

Leon Reporter, Leon, Iowa
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Thinking that it would be of some interest to the citizens and old settlers of Leon, I have endeavored to write a history of the Leon Public Schools. It has been a laborious task to obtain the information necessary. There may be a few facts omitted but I have done the best I could. I desire to acknowledge the help received from some of the former professors, and from the old citizens of Leon.

In the year of 1853, Mr. Humphrey Fullerton taught the first school in Leon in a 16 foot log cabin where J.A. Caster's grocery store now stands. The following were his pupils:

Martha Ellis-James, Mary Ellis-Coffin, Luticia Ellis-Wainwright, Samuel Ellis, William Tharp, Belle Tharp-Walker, Mattie Tharp-Jordan, Martha Jordan-Ackins, Benjamin Jordan, James Shackelford, Lyman East, Julian East, Albert Tharp, Uz Tharp.

Joe C. Porter taught at the same place in 1854. Geo. T. Young in the summer of 1855 taught in the old court house where Mayer's and Hoffhine's stores are now located. One afternoon a windstorm passed over our little village and the wall of the upper story of the school house was blown down and not one of the eighty pupils were injured. It was afterwards rebuilt and then destroyed by fire on March 31, 1874. In the winter of 1856 Miss Nellie Arnold taught in a log cabin on the southeast corner of the property owned by Mrs. A.E. Chase. Miss Arnold taught a summer shool in 1857 at the same place. In the winter of 1857 Mr. L.M. Hastings taught in the new school house in the east part of town near T.J. Gibson's residence, the term being for only four months. Sarah Patterson-Bashaw taught in the summer of 1858 in the east school house better known to the old settlers as Gospel Ridge. In the winter of that year J.C. Porter taught. In the summer of 1859 Mrs. Higby-Warner taught and in the winter Mr. Carr Porter. Between the years of 1860 and '64 there were more than one school taught at the same time, one room not being large enough to hold the pupils.

Sarah Patterson-Bashaw taught in a log cabin back of Mr. Orslin's shoe shop. Where the Farmers & Traders Bank now stands, Sam Sears taught up stairs and Mr. Strong down stairs. They were succeeded by the following teachers:

Mr. Adams, Mr. Wainwright, Miss Higby, and Sarah Kirkpatrick. Prof. Lewis taught in a small building east of Brown's Hotel, and later in a building where Frank Clark's grocery now stands, also in the old M.E. Church on Commercial Street. Miss Sill Jones taught in a frame building west of Teale & Wharton's store. Miss Emma Higby taught several terms in a building where Frank Clark's grocery now stands. Andrew Warner taught during this time and I.P. Martin taught in the M.E. Church. During this time the first brick school house was built in the north part of town by Mr. John Kirkpatrick. The building was completed in 1864 and the bell that calls us to school now, is the bell that was on the old court house and was placed on the new school house.

While the school house was being built Mr. L.M. Hastings taught in the M.E. Church, Mrs. Hastings and Mrs. Lizzie Simmons-Vail being his assistants. At the same time L.P. Martin had a portion of the school in a building where Frank Clark's grocery store now stands. The schools at this time were not graded and four months was the longest term taught. In the fall of 1864 only two of the rooms of the new school house were completed and Prof. Hastings occupied the south room up stairs and Sarah Kirkpatrick the north room.

For the school year of 1865 and '66, Mr. S.P. Hencomb was elected principal and the following teachers taught in the different departments:

Sarah Kirkpatrick-Baldwin, Sarah Patterson-Bashaw.

In 1866 and '67 Prof. Abbott was elected principal, and re-elected each year for the next four years. The following taught under him:

Gusta Smith, Emma Blair, Mrs. Reed, Linnie Arnold-Horner, Eliza Avery, Emma Dawson.

Prof. Frazier graded the schools. There were four rooms and three grades in each room.

On June 16, 1871, the first graduating class was sent out. They were as follows:

Mr. Samuel Gates, Mr. T.W. Silvers, Mr. A.F. Woodruff, Miss Matilda Jordan-Critchfield.

This class bought an organ for the school which cost \$275. It also started the first library, and bought a globe, a dictionary, a microscope, electric machine and history chart. They gave exhibitions and festivals to buy these things. On Jan. 2, 1872 the following teachers were elected for a term of ten weeks:

Emma Dawson, Hettie Rogers, Mrs. Reed.

And on March 22, 1872, Mrs. Reed, T.W. Silvers, Emma Dawson.

August 16, 1872, Mr. W.S. Domer was elected principal with the following teachers:

Mrs. Reed, Ella Eaton, Mollie Miles.

It was ordered that school commence the second Monday instead of the first.

Sept. 27, 1872 the following teachers were elected for a term of twelve weeks beginning the first Monday in Jan., 1873:

Lucy Black, Emma Dawson, Mollie Miles.

W.S. Domer was re-elected principal on April 4, 1873 with the following teachers:

Lucy Corbett, Emma Dawson, Mollie Miles.

On April 10, 1873, a committee was ordered to rent a room for part of the Primary Department, the basement of the Presbyterian Church being rented. Mrs. Hyatt was elected teacher. In the school years of 1873 and '74 Aaron Frazier was elected principal. The following teachers taught in 1873:

Emma Mills, Mollie Miles, J.L. Harvey.

In 1874 the Babbott Writing Book was adopted as one of the text books of the school. The teachers were:

Lucy Corbett, Emma Mills, J.F. Kirkpatrick, Mrs. Hyatt, Esther Sanger, Laura Dye, Leota Haywood, Josie Miles, Mettie Pitman.

It was decided Dec. 31, 1874 that five more months be added to the school year with one week vacation.

On July 28, 1875 R.L. Parrish was elected principal, and in 1876 was re-elected. The following teachers taught under him in 1875:

Laura Dye, T.J. Hastings, Esther Sanger, Josephine Kellogg, Ellen Gammon.

In 1876, Kittie Stone, Josephine Kellogg, Belle Thompson, Laura Dye.

On Aug. 12, 1876, it was ordered that this school year be held for nine months and commence Sept. 4, 1876, the first term seventeen weeks and two weeks vacation, the last term nineteen weeks.

July 2, 1877, Mrs. C.M. Des Islets was elected principal for the following four years. The teachers were as follows between 1877 and 1881:

Ella Gammon, Emma Wilson, Esther Sanger, T.J. Hastings, William Field, Allie Porter, W.H. Albaugh, Mrs. M.A. Critchfield, L.P. Martin, S.D. Calhoun, Stephen Varga, Miss Davidson, Mrs. Reed.

Miss Pollard was elected to teach music in each department of the school giving two lessons of fifteen minutes to each department twice a week.

The old school house that was completed in 1864 was torn down and the bricks sold and a new one built in 1876 and 1877. It was completed Sept. 13, 1877, B.F. Roberts being the contractor. On Dec. 10, 1877, a new department was called the Second Intermediate Department.

May 6, 1878, the school year consisted of ten months. For the school year of 1881 and 1882, A.B. Cornell was elected principal. The following teachers taught under him:

Frank Gardner, Eva Kirkpatrick, Georgia Brown, Augustus Roy, assistant principal, Sarah Johnson, Retta Biddle, Finley Frazee, Merge Jordan.

July 3, 1882, B.F. Miller was elected principal for the next school year. On June 18, 1883, S.M. Mowatt was elected principal and was in charge of the school for the next seven years. The following teachers taught in 1883:

Nellie Parris, assistant principal, Mrs. Reed, Mrs. M.B. Harvey, Eva Kirkpatrick, Esther Sanger, Sarah Johnson.

In 1884 the same teachers with the exception that Grace Arnold took Mrs. Reed's place. In 1885 W.J. Edwards was assistant principal, the same teachers with the exception that W.M. Scott took Grace Arnold's place and Jessie Forrey was elected teacher. In 1886 Susie Young was assistant principal. The new teachers were:

Olive Logan, Cora Brooks.

In 1887, Mis May Wilson was assistant principal. The other teachers were:

Emma Roy, Jennie Haskett, Elva Noble, M.B. Harvey, Cora Brooks, Esther Sanger.

On Sept. 17, 1888 the following studies were introduced into the Public Schools:

Ray's Higher Arithmetic, Ray's New Practical Arithmetic, Electic U.S. History, Harvey's Revised

Grammer, Electic Geography.

Teachers in 1888:

Emma Roy, Kate Hall, Henrietta Vogt, Lillian Howard, assistant principal, M.B. Harvey, Jennie Haskett, Esther Sanger.

In 1889 V.R. McGinnis was elected assistant principal. Teachers were:

Eva Kirkpatrick, Jennie Haskett, Mrs. Reed, Kate Hall, Lillian Howard, Emma Roy.

May 10, 1890, A.S. Lyons was elected superintendent of all the schools for two years and V.R. McGinnis principal of the High School. Teachers in 1890 were:

Mrs. M.P. Lindsey, Mrs. Haskett, Hortense Dilsaver, Mate Parrish, Lillian Howard, J.E. Cummins.

In 1891 teachers were:

Mrs. Lindsey, Mrs. Haskett, Hortense Dilsaver, Mate Parrish, Kate James, John Parrish, Cora Brooks.

May 2, 1892 V.R. McGinnis was elected principal and J.M. Howell, assistant principal for two years.

Teachers in 1892:

Mrs. Lindsey, Mrs. Haskett, Eva Kirkpatrick, Mate Parrish, Homer Dye, Hattie Drake, R.F. Porter. Prof. M. Schoenert was elected musical director.

Teachers in 1893:

Mrs. Lindsey, Mrs. Haskett, Mary Martin, Mate Parrish, Eva Kirkpatrick, Mabel Horner, Hattie Drake.

M. Schoenert was re-elected musical director.

April 2, 1894 Samuel L. Darrah was elected principal for the following four years. Teachers were:

Hattie Drake, assistant principal, Mrs. Lindsey, Mrs. Haskett, Mary Martin, Mate Parrish, Eva Kirkpatrick, Mabel Horner, Carrie Hoffman.

April 1, 1895 M. Schoenert resigned and Miss Mayme Penniwell was elected to fill his place. Teachers in 1895 were the same as in 1894.

The new south school house was built in the summer of 1895, S.L. Lorey being the contractor.

In 1896 Miss Helen Radnich was elected first assistant principal, Miss Virginia McKee was elected second assistant principal. Teachers at north school house:

Mrs. Stewart, Henrietta Vogt, Eva Kirkpatrick, Mate Parrish, Ophie Clark, Mrs. Lindsey.

Teachers at south school house:

Hallie Moore, Mae Lorey.

Ella Kemp, musical director; Mable Horner, election teacher.

In 1897 Miss Mamie Allen was elected first assistant principal, and Harriet Shields second assistant principal. Teachers at north school house were:

Mrs. Lindsey, Mrs. Roy, Claudie Clapp, Henrietta Vogt, Mrs. Stewart.

Teachers at south school house:

Eva Kirkpatrick, Hallie Moore, Mae Lorey. Ella Kemp, musical director.

In 1898 Miss Mamie Allen was re-elected first assistant principal; Miss Margaret Young second assistant principal. Teachers at north school house:

Mrs. Lindsey, Mrs. Roy, Ethel Bowman, Henrietta Vogt, Hoyle Gilreath.

Teachers at south school house.

Hattie Kirkpatrick, Hallie Moore, Mae Lorey.

The schools since 1853 have progressed rapidly. The teachers are more competent than in former years. The scholars numbered 15 in the first school and they number nearly 500 at the present time, which goes to prove that the knowledge is more complete at this age than before.

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