Rural school house and grounds of Crawford County, Iowa

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THE RURAL SCHOOL HOUSE AND GROUNDS OF
CRAWFORD COUNTY, IOWA

by

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INTRODUCTION

The subject of this study is the condition of the school houses and their equipment, and of the school grounds, and outbuildings in the rural districts of Crawford County, Iowa. An attempt is made to discover what conditions are present that will influence the school child for good or ill, as it is believed that the environment of the pupil has much to do with the results obtained in the rural schools of Iowa at the present time, and is to a certain extent accountable for the poor showing of Iowa's schools when they are compared with the schools of neighboring states. In investigating the problem the writer personally visited forty-nine of the rural schools, obtained detailed reports on houses, equipment, and grounds from ninety-nine rural teachers working in the schools this year, photographs of one hundred and fifty school houses and school grounds, outbuildings, etc., detailed reports from the twenty township secretaries of school boards, elaborate reports on the condition of the houses, outbuildings, equipment and grounds from the County Superintendent of Schools, and had numerous conferences with patrons and teachers of the rural schools. Data was obtained from ninety-eight percent of the schools in the county, and no large part of
any township was missed, so that the material presented may be taken as a thoroughly representative index of the educational conditions that surround the school years of the children of the country districts of Crawford County.
GENERAL DESCRIPTION OF CRAWFORD COUNTY

Crawford County is a typical Iowa county and is valuable for this investigation because of its average character. The county is in the middle tier of counties from north to south in the state, and in the second tier from the western boundary. It is made up of heavily rolling prairie, cut up by numerous small creeks, but having no large streams and no lakes. There has never been any large amount of forest land in the county, and the native forest that the early settlers found along the streams and in the breaks of the hills has nearly all disappeared to make room for the more profitable farms of the thriving farmers, who with characteristic American zeal have made a fertile land out of a wilderness, and incidentally, in the process, have destroyed much of the natural beauty of the land. Although the prairie is rolling, there is little of it that may not be brought under the plow, and so the county supports a large rural population. There is no mineral wealth in the county, the drift clays that underlie the surface loams and loess being at least a thousand feet in thickness, and then underlaid with sandstone. Borings for minerals to great depths have revealed nothing of value, so that the inhab-
itants must depend on agriculture. For this reason the rural school will always persist in this county.

The first settlement of Crawford County is said to have been made in 1849. One of the very early white men to visit this county lived, until recently, in Iowa City. This gentleman, Mr. Hickenlooper, visited the county in 1852, just after the Indians had left the region and before it was opened to homesteaders. He crossed the southern and central parts of the county without seeing any indication of man, and he describes the country as a beautiful, undulating prairie region of waving grasses, having great quantities of wild game. The last bison taken in this section of Iowa was killed where the present town of Denison now stands, and the process of extermination then begun has since taken all large game out of the county, and destroyed nearly all of the smaller species.

Seven years after the first settlers came, the first school house was built at Mason’s Grove, in Milford Township, and the first term of school was taught by Mr. Morris McHenry, who began school December 15, 1856, and closed March 24, 1857. His account is as follows:

"The first school in Crawford County was taught on Section 18, Township 54, north of Range 38, west of 5th
P. M., in what is now Milford Township. I think the site of the old school house is now included in the Independ't District of Deloit. I commenced school December 15, 1856, and closed March 24, 1857. I had twenty-seven scholars, three married men and one married woman. It was under no district organization; we had none at that date. The Mason's Grove people wanted a school and cut the logs for a house on the east side of the grove. The settlers on the west side objected to going so far, so the logs were moved nearer the center. Mr. Benjamin Dobson had five boys and was so anxious for a school that he told his son Joseph, and myself that we might take his oxen, go into his timber, cut the logs, haul them to his mill and saw enough lumber to finish the school house. We did so and finished the wood work. Having no stove, we made a dirt fire place by hard pounding and topped it out with a stick chimney. I "boarded around." Each scholar paid for the number of days attended. I think my pay was about $23.00 per month (and board). I think we used McGuffey's readers and Ray's arithmetic. I taught school there the next winter. Two of my boys were soldiers in the War of the Rebellion."

If the energy that was afterward shown by this citizen in business in Crawford County characterized his
school, we may well believe the cause of education there received a good start.

The early settlers who came before the Civil War were mostly of English or Scotch-Irish descent, but the greater part of them have now been displaced by more thrifty immigrants from Germany and Sweden. In the southwest part of the county there is a large number of Irish descendants of the early settlers, and there the schools are in a very bad condition. At the present time one of the township sub-districts in this part of the county, in Union Township, has a school population of seventy children, and an actual enrollment this season of fifty-two children. The school house in this sub-district is not large enough to contain all the pupils, if they should come at once, and about all the teacher is able or expected to do, is to keep order. The school is carried on in the old fashioned ways of bygone generations. The present teacher has been able to hold her place all the year, but the three preceding teachers were all run out of the school by the pupils. So it is perhaps a good thing that the early settlers have largely gone and have been displaced by the more law-abiding foreigners who, in their own countries, have been used to obeying some authority. The rural schools established before
many of these foreigners came into the county have had much to do with the Americanizing of them.

The rural school system persists in its present form partly by virtue of inherent merits, but largely by force of the immense inertia of an old established institution. The population at the last census numbered 21,685 persons which was rather less than the average of the counties of the state, but more than the population of sixty-two of the counties. Although the county is not well wooded there are found many beautiful landscapes, and some of the rural schools are so fortunately situated as to present these to the eye of the pupil continuously.

There are at present one hundred seventy-two rural school houses in the twenty townships, and the condition of these, of their equipment, outbuildings and playgrounds is the subject matter of this paper. The educational ideals of a rural population are reflected in them; the law makes them a vital part of the environment of the children during the greater part of their daylight hours, from the ages of seven to fourteen and, by custom, the children are in the school for several years in excess of the legal requirement, while the school house in numerous instances is the social center of the community. The importance of the school in the life of the rural
community cannot be overestimated. The director in his sub-district has more real authority than is enjoyed by any other officer in the whole educational system, and the zeal or lack of it shown by him in the discharge of his duty is at once reflected in the condition of the school house and grounds. There are not lacking instances where the selection of a good, earnest school director has changed the whole notion of things in the school-world of the sub-district simply by the hard work and good sense the man has put into his office. It is easier to get good teachers in a district where things are kept up in proper condition, and where the environment is made agreeable and suitable for earnest work. This is especially true in Crawford County where the supply of teachers is scanty, and where nine schools have had to go without teachers the past year.
GENERAL DESCRIPTION OF
A COUNTRY SCHOOL HOUSE AND GROUNDS

The school buildings of the county have been generally constructed without knowledge of the things that should enter into school architecture and so are nearly all of one type. They are nearly all rectangular in form, about twenty-two by thirty-two feet in size, with ten-foot ceilings, windows on both sides, and also in numerous cases in the front end; in some cases so arranged that the pupil must face the window behind the teacher's platform. There is usually a small hall at the front used for a cloak room, and as a general storage room for dinner pails, old seats, and surplus apparatus, in the cases where surplus apparatus exists. A number of the school houses have the coal house attached to the main building, an advantageous arrangement, inasmuch as the teacher is not obliged to go out for fuel in bad weather. It also happens in these country schools that the teacher is also janitor, except in the cases where she is able, out of her own wages, to hire some one to do the work for her. This is an evil that needs correction. The school houses are all heated by means of large stoves placed generally in the center of the room, which are a constant source of vexation to the teacher because
they interfere with the view of the room and need considerable attention. If the teacher is lively and energetic, one finds the stove blacked and looking well, but many of the stoves are dirty and rusty from neglect. This is so sure an index that the visitor can at once form a fairly good estimate of the energy and ambition of the school teacher by looking at her stove. In a number of cases the teachers report the heating apparatus out of order, due to neglect on the part of the school director, and frequently that dignitary has to be reminded of his duty in this respect by the County Superintendent. Farmers, as a class, are more apt to neglect the public business to look after their own, because of their isolation and consequent escape from observation, and so make poorer public servants than townsmen. This is one of the unavoidable evils that afflict the rural schools.

The country school houses are not very attractive inside unless the teachers make them so, for the desire to economize the public funds leads to the construction of the plainest of interiors and the provision of the bare necessities only. In a number of cases in this county the school houses have been papered after the walls have become dirty, and in most cases the paper is cheap and gaudy. Some of it is exceedingly offensive to
the aesthetic taste. The outside of the house generally receives two coats of white lead when built, and no special trimming. The farmers would not think of painting their homes one solid color, and not trimming the outlines a darker shade, but this is not often done in the case of the school house. There are some notable exceptions to this in the county, but they are not the rule.

The children are the most valuable possession of the people and their training is of enormous importance in the development of their character and preparation for citizenship, and all helps in the way of good environment should be provided if possible.

The school grounds in many cases are by no means the best that could be had in the particular locality. In order that the pupils may have equal distances to walk to and from school there has been a strong tendency to place the school house as near the geographical center of the district as possible, leaving out of consideration the value that lies in a fine site where the pupils may have beautiful landscapes to look upon and opportunity to enjoy fine shade trees. There are ideal school sites utilized in the county but not nearly all of the school houses have them. Instances may be found of grounds situated on the bleakest hillsides, and in dark, gloomy hollows be-
tween high hills, with no houses in view; of school grounds facing hog yards, and school grounds so steep as to be dangerous to walk over. Many of the grounds have few or no shade trees, and nearly all of them are susceptible of improvement in this respect. There is but one school house in the county whose ground is reported by the teacher to have too many shade trees. The playground should be as nearly level as possible so that the children can play games with ease and comfort; it should be well seeded to lawn grass, and should be kept in fit condition; there should be a sufficient number of shade trees, at least a good row around the back, and the two sides of the lot, with some good trees near the house or scattered on the playground. The fences should invariably comply with the legal requirement that there be no barbed wire within ten feet of the school ground. But numerous school grounds are fenced in large part with barbed wire. The front fence should be of a more pretentious character, a neat board or picket fence, or an ornamental iron fence. Such are found occasionally and should be more common. Hayes Township affords examples of some finely fenced school grounds. In the cases where tornado caves are provided for the protection of the children in stormy weather, the cave should not be
located directly in front of the door, although that is without doubt the most convenient place to have it if the children are to run into it in a great hurry. School grounds are to be found in this county largely made up of bog, others very rough and covered with large weeds, others without a sign of shade, and still others too strip for any sport except sliding down hill. There is no necessity for these conditions and they should not exist. The illustrations show some of the best school houses and grounds, some of the worst ones and some that are medium in character.
4 Otter Creek.
6 Union.

Milford 1.
4 Denison.

4 Washington.
The rural communities have a large financial asset in their school houses and grounds. The reports received from the township school board secretaries indicate the value of all the schools to be considerably in excess of one hundred thousand dollars. The estimates run from $400.00 per school, in the case of Charter Oak Township, to $1150.00 per school in the case of Hayes Township. The relative value of the schools is shown in curve K on the curve insert. The total cost of the schools is represented by townships in graph A. The average valuation given of 168 schools in twenty townships is $625.77. A new rural school house, twenty by thirty-two feet in size, with coal house and two closets, complete, was built last season for the contract price of $1001.00. This completed the building ready for the school furniture. It was not erected in Crawford County, but near at hand in Monona County, where conditions and prices are similar. So it would seem that the estimate of the secretaries averaged too low. However, we must take into consideration the fact that building material was cheaper when most of the Crawford County school houses were built.

In such an important matter as the building that is
to be occupied by many successive generations of students there should be no parsimonious action on the part of the school board erecting the same, but provision should be made for such a house as will enable the best work to be done. This is a place where the investment is to pay returns through a long period of time, and to many people. In equipping the rural school for the work to be done, the idea of economy has been carried to such an extent in some of the schools that the blackboards in use consist of painted paper, or of painted cloth, on which it is very difficult to make a plain mark, and which easily become torn, and yields very bad results. Through the efforts of an enterprising county superintendent, co-operating with a school supply agent, many of the schools have been furnished lately with the best of slate blackboards and with many other items of up-to-date school material, all of which should be found in every one of the school houses, and not in a part only.

The several pieces of apparatus in the school houses comprise globes, charts, maps, library books and mensuration blocks. There are a few other pieces to be found in the schools, but so few as to be entirely negligible. These different pieces of apparatus represent a considerable outlay of money on the part of the school districts.
There is no settled amount that shall be expended for apparatus or supplies, and no established list of what shall be bought. Most of the purchasing is done by very ignorant farmers who are on the boards of school directors, and who are persuaded to their action by the agent of some supply house. A good illustration of the foolishness of this method of supply is seen in the case of St. Clair Township, Monona County, where a smooth-tongued agent sold the township board of directors nine small boxes of wooden blocks for the exorbitant price of $28.00 each, or a total of $252.00. This sum of money could have been invested by the county superintendent, or by some experienced teacher in much more advantageous ways. Another good illustration of the inability of country school boards to get what they should for their money, is seen in the list of the large dictionaries supplied for the use of the rural schools in Crawford County. The list includes "Webster's International," "Webster's Unabridged," "Webster's National Pictorial," "Webster's Academic," "Webster's Encyclopedic Dictionary," "Webster's Collegiate," "Webster's New Collegiate," "Webster's and Wooster's Dictionary," "Dictionary of the English Language," and ten others whose names are not reported. Seemingly anything in the way of a dictionary that has the
magical name of Webster attached to it will sell to the school boards. Fortunately in this county the combination above referred to, of a good, live county superintendent working in conjunction with a good, live book agent, has brought into the schools a total of sixty-four percent of the "Webster's International" dictionary in the schools reporting. The manner of working employed by the county superintendent and the agent is as follows: The county superintendent arranged with a friend to have him become agent for some of the best school supply houses. The agent agreed to charge only a reasonable commission on the goods he sold to the country boards if the superintendent would help him to get the business. The superintendent notes the needs of the schools, in his regular visits to the school houses, and where he sees a chart in bad repair, or a globe, or recitation seat, or other furnishing to be in need of replacement he notifies the school director concerning the matter. At the same time he sends word to the agent and the agent immediately proceeds to solicit the business while the superintendent's injunction is fresh in the mind of the school director. The directors look up to the superintendent and are very much inclined to take his suggestion in the matter, so the agent does a thriving business. There is nothing illegal
or wrong in any way in the matter, for the agent gives the county superintendent nothing at all for the help, except to furnish good goods at a reasonable cost to the schools. The superintendent's only motive is the desire to better the schools in his care, and the results obtained in this case by seven years of patient effort are really remarkable. If such a method were used in all the counties of the state there would be great gain in school efficiency as far as the ends sought are conditioned by the quality and quantity of apparatus in the school houses. This shows in some degree the value of an experienced educator as buyer, or as advisor, in the purchase of school supplies. It is reasonable to believe that the man who has used the material in practical work, who knows what ends are to be sought, and who has made some comparison of supplies from different sources can furnish more expert advice and more practical knowledge in the buying of it than the rural director whose horizon is made up of cattle, crops and market reports.
CONDITION OF REPAIR
OF THE RURAL SCHOOL HOUSES

The problem of keeping the school property in good repair is one that causes the school director no end of trouble. This is partly because he is unfamiliar with what is required, partly because of irregularity of need for repairs, and largely because he gets very little pay for what he does. The average rural director acts on the theory that what is for the use of everybody, is everybody's business; and it happens that what is everybody's business is nobody's business, and the school goes without attention. This is not invariably true. There are shining examples of efficiency to be found in Crawford County. Hayes Township heads the list in this respect, the condition of the rural schools there being a matter of great local pride. The townships of West Side, Goodrich and Hanover are close followers of Hayes, while Denison Township, containing the best town system and the county seat, has the poorest country schools.

Of the school houses of the county, 20 are reported in excellent condition, 116 in very good condition; 5 are in good condition, 6 are in medium condition, 3 are too small for their purposes, 4 are in need of repair, 2 are dirty, one is said to be in poor condition and 4 are not
used. The percentages are: excellent 12%, very good 72%,
good 3%, medium 3%, small 1%, needs repair 2%, dirty 1%,
poor 1%, not used 2%. These conditions are represented in
graph B of the graph insert. The illustrations of school
houses show some of the instances of lack of repair, as
well as of school houses in good repair. The actual dif­
ficulties to be met by the teacher in some of the neglect­
ed school houses are much greater than may be realized by
the general remark that conditions are not the best. As
an instance, one teacher reports that it has been nec­
essary this past winter to take down the stove pipe every
other morning and clean the soot out of it before build­
ing the fire, because there is no chimney on the house to
furnish draft. In cold winter weather this is a very dis­
agreeable task. The floors of numerous houses are built
of single thickness, and when the boards dry out, there
are often cracks to be seen between them. The director
should remedy this, but the attention needed is hard to
give, for it means the removal of everything in the school
house and the laying of another floor, and so it goes un­
done because of the difficulty and the expense. A favor­
ite diversion of the rowdy, going home from town in the
night during the summer, is to smash the window lights.
It seems incredible that any community would allow this,
but it is very hard to catch the offender and there is nobody interested at that time of the year to catch him, and so it goes until autumn when the teacher reports that there are four or five panes of glass gone in the windoes and the director has the work of replacing them. He is not a glazier and dislikes the task, and frequently puts it off as long as possible. These are some of the reasons that the schools are not always in the best of re-pair.
THE PROBLEM OF THE OUTFIELDINGS

A more serious problem is the problem of outbuildings and their use and abuse. It is altogether probable that more children get their first knowledge of obscenity in the school house privy than in all other places combined. The writer has discovered school boys who made a practice of getting the other boys into the closet and rehearsing with them all the obscenity that they could imagine. The condition of the walls and seat of the average school outbuilding in the state of Iowa is well illustrated in the case of Crawford County. Except where the school teacher is unusually vigilant, or the community is unusually alert, on the subject of morality, there will be found all manner of vile drawings and obscene pictures and words written and printed and carved on the walls and seats of the closets, and on other parts of the school property in case the teacher is lax. This may lead to the worst possible results as in the case of the family in the region under consideration. This family sent six children to the rural schools. All were bad examples of what a child can become in this way. They were exceedingly industrious in spreading vice and obscenity among their schoolmates, and the evil that has come from their efforts cannot be estimated. The present
record of this family of children is as follows: The oldest girl has endeavored to save her reputation by marrying a man foolish enough to bring up a child that he does not own; the oldest boy is a fugitive from the law after a career including soliciting for the next member of the family; a girl who became a prostitute and ending in highway robbery; the fourth, a boy, was as immoral as possible without going into it as a business; while the fifth, a boy, is now dying of syphilis. Their home was known to be a hiding place for criminals, and they carried the contagion of vice to the public schools and spread it. Some of the illustrations show samples of the bad school privies in this county. The really unfortunate thing about the matter is that these closets can be duplicated all over Iowa. The closets should be well built so that they may not be easily overturned, which is the cause of the condition shown in some of the illustrations, and so that openings may not be made in the walls by the children; they should be well painted and sanded on all the interior walls so that is difficult to mark on the walls, and to discourage the use of knives for carving obscene symbols. The two closets should not be under one roof as is the case with nineteen schools in Crawford County, because of the impossibility of preventing communication.
between the two parts. There should be as wide separation between them as the nature of the school ground will permit, and they should be so arranged that the exits do not face each other. The teacher should inspect both closets every day and see to it that they are kept clean and free from anything that will be out of place therein. Enough vice and crime in its incipiency could be prevented by these simple measures to greatly improve the moral tone of the state in a few years. In this particular it is well to be sure that the school director is the right kind of a man. I have worked for a director who openly declared that the morals of a teacher, good or bad, had no relation to school work or teaching, and should not be considered by school boards in employing teachers. This man is at present a member of the school board of one of the accredited high schools of Iowa, and he puts his principles into practice, to the very great injury of the school. There is no greater problem for solution in rural school environment than the problem of the outbuildings.
Boys' privy, No. 4, Iowa.

9 Washington (Boys' privy.)
4 Washington (Boys' Firing)

Boys' Firing, no. 1 - Hayes.
In order that the child in the rural school may have proper recreation and the training that comes from games with other children, there should always be provided suitable playgrounds. The school that has only a dozen pupils and an average ground of one acre, seems in a way to have plenty of room for all the activities of the children, but in very many cases these grounds are in such condition that the child is not tempted to play games in the open. The reports of the ninety-nine teachers responding to the questions as to the condition of the school grounds where they were teaching, give twenty-four percent of the grounds as "medium" or worse. This percent over the county would place several hundred children in the bad environment of a poor playground. Not to speak of the mental development direct from play, the child does better seat work if he has good exercise at intermissions, and general conditions should be such that he can have it without the risk of breaking his neck by falling off the school ground or dying of sunstroke from lack of shade in hot weather. It is possible to have good shade trees in this county. Eighty-eight teachers report 1541 shade trees on their school grounds, an average of 17.5 for those reporting, but of these eighty-eight, there are eleven who report
that they have no trees at all. At this rate there are twenty-one bare school grounds in the county. It is altogether probable that the lack of other school grounds nearby for comparison, and the inexperience of many of the teachers caused many of them to be satisfied with classing their school grounds as "good," rather than giving them some lower grading. If the teacher was contented with the place, she would be apt to call the grounds "good."
THE APPARATUS IN THE SCHOOLS

There must be certain materials at hand for the teacher to work with. These things are her working tools and are collectively termed "apparatus" in this discussion. The various studies pursued in the common schools of Iowa require material for purposes of illustration, demonstration and supplementary work, beyond the amount that the pupil may reasonably be expected to buy. The town pupil is furnished supplementary readers after or during the time he is working on the basic readers, and the benefit that comes from their use is very great. It adds to the spice of the child's school life to have some variety introduced. The country pupil should have the same privilege. The rural schools need sets of supplementary readers. The beginners in the town schools have all manner of materials for their use in weaving, paper cutting, etc., and substitutes for these, if not the actual proper working materials, may generally be found in the rural school house. Almost invariably they are there as a result of the teacher's personal self sacrifice. The school district ought to furnish these things in the country as in the town, if it is going to furnish the young children that need them. The country pupils working in number and in arithmetic.
should have the necessary weights, blocks, measures of various sorts and the other material that the town pupils find so interesting and helpful. The classes in geography in the country ought to have good maps and good globes and good charts to work with. The pupil in the country should not be allowed to use the slate to write on any more than the pupil in the town. The town banished it because of the noise, but the reason for which it should be banished is the filthiness of its ordinary use, and because it trains to writing on a medium quite different from that used in the practical affairs of every day life.

The pupil in the country deserves to have good blackboards and good crayon to use thereon and should not be made to write on boards or cloth or paper, that has been painted black and has half worn off, and whose use requires the use of soft chalk that fills the air with particles which get into the lungs of the child and induce disease. There should be such reference books that it will be possible for the child to look up the ordinary things mentioned in his text books with some degree of accuracy and satisfaction. This means only the outlay of a few dollars for encyclopedias and dictionaries. Then, too, the school should be seated with
the modern desks and single seats that present day methods demand; the heating apparatus should be ample and well arranged; and there should be proper accommodations for the teacher. Of course the teacher is the most necessary thing in the school, but the helps she has to work with are all to be taken into account if we are to get the best results. We actually find in the schools of Crawford County seven different materials used for blackboards, and these are reported in six different degrees of condition so that we have some forty-two sorts of blackboard in use by the pupil who is trying to express his thoughts or compute his problems on this piece of equipment. The best of the rural school blackboards are the slate ones, and all of them ought to be of this material because of its uniformity, indestructibility and ability to take a mark from a hard crayon, as well as to show the mark to good advantage. It is economy to buy this material for the schools because, if taken care of at all, it will outlast the building it is placed in and be as good at the end of that time as it was at the beginning, while all the other materials continually deteriorate with use and time.

The maps in the schools reported by the county
superintendent (168 schools) are, 279 wall maps, 9 relief maps and 36 cases of maps. Of these the condition of 149 is not given, 81 are said to be in excellent condition, 98 in very good condition, 3 in good condition, one in medium condition, 12 in poor condition. The total number is 324, or an average of just under two to the school. This is too small a number. There should be maps of the states, the United States, of the several continents, of the world as a whole and relief maps of the continents, in every rural school. The condition of the maps by percent is as follows: condition not given, 45%; excellent, 18%; very good, 30%; good, 1%; medium, 1/3%; poor, 4%; cases of maps in generally good condition, 12% of the whole.

The charts in the county from the reports are 154 in number, of which 48 are in excellent condition, 69 in very good condition, 6 in medium condition, 16 in poor condition and 16 not stated. By percents this is as follows: 31% excellent, 44% very good, 4% medium, 10% poor, 10% not stated. Here we have 14 of the schools with no primary charts at all for the teacher to work with, and through neglect or otherwise 22 of the remainder lack a good chart. In the case of the globes, we have 116 in the 168 schools reported; so that 52 of them
have none at all. There will be many children in those fifty-two schools who will fail to have a correct conception of the shape of the world on which they live because of the false economy of the local authorities, who think that a teacher can teach geography without a globe. These fifty-two schools enroll seven hundred children. Where is the town school with 700 children who have no opportunity to see the correct shape of the earth? The condition of this particular piece of apparatus is given, for the 116 schools having it, as 12 excellent, 89 very good, 2 good, 3 medium, 9 poor, one not stated. By percents this is as follows: 10% excellent, 76% very good, 1% good, 2% medium, 8% poor, 1% not stated. The total number of pieces of apparatus mentioned in the reports is 594, of which 121, or 20%, is in excellent condition, 256, or 43%, in very good condition, 5 pieces, or 1%, in good condition, 10 pieces, or 2%, in medium condition, 37 pieces, or 6%, in poor condition, and 166 pieces, or 28%, condition not stated.

The prime cause for the bad condition of apparatus when found in improper order is neglect or abuse. Apparatus for the school room is not generally worn out in legitimate work, it is the improper use that destroys
it. Children are allowed to use globes, blocks and charts for toys, are permitted to scribble on the maps and in the dictionary, and tear leaves from the reference books, etc. until their condition is deplorable; the school house is not properly closed in the vacation period and big boys and tramps entertain themselves therein in the summer, to the destruction of the general contents of the house. Evening entertainments are highly destructive of the property. There is a regular fashion in these schools of closing the "box-suppers" by choosing sides and lining up on opposite sides of the room for a battle in which the missiles are the remains of the suppers. The effect on wall maps and paper must be seen to be appreciated. There should be reasonable allowances of funds made by the school boards for the apparatus needed in all the grade work of the schools.
THE SCHOOL LIBRARY

The school library is a vital point in the school life of the community. If the pupils have a chance to read the books that are suitable for their years, and if the teacher in such a case makes use of her opportunities, the child will have a mine of information, a source of inspiration and a means of recreation opened to it that will bear rich fruit in all the years of life. It is astonishing to see the dearth of reading matter in the homes of even the American population, and in many of the foreign homes the only reading matter is the Bible, which is never read, an occasional circular letter of advertisement and the catalogue of Montgomery, Ward & Co. of Chicago. The intellectual center of the community can be made the school library if the teacher knows how to go at it, and has the material. The ninety-nine schools that reported give a total of three thousand, one hundred and eighty two books in the libraries. Five teachers omitted the library query, so that the average for the rest is 33 books to the library. Seventy eight of these report the number of books their pupils read, averaging 33 books to the school. This is a small number for the
year, when it is remembered that the school's average enrollment for the county is 14 pupils. In the writer's experience there has been little difficulty in getting pupils to read ten books during the nine months and report on them. Many pupils did much more than this, and without interfering with good work in other directions. The average for the rural schools ought to be at least twice as large and it could be made so by effort on the part of the teachers. In the 99 schools reporting there were 69 library cases, and 20 that had no case for the books; 87 kept a loan record and the others did not. Some of the libraries are very small, and a few of them are comparatively large, running up to more than one hundred and fifty volumes. The following lists are the titles of the books in one of the smaller libraries, and of those in one of the larger ones:

Books in a small library, - School No. 5, Morgan Township.

Books in a large library,- School No. 8, Nishnabotny Township.

It will be seen from the above lists that there is a large proportionate amount of material in the rural school libraries that is of a very poor quality. In the above we miss many of the best authors, and find a number of books that are of little value unless it is in getting
idle boys into the reading habit by giving them adventure stories. There are a few stories in the lists written to be sold to silly young girls, and these ought not to be in the hands of school children. But the bulk of the material is usable in one grade or another and the intelligent teacher can do much good work with it. Union Township has only 210 books in the school libraries, but the township secretary moves these about among the schools frequently so that all the schools have the use of all the books. The list for this township is as follows:


The secretary of this township, Mr. Mott McHenry, has some definite ideas on the library question and works toward some definite ends. He says that he does not want books that do not get read in the schools, and that when mistakes are made in the purchase of books and it proves that the pupils do not read the books, he disposes of them to anyone who will give him other books that the children will read. This spring he was offering in this way a number of sets of Prescott's "History of Mexico," which had cost the schools considerable money, but in which the children took no interest.

The financial side of the rural school problem ought to include the libraries of the schools. By law a certain small amount of a few cents per pupil is allowed for the purchase of library books in each district. This is a
very small factor, going as low as eight cents, and in certain cases in this county not even that much being expended last year. In practice the formation of a library is left to the personal initiative of the teacher. The one method in use of raising funds in the schools of Crawford County for library purposes, is for the teacher to get up an evening entertainment and have a supper in connection with it to which all the people of the neighborhood are invited. The young women bring suppers in boxes which are sold to the highest bidder, and after the supper is eaten the evening is spent in games. The financial return from such an evening are usually very good,—as much as $50.00 being realized at a single "box supper" last winter. The proceeds are spent for books for the library. The township secretaries report for 168 schools a total of 5123 library books, or an average of 30 books to the school, and a total of 102 library cases in these schools. The total expenditure of the county for new books last year was $323.05, which amount of money was paid for 742 new library books. This gives an average valuation of these library books of 43 cents. The expenditure per pupil varied from 35 cents to nothing, with a township average of 19 cents. If we assume the cost of all the books in
the libraries to average 43 cents, we get a total library valuation of upwards of two thousand dollars.

The county has a very good collection of books on professional subjects for the use of the teachers and also a considerable number of the better works of the standard authors. These are distributed about the county, one case of about 100 volumes in each township, where they are most easily reached by the teachers. Careful record of the loans is kept and the cases are changed during the school year, so that the teachers in any one township have the use of two sets during the school year. Each teacher contributes a small annual assessment toward the buying of new books and a patriotic citizen contributes the sum of $100.00 for this fund each year. This is a most useful plan.
Patriotic Teaching in the Rural Schools

The rural schools of this county had 2459 children enrolled at the time the reports were made out. Of these fourteen out of every twenty were the children of foreign-born parents. This gives seventy percent foreign, which is a dangerous number unless there is much work done in making good Americans out of them. Some of the ways that can be used in the ordinary schools to further this end are in use in the schools of Crawford County and also some ways that are not used anywhere else, to the writer's knowledge. All country schools should have flags and some sort of flag drill. Of the schools reporting on this subject thirty-four have flags and sixty-six have no flags. This means that there are 1622 pupils enrolled in schools where they see no flag during the year. Of this number 1135 are foreign children, whose ideas of the country and of the government are colored to a great degree by the home life with their foreign-trained parents. It is impossible that they should be as good Americans as the children of the American families whose ancestry have been part of the body politic for generations, and who generally have contributed to the armies of the nation in some of the country's wars. The intense loyalty that they should have must be de-
veloped, in part, in the school room. The Grand Army organization of the county is doing an unusually good work in this connection through the schools. It has appointed a splendid gentleman, Mr. Richardson, of Denison, as "Patriotic Instructor to the Youth," and he finds opportunity to lecture to the children in the school houses on the subject of applied patriotism. Mr. Richardson is a veteran of the Civil War and has splendid ability in interesting the children in his theme. Having heard him speak to public school children on a number of occasions, and observed the fascination of the little people as he told of the country that we live in, and what it means to be a loyal American, the writer has felt that here was a missionary who was doing part of a mighty work for the preservation of the American state.
CONCLUSION

VALUE OF ENVIRONMENT TO THE

RURAL SCHOOL PUPIL

"Character is the real aim of the schools and the ultimate end for the expenditure of millions for their maintenance." The character of the pupil in the school is made or marred by the things that come about him and cause him to react in various ways. Of the influences that work toward the development or destruction of his character we are bound to include the school environment as among the most important. There is a vital relation between the kind of a house a person lives and works in, and the ideals he will have, and to that extent there is importance in having the right sort of school building for the young American to live his school hours in. The quality of the education of the child is decidedly influenced by the school equipment that he must work with, and by the apparatus the teacher has available for demonstration purposes. To give him the best possible education there must be effective tools. The aesthetic ideals may be greatly advanced by beautiful school grounds, and the value of play in the child's life may be made real and effective for his growth in social qualities if there is opportunity for
the same on good play grounds. The citizenship of America is in the making, and the problem of the foreign element in our population is a serious one. If there may be given to the youth of our public schools right impulses toward the goal of useful citizenship, if the feeling of intense loyalty to a beneficient government can be engendered in their souls, then there need be little fear for the safety of society and the perpetuation of the national life. The child of the present is to be the citizen of tomorrow and out of these undeveloped country children will come the leaders of the state.

The facts presented regarding Crawford County show the present conditions to be such as need arduous toil on the part of the educators of this generation, and co-operation and steadfast faith in the possibilities of the public schools on the part of the patrons of the schools. This study of a typical county of the great state of Iowa reveals some of the needs of the rural communities and some of the possibilities of present day common schools. It also shows that in the point of greatest danger to the state there are wonderful possibilities for good, and under the present system and force of work no vital pains to be feared.
Mr. John B. Richardson.

"Patriotic Instructor to the Youth,"

Crawford County, Iowa. 1909.
Mr. Morris McHenry.

First school teacher in Crawford County, Iowa - 1856.
A. Author's estimate of condition of school grounds.
B. Estimate of condition of school grounds by one hundred teachers of rural schools.
C. County superintendents' estimate of condition of school grounds.
D. County superintendents' estimate of condition of school houses.
E. Teacher's estimate of condition of school houses.
F. County superintendents' estimate of condition of outbuildings.
G. County superintendents' estimate of condition of library books in rural schools.
H. County superintendents' estimate of condition of maps in rural schools.
I. County superintendents' estimate of condition of charts in rural schools.
J. County superintendents' estimate of condition of globes in rural schools.
K. Value of school houses (township school secretaries' reports).