

The Normal School Bulletin

Vol. 7

FEBRUARY, 1918

No. 2

THE RURAL SCHOOLS OF HAYS COUNTY, TEXAS

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DEPARTMENT OF SOCIOLOGY

Published Quarterly by the
SOUTHWEST TEXAS STATE NORMAL COLLEGE
San Marcos, Texas

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PREFACE.

This study of the Rural Schools of Hays County, Texas, does not presume to be a detailed analysis of the rural school system. Only the general features are surveyed and discussed, in no case with a view to unkind criticism, but with the hope that the people of the County may see their schools in their true light, and that some recommendations may be offered which will be constructively helpful. If such be the results, then the writer will feel abundantly rewarded for his efforts.

Almost no attempts have been made to compare the Hays County schools with those of other counties. In fact, the writer has not made a survey of the schools of any other county of the State, but he is of the opinion that the Hays County rural schools are fairly representative of the rural schools of Southwest Texas, and perhaps do not differ essentially from those of the larger part of the State.

An expression of grateful appreciation is hereby extended to all those who have in any way contributed to this study: to the teachers of the common schools who responded so promptly and carefully to the questionnaire sent them; to the superintendents of the three independent districts of the County—Buda, Kyle, and San Marcos—for special data concerning their schools; to Mr. S. W. Henderson for the privilege of using materials from his excellent paper on the Financial History of the Schools of Hays County; to County Superintendent, J. H. Saunders, for the data given in his annual reports and for other information both personal and official; to Professor E. E. Davis of the Department of Extension of the University of Texas for statistical and other data gleaned from his Study of the Rural Schools of Travis County, Texas; and to any others who may have offered suggestions or given advice.

San Marcos, Texas,
January 20, 1918.

A. C. BURKHOLDER.

I. SOME HISTORIC FACTS CONCERNING THE COUNTY SCHOOL SYSTEM.

The facts in this chapter have been taken from a Term Paper prepared by Mr. S. W. Henderson for the Department of History in the Southwest Texas State Normal School in the spring of 1917. This was a piece of original research and as such it deserves to be preserved. Due acknowledgment has already been made to the writer for the privilege of using the facts below.

1. *Organization of Districts.*

In 1848, Hays County was separated from Comal County and given its own county organization. Six years later, 1854, the first school districts, eleven in number, were formed. One year later a twelfth was added. The boundaries of these districts were very indefinite, as shown by those of the Twelfth District, which were as follows: "Beginning at I. Glover's, thence up Onion Creek so as to include Mr. Voight's and that immediate neighborhood, making Parson G. Smith's place the center." In 1867, under military rule, the County was redistricted. Five precincts were formed, managed by the Justices of the Peace. Under the present constitution, adopted in 1877, districts were again organized, twenty-nine at first, but later, by the division of old ones and the organization of new ones, the number reached a maximum of fifty-one in 1894. This seems to show a decided tendency to one-teacher schools. Since that date, by the consolidation of districts, the number has been reduced to thirty-one, where it stands at this writing.

2. *Maintenance and Administration.*

Before the period of military rule, the schools were governed by boards of trustees consisting of three members each, elected by the people. These boards received the school money from the commissioners courts and paid it to the patrons according to the number of their children attending school. The patrons in turn paid it to the teachers. Up to the year 1857, at which time

the first record appears, the money was paid to the teacher directly from the fund by order of the commissioners court. This seems to have been the practice for the rest of this period. In 1858 the first board of examiners was appointed by Judge J. C. Watkins, composed of Peter Wood, Thomas Lyons, and William M. Brown. Because of the Civil War, in 1861 the court ordered that only indigent children should receive public money for education. The distribution of funds only to indigent children was continued through the period of military rule. In 1867, an ad valorem tax of $3\frac{3}{4}$ cents on the \$100.00 was assessed specifically to pay for indigent children. Each child had first to be reported by the county commissioner before it could receive its apportionment. During this period of military rule, the schools were under a county board of trustees similar to the present system. This board was composed of J. H. Saunders, (the present County Superintendent), Y. L. Lyons, and Prof. Hutchings.

It is well to study at this point the school fund as it stood at that time. In 1839, the Congress of the Republic set apart for each county three leagues of public land (a league was 4,428 acres) for the maintenance of a public school system in Texas. This system provided for a primary school and an academy in each county. An additional league was given each county for the purchase of "such instruments and equipment as are needed." The proceeds were to be divided equally between the primary school and the academy. The Organic Law of the State adopted in 1845, when annexed to the United States, added to the funds derived from the lands previously granted, not less than one-tenth of the revenue annually derived from taxation. Under the Reconstruction Constitution, in 1866, a permanent school fund was created consisting of (1) all donations by previous constitutions, (2) all alternate sections of land previously owned by railroads, (3) one-half of any part of the public domain that should be sold so as to give the United States dominion over it, and (4) all public lands sold by the Legislature. The available fund was to be composed of all interest on all permanent school funds, which were to be invested only in United States bonds or such other bonds as were guaranteed by the State. This

available fund was to be apportioned annually by the Legislature. The Constitution adopted in 1869 under military rule added to the available fund one-fourth of the general revenue and a poll tax of one dollar. In 1873 one-half of all public vacant land was added to the school fund. The ad valorem tax of $3\frac{3}{4}$ cents previously mentioned must be considered only temporary.

The Constitution of 1876, the present one, added nothing to the permanent school fund, but provided that the available fund should be distributed according to scholastic population, and proposed a complete plan for the disposal of public school lands. There began, in 1891, an educational revival which resulted in the levy and collection of special taxes in many of the districts, ranging from five to twenty-five cents per \$100.00. The permanent school fund is approximately \$65,000,000.00 at present, with \$11,000,000.00 of county funds and about 4,000,000 acres of school land, making an aggregate of approximately \$100,000,000 of which Hays County receives annually its share of income.

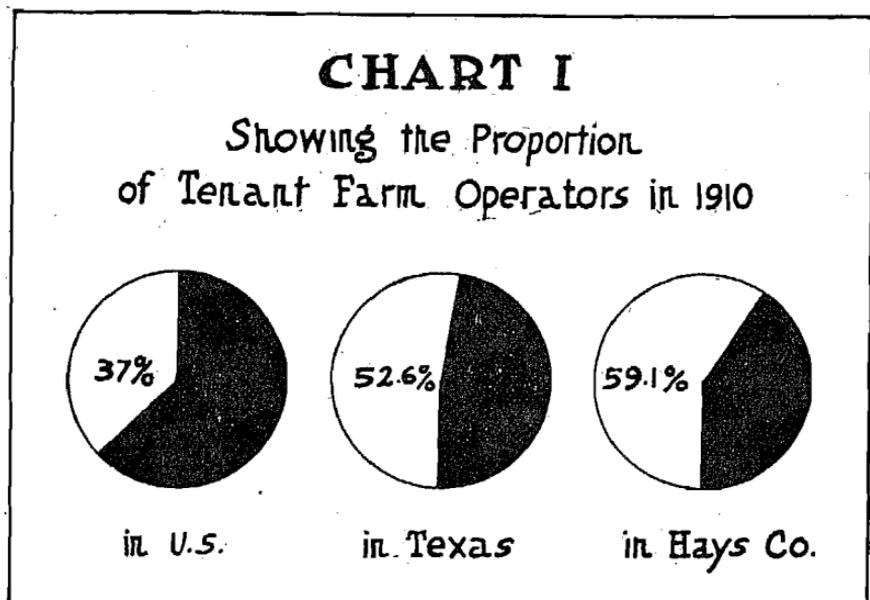
3. *Teachers.*

In 1887 there were employed in the schools of the County, 47 teachers: 33 males and 14 females. The average length of the school term was a little more than four months, with an average salary of \$37.00 per month, or \$138.00 per year.

II. PRESENT SOCIAL AND ECONOMIC STATUS OF HAYS COUNTY.

1. *Population.*

The population of Hays County according to the federal census of 1910 was 15,518. Of these 11,447 were classed as rural. During the decade between 1900 and 1910 this rural population decreased 3.4 per cent. The negro population was 2,165. Since the scholastic census of 1915-16 showed only 201 rural negro scholastics against a total of 518, it is fair to assume that but a little more than one-third of the negroes belong to the country.



It is therefore evident that the rural problems with reference to negro education are almost negligible. Indeed, only three negro teachers are employed in the country schools. A much greater problem is due to the presence of Mexican laborers and tenants. There are no statistics in hand to show the relative number of Mexicans in the County but it is a known fact that the Mexicans compose a large part of the tenant class. In 1910 tenants operated 59.1 per cent of all farms. Tenantry had

increased during the preceding decade 6.4 per cent, so it is a low estimate to say that in 1917 at least 62 per cent of all farms were occupied by tenants.

From these facts one can see that there is a sufficiently large body of Mexicans in the country to give its life considerable color. Many of these tenants move from one district to another every year, therefore it is impossible for them to have an abiding and active interest in any community institutions such as the school, the church, farmers' clubs, good roads, etc. Where this is the case there can be no community spirit, no community activities. The roster of country teachers shows only six employed in Mexican schools. This small number adds evidence to the fact stated above that the tenant, whether Mexican or otherwise, cares very little for schools. It is fair to state that the compulsory school laws may affect the situation somewhat.

The following quotation from a bulletin of the University of Texas, No. 67, 1916, by E. E. Davis on *A Study of Rural Schools in Travis County, Texas*, pp. 10-11, points out many pertinent facts concerning the Mexicans:

“During recent years there has been a very marked increase in the number of Mexican farm tenants in some of the white communities. The advent of the Mexican tenant seems to be attributable in the main to two causes: (1) the influx of refugees from Mexico due to the revolutions in that country the past five years; (2) the lower standards of living on the part of the Mexicans, which makes the Mexican tenant more profitable to the landlord than the white tenant.

“This wave of peon and middle-class Mexican refugees has very perceptibly extended itself along the International and Great Northern, and the Missouri, Kansas, and Texas railroads as far north as Bexar, Hays, Caldwell, and Travis Counties. The census showed the greatest density of Mexican population in Texas to be in Bexar and Caldwell Counties. Those Mexicans have since served as a nucleus to which their refugee friends have gravitated and spread out to neighboring counties. Nor have the American farmers been slow to take advantage of the Mexican's economic dependence and low standards of living to

exploit his muscle for all it is worth. In this way the general standards and desirability of many communities as places for white people to live have been very materially reduced.

“The displacement of white tenants by Mexican tenants is so diluting the white population that its effects are very telling in the schools. The case reported at the Pleasant Hill School exemplifies this statement. Four years ago there were eighty-five white pupils and three teachers. Now there are only fifty-six white pupils and two teachers, with thirty-nine Mexican children of school age running at large over the community and not one of them reported as having attended school a single day the past school year.

“In those districts where the Mexicans and the white children attend school together, there are such differences of race, language, and character, that there is a serious lack of congeniality among the pupils. For this reason separate schools for the Mexican children are preferred at times by the Mexicans as well as the whites. While this may not be true in portions of Southwest Texas, where the Mexicans have been established for so many years, it is decidedly true for Travis County.”

Along with tenantry there also exists the absentee landlord, who usually lives in the nearby town, and has very little more interest in rural community institutions than the tenant himself. He is usually opposed to a local tax for school support, and it is frequently possible for him to control the elections for levying a local school tax.

2. *Economic Conditions.*

Hays County in 1910 contained 1561 farms, with an average of 224.7 acres each and an average value of \$23.08 per acre. According to the report of the County tax collector for 1916 this land was valued for purposes of taxation at a general average of \$11.07 per acre. Since land is assessed at from 40 to 50 per cent of its market value it would seem that the value of land has hardly increased in value since 1910. The grand total of taxable property in the County in 1916 was \$10,147,020, yielding to the County, total taxes of \$48,599.53. The tax rate is one dollar per \$100.00 value of property. Of this,

the State gets 45 per cent, and the County 55 per cent, or \$26,729.53.

By far the most valuable single crop is cotton. The total product in 1916 was more than 21,000 bales, while in 1917 it was only a little more than 9,000 bales because of the unusual drouth of that season. The second largest item of production is cattle. In 1916, there were rendered for taxation 10,746 head, valued at \$169,480.00.

III. PRESENT STATUS OF SCHOOLS OF HAYS COUNTY

1. *Financial Support.*

The schools of Hays County depend largely on the State appropriations for their financial support. For the scholastic year of 1915-16 this amounted to \$18,060.00, at the rate of \$7.00 per scholastic. The local taxes, excluding the three independent districts, amounting to a little more than \$4,000.00. The total available school fund was approximately \$22,000.00. Of all the county districts only twenty-one levy a local school tax. This ranges from 2½ cents to 30 cents per \$100.00 value of property.

CHART 2

Showing the Amount Expended a year per Child

\$ 38.88

IN UTAH, 1914

\$ 23.38

IN AUSTIN, TEXAS, 1915

\$ 16.00

IN STATE OF TEXAS, 1915

\$ 12.50

IN HAYS COUNTY, 1915

The average of all twenty-nine districts was 11.9 cents, while the average of those actually having a local tax was 16.4 cents. This is far below the constitutional limit of 50 cents. It is to be noted here that all the independent districts have levied the maximum rate. The general tax rate of one dollar per hundred is low and surely every district could well afford to levy the maximum school tax for the education of its girls and boys. At the present

rate only \$12.50 per pupil enrolled or \$8.50 per scholastic, is spent by the County. The State as a whole is spending \$16.00 per pupils enrolled, or \$13.50 per scholastic. In 1915 Austin, Texas, spent \$23.38 for the education of each of its children, while in 1914 Illinois spent \$38.61, and Utah \$38.88. It would seem rather unfair for the rural child of Hays County, with only about \$12.50 per year spent for its education, to compete with the Utah child who has the advantage of \$38.88 per year, but such thing actually takes place.

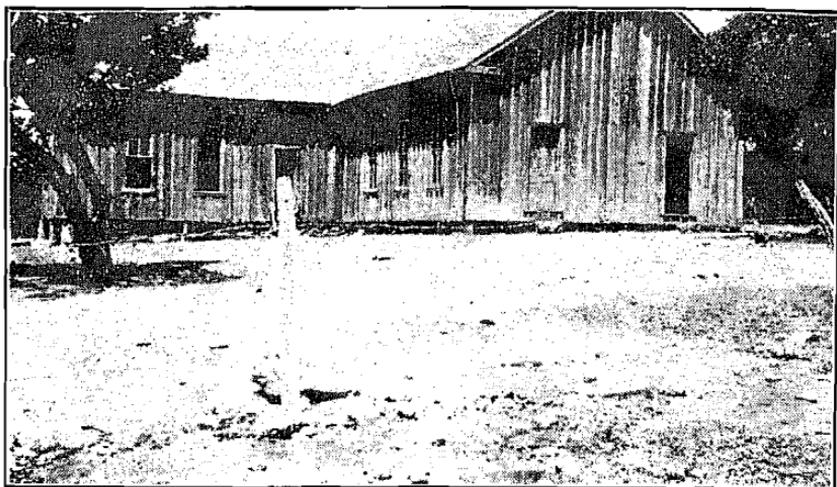
2. *Physical Equipment.*

No matter how well the teacher may be prepared academically and professionally for her work, the educative process will be greatly hindered without sufficient physical equipment of the proper kind. It is the practice of all efficient managers of labor to see to it that the workman does not operate below his ability because of a lack of proper tools. The dearer the labor, the better the tools must be. It is just as necessary that the teacher should not operate below her ability for lack of efficient equipment.

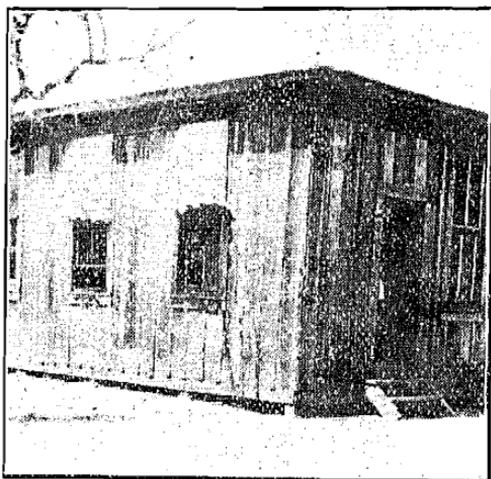
The school buildings of Hays County are nearly all of the old fashioned box-car type, the kind that were intended to serve only a pioneer stage in civilization. Even one building erected less than two years ago, which should have been designed according to modern ideas in school architecture, is of the same old type. The plea of economy in using an old foundation could not be made, for it was erected in a different part of the district from the old house. Many of the school houses are such as would hardly be considered fit for brutes. Indeed, many a cow, horse, and pig, has quarters far better adapted to its purpose than some pupils of Hays County have. In some buildings we have visited there are large cracks in the doors, holes in the floors, broken glass in the windows, and heaps of coal in a corner on the floor. One principal of a three-teacher school described her building as follows: "They have an old dusty, musty bat cave, built in 1881, and so poorly lighted that you cannot see the blackboard unless you are within three feet of the board." This same

description would fit other school houses the writer has seen. Nearly all the stoves used are of the old unjacketed type. Only one school reported sanitary ventilating stoves.

Chart 3—Showing Two Types of School Houses in the County.



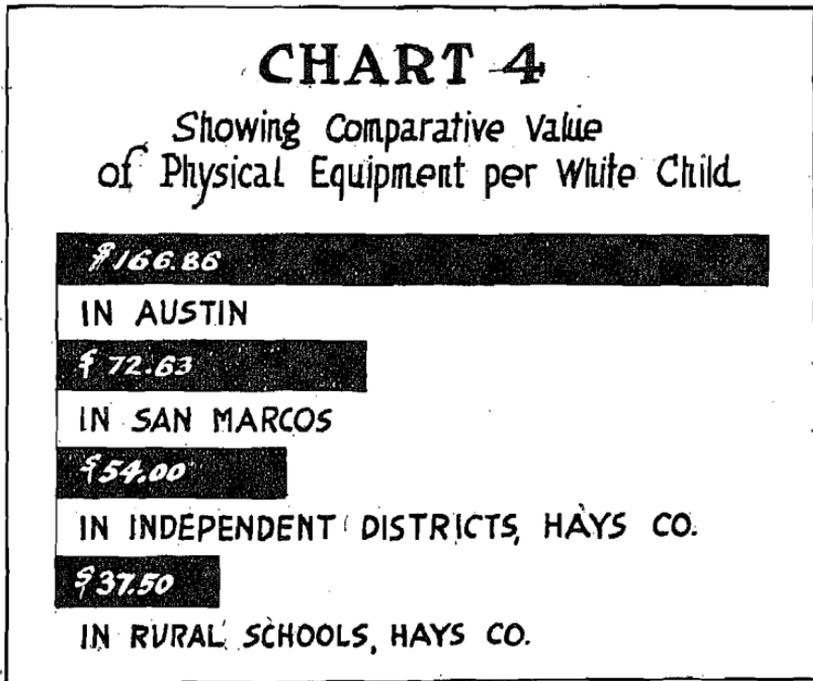
Old and Dilapidated but Speaking of Better Days.



A New House, but Built on the Plan of Fifty Years Ago.

To put the case concretely, counting buildings, grounds, laboratories, libraries, furniture and fixtures, the physical equipment

per child in attendance during the session of 1915-16 was \$36.81, or \$37.50 per white child, or \$29.74 per scholastic. These figures do not mean much unless we make some comparisons. In so small a city as San Marcos the equipment per white child is \$72.63, or \$46.00 per scholastic. The average for the three independent districts of San Marcos, Kyle, and Buda is \$54.00 per child in attendance, or, \$44.00 per scholastic. The country



child has just a little more than half as much equipment as the child in the independent district. We cannot refrain here from asking whether the country child is only half as deserving of an education as the city child. Texas needs a law requiring that all new school houses should be built according to plans prescribed by the State Department of Education, with standard interior and exterior equipment. The standards for obtaining State aid from the million dollar appropriation would be a good minimum standard for every country school.

The internal equipment and furniture is as primitive as the buildings themselves. Eleven schools out of twenty-seven

studied have no modern desks. They have the old, mutilated, carpenter-made desks. One teacher reported "six home-made desks that will seat seven pupils each." Almost no schools have single desks. Other equipment, such as maps, charts, globes, pictures, etc., were in various cases described as follows: "none except what the teacher provides"; "we haven't any"; "not one thing"; "one map and unframed cheap pictures." The few maps, globes, and planetaria found were usually in bad condition indicating that no recent improvement had been made.

Library facilities are very meager. The total number of volumes reported in all rural schools by the County Superintendent was 1,930, or a little more than one volume per child attending. In terms of money that means \$1.03 per child, or \$35.42 per school. Not a single volume was reported as added during the year. All laboratory equipment for agricultural purposes was valued at \$100.00, while grounds devoted to agricultural purposes were valued at \$500.00. It would seem that in a rural school no equipment is more necessary than libraries and laboratories. How can these schools instil a love for reading with such inadequate libraries, and touch real country life without school gardens and laboratories?

It is but just to say that at least one school, Goforth, has a new building constructed according to improved plans. It has three teachers and a school term of 160 days, and pays the principal \$90.00 per month. The equipment includes a teachers' home, a school garden, a library of 115 volumes in a sectional bookcase, three double-cased stoves, modern single desks, one globe, a planetarium, history and physiology charts, eight geography charts in case, and a basket-ball court on the playground. Here are found the possibilities of a modern rural school.

From the standpoint of sanitation and health, conditions are no better than other equipment. Cloak-rooms are rarely found, especially in the one-room school. The seats are very poorly adjusted to the size of the pupils. The lighting is usually very bad, especially with reference to the admission of light. Often it admits light from each side and from the back at the same time. In some cases it is insufficient. Curtains or shades to keep out the direct rays of the sun are rarely found. The stoves

are in some cases the centers of expectoration while the sand-boxes under them still serve as a place for deposit of scraps from the children's lunches. Floors rarely are oiled, and in sweeping, the dust flies everywhere to be breathed by the pupils.

The privies are usually such as to furnish little privacy. Frequently there are no doors, nor are there any glinds to the approaches. In many cases they are filthy both underneath and in the inscriptions on the walls. In some cases there are no privies available for either girls or boys. The writer visited one school where a ledge of rocks in the rear of the school served as a privy apparently for both boys and girls, while another had nothing but the woods in which the school was located. No screened privies were seen. It is probable that there are very few such in the County. It is doubtful whether there is a greater breeder of immorality to be found anywhere than in such out-houses. The County needs to organize a campaign for decent privies for the safety of the boys and girls who are to become its future citizens.

The drinking water is usually obtained from wells or springs in the neighborhood. Perhaps it is as pure as the water generally used throughout the country districts. In many cases the common drinking cup is still in use. The bucket is passed around by some of the pupils during school hours. The individual drinking cup is a great advantage over the old method, but a tank holding from five to ten gallons, with a sanitary bubbler attached is far better, and can be installed in any school-house at small cost.

3. *Attendance of Pupils.*

The scholastic population of the rural districts for 1915-16, as shown by the Public School Directory of the State of Texas for 1916-17, was 2580; whites 2379, and negroes 201. The actual enrollment for the same year was only 1755, or, 68 per cent only of all scholastics reported to the schools. The negro schools enrolled 49 per cent of all their scholastics, the white schools 61 per cent. It is fair to state that in 1916-17 as many as 189 pupils were transferred from the common school to independent.

districts. Perhaps an equal number were transferred the previous year. If so, the per cent of enrollment in schools would be a little higher.

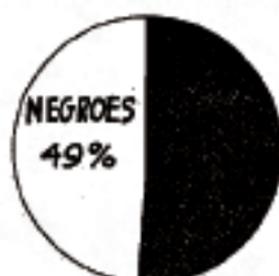
The average length of term was reported by the County Superintendent to be 140 days. If five days be deducted for teacher's attendance at the County Institute, then only 49 per cent of the school possibilities of those actually enrolled was utilized—in the case of the whites 47 per cent, and of the negroes 96 per cent. The low per cent of negro scholastics in attendance is doubtless due to the fact that the negro population is so scattered that many do not have access to schools, but it is a striking fact that the negroes in attendance utilized all but 4 per cent of their possibilities, while the whites utilized less than half of theirs. Again, in terms of all scholastics, only 33 per cent of all possibilities were utilized. Here the whites utilized 32 per cent and the negroes 48 per cent. From this point of view also, the negro shows greater appreciation of the schools than the white.

It is to be noted here that the compulsory school laws were not in operation when these statistics were gathered. Doubtless a better record would be shown now, but for the purpose of this study we prefer not to include the later statistics because we want to know just what the feeling of the people themselves is with reference to such a vital problem as the education of their children. This conclusion remains to be drawn, that no business concern can afford to realize only 33 per cent of the full capacity of its plant, yet the County of Hays is running its school plant on just such a low scale as that. What an extremely small output of such a valuable product! What a tremendous loss in the running of our school system! Now, to show that the schools could accomplish much more let us note the fact that the white schools enrolled an average of 34.5 pupils but only an average of 16 were in attendance for the term, while the negro schools enrolled 33 pupils, practically all of which were in attendance. The negro schools could not successfully have accommodated a large number of pupils, but the white schools might easily have instructed twice their number with the same

CHART 5

SHOWING ATTENDANCE OF PUPILS IN
HAYS COUNTY RURAL SCHOOLS

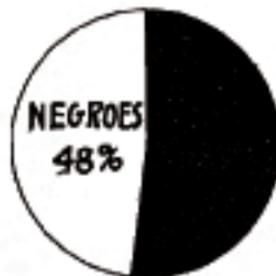
¹
Percent of all Scholastics Enrolled



²
Percent of School Possibilities
Utilized by those Enrolled



³
Percent of School Possibilities
Utilized by all Scholastics



number of teachers in the same school buildings with approximately the same equipment. If, however, all scholastics were in attendance all the time, each white teacher would have 49 pupils, and each negro teacher 67. If such a condition could be realized the staff of county teachers would have to be almost doubled.

It is hardly fair that the country child should have a shorter school term than the city child. The child in San Marcos has 34 days more per year than the rural child. During the elementary school life this makes a difference of 238 days or nearly two school years. Besides, the San Marcos child gets the advantage of a four year high school course.

4. *Distribution and Promotion of Pupils in the Grades.*

The following table shows the distribution of white pupils in the grades and the corresponding promotions for the session of 1915-16:

Grade	No. in Grade	Number promoted	Per cent promoted
1	184	138	75
2	249	218	88
3	349	302	87
4	196	168	86
5	166	148	89
6	283	169	60
7	74	60	81
8	130	45	35
Total	1631	1248	77

A study of this distribution shows some very great variations which can scarcely be accounted for. It is unusual to find such a falling off in the fourth and fifth grades followed by such a marked rise in the sixth grade. It seems however that few children go beyond the sixth grade—only 12½ per cent. It may hardly be claimed that they attend higher schools for they are not prepared to enter such schools.

5. Course of Study.

The instruction given by the County Superintendent to the teachers is to follow the Course of Study proposed by the State Department of Education. It can truthfully be said that the teachers are making every effort to carry out the instruction to the letter. A few teachers only have had to change the course just a little to meet peculiar conditions. In 1915-16 the distribution of pupils in the various subjects was as follows:

Agriculture	138	Texas History.....	1033
Algebra	31	U. S. History.....	1024
Arithmetic	1143	Nature Study.....	218
Civil Government	31	Physics	240
Composition	85	Physiology and Hygiene.....	1174
Descriptive Geography.....	960	Reading	1362
Physical Geography	357	Spelling	1591
Plane Geometry	85	Writing	1407
English Grammar.....	791		

The one-teacher school can hope to teach relatively little more than reading, writing, and arithmetic, but it seems almost inexcusable that such a small number of pupils are being taught agriculture, and nature study, when these form the very center and soul of rural life. Since the study of civil government is a direct preparation for citizenship, the small number of 31 pupils studying such a vital subject seems ridiculously low. We cannot believe that those who planned the State Course of Study contemplated such a rigid adherence to it as to exclude such vital subjects. The school must touch the very life of a community with all its activities and interests, if it is to prove the uplifting force for which it was instituted. The tax payers have a right to demand that the school shall prepare for life in the community where it is located, and by which it is supported. The schools need instruction in agricultural arithmetic and in agricultural composition as well as in agricultural science and agricultural practice as taught from the textbook and demonstrated in the school garden, the window plant box, and the farms and gardens of the community. Furthermore, there is no mention in the reports of anything pertaining to

household economy, which is also one of the very vital activities of country life. It is possible for even the one-teacher school to do something along this line also. The writer knows of cases outside of Hays County where a live teacher in a one-room country school taught the girls the principles of cooking and sewing by actual practice in sewing in the schoolroom as a part of the daily program, and cooking, by giving principles and recipes in school and having the girls to apply them at home and bring samples to school for inspection and corrective suggestions. There is no reason why the boys and girls could not be organized in each school into clubs under the direction of the teacher, except for the unfortunate fact that the teacher does not remain in the school long enough to get such clubs sufficiently well organized to sustain themselves from year to year under the annual change of teachers. Any school community would welcome sufficient deviation from the traditional course of study so as to make the school an effectual part of community life. Let the teacher start some home project work. Why should not the boy keep an account of cost of feeding the cow and the value of butter and milk produced so as to determine whether the home cow is a profitable animal or not? Similarly the girls could test the flock of hens. This would be real arithmetic functioning in life. Any live teacher could find many opportunities for real home project work.

6. *The Teachers.*

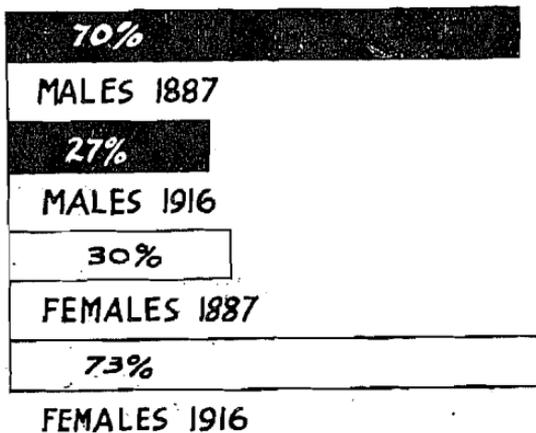
Whatever else may be necessary for the promotion of good schools, it remains a stubborn fact that the teacher has always been in the past and will always continue to be the greatest factor in the success of any school. Among the necessary qualifications for a rural teacher are scholarship, professional training, experience, and an intimate knowledge of country life and its problems, and likewise close sympathy with the country child in all that pertains to its education, its activities, its home life, and its habits of thought and action. The first two, academic and professional training, may be obtained in institutions already organized, but the intimate knowledge of country life

comes best from having been born, reared, and educated in the country. Sympathy may best result from the same, but it may also come from an unselfish philanthropic desire to do for the country people all that will make their life as desirable and happy as that of any other class of human beings just because they constitute a definite part of the great social whole. The author believes that it is for the best interests of rural education that rural teachers should be born and reared in the country, educated in rural schools, and trained along the special lines of rural life in special rural training institutions.

In the session of 1915-16 there were 51 teachers employed in the rural schools: 48 whites and 3 negroes. Of these 27 per cent were males and 73 per cent females. The one-teacher schools employed 33 of these. It is interesting here to recall that in 1887 the per cent of male and female teachers was almost the reverse, the males being 70 per cent and the females 30 per cent.

CHART 6

Showing the Proportion of Male and Female Teachers in 1887 and 1916



In 1916-17 the transiency of 27 teachers studied was indicated

by the fact that 1.8 years represented the average term of service in the positions then held. Of this number, 18 were teaching their first year in the present positions. This means that 66 $\frac{2}{3}$ per cent of the schools changed teachers. The average teaching experience of all teachers in all country school was 3 $\frac{3}{4}$ years. No constructive scheme of education can be successfully carried out with teachers as leaders who stay less than two years at one place and who have had less than four years' experience.

The causes for such frequent changes in position and the large number of inexperienced teachers are here as everywhere: (1) many young teachers begin in the country schools to get the experience necessary to secure a better position in the cities; (2) they frequently use teaching as a stepping stone to some other occupation; (3) often the young girl graduating from the high schools, the normals, and other higher institutions of learning, teaches several years until she marries. In either case the country schools and country children serve to train young teachers to a point where they become efficient, and then lose them. Hays County is a veritable training ground for professional recruits.

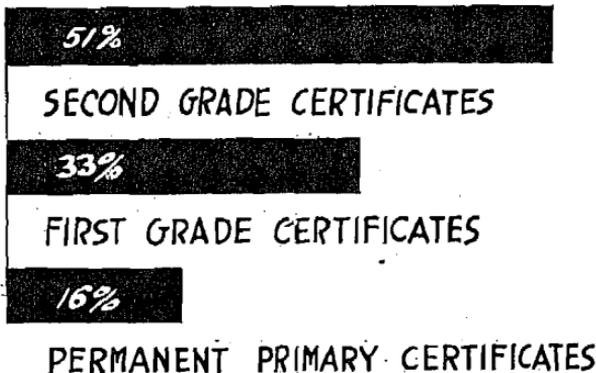
Better salaries and longer terms would do much to keep teachers longer in the schools. Teachers, like all other persons, must have an annual income sufficient to make living respectable and comfortable. It is expected that they maintain a high standard of life. The average salaries of Hays County white teachers is \$309.55 a year, or \$44.22 a month for the term of seven months. The average for white males is only \$2.50 higher per year than that of white females. It can hardly be said that Hays County makes a discrimination between the salaries of men and women in her schools. It is not hard to see that no man with a family to support can afford to give his time and energies to an occupation that yields only \$311.55 a year. So, a young man when he marries is forced to find a more remunerative vocation or find a teaching position in the city. The lady when she marries rightly drops out of the profession to become a home maker and mother. The lady who stays in the profession is usually ambitious enough to seek a position with better equipment and

salary. The rural schools of this and most other counties must pay larger salaries if they hope to keep teachers long enough to reap the benefit of their experience in improving instruction and in building up the schools. Further inducement may also be offered by furnishing the teacher a home. Only three teacher-ages are found in the County and none of these is occupied directly by the teacher.

The average annual salary for rural teachers in the State is \$415.27. Hays County is more than \$100.00 below. The average salary of teachers in the city of San Marcos is \$626.00, and the average salary for the three independent districts of the County is \$586.71. Place such salaries against that of \$307.05 and it is easily seen why teachers leave the country schools. The result is that the instruction received by the country child is far below that received by the city child. The cost of instruction and supervision per rural child in attendance was \$9.27 per year and that of the San Marcos child was \$17.40. Here again, the country child receives only half the advantage of the city child.

CHART 7

SHOWING THE CERTIFICATION OF THE TEACHERS
OF THE COUNTRY SCHOOLS



A study of the certification of teachers shows that 26 out of the total of 51 teachers held second grade certificates—a little

more than 50 per cent. Seven held county first grade and ten held State first grade certificates. Only eight had permanent primary certificates. In the city of San Marcos, only five had second grade certificates, of which four were negroes. Studied from the standpoint of aedemic training twelve were not graduated from any school, thirteen were graduated from high schools, and thirteen from still higher institutions of learning. It is hardly credible that a county in which has been located a State Normal School for twelve years should have more than half its teachers holding second grade certificates.

7. Supervision and Administration.

Hays County has had a superintendent of schools ever since the State law permitting county superintendents went into effect in 1906. The present incumbent has held the position the whole of this time. Whatever has been achieved, or whatever failures have been made, are to be attributed to the supervision of one man. The writer believes that the appointment of a superintendent should be removed from politics, and that the superintendent should be appointed for a much longer term of office than two years, but so far as Hays County is concerned, one man has had the office long enough to organize his system and build up his schools. But there is no reason why the appointment of a superintendent should not rest with the county board of trustees, who should have the privilege of finding the best man for the place, whether a citizen of the County, or of some other county of the State, or even of some other state. This practice has been successful in cities and it would go far toward solving the problem of efficient school supervision in the county systems. In fact, many of the most progressive states along educational lines have already passed such laws. Texas must do so also if she desires to be really progressive.

During the past few years Hays County schools have not had the careful supervision necessary to uniform and continuous development. Out of 28 schools investigated during the session of 1916-17, as many as half reported that they had had no visit from the superintendent. The investigations was made at the end

of the session. One teacher reported that there also had been no visit the previous session. If this represents the condition of the whole County, then at least half of the teachers touch the supervising officer only in the county institute. This type of supervision falls far short of its possibilities. In fact we wonder whether it is supervision at all. As shown above, a large number of the teachers have had no previous experience, and also have had little professional training. They need a supervisor who can go into their school rooms at the beginning of the session especially, and help them classify their pupils and make a working daily program, and show them how to conduct a recitation. Then they need several other visits during the session, usually early in the session, to help them solve new problems that are always presenting themselves to an ambitious teacher. The lack of supervision is in part to be accounted for by the fact that the superintendent cannot often leave his office, either because he has too much clerical work to do, or because there is no one to stay in the office to attend to business visits. Such a state of affairs may be remedied by having the county board furnish the superintendent a secretary. It is a very unsound business policy to have a man at a salary of \$1,400.00 per year doing work that could be done equally as well by a clerk costing less than half as much. Concerning the superintendent, the State law says: "he shall spend as much as four days in each week visiting the schools while they are in session, when it is possible for him to do so." No county board is acting wisely which does not make it possible for him to do so whether the need be for an automobile in which to travel, or for a secretary to relieve him in the office.

It would be better still to divide such a large county into four or five supervisory districts and have a supervisor over each one, all under the general supervision of the superintendent. Indeed, the writer is much inclined to believe that there should be no line of demarkation between independent districts and common school districts, but that the whole county, cities and rural districts, should be under one and the same superintendent, with subordinate supervisors. This plan is especially feasible in Hays

County where there are no large towns. In such a case the superintendents of what are now the independent districts of San Marcos, Kyle, and Buda could become supervisors over the divisions in which they are located. Even with only one county supervisor the work would be greatly facilitated if the county board should furnish him an automobile in which to travel. The schools are so far apart that too much of the superintendent's time is lost in going from one school to another. One result has been that visits have been too short to give the teachers any real assistance. Harris County, Texas, may be cited as an example both of divisional supervisors and of the use of the automobile by the superintendent.

8. *Consolidation.*

Consolidation is usually pointed out as the panacea for all the ills of the rural schools. The writer is frank to say that consolidation to any great extent is hardly to be looked for in Hays County. The present distribution of the rural population is such as to make consolidation next to impossible. The many large ranches make the population very scattered in a large part of the county, while the hills and bad roads make travel difficult. In the black lands there are many Mexican tenants who either do not educate their children at all, or send them to their own schools. A race line exists and it is too much to expect it to be abolished. Neither Mexicans nor whites have children enough to form consolidated schools. The best that the writer can see for the immediate benefit of the schools is for the pupils who live within four or five miles of the towns constituting the independent districts to transfer to these schools. This is already being done to some extent, but several schools near these towns which have already been weakened greatly by these transfers could wisely be abolished altogether. In the session of 1916-17 transfers were reported by the independent districts as follows: San Marcos, 73; Kyle, 69; Buda, 47. We recommend the practice at Kyle where sixteen stalls have been built for horses driven to school by country children, all of which stalls are being occupied. While it is the best educational policy for country children to be

educated for country life in country schools, yet since this is not to be realized immediately, the transfer to town schools is to be commended, especially since the country schools are teaching the same subjects as the city schools. The instruction in the graded schools is far superior to that in the country schools. It would be well for those sections where consolidation is possible to consider a three-teacher school with a principal who is a trained agriculturist, one assistant who is trained in household economy, and a second assistant trained in recreational activities. Such a school could offer many of the advantages of a graded school and could give at least two years of high school work. They could obtain State aid to help bear the expenses.

9. *The County Teachers' Institute.*

The teachers of both the common districts and those of the independent districts meet together in an annual institute. The program was made up almost entirely from the faculty of the Southwest Texas State Normal School for the institute in session from December 17 to 21, 1917. There is every reason why the normal schools should assist in any county institute and the more so when they meet in the same town. The subjects discussed were as follows:

- Present Status of the Teaching Profession.
- Food Conservation Movement.
- Psychology of Class Management.
- Some Factors in Teaching History.
- Teaching the Classics.
- Mission of the Mothers' Council.
- The Rural Schools of Denmark.
- Vocational Guidance.
- Psychology of English.
- Silent Reading and How Conducted.
- Points of Weakness in Preparation of High School English.
- Psychology of Mathematics.
- Use of Standardized Tests in Small Schools.
- Teaching of the Essentials of Arithmetic.

Contribution of Domestic Art to War Relief.

The Teaching of Food Conservation.

The School Savings Bank and Thrift.

Psychology of History.

The American School in the Present War.

Teaching Agriculture in Hays County.

Socialization.

The Adjustment of the Normal Schools to the Best Interest of the Public Schools.

Some Educators a Teacher Should Know.

How the Parent May Best Help the School.

A study of these twenty-four subjects shows a very wide and deep field of thought, as well as an important one for the teacher. It is doubtful whether a better program could be found in any institute in the State. The suggestion seems pertinent that instead of having all the teachers of every grade and class of schools sitting in one general session and hearing all these discussions, there should be a division into departments and only such subjects discussed before each department as are of special interest to it. Part of the day, perhaps half, could be devoted to discussion of subjects of general interest before the whole institute. It is too much to expect teachers to listen to such a heavy program as given above from morning till night for five consecutive days, especially when much of it has no direct bearing on their particular work. There is much need of round-table conferences in which the teachers may exchange ideas and experiences and present their own particular problems for discussion and solution.

10. *Interscholastic Activities.*

The schools of Hays County are organized into a scholastic league under the general direction of the Department of Extension of the University of Texas. Annual contests are held in public speaking, spelling and track athletics. The contest for 1917 was held at Kyle in the spring of the year. All county schools were supposed to send representatives as contestants but

the fact in the case was that the independent districts had the whole meet. Not more than two country schools were represented. The reason for their absence was reported by themselves to be that the small country schools had no chance of winning from the larger schools of the independent districts. This interscholastic feature needs to be encouraged, but to meet the demands of all the schools it will be necessary to organize so that some features of these contests would be open to country schools only. Perhaps an entirely separate meet should be arranged for them. One feature of the above named meet was striking to the observer, that while the Hays County schools were not in attendance, one live teacher of a one-teacher school of an adjoining county suspended studies for the day and brought her whole school to the Hays County meet that she might learn something to apply to her own county.

IV. CONCLUSIONS.

1. *A Square Deal for the Country Child.*

(From a careful reading of the preceding pages one cannot escape the conclusion that the country child in Hays County is not getting a square deal.) (The education received from the rural schools does not fit the rural child for the activities of rural life nearly so well as that received from the city schools fits the city child for the activities of city life.) (In the main, the instruction given in the country schools differs from that given in the city schools only in that it is given by teachers much less efficient in academic and professional training and in experience, distributed over a much shorter school term, and in schools that give no opportunity for high school work.) It must not be forgotten that at least 90 per cent of the children born and reared in the country remain in the country the whole of their lives. (The rural schools supported by the country people are falling short of their purpose if they do not train that 90 per cent rather than the 10 per cent that does leave the country to engage in the varied activities of urban life.) The school of the community must serve first its own community and then serve the rest of the world. The schedule of recommendations and standards below will indicate how the opportunities of rural children educationally may be made to approximate those of the city child.

2. *Are Schools in a State of Decay?*

In such a study of schools as this we are forced to ask the question whether the schools of the county are not in a state of decay. The writer confesses to a period of residence in the County of a little more than two years, and therefore is not prepared to speak with personal authority to the question. It is the expressed opinion of some who have been observers for a period of years that the schools are not as efficient as they were some years ago. Even to a recent observer there are some apparently unmistakable signs of retrogression. Perhaps it is only stagnation, a thing

which is very closely akin to decay. Here and there are to be found school buildings designed for two or three teachers, built in a substantial and comfortable manner, giving further evidence that when constructed they compared favorably with the homes and life of the community. In some cases only a one-teacher school is left and that a small one, while the house is in a deplorable state of decay. Perhaps the rapid influx of Mexicans into the cotton area is responsible for some of this, but there are schools of similar kind where no Mexicans live, nor have ever lived. Whatever may be the cause, it is time for the good citizens of the County to awake to the situation and see to it that the schools are modern and efficient.

3. *Schedule of Recommendations.*

For convenience, the recommendations made directly or by implication throughout this study are here summarized as follows:

✓1. Every district in the County should vote the maximum constitutional local tax for school support and also bond itself for the erection and equipment of a modern school plant.

2. The buildings should be constructed according to some uniform plan prescribed by some competent authority, preferably the State Department of Education, such authority to be established by State law.

3. Every school should be provided with a sanitary ventilating and heating system, a water supply sufficient both to furnish an abundance of pure drinking water, and for bathing purposes, with such conveniences as sanitary fountains and lavatories. If possible water should also be furnished for flushing sanitary privies.

✓4. From three to five acres of ground should belong to each school plant so as to furnish ample room for school gardens, playgrounds for children of different ages, including tennis courts and baseball diamond, and play apparatus such as swings, sand-box, teeter-boards, giant stride, etc.

5. Boys and girls should have separate sanitary privies flushed by water if possible, but surely the vaults must be kept

clean from material filth and their walls from vulgarity. These privies should be made private by blinds before the entrances.

✓ 6. Each school should have its teacherage so as to encourage teachers to remain in the school long enough to become part of the community and participators in all community interests and activities.

(7. The school term and the course of study provided should be as long as that of the city.) Country activities are more varied than those of the city from the standpoint of occupation of the individual, therefore as much training is necessary and perhaps even more.

✓ 8. The course of study would be vitalized by adjusting it to rural needs by making agriculture, household economy, sanitation and hygiene, and community and state civics the nucleus of the school work.

✓ 9. The academic and professional standard of the teaching force must be raised so as to insure competent instruction. Salaries should be increased so that teachers can afford to prepare themselves to meet the required higher standard.

✓ 10. Better supervision must be secured by raising the standard of preparation of the superintendent and also by furnishing him a secretary for the office and district supervisors for the field work.

✓ 11. Schools and districts should be consolidated wherever possible so as to facilitate the reorganization suggested in these recommendations. The three-teacher school should be set as an ideal toward which to work.

12. Until the rural schools can be reorganized according to plans proposed those children who can reach the schools of the independent districts should do so.

✓ 13. The county teachers' institute should be organized into general sessions and departmental sections, so that teachers of all grades and types of schools may devote themselves to their own specific problems.

14. Interscholastic contests are to be stimulated between the country schools by organizing separate meets in which they compete only with schools of their own type.

15. All the school forces of every district in the County should strive with all their might to put their school upon the standard required for State aid from the million dollar fund, and in this way receive from the State that which has been provided for them.

4. *Six Books That All Rural Teachers Should Read.*

1. The Rural Teacher and His Work. Foght.
Macmillan Co., Dallas. Price \$1.40.
2. Country Life and the Country School. Carney.
Row, Peterson and Co., Chicago. \$1.25.
3. Teaching a District School. Dinsmore.
American Book Co., Dallas. \$1.00.
4. Among Country Schools. Kern.
Ginn and Co., Dallas. \$1.00.
5. Beginning and Developing a Rural School. Stolfus.
University of Texas Bulletin. Free.
6. Rural Life and Education. Cubberley.
Houghton Mifflin Co., Chicago. \$1.50.