helping allowed the younger children to complete their tasks.

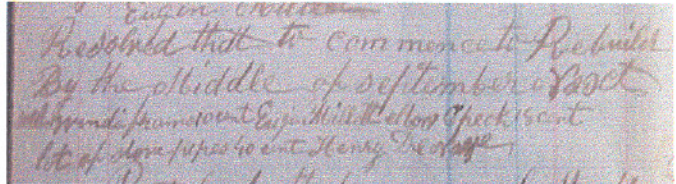
This relationship that developed between the children was the first level of interdependence in the schoolhouse.

A second level of connectedness occurred between the community members (parents and grandparents). During this time, state aid was little help if any to the schools. Each school basically ran on what little tax money it collected and the generosity of its community members. Whenever work needed to be done concerning the schoolhouse, the trustees of the schoolhouse, fathers, grandfathers, and older boys of the area always completed it. Below is a list of jobs that were completed by community members on the schoolhouse as cited in the Williamson Sun and the School Board Minutes of School Number Eleven.

all information with () is an error in spelling as it appeared in the handwritten minutes. (All information in below list from District Number Eleven minutes except for the two cited.)

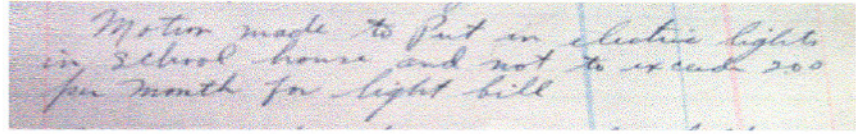
- 1884-85 – New shingles on school
- 1886 – Extension of school building.

*Excerpt
from
Schoolhouse
minutes*



- 1896 – Floor
*repeared [sic]
- 1900 – *Schoolhaus [sic] pained white. Built a new wire fence around school.
- 1902 - Repaired grate for stove.
- 1909 – Reshingled roof.
- 1915 – School house painted
- 1920 – New entry for schoolhouse built.
- 1921 – Clean toilets.
- 1923 – Buy 2 acres of land from Mr. Sheffield to build a new playground on and put new windows on the south side.
- 1924 – Change placement of door. Put up four stop signs on road.
- April 25, 1929 Williamson Sun – Koetsville laid a new floor and bought a new globe

- February 12, 1925 Williamson Sun – Koetsville has additional windows, a new and safer entrance and an improved playground. Citizens took pride and pleasure in doing this labor.
- 1929 – Put electric lights in school



Excerpt from Schoolhouse minutes

Mr. Robert Valore, who attended the schoolhouse from 1919-1924, also contributed his time and effort toward the proceedings that occurred in the Schoolhouse. Living across the street gave Robert the opportunity to take care of the school on a daily basis. He became the janitor at the age of twelve.

I worked as a janitor for four years, while my mother was a teacher at Koetsville. Every morning I had to get up early to haul in wood from the woodshed and start a fire. The schoolhouse needed to be warm by the time school began, so this meant some very cold, early mornings, especially in the wintertime. At night, I had to stack up the coals in the stove, in hopes that they would stay warm through the night and into the morning. This would make starting the fire in the morning easier. Most afternoons, after school had ended for the day, I would have to sweep or mop the floors. In the wintertime, I would even have to shovel the porch and the walk. Every day at 9:00 a.m. I would ring the bell that was on the top of the school, which signaled the beginning of the school day. The bell was also rung at lunchtime.

For his work as a janitor, Robert received \$1.00 per week. At certain times throughout the year, “Holy Roller Ministers” would travel around Williamson and preach at each schoolhouse or meeting area. When Robert helped these ministers, either by taking up a collection, handing out fliers, or moving chairs and such, he would be given \$1.00 per night. These services usually went from about 7:00 p.m. to 9:00 p.m., and many members from the community participated. Another Koetsville student, Chester Peters, who attended the

schoolhouse from 1924-1929, attended such services and remembers them as this: "There would be so many people at these Evangelistic revivals that they would be hanging out the windows!"

Another way in which community members were involved with the School was by way of the School Board. For the most part the School Board consisted of men who had children or relatives attending the school. Therefore, they were concerned with the activities and proceedings surrounding the school in many ways. During the time between 1850 when the school opened and 1931 when it closed its doors for the final time as a schoolhouse, many men served on the board. At the time when Mr. Ray DeRight served on the School board, his son Jessie was attending School. Mr. James Fox was a man who served on the School Board for many years. This was mainly due to the fact that he had 13 children of which Delia, Dina, Edward, Ida, James, and Magdalena were just a few, who attended Koetsville over time. These families were just two of the many families living in School District Number Eleven that had family ties between members of the School Board and children attending the schoolhouse ("District").

In the early 1900's, very few people moved around from house to house. Most people lived on the same farm all of their life, and the children of these people would purchase farms in the neighboring area. In Koetsville, family descendents lived close together. Because of this, many men who served on the School Board had sons and relatives serve after them. The names that appeared most frequently on the School Board were Adrian DeRight, Jessie DeRight, John DeRight, and Ray DeRight; James Fox, Abe Fox, and Henry Fox; Issac Wood, William Wood, and Glen Wood. Within the School Board, there was a chairman of the board, a clerk, a collector, and a trustee. Since the School Board and men of the community only met once a year, unless there was a special meeting called, there

would be new elections each year. The elections would take place at the beginning of the meeting and the persons that were elected would serve for the following year. The chairman of the meeting was elected for that particular meeting. His job was merely to keep order and conduct the meeting. The Clerk's job was to keep the meeting minutes, and the collector's job was to gather the money from the community and also pay the teacher. The clerk was given what little state aid there was from the superintendent. A different community member would serve as trustee each year.

The men of the community wanted to fill the trustee position on a rotation system instead of a voting system. Being the trustee of the schoolhouse was hard because they were responsible for hiring the teachers and fixing anything that needed repair. However, the men worked out a system so that they all agreed on the next trustee before the elections took place (Leenhouts). The members of the School Board had the combined jobs of gathering statistics, preparing reports, rallying public support for education, and distributing what little state aid there was for such things as library books and a new globe (Minutes 54). At each yearly meeting, the amount of money that was in the Board's hands was reported. This information gives details to what little state aid was actually given. In 1885, the trustee only had \$4.74 on hand for the entire year. This money was worth more than it is today, however most of it was collected from the community and not through state aid. Although the amount of money that was in the school's possession increased over time, this was largely due to the increase in the general level of the economy. The annual School Board Meeting was held on the first Tuesday of May, unless otherwise stated at the previous meeting (Minutes).

The community members would also interact within the school through monthly presentations. Each month, one family would have the opportunity to prepare and perform

a skit, musical, or drama, which the entire community would come to watch. During this time, each district was essentially a little community or neighborhood. The little gatherings which took place could even be compared to a family picnic. Koetsville lost this close knit feeling when centralization began (Peters).

The symbiotic relationship that occurred between the individuals of the community and the activities involving the school was mirrored by the interrelations of the students and the activities within school. The student-to-student mentoring was the very first level of this complex relationship.

Throughout the school year, many courses were taught. These courses varied only slightly between grade levels, considering all of the students were in one building and there were very few students in each individual grade. The only difference from year to year may have been the degree of difficulty and the addition or subtraction of certain courses. The basic courses that were taught at School Number Eleven were deportment (mannerisms and how to present oneself in public), spelling, arithmetic, reading, English, history, and geography. History and geography were taught to only the older children. Every morning the Pledge of Allegiance was recited, followed by the singing of a few popular songs such as "The Farmer in the Dell", the reciting of the Lord's Prayer, and then the taking of attendance (Plassche). Attendance was very important to the children of Koetsville. If a child was absent from any regular examination for any cause except sickness, that could be considered sufficient reason for placement in the next lower class or even exclusion from school. If a child was in school every day, he/she had the opportunity to skip certain courses and even grade levels. For example, when Ida (Fox) Leenhouts was a young lady attending school at Koetsville from 1917 - 1925 she had this opportunity:

When I was in fifth grade, I was able to take the seventh grade Geography test and pass it. Therefore, I did not have to take geography at all in my school career. I believe this is because I was able to listen to the other children's lessons.

Other activities that occurred throughout the school year were courses in art, singing, penmanship, nature study, health, and physical exercises. Courses taught depended on the extent of a teacher's ability (Wayne County; Leenhouts). If a teacher knew a lot about nature, she would take the children on nature hikes and field trips. However, if that teacher did not enjoy teaching health, or physical exercise, she would not be made to do so. The teachers of Schoolhouse Number Eleven could decide to some extent on what they wished to teach. The members of the School Board had the job of deciding the core curriculum, but it was up to the teacher as to what order she was going to teach the courses.

The teachers that were hired to work at Schoolhouse Number Eleven were all young, unmarried women, with at most a high school education. Women were chosen to be teachers because of their innate abilities with children and their patience. The children all had the utmost respect for their teachers. They always addressed the teacher with titles of respect, such as Mrs., Miss, and Ma'am. When a child spoke to either the teacher or the class, that student had to first ask permission and then stand. Punishments at Koetsville, along with all other schoolhouses in the area, varied depending on the offense and were quite harsh according to today's standards. Usually the punishment was a rap on the hand or knuckles with a hickory ruler, standing in a corner with face to the wall, wearing a dunce cap while sitting on a high stool or standing for long periods of time (Old Cowtown). However, a few offenses deserved a higher degree of punishment. Ida Leenhouts especially remembers one trouble making young boy:

One day, a boy picked up a handful of worms during recess, and placed them in the teacher's drawer. When the teacher found them, she screamed because she was so frightened. Once she found out who had placed the worms in her desk she brought the boy in the back room by the toilets, and proceeded to whip him. As soon as this boy's sister heard what was happening, she marched into the back room, said, "You leave my brother alone," grabbed him by the arm and took him home.

In the case of this mischievous boy, the punishment was quite painful. However, most teachers did not have to whip their children to make them behave, especially after an episode occurred like the one mentioned above.

School children often walked into the schoolhouse's small room, with a stove for heat in the center, around 8:30 in the morning. The students would quickly sit in one of the many double desks that occupied the room and faced the teacher's desk. The school day officially began at 9:00 and ended around 4:00. Throughout the day, the teacher would call different grade levels and courses to the front of the room to sit at the recitation bench. This bench was located in between the teacher's desk and the student's desks (See Appendix). For example, when the teacher called fourth grade spelling, all students that were in this course walked up to the front of the room and began their lessons. All of the tests and quizzes were given to each grade at the recitation bench. The teacher would teach a lesson while the children were at the bench, ask questions, answer questions, and assign homework. Once the teacher had finished with this group of children, she would tell them to return to their seats and begin their assignment and she would call another group forward (Leenhouts).

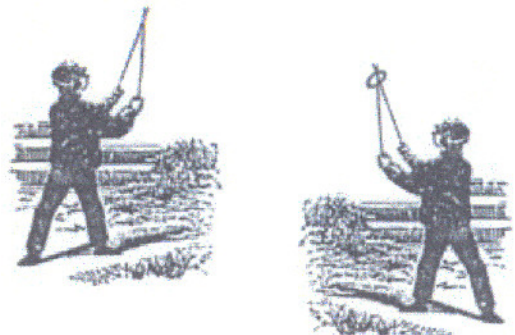
Each day there were two 15-minute recesses, at 10:00 a.m. and 3:00 p.m. Students also had 1 hour off from 12:00 to 1:00 for lunch. The students were very grateful when the teacher allowed them to have a break. This was especially true on warm spring and summer days because many students became quite thirsty. There was not a well on the school lot, however the farmer that lived across the street allowed the children to carry the bucket over to his pump and pump water for the school children. Once the pail was back in the classroom, the children all shared the “common dipper” to drink the water (Leenhouts). During these break times the true nature and camaraderie of the students was evident. At recess, the children would play unique games such as:

(Information in below list from Wayne County Historical Society Country School Days pamphlet)

- Jack Lost His Supper
- Wash the Lady’s Dishes
- Tag-Squat-Stone-Tree-Touch
- Mumble de (Mumity) Peg
- Prisoner’s Goal
- New Orleans
- Button Button on a String
- Old Maid
- Poor Pussy

(Only your imagination can guess what some of these games consisted of!)

In addition, at recess, the children would play with toys such as a cup and ball, a T-stick and metal hoop, a Large Hoop and Stick, and Graces. Graces is the most unique toy used because it was normally only played when there was a young girl and a young boy playing together. Graces was played with each person being armed with a hoop and two



Picture of children playing Graces

light sticks. One person places the hoop on his/her sticks, then makes an "X" with the sticks. The hoop remains between the "V"s formed by the sides of the "X". The hoop is to be thrown by one party toward his opponents, from the crossed ends of his sticks by sliding them to the side. As the hoops slides to the top propelled by the sticks that are being uncrossed, the opponent attempts to catch the hoop on his outstretched sticks (Old Cowntown).

Because the children that attended Koetsville lived in close proximity to the school, they had to walk to school. In the morning, the children that lived the farthest away from school began their journey to school early. When these children walked by a farm, the children that were attending school from that household would join them. By the time the children got close to the schoolhouse, there was a long line of children. There was a hill that the schoolhouse sat on and most of the children would run up this hill to get to school each day, however Edward Fox had a problem with this.

My brother Ed had asthma, and it was very hard for him to walk up the hill surrounding the schoolhouse, let alone run up it like the other children.

Every day I would have to practically drag Ed up the hill to school so that we would not be late. I was never going to leave him behind! (Leenhouts)

It was mandatory for children to go home for their lunch hour for many years, until the School Board hired a teacher that was required to stay in the schoolhouse for the entire lunch hour. This was not a problem for most children. However, if a child lived too far away from the schoolhouse to make it home for lunch and back in time, another kind neighbor would take that child in and feed him or her lunch. Another problem that arose concerning the lunch hour was bad weather. During the winter, a storm may have made it difficult for the children to return home for lunch. In these cases, it was common for the

fathers and grandfathers to deliver the lunch to the school for the children by horse drawn cutter (Leenhouts). During these free periods, some children would have to return home, eat a fast lunch and do chores as well. However, many children relaxed and enjoyed camaraderie with the other children. Since the children lived in such close proximity to each other, everyone knew everyone else. There were not many bitter enemies, and although little disputes may have occurred, everyone remained friends. For example, in the spring of the year, the “big boys” would play ball in the yard, for the pure fun of it, and play little jokes and games on the girls. One memory of the boys “raising hell” for the pure fun of it came from Mr. Robert Valore:

One spring, the boys went down to the edge of the schoolyard while they were playing ball, and climbed the cherry tree. They then proceeded to ring bells and blow horns so that the girls would become interested in what they were doing. Once the girls came over to the tree to investigate what all of the commotion and noise was about, the boys would dump water on them.

No matter how mad those girls became at the young, foolish boys, they would never hate them or stop playing their silly games. It seems as though the memories of life back in then early 1900's was lived more carefree and the children had the opportunity to become close friends because they lived so close together and were so interconnected and intertwined. According to 88-year-old Mr. Valore, life back then was friendlier.

After school had finished for the day, often a Regents review class was held from 4 to 4:30. This class was held for those children almost finished with 8th grade. During this time, in order to receive an 8th grade diploma, it was mandatory that the children pass a regents test for every single subject. An 8th grade Regents diploma was necessary if a child

wished to continue his or her education at the High School level. It was also mandatory for children to pass all required regents tests in order to receive a High School Diploma (Peters).

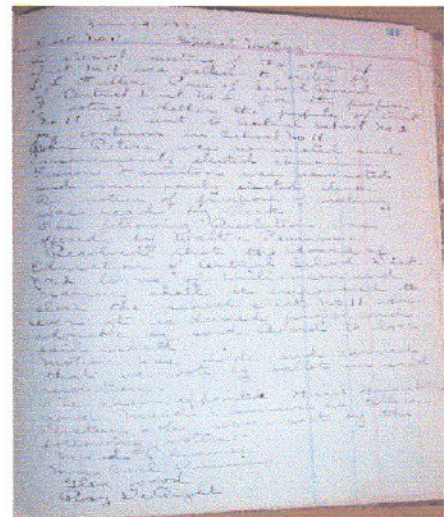
The wave of centralization that occurred in the late 1920's and 1930's stirred up controversy and questions throughout New York State. Koetsville was affected by this new idea of schooling. Before the 20th century, everything concerning education was decided locally. Local citizens decided whether to have schools, raised the money, hired the teachers, and chose which books to use, as was the case in Koetsville. The people liked the schools and the systems they had established. However, many welcomed the new possibility of a Central Rural School. Although the push to consolidate one-room districts began in 1900, it did not gain much momentum until the Great Depression and did not really accelerate until after WWII. In fact, in 1917, New York State had an estimated 195,400 school districts, compared with fewer than 15,000 today. The rise in state power and the shift toward consolidation picked up steam with the Depression. By 1933, local financing, which accounted for about 80% of school support, was in a shambles in many districts (Olson). These financial problems allowed the state to come through with an incentive to centralize. The State Education Department proposed a plan of State Aid for the towns that centralized. This consisted of giving each district a specified amount of money based on the number of students attending each district during 1928-1929 school year. Koetsville received \$951.79 in this state aid. As an added incentive, the State agreed to pay the districts an additional \$25,000, if they centralized. This added money in the district caused taxes for the citizens of Williamson to drop from \$17 per thousand before centralization to \$6 after it (Peters).

Centralization occurred throughout the country and in Williamson, it was the condensing of the 12 Williamson area school districts scattered throughout Williamson into one large central school district. Centralization was initiated throughout the state as a solution to the problem of overcrowding in the tiny one-room schoolhouses and it also enabled the unification of material taught in each district. When it was time for Koetsville to decide if it was going to join District Number 2, which was going to be the central district, in 1931, the President of the Board of Education, L. L. Fuller, sent out a letter to all voters. This letter explained when a meeting was going to be held on Thursday, January 29, 1931 at seven-thirty o'clock p.m. to decide if School Number Eleven was going to centralize. In addition, in the town paper, there were articles sent by the state addressing questions that had arisen regarding centralization. These articles addressed questions about what central rural school districts were, how they were to be financed, and how they would be established.



Title of one article featured in the Williamson Sun April 5, 1930

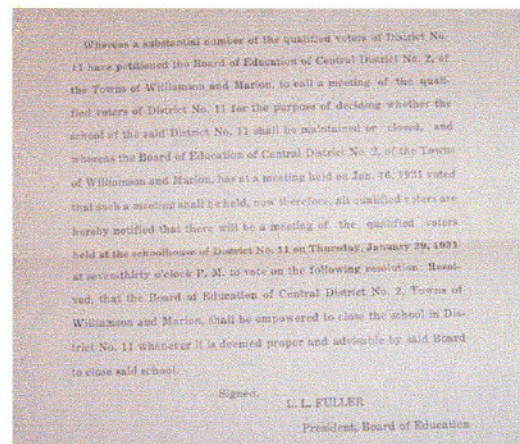
Before it was official that Koetsville was going to centralize with the other districts, the community members all joined together and had a special meeting discussing the pros and cons about centralization and also the effect it would have on the community as a whole. The people of the community all experienced the same concerns and apprehensions. When the issue of centralization first became powerful within Koetsville, the community sent out three



Meeting minutes from special board meeting held on January 29, 1931 discussing centralization

delegates that visited a different central rural school and reported on their findings. At a special meeting held by the District Number Eleven School Board on November 25, 1929, these three delegates reported they felt that centralization was working very well in the districts of Trumansburg, Adams Center, Mumsville and Hamilton, which they visited, and that it was advisable for District Number Eleven to consider it. However, the people of the community were still worried and had many questions. Was the centralized school the best choice? Were the children going to continue to get a good education? How were the children going to get back and forth to school? These questions and many more were brought up at the meeting on Thursday, January 29, 1931 at 7:30 p.m. At the meeting following this, the voters of School District Number Eleven were to make the following resolution:

Resolved, that the Board of Education of Central District No. 2, Towns of Williamson and Marion, shall be empowered to close the school in District No. Eleven whenever it is deemed proper and advisable by said Board to close said school. (Minutes)



Legal notice given to all community of Schoolhouse Number Eleven concerning upcoming meeting on January 29, 1931

Before this meeting was completed, the community members of Schoolhouse Number Eleven voiced all of their concerns and questions. Then the capable voters voted on whether or not the school was going to centralize. There were only sixteen able voters at this meeting, twelve of them voted for centralization, and four voted against it. It was

official that School District Number Eleven was no longer going to exist, and the entire area would centralize with School District Number 2.

Talk of Centralization began in Koetsville around 1929. For about one year, grades seven and eight attended the new Central District Number 2. The remaining six grades continued to attend Koetsville, until January of 1931. At this time, centralization was official and District Number Eleven closed its doors for the last time as a schoolhouse (Peters).

Every aspect of life in Koetsville was interconnected, as well as each individual. It could almost be said that each child was raised by a community instead of a single set of parents. The activities, celebrations, and business that was conducted concerning School District Number Eleven were all intertwined and because of this unity and sense of oneness, the community enclosed within the borders of this district were interrelated and a family. Koetsville was the main source of entertainment, business and schooling in the entire community, and because of the many threads that ran through its doors, it was the center of the community and the lives of the people.

The Appendix

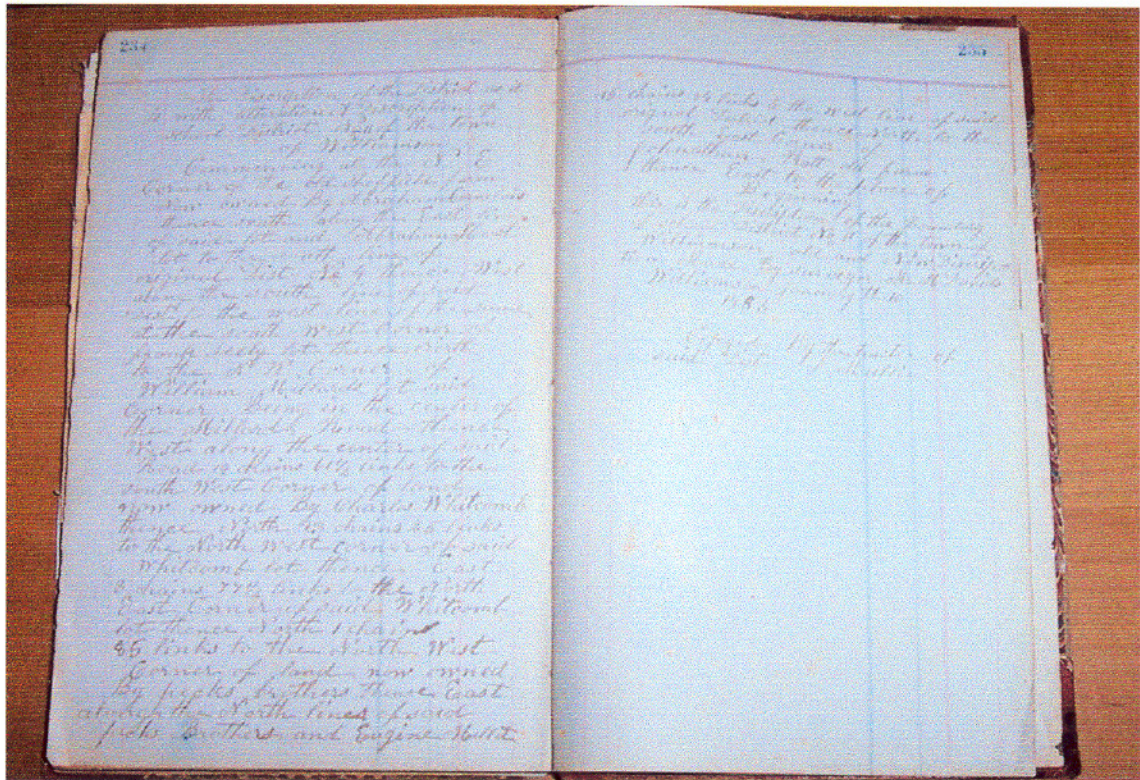
- i. Picture of Koetsville taken around 1920
- ii. Picture of Koetsville taken in 2002
- iii. Description of District Number 11 Boundaries
- iv. Article Published in the American Agriculturist on April 5, 1930
- v. Article Published in the Williamson Sun on May 9, 1929
- vi. Special Meeting notes from November 25, 1929
- vii. Map of 15 original Districts in Williamson
- viii. Map showing District Number 11
- ix. Teacher Certification Test from 1905
- x. Sodus Academy pamphlet
- xi. Country School Days Pamphlet
- xii. Approximate Floor Plan for Koetsville school



Picture of District Number 11 Schoolhouse, taken around 1920, before the entrance door was moved from Stoney Lonesome Road to Shepard Road. This door was moved because of a mandate from the state. Stoney Lonesome Road at this time was a "Highway", and it was not safe for children to exit or enter the schoolhouse using this door. In this picture, the bell tower is also on top of the schoolhouse.



Picture of District Number 11 Schoolhouse as it looks today, in the year 2002. This building is no longer used as a school. It is now the home of Mr. and Mrs. Steven Dunning. When the State mandated that the entrance be moved from Stoney Lonesome Road to Shepard Road, it was placed in the location pictured.



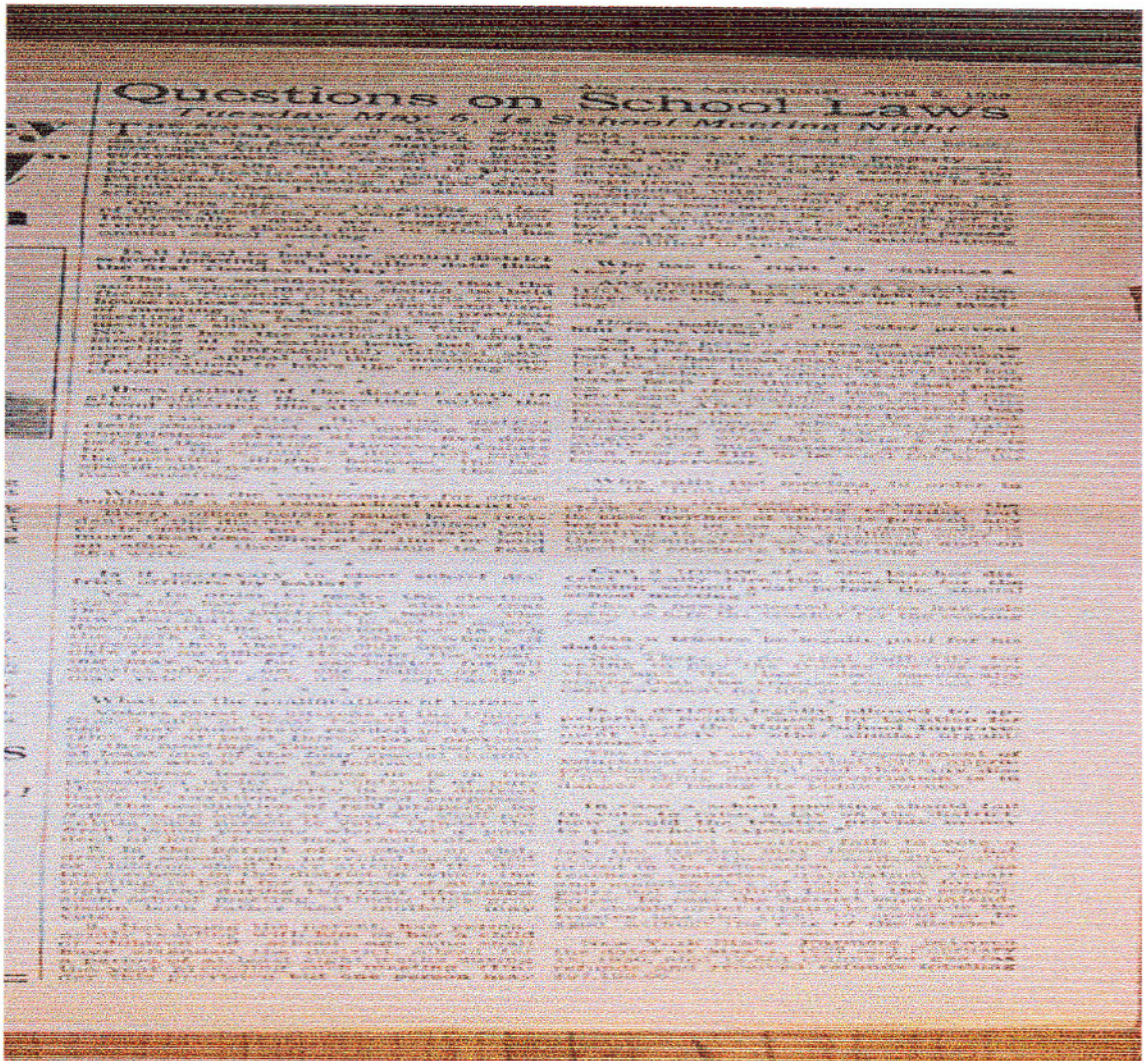
Pages 234-235 in School Minutes Book

The Description of the District as it is with alteration of Description of school District No. 11 of the town of Williamson.

Commencing at the NE Corner of the old Sheffield farm now owned by Abraham Corneluis Hence south along the East line of said lot and Abraham Hast lot to the South line of original Dist. No. 4 Hence West along the South line of original Dist. to the West line of the same at the South West Corner of Frank Seely lot Hence North to the N W Corner of William Millards lot said corner. Being in the center of the Millards road Hence west along the center of said road 19 chains 61 1/2 links to the South West Corner of land now owned by Charles Whitcomb hence North 13 chains 25 links to the North West Corner of said Whitcomb lot Hence East 3 chains 77 1/2 links to the North East Corner of said Whitcomb lot Hence North 1 chain 85 links to the North West corner of land now owned by Pecks Brothers Hence East along the North lines of said Pecks Brothers and Eugene Millet 15 chains 85 links to the West line of said original District hence North to the South East corner of Johnathan Pratt old farm Hence East to the place of Beginning.

This is the Description of the Boundary of School District No. 11 of the town of Williamson old and new description made by Surveyor Mr. M. Davids. Williamson January the 10 1883.

Copied by the trustee of said District.
P. Mullie



This article was featured in the American Agriculturist on April 5, 1930. It discussed the different questions and answers that arose concerning School Laws. Some of the questions that were addressed in this article were:

1. Is it legal to hold our annual district school meeting on any other date than the first Tuesday in May?
2. Does failure of the district clerk to give notice of the meeting make the school meeting illegal?
3. What are the requirements for office holding in one-room school district?
4. Is it necessary to elect school district officers by ballot?
5. What are the qualifications of voters?
6. Who has the right to challenge a voter?
7. Does challenging the voter prevent him from voting?
8. Who calls the meeting to order in case the trustee is absent?
9. Can a trustee of a one-teacher district hire the teacher for the coming school year before the annual school meeting?
10. Can a trustee be legally paid for his duties?
11. Is a district legally allowed to appropriate money raised by taxation for support of the Rural School Improvement Society or other similar organizations?
12. In case a school meeting should fail to vote to raise a tax on the district, how could the trustee provide money to pay school expenses?

What are Central Rural Schools and Central School Districts? How are They Financed?

How May They be Established? Questions and Answers compiled by Rural Education

Bureau of the State Education Department.

QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS ON CENTRAL RURAL SCHOOLS AND CENTRAL SCHOOL DISTRICTS

1 Q. What is the central rural school law?

A. A law designed to enable rural people to provide good elementary and good high school advantages near home at reasonable tax rates.

2 Q. How does the central school law make it possible to provide these advantages at reasonable tax rates?

A. By a larger local unit of administration and by largely increased state aid.

3 Q. How does the central school law provide a larger local unit of taxation and administration?

A. A number of school districts that are naturally associated are grouped together to form a central district.

Q. Does this mean that schools now maintained must be closed?

A. No; under the central school law a school can not be closed in any district for the first six grades until the voters of that district vote to close it.

5 Q. How does the central school law provide increased state aid?

A. Central school districts are entitled to all the state aid to which the separate districts were entitled; to all the aid to which union free school districts are entitled; to one-half the cost of transportation of upper grade and high school pupils, and of lower grade pupils if schools are closed by vote of the people in any district; and to one-fourth the cost of the erection or remodeling of all buildings.

6 Q. How is state aid raised for central districts?

A. By some form of statewide taxation.

7 Q. Is not the state real estate tax increased to raise this increased aid?

A. No; very little state tax is raised on real estate. In fact, the state tax on real estate has actually been decreased since the central school law was passed.

8 Q. What part of the state aid to central districts is paid by rural people?

A. Less than one-eighth of the total amount.

9 Q. Why has the Legislature provided more state aid for central districts than for other districts?

A. Because the facts show that small districts can not provide adequately for seventh and eighth grade and high school pupils. The extra state aid is given to central districts so that rural people may have as good elementary schools and as good high schools as are provided for any children anywhere and so that rural people may have a voice in the control and management of the schools which their children attend.

10 Q. Are not taxes greatly increased in central districts?

A. No; the increased state aid pays for most of the improved facilities. In many districts taxes are actually decreased.

11 Q. In what districts, if any, are taxes increased?

A. Sometimes there is a slight increase in those districts that have a very low tax rate under the present system, such as those that have the railroads and other corporations to pay their taxes. Even in such districts the state aid prevents taxes from being greatly increased.

12 Q. In what districts, if any, are taxes decreased?

A. In the large number of outlying districts that have no or very little corporation property to pay their taxes.

13 Q. Are there some very rich rural districts?

A. Yes; some one-teacher rural districts have several hundred thousand dollars valuation. A few have more than a million dollars valuation.

14 Q. Does every taxpayer in a central district pay the same rate of tax?

A. Yes.

15 Q. Is it true that every taxpayer in a central district pays the same rate if present schools are not closed by vote of the people?

A. Yes.

16 Q. Is the primary purpose of the central school law to reduce taxation?

A. The primary purpose of the central school law is to give rural people an opportunity to provide good schools for their children at a rate of tax that is fairer to all.

Upper Grade and High School Advantages

17 Q. Are high school privileges provided for all children in central districts?

A. Yes.

18 Q. Where?

A. In the central school which seventh and eighth grade pupils also attend.

19 Q. Is it necessary to have central schools for seventh and eighth grade rural pupils?

A. Yes; boys and girls in these grades usually have entered the critical adolescent period of life. If they are to continue their interest in school they must have the opportunity to associate with more pupils of their own age and grade than is possible in small schools, and they must also have equipment and teachers for their instruction that can not be provided in small schools.

20 Q. Is there any evidence that seventh and eighth grade pupils do better work in central schools than in small schools?

A. Yes; the records show that upper grade pupils make much better progress in the larger schools; also that rural boys and girls are likely to lose interest and drop out of the small school. The facts show that the one-teacher school has less holding power for older pupils than any other type of school.

21 Q. What is a junior high school?

A. A school organized and equipped to interest, guide and instruct adolescent boys and girls.

22 Q. Is it possible to have junior high schools in central districts?

A. Yes; a central rural school may have many features of the junior high school. Rural boys and girls need junior high school advantages and should have them in their own schools.

23 Q. Does a junior high school take the place of what is commonly known as a senior high school?

A. No; the junior high school is organized in the seventh, eighth and ninth grades. By interesting boys and girls in their school work it keeps them in school and prepares them for the senior high school.

24 Q. If rural people have all these high school advantages, will not the local cost be greatly increased?

A. No; the plan for organizing the schools and for equalizing taxation takes care of this.

25 Q. May pupils in the lower grades attend the central school?

A. Yes; they may attend the central school if the voters of the district in which they live vote to close the school in that district.

TRANSPORTATION

26 Q. Are small children transported long distances in central districts without the consent of the voters?

A. No; transportation of small children is unnecessary unless schools are closed and a school can not be closed in any district unless a majority in that district vote to close it.

27 Q. Who pays for transportation of upper grade and high school pupils and other pupils from districts in which the people have voted to close their schools?

A. The central district and the State.

28 Q. How are the schools administered in central districts?

A. By a board of education of five members elected by the legal voters. Through the representatives

five rural people who are elected members of the board, the farm people manage to control their own schools.

29 Q. What powers does a central district board of education have?

A. Practically the same powers that school district trustees and boards of education now have.

How To Form A Central District

30 Q. What is the first step required by law in establishing a central district?

A. The Commissioner of Education must issue an order laying out the central district.

31 Q. With whom must the Commissioner's order be filed?

A. With the clerk of the town or towns in which are located the districts to be included in the central district.

32 Q. What else must be done before a central district becomes established?

A. A meeting of the legal voters of the central district must be held and a vote taken.

33 Q. Who calls the meeting to vote on the proposition to establish a central district?

A. The town clerk with whom the Commissioner's order is filed.

34 Q. Must the town clerk call a meeting to vote on the proposition?

A. He must call a meeting if fifteen taxable inhabitants of the proposed central district request him in writing to do so. If such written request is not filed with him he can not call a meeting.

35 Q. How is a central district finally established?

A. By a majority vote of the legal voters of the proposed central district assembled at the meeting called by the town clerk.

36 Q. Is this method of voting fair to districts outside the village or union free school district?

A. Yes; a majority of the voters often live in the outside districts. In any case, a vote can not be taken unless the central district is laid out by order of the Commissioner of Education and the Commissioner has ruled that he will not issue an order laying out a central district until he has evidence that a majority of the legal voters in the outside or common school districts are in favor of establishing a central district.

37 Q. How must this evidence that a majority in the common school districts favor establishing a central district to be furnished to the Commissioner of Education?

A. By petitions signed by legal voters in the common school districts or by a record of duly called meetings at which a vote has been taken.

38 Q. Must there be a majority of the voters in each common school district in favor of forming a central district?

A. No; a majority of the legal voters in all the common school districts taken together must favor it.

39 Q. Why not a majority in each district?

A. Because one or two high valuation districts with extremely low tax rates could prevent the establishment of a central district which was favored by a majority of all the rural people affected.

40 Q. Are the petitions signed by legal voters or the meetings in common school districts required by law?

A. No; they are required by the rule of the Commissioner of Education which has the force of law.

41 Q. Is there any precedent for the unit vote in establishing central school districts?

A. Yes, for more than fifty years union free school districts have been established by unit vote.

42 Q. What is the best way to find out about central rural schools and central school districts?

A. Make a visit to a central school district and ask the rural people who live there how they like the central district plan. Ask them if they would like to receive the old conditions.

Article
published
in the
Williamson Sun
on
May 9, 1929

Minutes from special meeting held on November 25, 1929. Mrs. Anna DeRight, who was appointed temporary secretary for this special meeting, wrote this letter to Mr. Carl Dunning who was the clerk of Koetsville at the time. At this special meeting, three men discussed their visits to four different Central Rural Schools. All of the men visited each part of the district, and talked to the community members. They all reported at the meeting that overall, the community members were satisfied with the new Central School system.

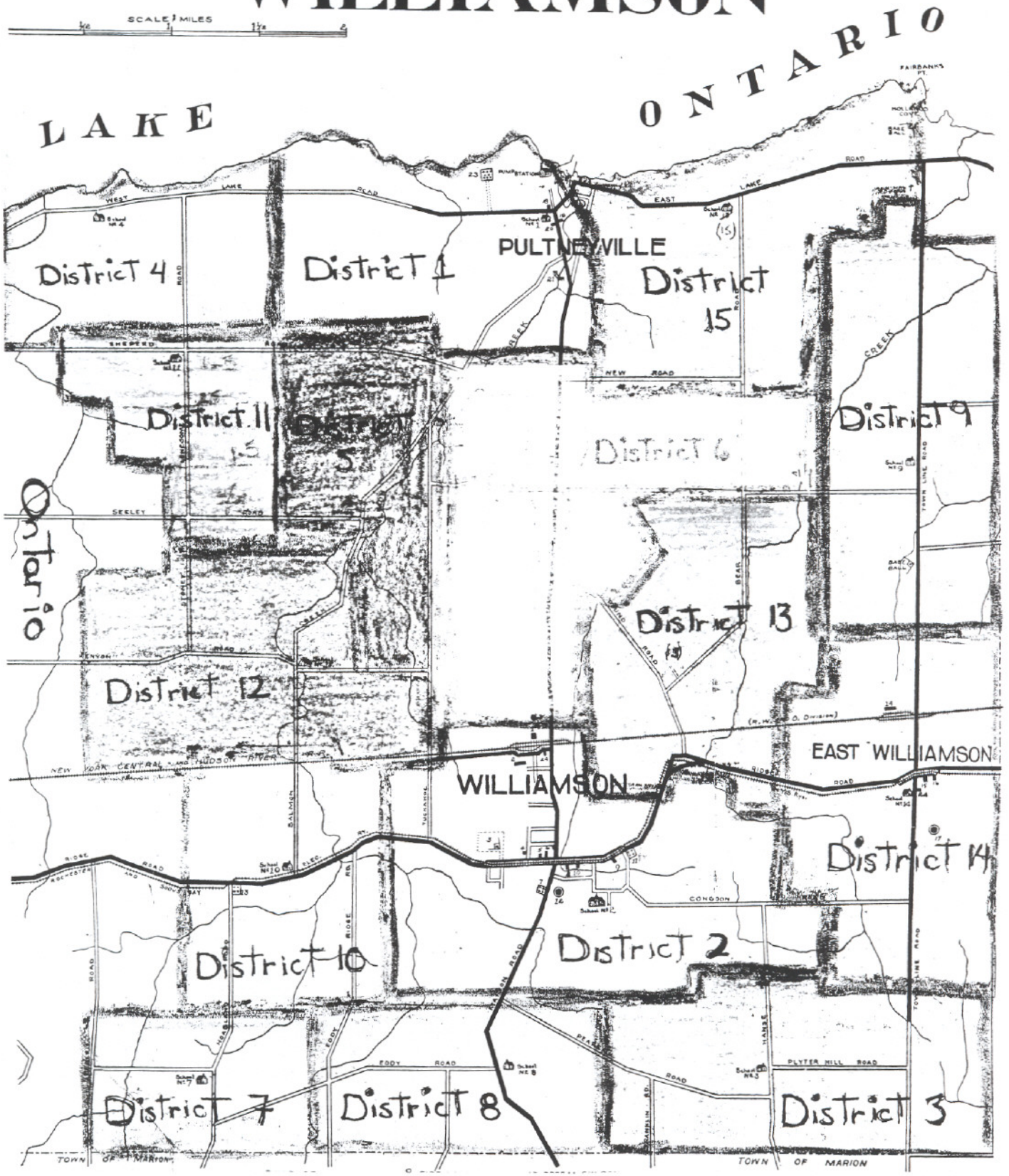
Minutes from special meeting held on November 25, 1929. Mrs. Anna DeRight, who was appointed temporary secretary for this special meeting, wrote this letter to Mr. Carl Dunning who was the clerk of Koetsville at the time. At this special meeting, three men discussed their visits to four different Central Rural Schools. All of the men visited each part of the district, and talked to the community members. They all reported at the meeting that overall, the community members were satisfied with the new Central School system.

Minutes from special meeting held on November 25, 1929. Mrs. Anna DeRight, who was appointed temporary secretary for this special meeting, wrote this letter to Mr. Carl Dunning who was the clerk of Koetsville at the time. At this special meeting, three men discussed their visits to four different Central Rural Schools. All of the men visited each part of the district, and talked to the community members. They all reported at the meeting that overall, the community members were satisfied with the new Central School system.

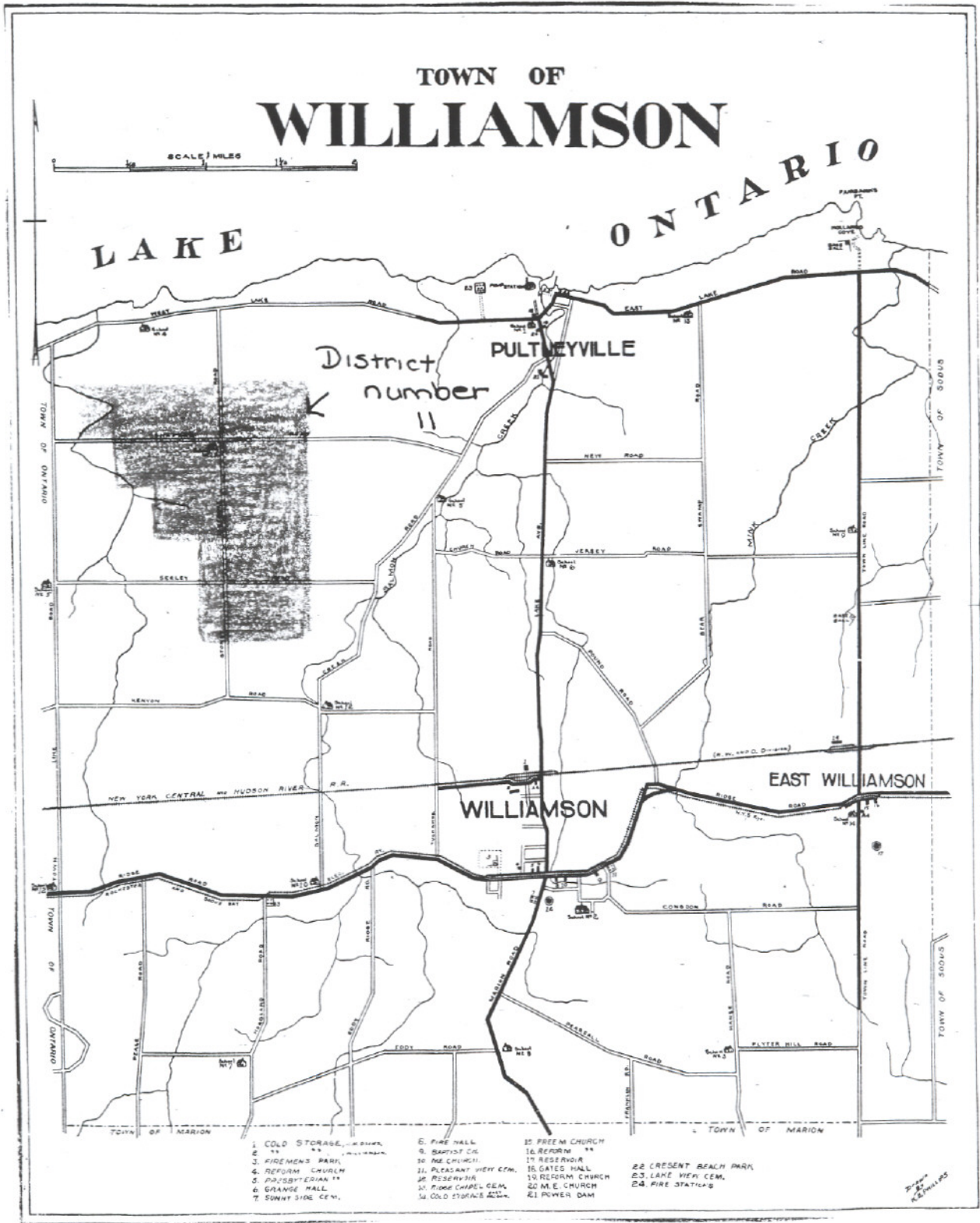
Minutes from special meeting held on November 25, 1929. Mrs. Anna DeRight, who was appointed temporary secretary for this special meeting, wrote this letter to Mr. Carl Dunning who was the clerk of Koetsville at the time. At this special meeting, three men discussed their visits to four different Central Rural Schools. All of the men visited each part of the district, and talked to the community members. They all reported at the meeting that overall, the community members were satisfied with the new Central School system.

TOWN OF WILLIAMSON

SCALE 1 MILE



Map of 15 original Districts. Koetsville was District Number 11. Map printed in 1874.



Map of District Number 11 alone. The area north of Shepard road overlapped with District Number 4.

State of New York
Education Department
UNIFORM EXAMINATIONS
COMMISSIONER CERTIFICATES
Thursday, April 13, 1905, p. m.

The envelop containing these questions must first be opened in the presence of candidates, when assembled for examination.

CANDIDATES should examine every question with care and fully answer it, but *should write no more than is necessary*. Quantity will not be allowed as a substitute for quality. Except in mathematics write the answers only, numbering them to correspond with the questions. Commence every answer as a separate paragraph.

EXTRACTS FROM REGULATIONS

Penmanship will be judged from the papers on geography.

In the solution of problems, every process must be indicated; mere answers will not be accepted.

The examination in each subject will be restricted to the half day designated in the program.

Collusion between candidates, or any other act of dishonesty, will wholly vitiate their examination.

Answers should be written in ink, and papers arranged and filed in good order.

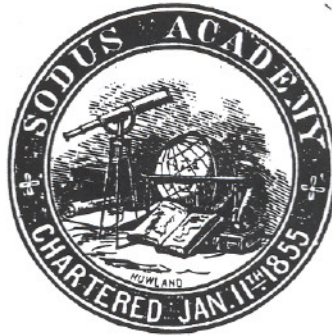
ENGLISH COMPOSITION

Each of the following questions has 10 credits assigned to it.

- 1 Write a letter to a trustee applying for a position as teacher. Give references and details as to qualifications.
- 2 Give *two* rules that must be observed in order to secure unity in the sentence; *one* rule that must be observed in order to secure unity in the paragraph.
- 3 Change the italicized words in the following so as to express the opposite meaning in each case: *veto* a bill, *confirm* a report, *convict* a prisoner, *abolish* a custom, *defend* a position, *acquiesce in* a decision, *decline* a reward, *increase* revenues, *retreat from* a position, *grant* a request.
- 4 He walked from one end of the hall to the other, with the attitude of one who advances to charge an enemy, or to storm the breach of a beleaguered place, sometimes ejaculating to himself, sometimes addressing Athelstane, who stoutly and stoically awaited the issue of the adventure.
Classify the above sentence as periodic or loose, and rewrite it, changing it to the opposite form.
- 5 Distinguish between (a) metaphor and simile, (b) metonymy and synecdoche. Illustrate each.

Sample Teachers Certification Test. This test was given on April 13, 1905. A woman had to complete and pass this examination before she was able to teach in a one-room schoolhouse, like Koetsville.

SODUS ACADEMY.



E. CURTISS, Principal.



The Second Quarter of Sodus Academy will begin Monday,
Nov. 12, 1899.

The Third Quarter of Sodus Academy will begin Monday,
Jan. 29, 1900.

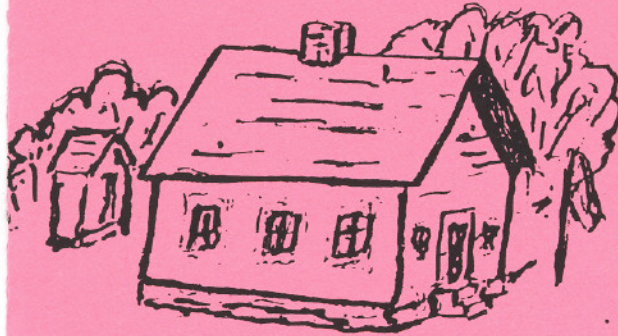
The Fourth Quarter of Sodus Academy will begin Monday,
April 9, 1900.

The Second Term Teachers' Training Class of Sodus Academy
will begin Monday, Jan. 29, 1900.

ALLIANCE PRINT, SODUS, N. Y.

Sodus academy was an organization that included the School Districts in the towns of Sodus, Huron, and Williamson. In this packet, there is information concerning the teacher at Koetsville at the time and the Clerk. During this time, John DeRight was the Clerk and Mrs. Susie DeBack was the teacher.

COUNTRY SCHOOL DAYS
1925 - 1950



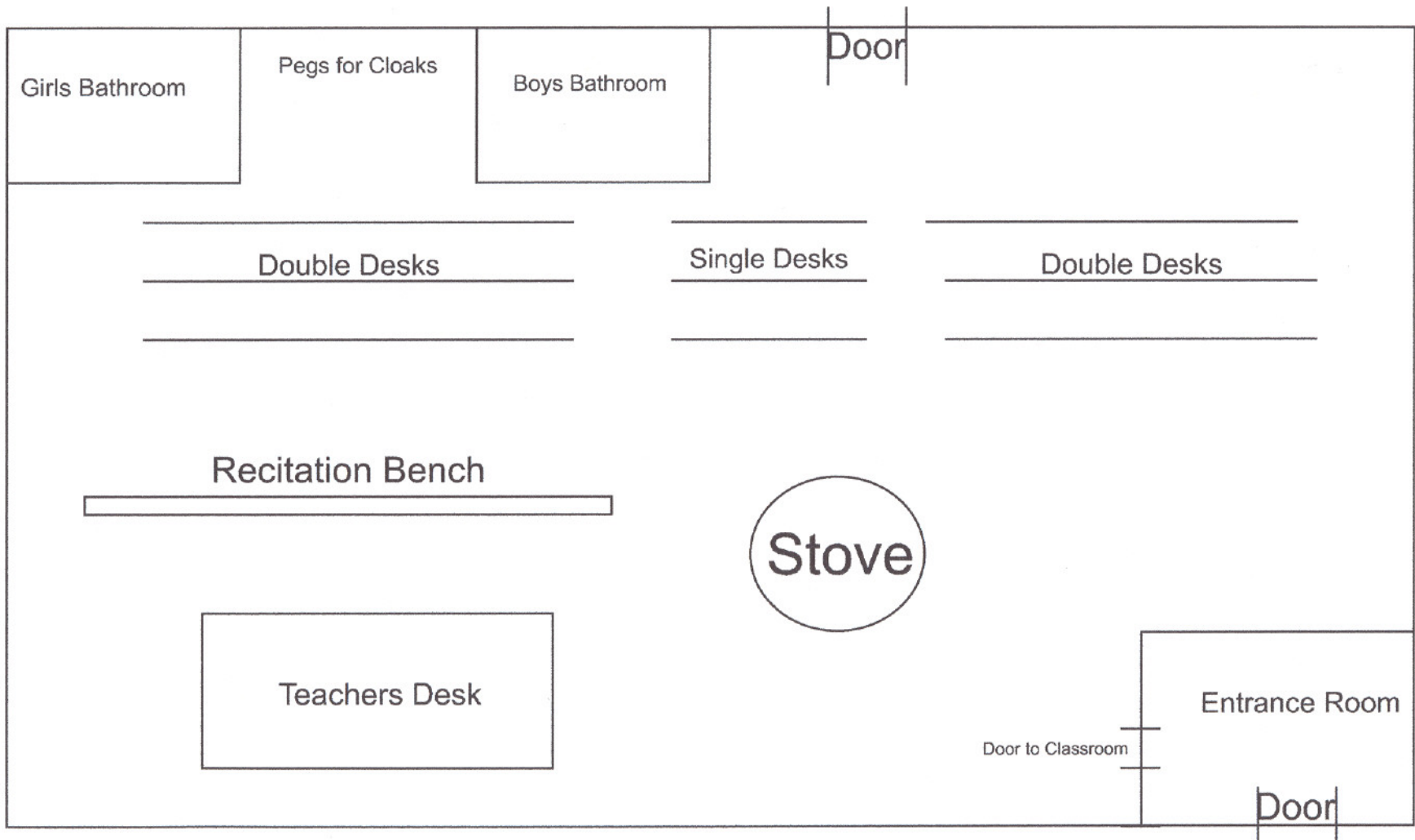
Still sits the schoolhouse by the
side of the road,
A ragged beggar sleeping.
Around it still the sumacs grow,
And blackberry vines are
creeping.

Within, the master's desk is seen,
Deep scarred by raps official.
The warping floor, the battered
seats,
The jackknife's carved initial.

The charcoal frescoes on its walls
The door's worn sill, betraying
The feet that, creeping slow to
school,
Went storming out to playing.

from
"In School Days"
by
John Greenleaf Whittier

This pamphlet was compiled by a group of one-room schoolhouse teachers. The Wayne Country Historical Society published this information.



What Koetsville May Have Looked Like

Work Cited

- "District Schools." [ongoing new column.] Williamson Sun. 1925-1929.
- Dunning, Richard. Personal interview. 21 March 2002.
- 1874 Map of Williamson New York.
- Hoffman, Deolores. Personal interviews. 20 March – 18 April 2002.
- Leenhouts, Ida. Personal interviews. 14 March – 16 April 2002.
- Minutes from District Number 11 School Board Meetings. 1850-1931.
- Old Cowtown Museum One Room School Program. Historic Wichita-Sedgwick County, Inc. 7 January 2001. 15 April 2001. <http://www.old-cowtown.org/OneRoom.html>
- Olson, Lynn. Pulling in Many Directions. Education Week. 17 November 1999. 15 April 2002. <http://www.edweek.org/ew/csstory/cfm?slug=12govern.h19>
- Peters, Chester. Personal interviews. 13 March – 17 April 2002.
- Plassche, Edith. Personal interview. 18 April 2002.
- "Questions on School Laws." American Agriculturist. 5 April 1930: 2
- Sodus Academy Pamphlet. Sodus: Alliance Print, 1892
- Teacher Certification Exam from 1905.
- Valore, Robert. Personal interview. 8 March 2002.
- VanDuesen, Jeff. Education in Williamson. Hoffman Paper. 1965.
- Wayne County Historical Society. Country School Days 1925-1929. 2001
- "What are Central Rural Schools and Central School Districts? How are They Financed? How May They be Established? Questions and Answers compiled by Rural Education Bureau of the State Education Department." Williamson Sun. 9 May 1929. np.