

Purpose

The purpose of this study was to research the development of the rural school system in Tully, New York in relation to the centralization of the district.

Significance

The Tully Central School System was chosen for examination because of its definite evolution from rural education to centralization. According to Edgar W. Knight in his book, Education in the United States, the task of equalizing educational opportunity in the remotely rural areas of the U.S. has become increasingly difficult. He also believes that in studying the systems of the past we can avoid repeated mistakes in the future.

Limitations

This study was limited to the above mentioned school area and its development in relation to buildings, teachers, and locations. The researcher developed the study from the original school house (1801) to the new existing central school building.

CHAPTER I

Definitions

Due to the repeated reference of numerous definable words, the researcher found it necessary to devote a section of this study to an explanation of rural education, district system, and centralization. Once defined it should be understood by the reader that the preceding words will be referred to throughout the study, using the content in the definitions to follow.

Rural Education

As used in this study, rural education refers to the education of people living in a rural environment. Its characteristics can be identified by a relatively low density of population and evidence that the rural people are primarily engaged in farming, in extracting natural resources and in processing resources of natural surroundings.

District

When referred to in this study, district will entail one rural school. The study deals with research concerning twenty-three of these above mentioned districts.

System

In using the word system, the researcher differentiates it from district in that a system in this study refers to the organization of all the districts.

Centralization

Centralization is technically defined as the practice of unifying administration and supervision under fewer organizations. In this study the researcher refers to it as a unification of the Tully School System annexing three Otisco Schools in one school building and four rural schoolhouses.

Methodology

The organization of this study was pursued by the researcher through personal interviews, with Miss Cecilia Murphy and the town historian, Mrs. Leno Hoag, along with data and historical records obtained by those interviewed. Due to the lack of many specific records, the researcher relied greatly on the memories of these people who were living during the changes.

CHAPTER II

History of the Community

Tully is situated in the heart of a prosperous farming section, eighteen miles from Syracuse, New York and fifteen miles north of Cortland, New York. Route 11 rises above the derricks and salt wells of Tully Valley and drops into the Tioughnioga Valley. Fields of hay, corn, potatoes and cabbage, green pasture lands with herds of Holstein cattle, and farm houses are backed by hills that form the divide between the water sheds of the St. Lawrence and Susquehanna rivers. This road was built on one of the trails followed by the Sullivan-Clinton Expedition.

Looking back at the securing of this town the researcher found that in 1790 the Tully township was number fourteen in the Military Tract drawn by soldiers of the Revolutionary War as bounty lands for service in the Continental Army. It was named Marcus Tullius (Cicero). Thus from this evolved the name Tully.

In 1790, New England pioneers, many of whom had served with Sullivan and Clinton, traveled westward in covered wagons. They turned south at Lafayette, New York and erected cabins along the trails. Phineas Henderson, one of the first settlers came early in 1796 with his wife and little girl, Rachel, one cow, and some provisions by boat up the Susquehanna River to Binghamton, New York, up the Chenango, then the Tioughnioga to Port Watson, near Cortland, New York, walking the rest of the way.

The first settler was David Owen, who came in 1795 and built the first log cabin in Tully. These early pioneers found heavy forests of hemlock, beech, maple and ash. Their first homes were rude log cabins, with oiled paper for windows and blankets for doors. They had frequent visits from the

Onondaga Indians, whose homes were in the valley north of Tully. The timber was cleared rapidly and converted into lumber and ashes. The latter was manufactured into potash, which was the principle article of revenue at that time. Later agriculture became the leading occupation and continues to the present.

In an account of the life of Eli Farr and his family written by his daughter, Betsey Farr Ingraham in 1869, the researcher found information secured by Mrs. Lena Hoag, town historian. Betsey Farr relates that her father came west looking for land, erected a log house with two rooms, cleared several acres, and planted corn and potatoes with his family in Tully in 1801. At this time there were four houses in the area. This was to be a way for many more settlers.

As the town developed it is of interest to see the various government procedures and private establishments which were formed.

The first town meeting was held on May 1, 1809 where Phineas Howell was elected supervisor. The Tully Village was incorporated in 1875 with John Gail as president and Henry V. Arnd as clerk. Communication was necessary so in 1815 a post office was established in Tully with Nicholas Howell as postmaster. Surrounding areas also established postal stations such as Vesper in 1827 and Tully Valley in 1836. However, these were discontinued later and replaced with a stage carried mail service. This was later changed to Rural Free Delivery with four mail routes.

Turning to business, the researcher came upon Peter Van Camp's grist mill of 1810 as the beginning of the O.L.F. industry in Tully. Other firms such as the John Strail Blacksmith Shop, John Wright's Old Reliable Drug Store, all evolved over the years until 1901 when the First National Bank was organized by William L. Earle.

Religions vital to villages and churches were established beginning with the Methodist Church in 1820. The Baptist Church was founded in 1825 and the Catholic Church in 1892. This set up a religious standard bringing many devote settlers to worship.

Tully Valley is one of the beauty spots of Central New York and from this fertile valley comes an abundance of salt. This salt bed was discovered in 1889. Solvay Process Co. bought the land and a brine line was laid to their plant. The valley was dotted with derricks that have now been replaced with portable salt drilling rigs that pump the brine. Solvay developed "Tully Farms" on this land, consisting of good farms, modern barns, houses, and a club house, built and furnished by the company for the men and their families. They built a modern dairy barn and established one of the country's first certified milk plants.

Prospering as a farm town, Tully now has a population of 1535. Buildings have been erected and people trade readily with community workers realizing the heritage of their town.

Religions were vital to villages and churches

CHAPTER III

School Evolution from 1801-1929

The first school in the town of Tully was kept in Timothy Walker's barn with Miss Ruth Therop as teacher in 1801. During the year 1804, a log schoolhouse was built which was succeeded by a frame building in 1809. This was burned down followed by a red schoolhouse in 1832. This building, according to the town historian's records was repaired and enlarged in 1880 and used until 1900. In 1901 the first red brick schoolhouse was erected and considered the finest in Central New York. The building included a town elementary division and a town highschool. The highschool division served Tully and it's rural areas. Students from farms who couldn't provide their own transportation boarded at many homes in the community on weekdays throughout the school year. According to town records those students outside the town limits were required to pay tuition.¹

Grammar school education was distributed across the system in one room rural schools. The number of schools which engulfed this area was found by the researcher to be twenty-three.²

The system including the town schools and the rural schools was formulated and was aided administratively by the State of New York. The superintendent of this particular area was Mr. M.E.Hinman. As a delegate of the state, Mr. Hinman visited the rural and town schools on the average of four times each year. Other than these visits the individual schools were

¹Trustee Book for School District #1, Tully, New York. Report for school year of 1918-1919. Henry Haynes, trustee.

²See Appendix A - List of Districts.

governed by the residents in each particular rural district.

Annually each school held a meeting usually on the first Monday in May. These meetings served to delegate trustee power and allocate the use of funds which included teachers salaries. These funds were collected in the form of taxes from each family in the district. Depending on the amount in the treasury each year, the research found by studying the trustee books that the teacher received on the average of twelve to twenty dollars during the years 1901 to 1929.

Another calling for a district meeting was the ensuing election of a trustee. In order to qualify for voting, a party had to be twenty-one years of age and be a land owner of at least one acre of land. Upon election a trustee would appoint a teacher for his district from a list of applicants. In an interview with Miss Cecelia Murphy the research found that she had applied for the position of teacher in the Tully Valley District in 1929 after teaching for five years in the Markam Hollow and Tully Center Districts. In the course of the interview Miss Murphy related that at the time of her application a trustee election was in the making and she was receiving competition for the position of school teacher. Miss Murphy explained that of the proposed trustees, Irving Sheridan would appoint her if elected. In order to strengthen his chances for election Miss Murphy told the researcher of her leasing of an acre of land from Ada S. Scott and Herbert E. Daniels for a period of eight months. One month was during the election thus allowing her to vote for Mr. Sheridan.³

Upon being appointed school teacher for the Tully Valley District, Miss Murphy explained that she had charge of approximately twelve to twenty

³See Appendix C - Lease.

children ranging from first to eighth grades. The school house consisted of one classroom which was used for all lessons. Children were given written work to complete while the teacher instructed another small group level in reading or arithmetic.

As a student at this rural school, Mrs. Beatrice Gleason told the researcher, while being interviewed, of the drill and work of the one room situation. The researcher found during this interview, evidence of children in upper grades aiding those in lower grades. Assignments were given and children shifted from several parts of the room to either complete assignments or to be instructed by the teacher. Often times a fast learner might find himself joining a higher grade for certain subjects.

In dealing with subject matter, the researcher found that the state issued curriculums for each subject and grade level. The syllabus was followed by all rural districts thus reassuring highschool teachers that each child had been exposed to similar content and instruction.

CHAPTER IV

New Formation from 1929-1943

From 1901-1929 the separate rural districts ran individually sending their graduates to the town high school.

On November 23, 1929 at 2:00 A.M. the schoolhouse in town began to burn. "Within a few minutes the hose company was on the premises, fighting desperately but the building was a mass of flames."¹ Within a week provisions were made in several town buildings to hold classes until a new construction could be planned.

The town began preparations to build a new school using as their motto: "Change calamity into opportunity."² As plans to build a new structure evolved, so did Mr. Hinman's recall of facts and materials concerning several central schools that were in operation. Mr. Hinman felt that the existing systems gave evidence to the success of the plan.

On January 30, 1930, a special meeting was called to discuss and vote on centralization. The researcher found that great interest was shown in this issue when newspaper articles stated that the attendance at this meeting numbered four hundred.

This meeting consisted of a call to vote on the centralization plan and to elect a new Board of Education. The resolution for centralization was read by Mr. Hinman and a motion was made that it be adopted by ayes and no vote.

Each voter was called to pass before the appointed tellers to record his or her vote. The resolution to centralize was carried by a majority of two

¹Junior Oracle 1930 - Tully High School, Page 11.

²Ibid.

hundred and ninety-nine.

Before the building was begun, final petitions were signed and sent to Albany in January 1930. The order of the commissioner of education laying out the centralized district and its organization was also finished in January of 1930. The bond issue was voted on in March 28th and the building was underway.

According to the 1930 Junior Oracle, the proposed building was to be a spacious structure of Georgian or Colonial style. Directly behind the front was to extend a wing housing a modern gymnasium with a spacious auditorium.³

In counting the votes of the people from all the rural districts all but four rural areas joined the main building. No rural district was forced to enter the main school building. The opposition wasn't as much against the principles behind centralization but rather against the taking of families from rural areas. Many opposers preferred the small schools and wanted the benefits of the new plan without moving the teacher and children into town. In dealing with the materials provided by Mrs. Lena Hoag, town historian, the researcher discovered that the four remaining districts were: the Tully Farms District, Tully Valley District, the Vesper School and the Octagon School. Even though these schools remained in existence, grades seven and eight from all were encompassed in the new town construction. All rural districts were now supervised by the central district. Each remaining district was given the choice at the time of centralization to either donate the acquired collectors funds to the new system or to spend the money on improving the one room schoolhouse. The researcher found evidence of the Tully

³Ibid. pg. 12

Valley decision to employ the funds for improvement of the rural schoolhouse.⁴

Because of the new system of administration, rural schoolhouses benefited from such extras as visits from music and art teachers from the main building in the village. Teachers' salaries were regulated and set to graduate each year. In reviewing Miss Murphy's personal records, the researcher found that the year previous to centralization her salary was \$950 per year and upon centralization she received \$1072 per year.

This system of education continued to operate to the present day. The four rural schools remained in progress until 1940 when the Tully Valley students moved to the town building. In 1941 all but the Tully Farms School joined the main structure. The lone rural school was non-existent after 1942 when its four pupils resided in a classroom of the town school structure with Roberta Shapely as their teacher. In the following year, the entire central school district consisted of grades kindergarten thru twelfth, employing twenty-four teachers.

⁴See Appendix D.