

An Early History of Patriot Schools by R. I. White Esq. (from the society archives)

The following article is not dated. A time reference was determined by checking Wanda Morford's book, *Switzerland County, Indiana Cemetery Inscriptions*, where the following entry was found: Rosman I., Capt. Co. G. 70<sup>th</sup> U.S.C. Inf. B. Mar. 24, 1839 d. Aug. 7, 1932.

*Schools*

*By R. I. White, Esq.*

*The rise, progress, and present condition of educational affairs in Patriot, may be briefly summarized as follows. Although we deplore the lack of documents for the establishment of absolute accuracy in numbers and dates, we feel tolerably certain of the approximate correctness of the data drawn from the recollections of our old citizens.*

*The first school was taught by Mr. Fordyce, in a log house, with a sheet of greased paper for a window that stood near the creek opposite Mrs. Temperance Vanhouten's ice house, north-west of the cemetery, in the year 1815, with about eighteen pupils.*

*The first building for school purposes was built in 1824, and stood on the ridge in Sam'l Fisk's pasture, above the brick-yard. The number of pupils ranged from 15 to 25, and the standard price of tuition per quarter was one dollar and fifty cents. A moderate degree of proficiency in the three R's, Reading, 'Riting and 'Rithmetic, was all the qualifications required of the teachers, and from general tone of the remarks of their quondam pupils, we are led to conclude that they devoted themselves principally to inventing unique methods of punishment, or to straight-out thrashing.*

*Thos. Ayres, a Revolutionary veteran, is held in vivid remembrance as the teacher who regularly took a nap each afternoon while his pupils were supposed to be preparing their lessons, but in reality were amusing themselves by catching flies and tossing them into his open mouth. His institution was located above the creek, where Wm. Lukie now lives. This is 1829.*

*In 1830 Capt. John Hicks opened a school on Front St., back of where Dr. W. A. Olcott's office now stands.*

*In 1831-32 Henry Brown taught in a log school built by Elisha Wade, on the spot where Chas. O'Brien now lives.*

*In 1834 the brick school house on Main St. was built, and in 1845-6 the basement of the Universalist Church was fitted up in a rather primitive style, and a school opened there. In 1848-9 Francis Jackson erected a fine three story Seminary on the hillside below the town, but it did not prove a successful venture. It was designed as a boarding and day school, and could accommodate one hundred or more pupils, but not over thirty or thirty-five were ever in attendance. It was burned down in February, 1860. Not rebuilt.*

*Mrs. Viena Woods, nee Herrick, leased and refurnished the basement of the Universalist Church the following season, and for a series of years taught therein, but even this private enterprise did not sufficiently relieve the pressure of the crowd entitled to free tuition in the little house on Main Street, and the friends of education determined to build, and by strenuous exertion did build in 1868-69 the present, fine three story brick building at a total cost, including furniture and grounds, of \$10,000.*

*The first session of school in the new building opened on the twenty-fifth day of January, 1869, under the tuition of T. J. Charlton, assisted by Mary Latham and Alice Emerson.*

*The report of the Principal shows 173 pupils enrolled, and an average daily attendance of 141 for the term. During the succeeding years the number remained about the same, the number enrolled and the average daily attendance for the current term being 184 and 129, respectively.*

*The faculty as at present constituted, embraces a principal (O. C. Garman) and two subordinate teachers (R. T. White and Mrs. O. C. Garman) and the course of study is the common school curriculum, with Algebra, Geometry, Natural Philosophy, Latin and Rhetoric added thereto.*

*The number of persons enumerated within the school corporation is 212.*

*The Board of Trustees is organized as follows: W. T. Pate, President; W. A. Olcott, M. D., Secretary; Charles Dibble, Treasurer.*

I am hopeful that some of Patriot's longtime residents can add to this history. Are any of the early buildings mentioned still in existence? Contact us at 427-3560 or stop by the museum at 208 East Market Street in Vevay, open daily from 10:00 am to 5:00 pm.

We are still seeking one-room schoolhouse (or any of the early schools throughout the county) stories for the "Schooldays" exhibit that will debut on Friday, August 6<sup>th</sup>.