

# Making Over Rural Schools

How the One-room Schools in the United States are fulfilling their purpose

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Rural schools are coming into their own so suddenly, so extensively and intensively that only one who gets out among them in every State in the union can appreciate the pace that is struck.

As always, there is a great philosophical conviction at the foundation of the progress. Nothing vital is achieved by way of progress against tradition merely because someone has a transient dream or a nightmare, which is a dream with the lid on. It is easy for one to gush over a pet scheme or go into hysterics over pests, but progress only comes where there is philosophical conviction.

The conviction which is revolutionizing rural schools is the discovery that intelligence is radically different from knowledge, that education is heaven-high above scholarship.

Knowledge is a body of facts or processes known or practiced by someone else. Intelligence is one's own power to grapple with new conditions, to solve new problems.

### What Education Means

Education is intelligence in action, scholarship in knowledge in extenso; education boosts, scholarship boasts; education faces forward, scholarship backward; education thrills, scholarship drills; education thinks of your grandchildren, scholarship of your grandfathers; education is live steam, scholarship is exhaust steam; education is positive force, scholarship is inertia.

There must be something in the country that thrills intelligence instead of drilling in knowledge, something that presents new problems rather than old, that looks forward to future advantage rather than past glory, that finds a live wire in human nature instead of that which disconnects nature from human nature and makes both useless as well as harmless.

Wherever rural schools have revolutionized a country community, wherever children have learned in school to love to live on the farm, wherever city families have moved into the country to get the advantage of a one-room school for their children there is sure to be live and not exhaust steam, a tonic and not a drug, a rainbow of promise and not a thunder cloud, a revelation and not anathema, hope and not despair.

I know personally hundreds of just such conditions, one-room schools in which boys and girls get the hang of things instead of being hanged on things.

### New Life in Rural Schools

Edward J. Tobin has been superintendent of Cook County, Illinois, for four years. There are in the county 101 one-room rural schools, just as rural as tho

they were a thousand miles from a city, and Mr. Tobin has made over every one of these rural schools. He has done it in such a way, it has been so contagious that many far away schools have been reconstructed thereby.

Every boy and girl in the 101 rural schools who is ten years old and more has a garden of his own, raises something commercially, pays rental for the land, which is from a tenth to a quarter of an acre, keeps account of every cent paid out, pays himself ten cents for every hour's work he puts into it, keeps a scientific account of all outgo and income.

### One School Record

Here is the record of one school, the East Prairie School:

#### East Prairie School, Cook County, Illinois—Season of 1914

Seth Shepard, teacher.

Age of Pupil	Square rods in plot	Name of Crop Planted	Amt. received from garden	Expenses	Net profit
14	160	Corn	\$39.30	\$7.00	\$32.30
14	6	Carrots, onions, asters, radishes	26.04	1.30	24.74
14	16	Parsley, onions, radishes, asters	132.65	5.30	127.35
13	3	Radishes	14.10	3.25	10.85
13	12	Radishes, beans	21.25	3.00	18.25
12	120	Corn	27.60	9.50	18.10
12	7	Radishes, lettuce, beets, carrots, on., cu.	14.05	2.20	11.85
12	6	Carrots, onions, asters, radishes	26.57	1.25	25.32
14	80	Tomatoes	51.15	3.60	47.55
13	130	Corn, tomatoes	43.45	12.25	30.20
12	7	Onions, asters	16.78	.73	16.05
12	160	Corn	37.16	7.00	30.16
12	16	Parsley, onions, asters, radishes	132.65	5.25	127.40
12	6	Kohlrabi, beans, radishes	18.40	5.56	12.84
12	52	Onions	84.00	4.95	79.05
12	4	Lettuce, asters	11.50	1.20	10.30
12	6	Radishes, beans	23.75	1.45	22.30
12	100	Onions	165.31	27.05	138.26
12	6	Radishes, beans	25.15	2.75	22.40
11	10	Radishes, beans	20.15	3.20	16.95
12	80	Tomatoes	147.10	12.75	134.35
10	3	Radishes	10.68	1.85	8.83
12	60	Onions	133.90	37.50	96.40
11	48	Beans, radishes	58.25	10.78	47.47
11	22	Sweet corn, carrots, beets, radishes, ons.	40.55	7.55	33.00
10	12	Radishes, peppers	22.75	9.56	13.19
10	5	Carrots, onions	19.01	2.57	16.44
11	2	Beans, peas	6.90	.40	6.50
10	2	Carrots, radishes, cucum., cabbage, cel'y	7.10	.25	6.85
Total			\$1,376.25	\$191.00	\$1,185.25

### Using Teacher's Holidays

This great result was attained because the teacher was employed for the three vacation months at \$100 a month, the same wages that he received for the nine months that he taught.

So far as I know this was the first time that a teacher of a rural school in the United States was ever paid full wages from the taxes for vacation work.

The local board voted unanimously to employ him for the three vacation

months for \$300. Why? Largely because they knew that he knew how to make his own garden profitable. In 1913 he raised from less than a quarter of an acre of land—35 square rods—\$141.50 worth of asters, \$73.40 worth of gladiolas, \$24.30 worth of sweet peas, and \$26.10 worth of radishes and onions, or a total of \$285.30 worth of flowers and vegetables, or at the rate of \$1,200 an acre. Besides this cash received Mr. Shepard raised on those 35 square rods all the cabbages, potatoes, tomatoes, lettuce and radishes for his own family use. This annual achievement of Mr. Shepard convinced the trustees and patrons that it would be a good investment to have him on the rural school garden job all summer.

In 1914, his first year on the \$1,200

that year, is now an assistant to Superintendent Tobin at a salary of \$2,100, taking the place of George E. Farrell, who was assistant to Mr. Tobin last year, and who is now assistant to O. H. Benson, of the United States Department of Agriculture.

But the one self-conscious joy of the doubting Thomas is that all this depends upon the personality of the leader, and if that peculiar personality is eliminated the last state of the district will be worse than the first.

### One Woman's Work

Fortunately we have a demonstration that meets this case. From April, 1907, to January, 1913, Jessie Field made Page County, Iowa, famous. There were 128 rural schools, and she had everyone of them "strike the sawdust trail," a la Billy Sunday. They learned to be handy with mechanical tools, they toned up every home in the county where a pupil lived, they increased the farm output, they improved the variety of plants and the breed of stock. In the language of a German farmer, "That woman has done more in dollars and cents for each school district than all the county pays her."

The boys and girls won first prize in the Congressional district contest, at the State Fair, and at Golden Belt Fair, winning for Miss Field an automobile for sweepstakes.

That year the cash premiums were about \$1,800. For three successive years they won the trophy presented by a New York man, a former resident of the county, costing \$350, in competition with the entire State.

Two and a half years ago Miss Field was promoted to national work, and one of her teachers succeeded her. In no respect has the work been retarded, and this year in a bread-baking contest a little Page County girl won over all girls in the United States.

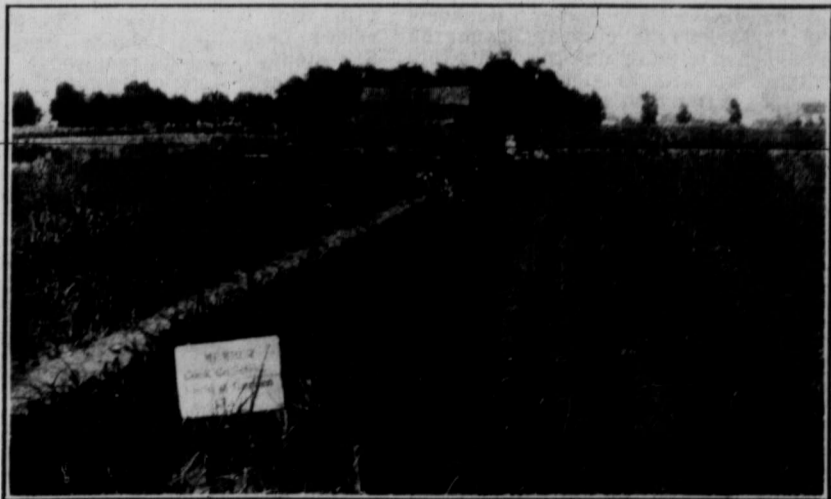
There are men and women without number who are uplifting entire country communities while ennobling their own lives. These cases are merely typical.

### Carpentry, Cooking, Music

There are many variations in these rural life advancement schemes. For instance, in Black Hawk County, Iowa, fifteen one-room schools are grouped under one country-life supervisor who looks after all features of the new work.

Each school has a bench with tools. The bench is sometimes in the cellar, sometimes one of the two entries is given up to it, and sometimes it is in the school room. A special instructor from the Cedar Falls State Normal College has charge of the industrial work of the fifteen schools. One day each

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A member of the Cook County School Garden Club in his garden field



Country school boys judging horses