

Filling a Need:

Administrative Practices in Mason County, WV

One-room Schools from 1935-1950

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## ABSTRACT

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West Virginia One-room Schools from 1935-1950

Douglas Sturgeon

The purpose of this qualitative study was to examine how administrative practices were carried out in Mason County, West Virginia's one-room schools from 1935-1950. These practices were examined using Gulick and Urwick's (1936) seven functions of the administrator and school-community relations as the framework. Twelve persons were interviewed for this study over the span of three months. Eleven of these persons were former one-room school teachers in Mason County. Of these eleven former teachers, two became central office administrators overseeing one-room schools. The twelfth person was a community leader in Mason County who attended a one-room school. The results of this study support accessed literature that one-room school teachers did take on a day to day administrative role in the rural one-room school setting in Mason County. Some of Gulick and Urwick's (1936) administrative functions were implemented at the central office and some were implemented at the school building level in Mason County. A key component of administrative practice undertaken at the one-room school site was the development and maintenance of positive school-community relations with the teacher playing a strong role in this practice. The implication of this study is that the development of positive school-community relations is important to gaining and assuring community support in the rural school setting.

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## TABLE OF CONTENTS

Abstract.....	ii
Acknowledgments.....	iii
Table of contents.....	iv
Chapter I One Room Schools.....	1
1. School administration as a practice.....	4
2. Administrative practices in one-room schools....	6
3. Research question.....	8
4. Significance.....	9
5. Limitations .....	14
6. Definition of terms.....	15
Chapter II Literature Search.....	18
1. One-room schools in United States history.....	18
2. One-room schools in West Virginia history.....	20
3. Gulick and Urwick's administrative functions....	25
4. Planning.....	26
5. Organizing.....	27
6. Staffing.....	32
7. Directing.....	36
8. Coordinating.....	45
9. Reporting.....	46
10. Budgeting.....	48
11. School-community relations.....	51
12. One-room schools today.....	55
13. Social Reproduction Theory.....	57
Chapter III Methods.....	59
1. Research Design.....	60
2. Sampling.....	61
3. Data Collection.....	63
4. Documents.....	64
5. Interviewing.....	66
6. Confidentiality.....	69
7. Data coding and analysis.....	70
8. Reliability and validity.....	72
Chapter IV Setting and Participants.....	76
1. Mason County, West Virginia.....	76
2. Teachers, administrators, community person.....	77
3. Entering the teaching profession.....	79
4. School and church were the community.....	87
5. School giving to the community.....	90
6. Community giving to the school.....	97
7. Community involvement in school functions.....	103
Chapter V Results.....	106
1. Planning.....	106
2. Organizing.....	114

3. Staffing.....	117
4. Directing .....	124
5. Coordinating.....	135
6. Reporting.....	138
7. Budgeting.....	140
Chapter VI Conclusions.....	145
1. Planning.....	146
2. Organizing.....	148
3. Staffing.....	148
5. Directing.....	150
6. Coordinating.....	153
7. Reporting.....	154
8. Budgeting.....	156
9. Community Relations.....	157
10. Teacher Autonomy.....	161
11. Social Reproduction.....	162
12. Implications for school policy and administrators.....	165
13. Questions for future research.....	168
References.....	170
Appendices.....	179

## Chapter I One-Room Schools

One-room schools have existed since the Puritan settlements in Plymouth, Massachusetts, to serve the education needs of our nation's students. Teachers within these schools have been both isolated and independent: "one-room schoolteachers can't retreat from decisions, nor can they pass the buck. They feel the responsibility for their judgments and must live with the outcomes of their actions" (Kenney, 1990, p. 53). The teachers, pupils, parents and community members involved with one-room schools often developed close relationships, with the school providing the environment that fostered and allowed these to occur.

The component missing from this scenario of close teacher, pupil, parent and community bond is the administration of the rural, one-room school. The administration of rural schools has not been given the degree of attention in research that has been afforded to school administration in urban settings (Stern, 1994; Theobald, 1993). According to Theobald (1993), this is not a recent phenomenon: "rural schools have long stood in the scholarly background of urban schools" (p. 116). The need to look deeper into the history of these facilities is highlighted in Theobald's (1993) assertion that, "the story of rural schooling is every bit as complex as the urban story and there is much hidden behind appearances in the history of rural education" (p. 117).

This study attempted to understand how administrative practices were undertaken in one-room schools in Mason County, West Virginia, from 1935-1950 as remembered by one-room school teachers, administrators and a community leader. This study utilized qualitative research techniques including interviews and primary documents to describe and analyze administrative practices in one-room schools.

Former one-room school buildings today sit isolated and abandoned across West Virginia and the nation. They were plain structures, often red or white, once upon a time. Yet, one-room schools were once the center of educational instruction and community interaction in rural West Virginia and in numerous rural enclaves across the nation (Williams, 1986).

One-room schools provided the foundation education of our nation's rural youth. However their teachers did more than educate attending students in traditional subjects such as, Reading, Writing and Arithmetic; the teacher's scope, role and responsibility reached into the community. A specific non-teaching responsibility of the one-room schoolteacher was to expand the function and importance of the local school into the surrounding community (Gulliford, 1996; Gulliford, 1985; Hepler 1988; Redding, 1992). Eventually this responsibility was broadened even further. This came as the responsibilities and goals of rural education were expanded to further enhance educational involvement into the immediate surrounding community of the one-room school.

People attached much importance to education and wanted it for their children. So the person to whom they entrusted their children was a cultural leader in the community. There was an interest in everything she did or said or wore, especially if she were a stranger. Those [teachers] that lived in the community came to become a kind of community fixture. She was important to the whole community, not just to the children in school (Rankin, 1981, p. 30).

In addition to promoting and enhancing the school as a part of the community, the teachers and administrators of one-room schools were expected to be upstanding

members of their community, further adding to their role as leaders within the local community structure. Slacks (1938) attested to this in his report on education in West Virginia. In addition to teaching the students and working with the community, teachers were also considered the intellectual and social leaders of their communities. Gulliford (1996) attested to these roles and responsibilities in his research on one-room schools. According to Gulliford (1996), “teachers had to be upstanding citizens who set an example not only to their students but also to everyone around them” (p. 73). According to Gulliford (1996), “country schoolteachers in the first half of this century were the intellectual, social and often spiritual leaders of communities where, until the 1940s, there were no books, few newspapers and fewer radios” (p. 73).

According to Leight and Rinehart (1992), the one-room schools were also important in establishing and sustaining the identity of rural communities. For the isolated citizens of our nation, “the school housed the activities that joined people into a community, and the identity of rural communities became inextricably linked with their schools” (Leight & Rinehart, 1992, p. 134). Besides being used as centers of educational instruction, the one-room schools were used for, “weddings, church services, autopsies and funerals...the schoolhouse was always the Polling Place on election day and almost any sort of business meeting or anything that affected or was of general interest to the community was discussed there” (Rankin, 1981, p. 37).

The schoolhouses took on special roles during war time as they became the center of community war support activities: “during World War I, the schools of Unita County, Utah, sponsored a junior Red Cross Program and collected a Christmas fund for the

soldiers and sailors. At the schools in east San Juan County the local people held dances and raffles to raise money to buy savings bonds” (Rankin, 1981, p. 38).

The one-room school did more than serve as a gathering place; it was the cement that held the rural community together. It was a center of activities and a point of common focus, regardless of nationality, religion or economic status. In working to preserve their schools, rural citizens saw it as also working to preserve their way of life and sometimes their very community (Rankin, 1981).

One-room schools existed in small, rural communities across the nation. Isolation of these structures from district or county education offices resulted in the teacher taking on a day-to-day administrative role. In Kindley’s (1985) contemporary study of recent one-room school practices one teacher reported, “I like it here.... I like being a teacher in a one-room school. I like driving the bus, doing the cooking, being the janitor. Everything. I like having the responsibility for the whole shebang” (p. 124). This article documents the role of teachers as day-to-day administrators, undertaking administrative practices in one-room schools.

### *School Administration as a Practice*

Administration of and within schools involves the “tasks of structuring, managing, and giving direction to a complex mix of human and material resources” (Hanson, 1991, p. 2). Administrative structures within any school organization are often viewed as a bureaucracy. Within the contexts and confines of public school administrative practices, the overriding idea is that “bureaucratic structure and administration are designed to *routinize* problem solving—to treat incoming questions

and issues in a programmed, systematic way that will draw upon a minimum of human and material resources” (Hanson, 1991, p. 21).

Gulick and Urwick (1936) provided a keystone to understanding administrative practices and functions in their text, *Papers on the Science of Administration*. This text asked the questions, “What is the work of the chief executive? What does he [sic] do?” Their answer was POSDCORB (Gulick & Urwick, 1936, p. 13). According to the authors, POSDCORB was a “made up word designed to call attention to the various functional elements of the work of a chief executive” (Gulick & Urwick, 1936, p. 13):

*Planning*, that is, working out in broad outline the things that need to be done and the methods for doing them to accomplish the purpose set for the enterprise;

*Organizing*, that is, the establishment of the formal structure of authority through which work subdivisions are arranged, defined and co-ordinated for the defined objective;

*Staffing*, that is, the whole personnel function of bringing in and training the staff and maintaining favorable conditions of work;

*Directing*, that is, the continuous task of making decisions and embodying them in specific and general orders and instructions and serving as the leader of the enterprise;

*Co-ordinating*, that is, the all-important duty of interrelating the various parts of the work;

*Reporting*, that is, keeping those to whom the executive is responsible informed as to what is going on, which thus includes keeping himself and his subordinates informed through records, research and inspection;

*Budgeting*, with all that goes with budgeting in the form of fiscal planning, accounting and control (Gulick & Urwick, 1936, p. 13).

POSDCORB was the theoretical framework upon which this study was grounded with additional data coming from literature on the social reproduction theory.

Administrative practices in regard to school-community relations were also pursued and studied as part of this dissertation. School-community relations are important to the administrator, “because more and more of the administrator’s time is spent dealing with people” (Gallagher, Bagin & Kindred, 1997, p. 1). The idea of fostering positive school-community relations is based upon the need to have “organized, factual information” and an understanding of the “importance of social contacts, parent-teacher associations, school buildings and appraisal of results” (Gallagher, Bagin & Kindred, 1997, p. 11). Within this context, the purpose of school-community relations is to keep those with a stake or interest in educational and school practices abreast of information through a two-way system of communication, identifying and using resources, and fostering the “involvement and participation [of citizens] in the educational decision making process” (Gallagher, Bagin, & Kindred, 1997, p. 11).

#### *Administrative Practices in One-room Schools*

The one-room school teacher provided the day-to-day leadership and direction for the school itself, while the superintendent provided the district level oversight (Gulliford, 1996). Gulliford (1996) went on to document the role of the superintendent in the one-room school as one of providing the “teachers with valuable guidance, emotional support and needed school supplies” (p. 72). Often, the county school superintendent visited the one-room school only once per school year. The “county school superintendents also had

the difficult task of mediating differences between local one-room school boards resistant to change and the state legislature and state superintendent of schools, who demanded better teacher preparation and improvement of school buildings” (Gulliford, 1996, p. 73). Gulliford (1996) outlined very well the value of the lessons to be learned from the practices undertaken in one-room schools:

Out of necessity country schools have been practicing for more than a century what the most sophisticated education programs now encourage—smaller classrooms, programs that allow students to progress at their own rate and students who help each other to learn. We seem to have come full circle in our appreciation of the community values inherent in the one-room school, where the teacher taught students of various ages and abilities in a family-like atmosphere. Small private, parochial and alternative schools based on the one-room school model have begun to flourish. Many former country schoolteachers and students share the belief of Ellis Ford Hartford who wrote in *The Little White Schoolhouse* (1977), “It may be found that there was more to the little white schoolhouse and the neighborhood surrounding it than is suggested by mere nostalgic recollection and remembrances of former pupils.... Perhaps it is pertinent to suggest that Americans might well seek some of the same strengths and values in their diverse patterns of communities.” Country schools have always been important in the rural areas of this nation, as a symbol both of cultural continuity and of the opportunities to be gained from education (p. 45).

### *Research Question*

This study attempted to answer the question “How were administrative practices undertaken in one-room schools in Mason County, West Virginia from 1935-1950, as perceived by selected one-room school teachers, administrators and a community person?” The analysis in this study drew upon the framework of administrative functions provided by Gulick and Urwick (1936) in relation to social reproduction theory and on extant literature on school-community relations experienced by one-room school administrators and teachers.

### *Methods*

This study utilized qualitative research practices. Former teachers, administrators, and a community leader involved with one-room schools in Mason County, West Virginia, were interviewed using a semi-structured interview schedule. A total of twelve persons were interviewed for this study. Primary source documents were also utilized as research material, as these were written during the time frame of the study and are legal documents.

In the year 2002, it was impossible to personally and directly revisit the one-room schools in operation in this geographical area. The last one-room school in West Virginia closed more than fifteen years ago. The absence of one-room schools in operation in this geographical area made actual, on-site observations and data collection impossible. Only through source documents and interviews with key informants I study these schools and gain the data needed for understanding how administrative practices were accomplished in the one-room school setting.

Interviews were completed with one community leader, several former one-room school teachers and two administrators who were responsible for overseeing a number of one-room schools from the central office. These individuals were identified through previous association with the researcher and through the interviews undertaken in the data collection process. Using POSDCORB (Gulick & Urwick, 1936) as the theoretical framework, questions were developed for a semi-structured interview (see Appendices). During the interviews, additional questions came to light. These questions were pursued as part of the individual interview. The interview procedure is discussed in depth in Chapter III. A copy of the questions is attached in the Appendices (Appendix A-teachers, Appendix B-administrators, & Appendix C-community leader).

Documents from the time period of study (1935-1950) were also used. These documents included Mason County Board of Education meeting minutes from 1935-1950. Certified board minutes are legal documents as they are the official record of a government body. The research procedure undertaken for the interviews and document use is described in depth in Chapter III.

### *Significance*

In the words of a thirty-year veteran one-room school teacher in Vermont, “the secret of one-room schools—why they should be kept—is that they’re partnerships; parents have a familiar, ongoing relationship with the school, visiting the school is not a special or traumatic experience for parents visit the school routinely” (Kenney, 1990. p. 28). Tyack and Cuban (1995) outlined three solid reasons for studying past administrative practices as a source of valuable information for today. According to them, “Many educational problems have deep roots in the past, and many solutions have

been tried before. If some “new” ideas have already been tried, and many have, why not see how they fared in the past?” (Tyack & Cuban, 1995, p. 7). Further, again according to Tyack and Cuban (1995), “studies of past reforms confer the benefits of psychological distance on issues obscured by the passions of the present” and “history provides a generous time frame for appraising reforms. It [history] is not driven by...short-term needs” (Tyack & Cuban, 1995, p. 6). One-room schools provide an important legacy which not only has positive implications for today’s small, rural schools, but also for policies and practices in other educational contexts as well.

This study examined administrative practices in one-room schools in Mason County, West Virginia, from 1935-1950 as perceived by former one-room school teachers, administrators and a community leader. This county is a part of the Appalachian region (Weller, 1980). According to the research of Weller (1980), the schools of the Appalachian area are bound by tradition based upon past practices. Like Weller’s research, this study could assist the practicing administrator or teacher in rural Appalachia in understanding the foundations upon which the community’s educational expectations and paradigms have been established. The one-room school provided the educational paradigms for many of the residents in Appalachia today.

Further, Weller (1980) documented that in the eyes of Appalachians, the local school needs to be seen as important and necessary by its constituents. This importance or necessity was based upon perceptions from previous experiences in the residents’ lives of the usefulness and practicality of school attendance and educational practices. Taking this a step further, in order to know the realm of possibilities for improvement, it is imperative, using Weller’s (1980) writings as a basis, to know the local situation and the

background leading to the mindset of the affected, local population. Therefore the need and justification exist to look retrospectively at the administrative practices of yesteryear. These practices could be seen as precursors to today's school of thought regarding administrative practices. The possibility even exists for adapting or replicating these practices today.

The value of the lessons to be learned from one-room schools has been publicly acknowledged by some national level leaders. Former President Reagan acknowledged the value of the educational practices undertaken in the one-room school. He remarked "yesterday's teachers in one-room schoolhouses....have understood the importance of concentrating on basic academic subjects and fundamental moral values" (Cited in Sands, 1987, p. 14). The legacy of our rural, one-room schools is nicely summarized by former First Lady Barbara Bush, (cited in Leight & Rinehart, 1992). She said:

Country school children were exposed to a broad view of life. They learned a curriculum steeped in such values as honesty, industry, sobriety and patriotism—values we all cherish. But the country schoolhouse was not just a place for teaching. It was also a community center, where neighbors gathered for dances, concerts, lectures, debates, political caucuses and worship (p. 142).

While these statements alone do not justify the study of one-room schools, they do support the argument that the practices undertaken in one-room schools are worth being studied. Undertaking historical research on one-room schools' administrative practices could help administrators and educators understand the framework of administrative practices today and the nature of the rural citizenry's paradigms regarding

school expectations. The one-room school provided the historical foundation upon which these have been formed.

The passing of time should not constitute a reason to ignore past administrative practices. Administrative practices in one-room schools could provide information and insight into possible implementation of administrative functions and methods in school settings today as, “one-room schools help perpetuate this legacy and perhaps hold insights that still have implications for education in general” (Barker & Muse, 1986, p. 130).

Even when new methods are introduced for use in education practices, they should not be undertaken without first looking at practices of the past. Leight and Rinehart (1992) assert that the implementation of new practices in education needs to consider “critical aspects of their predecessors” (p. 134). This again directly links the innovations being undertaken today with the need to look in retrospect on the undertakings and lessons to be learned from the school practices of yesteryear. Johnson and Christensen (2000) argue that one of the core reasons for conducting historical research is, “to identify the relationship that the past has to the present” (p. 344). In regard to the value of historical research, Johnson and Christensen (2000) state “the past can give us a perspective for current decision making and help avoid the phenomenon of trying to reinvent the wheel” (p. 344).

In addition to adding to the existing body of knowledge and providing information and direction for current administrative practices in rural schools, this study has a preservation component. It helps preserve the “opportunities for applications of a distinctive pedagogy” (Leight & Rinehart, 1992, p. 142). The persons interviewed are

former teachers and/or administrators in one-room school facilities in Mason County, West Virginia that existed fifty or even sixty-plus years ago. Age and time are catching up with these professionals; they literally are a dying breed. With their passing, so too will pass their knowledge of these educational and administrative practices. Leight and Rinehart (1992) supported the value of this preservation component regarding one-room school practices and the immediacy involved with undertaking this topic of study:

The need to examine the history of this fading institution is immediate because we are fast losing that older segment of the population who attended and/or taught in such schools. Their first hand memories and evaluations will soon vanish if not recorded now (Leight & Rinehart, 1992, p. 134).

Saving information in danger of being lost is important. However, this study also provides information on the possibility of re-visiting some practices undertaken in one-room schools as an educational option in other settings. It would be wrong to say there is one best, every size fits all model. Geography, community attitudes and expectations and population patterns may dictate the need for some areas of our country to re-visit the one-room school administrative practices, in a modern version.

Perlmann and Margo (2001) took the idea of one-room school practices providing patterns and ideas for use today even further in their research. According to their findings, “the developments in teaching seem to have been rooted in the internal institutional history of the school” (p. 127).

One key area with possible overlap between administrative practices in one-room schools and administrative practices in rural schools today would be in developing positive, meaningful school-community relations. The goal of fostering positive school-

community relations, is critical to “improve student learning and to deal more effectively with economic and social change” (Stern, 1994, p. 21). It is an area of agreement between researchers and educators that when parents are involved in the education of their children, the children try harder and achieve more at school (Howley & Maynard, 1997). In addition, the strong “link between the community and the school is a defining feature of most rural settlements and can be a major source of strength to its citizens and to the quality of education offered there” (Stern, 1994, p. 69). The practices this study uncovered could be helpful in promoting positive, meaningful school-community relations. This study attempted to learn from the administrative practices undertaken in one-room schools in order to ascertain what is applicable for incorporation into administrative practices today.

### *Limitations*

The findings of this study should not be viewed as representative of all one-room school administrative practices. That is neither the intent nor the purpose of this study. This was a qualitative research study that was phenomenological in its nature. It is one small slice of time and practice within the broad scope of administrative practices within one-room schools in one geographical area of the United States. It would be incorrect to attempt to generalize the findings of this study to other geographic regions or even to other one-room school settings.

This study was also limited by the memory of the people interviewed. These teachers and administrators were involved with one-room schools over fifty years ago. All of those interviewed were at least seventy years old. Time has certainly affected their ability to remember some information. Further, the research of Cromwell (1994) found

that elderly persons in her study forgot things that were situationally stressful or caused anxiety. For this study, this could have created a limitation in that those involved may have only remembered the positive or unstressful components of their one-room school experiences. Lack of a currently operating one-room school in Mason County, West Virginia, was also a limitation of this study.

### *Definition of Terms*

Administrative Practices: the administration of and within schools involves the “tasks of structuring, managing, and giving direction to a complex mix of human and material resources” (Hanson, 1991, p. 2).

Community Leaders: For this study the key persons (or communicators) to be interviewed from the community will be former board of education members and community members from the time period of study, as identified by those one-room school teachers and administrators interviewed for this study.

Information rich cases: “those from which one can learn about issues of central importance to the purpose of the research” (Patton, 1990, p. 169).

Interview: “a purposeful conversation, usually between two people... that is directed by one in order to get information from the other” (Bogdan & Biklen, 1998, p. 93).

Key Communicator(s): “people in the community who sit on top of a hypothetical pyramid of communications” (Gallagher, Bagin & Kindred, 1997, p. 28).

Oriental Qualitative Inquiry: “Begins with an explicit theoretical or ideological perspective” (Patton, 1990, p. 86). This determines the concepts that are of prime importance. It also determines how the findings will be interpreted. In orientational qualitative inquiry, the researcher determines the “focus of inquiry” (Patton, 1990, p. 86).

Phenomenology: This method of inquiry focuses on, “how people describe things and experience them through their senses” (Patton, 1990, p. 69).

Primary source: A source in which the creator was a direct witness or in some other way directly involved or related to the event.

Primary source documents: “any handwritten or typewritten record or communication that has not been printed or otherwise duplicated in significant quantities for public dissemination” (Brundage, 1997, p. 16).

Purposeful sampling: this method is a key qualitative research practice since the “logic and power of purposeful sampling lies in selecting *information-rich cases* for study in depth” (Patton, 1990, p. 169).

Qualitative data: “rich in description of people, places, and conversations, and not easily handled by statistical procedures. Research questions are not framed by operationalizing variables; rather, they are formulated to investigate topics in all their complexity, in context” (Bogdan & Biklen, 1998, p. 2).

Reliability: “the extent to which studies can be replicated. It assumes that a researcher using the same methods can obtain the same results as those of a prior study. This poses an impossible task for any researcher studying naturalistic behavior or unique phenomena” (LeCompte & Preissle, 1993, p. 332).

School Administration: involves the “tasks of structuring, managing, and giving direction to a complex mix of human and material resources” (Hanson, 1991, p. 2).

Snowball or chain sampling: “an approach for locating information-rich key informants or critical cases” (Patton, 1990, p. 176).

Validity: “The extent to which conclusions [of a study] effectively represent, empirical reality” (LeCompte & Preissle, 1993, p. 323).

Chapter II discusses the literature regarding one-room schools in practice historically and today in the United States, with a focus on the Appalachian region and West Virginia. The literature addresses each of Gulick and Urwick’s (1936) administrative functions and literature on school-community relations. Specific research on implementation of Gulick and Urwick’s seven functions of the administrator, social reproduction theory, and on the promotion and development of school-community relations regarding one-room schools is limited in scope, but available resources are discussed in the following chapter under each individual practice.

## Chapter II

### Administration of One-Room Schools

The daily existence and function of one-room schools today is very limited, thus severely restricting the opportunity for on-site research on one-room school practices administratively, instructionally or otherwise. Scholars have completed some research on one-room schools historically, primarily focusing on their roles as community centers or their instructional practices (Gulliford, 1996; Kenny, 1990; C. Williams, 1995). For this study, the literature review focused on one-room schools historically and specifically reviewed research on administrative practices in one-room schools in the United States, Appalachia, and particularly in West Virginia. It is organized in relation to the implementation of Gulick and Urwick's (1936) seven functions of the administrator-- POSDCORB – Planning, Organizing, Staffing, Directing, Co-ordinating, Reporting and Budgeting (p. 13) – as they relate to school administration and literature concerning school-community relations. The study itself focused upon administrative practices in the one-room school setting and the development of school-community relations by those in charge of one-room schools in Mason County, West Virginia, from 1935-1950.

#### *One-room Schools in United States history*

The one-room school served as the primary education facility in rural America in the 18<sup>th</sup> and 19<sup>th</sup> centuries (Cockerille, 1963; Gulliford, 1996; Perlmann & Margo, 2001; Wilson & Woodard, 1998). The one-room schools received their name due to their physical structure: one room within which all instruction took place.

The one-room school was usually built “on an unprofitable piece of land” and was located in “the area it was designed to serve” (Swain, 1969, p. 1). Within this local area,

in the mid-19<sup>th</sup> century, the ages of the students varied greatly in the one-room school setting. It was common to have children as old as seventeen or as young as four in attendance at the one-room school (Gulliford, 1996). This did not present as many constraints or problems as might be anticipated, as students were not organized into grade levels, but rather were grouped according to approximate level of ability (Gulliford, 1996).

The daily schedule in the schools varied somewhat due to weather, attendance and upcoming events. According to Cuban (1984), in country, one-room schools during the 19<sup>th</sup> and early 20<sup>th</sup> century, the day usually began with singing, and/or Bible readings. The students were then grouped by the books they were using. Younger students usually led the way with their reading and then older groups followed until all groups had read aloud to the teacher. While one group read aloud, other groups worked on other independent assignments. At mid-morning, a short recess was allowed. Upon returning from the short recess break, the students continued the recitation, memorization, copying and reading until lunchtime. Lunch was eaten either at the students' desks or, weather permitting, outside in the play area. After lunch there was a playtime and this was followed by arithmetic, geography and history. Upon completion of the core academic classes and after a short clean up period, the students were dismissed to go home. Wyman's (1997) research on early one-room schools in rural America supports this daily undertaking in one-room schools as being the usual ritual.

*One-room Schools in West Virginia history*

The implementation of the one-room school concept in West Virginia was undertaken to meet the educational needs of the rural school-age population. From 1800-1850, school facilities in the western counties of Virginia, the area that would become the State of West Virginia in 1863, were built, maintained and managed by individuals (A. Williams, 1986). Poor or non-existent means of transportation eliminated the possibility of centrally located, larger facilities. Thus the trend of today was implemented in reverse. Instead of consolidating services into one centralized location, services were dispersed into numerous smaller units over larger geographic areas. Where the school-age population existed, the one-room school facility was to be found.

When West Virginia attained statehood in 1863, the legislature and governor made a commitment to provide a system of free common schools (A. Williams, 1986). School terms, according to A. Williams, (1986), “increased from 2.7 months in 1865 to 4.1 months in 1869. In 1870, there were 2,257 schools taught by 2,405 teachers” in the new state of West Virginia (p. 29). A. Williams (1986) went on to describe the one-room schools as “one room and two paths” (p. 29).

One-room schools were not destined to remain as the primary educational institutions in West Virginia. According to A. Williams (1986), two events came together to silence the sound of the starting school bell in the one-room school in West Virginia. First on May 22, 1933, the West Virginia Legislature passed legislation abolishing the existing district system of school administration and replaced it with the county board unit as the center of education administration. This bill “served as a compromise between those who supported local control on the one hand and those who

favored state control on the other” (A. Williams, 1986, p. 31). The second event that would prove detrimental for one-room schools was the improvement of the road system in West Virginia. This enabled students to travel to schools by way of the transportation network that was being constructed in the state to centrally located, consolidated school facilities (A. Williams, 1986).

The first nail in the coffin for one-room schools would come through the abolition of the district system of local governance for education. West Virginia’s decision to abolish the district system was primarily due to the Great Depression’s severity in West Virginia. Prior to this bill’s passage, local districts oversaw local school administration. Within an individual county, numerous districts could exist. As a result of declining property tax revenues due to the Great Depression, foreclosures on mortgages resulted in some school districts being unable to pay their employees (Ambler, 1951). Faced with declining revenues at the district level, the West Virginia State Legislature, under the leadership of Governor-Elect H. Guy Kump, was called into session. Even under criticisms and pressure to make modifications to his bill, the governor held firm to his bill, which came to be called, “Governor Kump’s County Unit Bill” (Ambler, 1951, p. 609) On May 22, 1933, this bill became law in West Virginia (Ambler, 1951). Kump had an additional purpose over just helping guarantee the financial stability of the public schools during the depression. According to his official papers he felt, “the adoption of a uniform minimum school program went far toward guaranteeing equal educational opportunities for every child in the state” (Harris, 1937, p. xxii). This idea of equal education was a key component of the bill and he refused to budge in any manner that

would lessen or weaken the bill (Harris, 1937). In his address on this legislation, Governor Kump said:

I say here that I have neither pride of position, nor strength of conviction in the matter other than to attain justice, efficiency and economy. To effect this, in my judgment, all the independent districts must be left out of the unit or all must be abolished and taken in.....The bill before you places the independent districts inside the county unit. I believe it is the best solution of the problem. This course has been followed in order that the revenue provided by the State shall be available to the *whole* state. I cannot subscribe to any policy which permits a child to enjoy only that degree of education for which his particular neighborhood can afford to pay. Wealth must be brought to the school, not the school to wealth....I am a friend of the free school system and seek to preserve it unimpaired (Harris, 1937, p. 52).

With the passage of the County Unit Bill, 398 school districts, 54 of which were independent, and their governing boards were abolished and replaced with 55 county boards of education. Each board of education was to be comprised of five elected members. According to the bill, no more than two members of the county board of education could be elected from the same magisterial district, with members elected through countywide elections. These county boards of education were “corporations vested with ownership of all school property and control of all school affairs” (Amber, 1951, p. 610). Also included in the bill was the requirement that each county board of education was “required to maintain an office at the county seat and to staff it

with the necessary force to maintain the schools on a basis of equality for all the school children in any county” (Ambler, 1951, p. 610-611).

Equality was a key idea behind this law. The county board now would employ all teachers and fix their salaries. A provision was also included so that in the interest of economy of scale, these county boards might close and consolidate schools. Local school boards were also required to provide for the transportation of children of school-age who “resided more than two miles from a school by the nearest road or path” (Ambler, 1951, p. 611).

Further, superintendents were now required by law to “visit the schools as often as practical to observe the instruction and the classroom management skills” of the teachers in the respective schools of their county and to “make suggestions regarding them and their general sanitary condition” (Amber, 1951, p. 611). These “superintendents were also required to hold bachelor’s degrees, to have at least eight hours of approved college credit in school administration and at least two years of teaching experience or its equivalent” (Ambler, 1951, p. 611). An additional provision of the bill gave the county board the ability to “lay levies within the statutory maximums for the support and maintenance of libraries, medical and dental clinics, supervision and extensions of school terms when requested by a majority of the voters” (Ambler, 1951). With passage of the County Unit Bill, teacher licensure, supervision and salary were taken from the control of the district unit and placed in the hands of the county board of education located in the county seat. Distance, road condition and political machinery would determine the number of visits to the rural one-room school by the central office administrator (Trent, 1960).

The second nail in the West Virginia, one-room school coffin came through improvements in the state's road system. The increase in paved roads, improvement in bridges and subsequent increased access to central population areas helped to mute the rural school proponent's main argument of the local school being the most accessible (Ambler, 1951). As roads and transportation improved, those schools most convenient and accessible to the central office were often the first to be closed by consolidation in the name of improving the economy of scale (Ambler, 1951).

The improved roads across the state allowed local control through the previous 300+ districts to be replaced by distant control in the county seats of 55 districts. Local focus on local educational concerns was replaced by county focus on county educational concerns. Prime concerns of the new county superintendents were efficiency and fiscal responsibility; these were used as the key reasons to close and consolidate one-room schools (Trent, 1960). Road and transportation improvements being undertaken across the state aided these consolidation efforts as it became easier for students to be transported to a consolidated school, located at a distance from the students' homes and away from the local community. One-room schools were usually within walking distance for the students; improved roads and bridges allowed buses to replace feet as the mode of transportation to school for many students (Trent, 1960).

One-room schools would again be at the center of legislative action a few years later in West Virginia. In 1939, the West Virginia State Legislature passed additional legislation with a direct impact on the one-room school, its teacher and school-community relations. In this legislative session, a bill was passed regarding vocational education, the use of federal funds for new buildings and the improvement of existing

school structures (Ambler, 1951, p. 618-619). This bill focused upon improving and equalizing the schools in existence. One-room schools in operation in 1939 were given a breath of life as this bill provided for the improvement of existing facilities as preferable to construction of new, consolidated school facilities. For small, rural communities this meant new life was breathed into efforts to prevent the consolidation of the local one-room schools. Prior to this legislation, urban areas were gaining new, consolidated facilities while rural areas were losing their local, existing, one-room school facilities.

*The West Virginia School Journal* reported, “The State Aid Act of 1939 placed West Virginia nearer to the goal of equal school facilities for urban and rural communities than it had ever approached before” (Fall, 1939, p. 18). This bill stipulated that “school terms be uniform in length, salaries be uniform in counties sharing equalization of funds, and the same type of supervision be extended throughout the state” (Fall, 1939, p. 17). Higher standards for teacher certification and superintendent certification were put into place to add to the professional status of these persons.

Yet for each school in existence, supervisory visits and teacher evaluations did occur, reports had to be filed, children had to be counted and attendance had to be kept. Further, licenses had to be renewed, buildings maintained, coal ‘let out’ for bid and delivered, teachers had to be paid and instruction had to be undertaken, regardless of distance, school or road condition (Mason County Board of Education Minutes, 1946).

#### Gulick and Urwick’s Administrative Functions in One-Room School Research

Gulick and Urwick (1936) developed their seven functions of the administrator in the midst of the Great Depression. Their ideas were developed to be applicable to

administrators in business first and then these ideas were also deemed applicable to public school administrators; as they said, “Of great importance...is the effort now being made to find measurements of administration in many fields”

(Gulick & Urwick, 1936, p. 33).

POSDCORB was the acronym given to their seven functions of Planning, Organizing, Staffing, Directing, Co-ordinating, Reporting, and Budgeting (Gulick & Urwick, 1936, p. 13). A definition and a detailed review of each function follows, as it is addressed in literature regarding one-room schools across the United States, including those in Appalachia and in West Virginia.

### *Planning*

“That is, working out in broad outline the things that need to be done and the methods for doing them to accomplish the purpose set for the enterprise”

(Gulick & Urwick, 1936, p. 13). Under the function of planning, certainly planning where to locate a school was and is a key function of the school administrator.

Theobald’s (1993) research documents the “sticky question of where the schoolhouse would be built” (p. 129). One location would be of benefit to some families at the expense of others. Often landowners would donate a parcel of land to the local board to insure the local school would be built in a favorable location (Theobald, 1993). Usually, this might mean some children would have to travel a longer distance to reach the school than others. Adults without children resisted payment of taxes for school construction, as they would ascertain no immediate benefit. According to Theobald (1993) “Those who resisted the common-school concept to the bitter end surrendered their school taxes only

after threats from the county sheriff. The idea of paying a tax for the education of someone else's children was a difficult one for many in the rural Midwest" (p. 129).

Across the nation, school building location affected more than the local citizenry; it also affected costs to be incurred by the central office. For example, the issue of where to construct a school had a direct effect upon the associated costs of transportation. In some states laws were in place in the early 20<sup>th</sup> century regarding the distance students could be expected to walk to school. In Iowa for example, the limit was two miles walking distance to school; any distance greater than this required provisions for free transportation. Other states had similar statutes for transporting students living a substantial distance from the school (Anderson, 1987).

A current practice in regard to planning, transportation and one-room schools is underway in Colorado. One-room schools in this state are in session four days a week, with the students staying longer each day and having Monday or Friday off. Initially, it was undertaken to save energy, "in at least two studies, however, not only was energy saved, but because of 10-hour days, teachers found themselves at least two weeks ahead of lesson plans made the previous year" (Rankin, 1981, p. 53).

### *Organizing*

"That is, the establishment of the formal structure of authority through which work subdivisions are arranged, defined and co-ordinated for the defined objective" (Gulick & Urwick, 1936. p. 13). Day in and day out, one-room schools were composed of one teacher and the attending students. The teacher led the classroom in instruction and set its organization (Gulliford, 1996). Overseeing the teacher were the administrator who visited periodically from an often distant central office and the local citizens who

provided the pupils and often even the housing for the one-room school teacher (Theobald, 1993). Consolidation efforts had the effect of loss of this direct control of local school decision-making. Both Tyack (1974) and Fuller (1982) argue that professional educators sought to transfer control of schools from the common person to those with more formal training in education. It was argued in the late 19<sup>th</sup> and early 20<sup>th</sup> century that school consolidation provided economic efficiency and instructional effectiveness. This provided the auspices under which control of the educational institutions was transferred from laypersons to those with formal training in education. Efficiency became the key word in industrialized America and leaders in education wanted to be known as efficiency experts on the efficiency bandwagon (Guthrie, 1979).

The movement toward consolidation of rural schools and transfer of local control to centralized offices was a step in the process of gaining efficiency within the organization. Consolidation also provided a way of solving rural school problems (DeYoung, 1995). This provided a semi-solution to the problems of the rural schools, instead of improving existing rural schools to the point of their being able to effectively provide the same quality of education as their urban school counterparts, rural schools were simply closed.

Not all one-room schools were closed in the name of consolidation; some have remained in operation. A one-room school teacher in Vermont in the 1980s reported, "The teacher has a friendship with the administrator that you wouldn't have elsewhere. Teacher supervisor relationships are simplified when group dynamics involve only two people, rather than the greater numbers found in most school staffings" (Kenny, 1990, p. 55). The administrator involved in this situation reported he felt his

responsibility was providing a “chance to work together to improve things. I make suggestions and give feedback, but I don’t evaluate the teacher, I evaluate the program. We work as a unit, yet I respect the autonomy of each school” (Kenny, 1990, p. 55).

Gulick and Urwick (1936) focused on the organizational structure of the formal central unit. However, research on organizing one-room schools focuses on physical organization of the structure itself. The actual physical organization of the one-room schoolhouse has been outlined by a number of researchers. The schoolhouse was built of sod, adobe, logs, stone or clapboard, depending on the area of the country, era of construction and availability of resources (Gulliford, 1996; Muse & Moore, 1988; Rose, 1997).

Inside, four rows of desks was the usual number for students. The teacher’s desk was in front of the blackboard and was visually accessible to all the students. Windows were along at least one wall to provide light. Entering and exiting the classroom took place through the doors in the back of the room. A pot bellied stove was in the center of the building to provide heat to those present. Earlier facilities had fireplaces on one wall; buildings constructed in the late 19<sup>th</sup> and early 20<sup>th</sup> century contained the pot-bellied stove as the heat source (Gulliford, 1996).

If embellishments of the outside did take place, they usually involved the bell tower (Rankin, 1981). The bell was essential not only to call children to school, but also, served to warn of a coming prairie fire. For those living near mines, the school bell ringing continually sent local citizens rushing to the mine entrance (Rankin, 1981, p. 11). Rose (1997) documented the actual organization of the classroom, “they [one-room

schools in the United States] were surprisingly uniform in their organization --young children in front, older in back” (p. 40).

The classroom itself was organized with limited resources. C. Williams (1995) documented the very limited resources available for instruction in his first one-room school teaching experience in the early 20<sup>th</sup> century. Cockerille (1963) provided a detailed analysis of the limited resources found in one-room schools nationally as recently as 1960:

88 percent of the schools had no movie projector.

43.7 percent had no library facilities.

75.5 percent had no science corners or equipment.

25 percent had no encyclopedias or outdated ones.

30 percent had no large wall maps.

36 percent had no globe.

70 percent had no film strip or slide projectors.

97 percent had no television receivers (p. 5).

Cockerille (1963) gave a detailed overview of the status of the organization of one-room school facilities in operation across the nation in 1960:

15 percent were judged to be very bad.

67 percent had no running water.

67 percent had no indoor toilets.

73 percent had no lunch services.

3 percent had no electricity, but 19 percent reported insufficient electrical fixtures.

84 percent were of frame construction.

33 percent had no fire extinguishers.

60 percent of the teachers did their own custodial work (p. 5).

Just as the buildings were fairly uniform, so too were the students in attendance.

The student body itself was often composed of students representing the same families.

Barker (1986) reported that students who attended one-room schools were “likely to have a brother or sister who attended the school with them, and live an average of seven to eight miles from school” (p. 39). Further, these students were “apt to know the teacher personally and to support actively the functions of the school” (Barker, 1986, p. 39).

Over time, changes and improvements were undertaken. Muse & Moore (1988) reported that the pot bellied stove had been replaced by natural gas as the source of heat in the majority of the 837 one-room schools still in operation in 1984. Further, over 95% of the remaining one-room school facilities in operation in 1984 had full indoor plumbing, thus refuting the stereotype of one-room schools with outhouses (Muse & Moore, 1988, p. 13).

Standardization of one-room schools was undertaken by some states in an attempt to provide uniformity in the schools. By the second decade of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, for example, North Dakota had established plan books for the construction of schools and the passage of state laws aimed at statewide uniformity (Rankin, 1981). Wyoming undertook a similar effort to provide standardization of its one-room school facilities. All such facilities were required to have “well sites, good outdoor bathrooms, playground equipment, a flag pole and other additions to the structure” (Rankin, 1981, p. 10).

### *Staffing*

“That is the whole personnel function of bringing in and training the staff and maintaining favorable conditions of work” (Gulick & Urwick, 1936, p. 13). In terms of the staffing component of Gulick and Urwick’s seven functions of the administrator, politics came into play for hiring practices in one-room schools. Hepler (1988) documented the role politics played in a West Virginia teacher’s life. According to Hepler (1988), “Before you could even be considered for a job... you had to contribute fifty dollars annually to the Wayne County West Virginia Democratic Party campaign fund” (p. 25). This practice was eventually discontinued. DeYoung (1995) provided additional research data on the influence of politics on staffing practices in one-room schools. According to his research in Braxton County, West Virginia, in the 1940s and 1950s the school board could simply vote to move or transfer a teacher. It was a blatant practice, according to DeYoung (1995):

Someone (would) run on a platform, I guess, that they were going to move a teacher. That’s when they and two other board members would band together and move a teacher...They jerked teachers around and I never could figure that out... But they would jerk them around politically. (By) politically, I mean it was based on what somebody called and said or, maybe not called, but written or even came with complaints (p. 193).

A specific instance is even provided whereby two parents came to the board meeting. Their purpose in appearing before the board was to ask for another teacher at their local, one-room school. They even named the teacher they wanted in their school. Their reason was, “the children were tired of the present teacher and have no interest in

school” (DeYoung, 1995, p. 194). Legislation passed at the state level eventually led to this practice being discontinued. These practices were not unique to any one state or region. DeYoung (1991) provides documentation of practices similar to these in Virginia and Tennessee during the same time period.

Theobald’s (1993) research went beyond the role of politics in determining one-room school hiring practices. His research documented the discrimination against women that existed in the hiring practices for the one-room schoolteacher in the late 19<sup>th</sup> and early 20<sup>th</sup> centuries. According to Theobald (1993), “often, by vote of the male, tax-paying residents, boards were instructed to hire a woman teacher ‘if we cant [sic] get a man teacher for a reasonable price” (p. 122). In another district Theobald (1993) found an instance which provided for the “board [to] be authorized to hire a first class female teacher for the winter school unless they can get a male teacher for nearly the same wages” (p. 122). This statement is particularly telling regarding implementation of the administrative function of staffing with regard to one-room schools. Note that it was necessary that the woman be “first class” while the man, on the other hand, could apparently be run of the mill and yet still be hired. Theobald (1993) goes on to document the view in some districts that “men teachers were needed in schools to keep order with several large boys in attendance” (p. 123).

Gulliford (1985) provided additional evidence of this sex role stereotype of male teachers who were seen as superior to women by administrators of one-room schools. According to this text, “a young, single woman in Nevada states that her rural school superintendent had told her: ‘You are hired unless I can find a man” (p. 9). This

administrator held the belief that “in a conservative community a man was better suited to teach and assist the older boys” (Gulliford, 1985, p. 9).

Theobald (1993) documented the initial denial of voting privileges to women in school district elections. As the 19<sup>th</sup> century closed in the Midwest, the right of women to vote in school district elections was extended. The Dakota Territory extended this right in 1879, followed by Wisconsin in 1885, and Kansas in 1889 (Theobald, 1993, p. 128). Theobald (1993) saw this as an extension of the feminization of the teaching profession. The right of women to become board members or superintendents came before the right of women to vote in school district elections in the Midwest. Theobald (1993) did not provide specific instances of women attaining positions as board members or superintendents during this time period, even though it was legally allowed in some states as the 19<sup>th</sup> century came to a close.

It would not be until the 1920s and 1930s when the female teacher came to classrooms as an instructional leader in one-room schools. A fair number of young men taught for a few years to earn money and gain maturity before moving on to other positions. But the career teachers, for the most part, were female. Even with the greater numbers of female teachers, incidents of salary discrimination continued even into the 20<sup>th</sup> century. Male teachers in 1914 in Nebraska were paid \$21.89 more per month than women. Average monthly salaries rose somewhat after World War I, but men were still paid more than women (Wyman, 1997, p. 27).

In America’s one-room schools in the period between World War I and the Great Depression, women outnumbered men, as teachers, by more than eight to one (Wyman, 1997, p. 28). Local boards of education were hard pressed to find teachers to

take on teaching roles in the more remote areas. Women were seen as more likely to take these jobs as they could board with local families, whereas men were seen as unwilling to undertake a boarding arrangement (Wyman, 1997). Many of these teachers were the “traditional old schoolmarms, and the termination of employment was often the penalty of marriage” (Leight & Rinehart, 1992, p. 135).

For women, teaching in the one-room school offered “one of the few avenues to independence and authority. It was a chance, as one young woman put it to ‘try myself alone and find out what I am’” (Rose, 1997, p. 40). However, the young teachers had little privacy due to their close proximity to the school (Gulliford, 1985).

In addition to being teachers, women expanded their roles and responsibilities into positions of one-room school administration. Even the superintendence of schools was not beyond the reach of women in the late 19<sup>th</sup> century. “Laura Eisenmuth was elected, in 1893, the first female Superintendent of Schools in Nebraska and in the nation”; others had been local district superintendents including C.J. Greer in the Washington Territory in 1883 (Wyman, 1997, p. 49). In Brown County, Nebraska, women took on a strong leadership role over a long period of time as only one man served as school superintendent between 1897 and 1975. Those who were hired as either teachers or administrators entered the positions with a wide range of formal training in educational or administrative practices (Wyman, 1997):

In 1900 no states required professional training or a high school degree to teach high school; however, by 1925, twenty-one states required both (as cited in Tyack, 1967). By 1928, all but five states had established normal schools and state school boards directed certification and qualifying examinations for

candidates where individual exams had been previously administered (as cited in Lortie, 1975), (p. 26).

More recently, Cockerille (1963) provided a detailed look at the level of teacher training in one-room schools in 1960:

	<u>One Teacher Schools</u>	<u>Others</u>
Less than 4 years of college	83.2%	33%
Four years of college	13.6%	43.6%
More than 4 years of college	3.2%	23.4% (p. 4)

In terms of meeting the provisions for state certifications, a “similar lag is noted; 14.3 percent of teachers in one-room schools do not meet minimum requirements. For the general population of elementary teachers the percentage in 1960 is 12.3 percent” (Cockerille, 1963, p. 4).

### *Directing*

“That is, the continuous task of making decisions and embodying them in specific and general orders and instructions and serving as the leader of the enterprise” (Gulick & Urwick, 1936, p. 13). The literature on the directing function will be subdivided under the sub-headings of early efforts at providing direction to one-room schools, consolidation of one-room schools and legal statutes for directing one-room schools.

#### *Early efforts at providing direction to one-room schools*

Formal legal statutes giving local persons authorization for control of the directing function of administrative practices in one-room schools were not limited to any one state or region. The provision for providing direction and supervision of one-room

schoolteachers was passed into law early in California's history. The premise behind these statutes was, according to Weiler (1994), undertaken with the idea that "because of women's presumed weaknesses; they argued for expert, usually male, control and supervision" (p. 25). Initial efforts to improve rural schools focused upon consolidation. However, given the local opposition to undertaking consolidation, the alternative answer to improving rural schools became increased supervision of existing schools (Weiler, 1994). Supervision of rural schools was seen as more politically acceptable to the rural populace than consolidation of their schools. With increased supervision and direction of one-room schools, greater control over rural, one-room schools and their teachers was achieved (Weiler, 1994).

One rationale for this increased control and supervision is provided by the study undertaken by Rylance (1981) on one-room schools in early 20<sup>th</sup> century North Dakota. This study brought to light the differences between students educated in one-room schools and their urban, multi-classroom counterparts. Rylance's (1981) findings were as follows:

That 72 percent of school age children in the state lived on farms and attended one-room schools and that 60 percent of teachers in those schools had failed to complete a single high school level course. Even more striking was the fact that just 33 percent of the 80,000 farm children in North Dakota ever finished the eighth grade and only 5 percent graduated from high school. These statistics stood in stark contrast to their urban counterparts, where fully 81 percent achieved the eighth grade and 30 percent obtained a high school diploma (p. 10).

Using these statistics as a basis, North Dakota's State Superintendent of Schools, Neil MacDonald, undertook to improve the standard of education in the state's one-room schools (Rylance, 1981). As a part of this program, a Rural School Commission was formed to address the inadequacies of one-room schools in the early part of the 20<sup>th</sup> century. The commission issued its report in 1912 in Grand Forks, North Dakota. Nine unfavorable conditions were found:

1. Short terms and poor attendance.
2. Poorly qualified and underpaid teachers.
3. Insufficient supervision.
4. Inadequate financial support.
5. Unsuitable school buildings and grounds.
6. Lack of proper means to fully satisfy the civic-social life interest.
7. Lack of proper adjustment of courses of study and text books to meet the needs of the time.
8. Too many conflicting interests in public school management.
9. The absence in many quarters of genuine interest in and sympathy with rural progress (Rylance, 1981, p. 13).

The recommendations from the Rural Schools Commission for improving these problems included "longer terms and better attendance, better financial support, school board organization, consolidation, improved supervision and better teaching and a campaign of education for rural school uplift" (Rylance, 1981, p. 13).

It is not known if these recommendations would have improved the status of education in North Dakota's one-room schools as MacDonald would be forced from

office due to political machinations. His plans “became linked to radical causes and ideals in the [Non-Partisan] League platform. He suffered a humiliating defeat in the fall election of 1918, at the hands of Minnie J. Nelson...who did not have a high school diploma” (Rylance, 1981, p. 10). MacDonald held a doctoral degree from Harvard University and had completed his dissertation on “Rural Schools and Rural Public Consolidation” (Rylance, 1981, p. 10).

The commission’s report on one-room schools, their problems and inadequacies, does provide clarity on the disparity between the educational achievements of one-room school rural students in North Dakota and their urban, multi-classroom counterparts. It also attests to the institutional disparities that occurred due to lack of financial, supervisory or physical resources. Had MacDonald been able to implement the committee’s recommendations perhaps this would have led to an improvement in one-room schools and a closing or at least a lessening of the gap between rural and urban school students in educational performance; but this is all sheer speculation.

North Dakota was not alone when it came to discrepancies between rural one-room schools and their urban counterparts, especially in terms of direction and supervision. Footman (1922) [as cited in Weiler, 1994, p. 35] provides a detailed description of additional problems faced by rural school supervisors. She was hired as one of the first supervisors of rural schools in California and given the daunting task of improving the rural schools within her district of California. She describes the difficulties and successes in this work:

It is a strange, many sided existence in which nursing a Ford over mountain roads, being pulled from mud holes by irate farmers, riding in the dark of the early

morning with frosted windshield; shouldering the burdens of the isolated young teacher, green or fresh, as you like, from the Normal, who has seen little of life and less of good teaching methods...or greatest risk of all, convincing the pitiful old gentleman, charming in himself but invincible in the determination that the three R's are to be taught and they alone; in getting the idea across that the curriculum really has enlarged, and that music, art, physical education, health nursing, sanitation and interest stirring devices are not fol-do-rols [sic], but real honest-to-goodness, tried and proven educational principles (Weiler, 1994, p. 35).

Footman puts forth the image of a progressive supervisor. Weiler (1994) presented the idea that this was “an image that may have contributed to later male hostility to women rural supervisors” (p. 35).

Callahan (1962) links the school administrator with the business executive. He found school administrators of the early 20<sup>th</sup> century wanted to identify with business administrators. Business leaders were seen as persons who were efficient and made changes happen. Business administrators in some cases even wanted to apply their business ideas and ideals to schools and school systems (Callahan, 1962).

*Providing direction to one-room schools*

One-room schools did not have an on-site formal administrator. The teacher was responsible for the day-to-day functions and running of the school (Kindley, 1985). The person most often charged with administrative oversight at the district or county level usually was a superintendent. In West Virginia, with the passage of the County Unit Bill, discussed in detail previously, the West Virginia Legislature required that each county superintendent visit each school at least one time per school year. Through this

bill, state law mandated the directing function of the administrator. These visits were to occur “as often as practical” to observe the “instruction and the classroom management skills” of the teachers in the respective schools of their county and to “make suggestions regarding them and their general sanitary condition” (Ambler, 1951, p. 611).

In other states, direction of one-room schools even extended beyond central office administrators to elected school board members and community members. Anderson (1987) documents instances of the local board performing needed maintenance and repairs themselves if time and need so demanded. The school to them was often seen as an expression of the community and thus the need for immediate repairs was perceived as a community need. Sometimes this was undertaken by “solid supporters” and other times undertaken by persons who were “stingy and backward” (Leight & Rinehart, 1992, p. 137-138). Fleming’s (1995) case study of one-room school teachers in Ashland County, Ohio found that the direction and organization of one-room schools was sculpted by farmers as “an arm of their beliefs and lifestyle” (p. 25). For example, the school calendar, start and end times, were decided by the farmers in order to meet their agricultural needs. Busy times of the year on the farm made it necessary to have the children home to help on the farm; less busy times of the year allowed the children to be released from the farm to attend school (Fleming, 1995).

Members of the community had a direct hand in the control of the one-room school during this time period of the late 19<sup>th</sup> and early 20<sup>th</sup> centuries. Fuller (1982) says this contributed to direct democracy in the Midwest as voters for school trustees or board members saw an immediate result in their vote as the election victors had a direct impact

on their lives in this small setting. In this case, their impact was on the one-room school that provided a cornerstone of social contact in rural American life.

Fuller (1982) goes on to say that the annual meeting of the small independent school district in the Midwest was the heart of direct democracy. It was at this meeting that the farmers and community persons met to elect members or trustees to the school board. They also set the agenda for the school year. For some school districts, even the number of months of instruction, start and end dates for classes and school building repair needs were established at this meeting (Fuller, 1982).

This was in direct contrast to what was occurring at the urban schools in the early 20<sup>th</sup> century. Tyack (1967) noted that in Portland, Oregon, in 1913, “decades of efforts to achieve continuity [have] resulted in a uniformity in the schools that is almost appalling” (p. 316). Local control and decision making based upon the input of concerned citizens was not part of this urban scenario. Instead, the primary concerns of the schools were continuity and uniformity.

Within this context, “home and community, formerly allied in training children, now seemed to have abdicated and turned over to the public school the whole matter of training and education of the young” (Tyack, 1967, p. 318). Through consolidation, the dual input into educational practices of home and community working to improve the schools was lost to the control of public school professionals whose intent often was on schools being run in a more business-minded fashion.

#### *Consolidation of one-room schools*

The question of why the one-room schools have been closing was not one to be answered directly by this study, although it does deserve some attention as part of the

effort to set the scene of one-room school administration. Leight & Rinehart (1992) proposed an interesting twist to the conventional school of thought on one-room school closings being due to consolidation. Other authors attribute the closings to the need for economic efficiency, perceived limited academic offerings in the one-room school and the overall movement toward graded classrooms (DeYoung, 1995; Gulliford, 1996; Newton & Newton, 1992; Weller, 1980). Leight & Rinehart (1992) discuss the closing of one-room schools as one part of a greater movement in closing other locally based institutions. According to their research the closing of the “general stores, general farms and general practitioners” was part of the whole societal movement that resulted in a “metamorphosis” and loss of these other community based institutions as part of the movement to modernize (Leight & Rinehart, 1992, p. 139).

Fleming (1995) provided insight into how consolidation was perceived by local farmers in an Ohio district facing the closing of the local school in favor of a consolidated facility in the nearby town. According to the persons interviewed for her study, consolidation meant the loss of local control over education. It also meant the children would be taken out of their immediate community or area and transported to a larger community, which...

Represented or was perceived to represent a different culture and possibly a different religion. It meant the children would have to conform in dress and behavior to a different set of standards and might face forms of corruption, such as smoking, not faced before (Fleming, 1995, p. 25).

Fuller (1982) saw the battle over consolidation with a slightly different twist.

According to his writings

At issue in that battle [over consolidation]...was the question of who was to control rural education: the farmers or the educators. To the farmers consolidation meant not only loss of the little school down the road to which they were sentimentally attached, but also the loss of their ability to control their children's education for which they had to pay (p. 234)

With consolidation of one-room schools, local control was lost to a centralized authority. As part of this loss, consolidation of one-room schools was often viewed as endangering the existence of the surrounding community (Gulliford 1996). The school and the community existed in an almost symbiotic relationship; one supported the other and one depended upon the other for its existence. The school and the community often mutually shaped each other:

To close a country school was to destroy an institution that held the little community together. It was to wipe out the one building the people of the district had in common and, in fact, to destroy the community, which in those years, so many were trying to save and strengthen. Even more important as far as the farmers were concerned, the destruction of their school meant that their power to set the length of the school terms, to employ their teacher, and to determine how much they would spend for education would be taken from them and given to some board far removed from their community and their control (Fuller, 1982, p. 235).

In Kentucky, efforts to consolidate the one-room schools during the 20<sup>th</sup> century also met with local resistance as, “the little red school house was a source of community pride to the patrons of the village it served” (Swain, 1969, p. 2). Consolidation took the local school from the immediate community area and also removed it from the community’s oversight. In the words of a Vermont one-room school teacher:

A teacher should reflect a community’s values. My purpose is to be of service to this town. If I am not serving Lodi, then I’m not fulfilling my obligations. But I feel it’s also important for me to be a leader, because they’re looking for me to be a leader too – Anne Martin, Lodi Teacher (Kenney, 1990, p. 83).

### *Co-ordinating*

“That is, the all-important duty of inter-relating the various parts of the work” (Gulick & Urwick, 1936, p. 13). Alkire (1982) directly addressed the topic of coordinating administrative functions in one-room schools. In a retrospective analysis of his own administrative training at Ohio State University, Alkire (1982) reported that he had been instructed the, “administrator should make uniform policies and show all teachers an equal concern” (p. 17). In the case of his administrative practices as a superintendent in South Dakota overseeing one-room schools, however, he learned this is not always true: “no two schools are exactly alike; the administrator soon learns to deal with each on an individual basis. Policy which seems fair for one school may be unfair for another” (Alkire, 1982, p. 17). A prime example he cited involved closing schools due to adverse weather conditions. In city districts the weather is generally uniform for all involved schools. However, in rural districts that cover from three to eight thousand

square miles, the weather conditions may vary drastically resulting in some schools being closed while others remain open (Alkire, 1982).

The coordinating function of administrators is also hampered by distance and accessibility (Alkire, 1982). Some one-room schools remain in session with only one administrative visit per year. This has “added more fuel to the fire of independence which is readily evident in many of the one-room schools. The patrons, teacher and students like to feel important” (Alkire, 1982, p. 18). However, it is imperative the administrator realize the schools must be depended upon to continue without the direct, day-to-day administrative oversight that occurs in consolidated schools with an administrator housed on-site each day.

### *Reporting*

“That is, keeping those to whom the executive is responsible informed as to what is going on, which thus includes keeping himself and his subordinates informed through records, research and inspection” (Gulick & Urwick, 1936, p. 13).

West Virginia educational policy in the early 20<sup>th</sup> century required attendance to be kept by the teacher with a current roster of students available when the superintendent visited the school (Slacks, 1938). Muse & Moore (1988) found the main reason for student absenteeism in one-room schools across the nation was not “poor teaching, old buildings or inadequate supplies, but rather to poor weather or to the demands of spring planting and fall harvest” (p. 9). In Kansas in the late 19<sup>th</sup> century, teachers were required to keep “The Teachers’ Classification Registers, in which the country schoolteachers kept records of their students’ progress and standing in their class for the

succeeding teacher [and] showed how the adjustments were made for fast and slow learners” (Fuller, 1982, p. 195).

In addition to reporting attendance and keeping documentation of grades and pupil progress, other reports were required for one-room schools. C. Williams (1995) documented the need to report income from fundraisers and the specific expenditures undertaken with the money. This requirement provided a safeguard against inappropriate use of school funds.

In addition to reporting attendance, fundraisers and expenditures, the one-room schoolteacher was also required to report necessary building repairs (Anderson, 1987). A key premise behind the upkeep of the school in addition to student safety was the school’s position as an expression of the community. When the one-room school was in disrepair it was a negative reflection upon the community. The one-room school was a symbol of the community and its vitality (Anderson, 1987). The teacher held the responsibility of insuring the timely reporting of needed repairs or maintenance for the one-room school facility.

Kenny’s (1990) research on Vermont’s last one-room schools found the reporting function to be a key reason teachers left the one-room school setting. According to the findings of Kenny (1990), the administrative reporting tasks for small and large schools in Vermont are the same. These are especially time consuming for the lone teacher in a one-room school. “The Vermont Education Department has put an extraordinary burden on small schools, as the same number of forms are required of all institutions” (Kenny, 1990, p. 42).

### *Budgeting*

“With all that goes with budgeting in the form of fiscal planning, accounting and control” (Gulick & Urwick, 1936, p. 13). Key arguments for closing one-room schools focused on cost and economy of scale. Alkire (1982) addressed this issue directly. As a contemporary county school superintendent in South Dakota, he asked the question, “How can a district justify spending \$18,000 to keep a school open for three students?” (p. 18). Alkire (1982) goes on to answer his question with, “the answer is easy” (p. 18). First as a superintendent he is dealing with such a vast geographical area that busing is impossible. This mandates schools in close proximity to the student population, even when they consist of very small numbers. In order to have consolidated, multi-teacher schools, buses would have to leave at 6:00 am and return home at 6:00 pm with the students on the bus for five hours per day. Bus transportation over such large distances is further hampered by instances of poor weather and road conditions that bring safety issues into play. High per pupil cost was a key argument against one-room schools in recent history and used as evidence of their lack of economic efficiency (Alkire, 1982).

Historically, one-room schools did not deal with anything close to the \$18,000 figure quoted above. Instead the financial resources for materials and teacher salaries were slim to non-existent in the rural one-room school of yesteryear (Gulliford, 1985). According to Sands (1987), a “book, a tablet, [and] a ruler for each child were the tools of the classroom; the country-side, with its flora and fauna, was its teaching laboratory” (p. 13). Teachers were to hold fundraisers through socials and school functions. All funds raised through these activities were to be reported to the school board and this report was to include the amount raised and the items to be purchased (Slacks, 1938; C. Williams,

1995). The one-room schoolteacher undertook the decision to hold fundraisers and then established the priority of materials to be purchased. This implies the idea of the teacher serving as the lead financial manager of funds for materials in the one-room school setting.

C. Williams (1995) described an instance of a fundraiser for the one-room school he was assigned for his first teaching experience. When he entered his first teaching assignment, a one-room school in the Appalachian Mountain region of eastern Kentucky, he found an “ancient unabridged dictionary...and two or three old hymnals at the organ, there were no books in the school building at all” (C. Williams, 1995, p. 34). In response to the lack of instructional supplies for his 33 students he decided to hold a fundraiser. In this case, the fundraiser was a pie mite and a cakewalk. A pie mite involved community members bringing homemade pies to be auctioned off. During a cakewalk people would pay a small fee, often ten cents, to walk a circle to music; when the music stops the person closest to the mark wins the cake (C. Williams, 1995). As a result of this effort, a total of \$28.00 was raised for the school. In his required report to the central office on the expenditures, C. Williams (1995) reported that in 1929, he was able to order “a set of phonics flash cards, a set of five supplementary readers for the first grade, a set of eight supplementary readers for second grade, single copies of story books selected by grade level, a hectograph duplicator, a can of filler for the duplicator, purple ink, special pens and duplicator paper” (p. 43).

Nationally, the issue of budgeting in regard to one-room schools is addressed by Leight and Rinehart (1992). According to their research, one-room schools were relatively economical to operate. They go on to document that “rural schools spent far

less per student and per classroom than urban schools during the first half of the twentieth century” (Leight & Rinehart, 1992, p. 140). Likewise, Cockerille (1963) provides a detailed description of the discrepancy between teacher pay in one-room schools and all other classroom teachers in 1960:

<u>One Teacher Schools</u>	<u>All Classroom Teachers</u>
51.1% - \$2,000 to \$2,999	51.3% - \$4,500 and over
24.8% - \$3,000 to \$3,499	31.7% - \$3,500 to \$4,499
5.5% - below \$2,200	17% - below \$3,500 (p. 4)

This shows the disproportionate rate of pay between those teachers instructing pupils in one-room schools and their teaching counterparts in multi-teacher schools.

In addition to discrepancies in pay between one-room school teachers and their multi-teacher school counterparts, the question of free textbooks is pertinent to the discussion of the cost efficiency analysis of one-room schools. Theobald (1993) specifically looked at the issue of textbooks and textbook purchase in late 19<sup>th</sup> century, one-room schools in the Midwest. According to his research, one-room school instructional practices depended heavily on textbooks. If children could not bring a textbook to class, they simply did not attend. Out of this rose a strong agitation for free textbook laws in the states of the Midwest. The first states to be admitted formally to the United States in the Midwest resisted this, while the states that were the last to be admitted (e.g. the Dakotas and Nebraska) led the way with such legislation. The earliest record of a county or district providing free textbooks to all students in the Midwest took place in District # 35 in Harlan County, Nebraska, in 1880 (Theobald, 1993, p. 131).

Textbooks were not the only expense of one-room schools. Salary to pay the teacher was often the largest expenditure of the one-room school (Gulliford, 1996). According to the research of Rose (1997), female teachers were often paid one third less than their male counterparts for teaching in the one-room school. This practice was not the exception, but was commonplace in one-room schools to varying degrees. Reasons for this practice include the perception of men being better able to control older students than women (Theobald, 1993). Sex role stereotypes existed, deeming men to be of higher quality than women as instructional leaders in one-room schools. This falsehood contributed to the idea of paying men higher salaries for the same job as women (Gulliford, 1996).

The discrepancies in pay for male and female teachers have been well documented in regard to one-room schools. However, specific procedures for paying bills or purchase order procedures, specific guidelines or practices for the administrator or teacher have not been found in the research. These day-to-day or month-to-month practices, as part of the budgeting component of the administrative practices in the one-room school, are one area that lacks research and documentation. Other areas lacking in the research on one-room schools and the budgeting component of administrative practices include information about monthly methods of teacher payment, teacher increment pay raises, and state aid per pupil.

### School-Community Relations

A key practice of educational administrators is the development of positive school-community relations. According to Gallagher, Bagin and Kindred (1997, p. 9),

“citizens in the community hold the status of part owners in the schools. They own the stock, so to speak, in the schools by virtue of the fact that it is their taxes that support the schools.” Candidates for school administrative certification or licensure are often required to complete at least one course in school-community relations as part of their educational program (Gallagher, Bagin & Kindred, 1997):

The superintendent’s role has centered on such activities as working with the parent-teacher association, establishing rapport with civic groups, becoming involved in community improvement projects, encouraging lay participation on school study committees, supervising the preparation and publication of news stories and literature concerning various phases of the educational program, handling the more serious complaints and criticisms of school policies and practices, and trying generally to bring the school and community into a closer and more harmonious relationship (Gallagher, Bagin & Kindred, 1997, p. 53).

In the one-room school setting, the community and school intertwined to a great degree in practice and function. This inter-relationship took on many forms across the nation. Often, the community not only provided the students sitting daily in the one-room school, it also often provided for the one-room school’s maintenance and upkeep. Maintenance of the one-room school was often a direct function of the community (Gulliford, 1996; Gulliford, 1985; Wilson & Woodard, 1998). In Squabble Hollow, Vermont, for example, parents were responsible for organizing and undertaking all maintenance of their 1881 one-room schoolhouse, including providing a yearly paint update to the inside and outside. Similarly, the 100 residents of Shaw Island, Washington, took on sole responsibility for the maintenance of their one-room school,

which has been in continuous operation since 1890 (Gulliford, 1985). Each of these one-room schools continues to serve the students of their areas in the one-room school setting.

These practices are further exemplified by the research of Anderson (1987). His research on one-room schools documented the perception of the school's upkeep and maintenance as a reflection of the community. School repairs were seen as community needs in addition to being educational needs (Anderson, 1987). Thus the school's surrounding community organized and often provided necessary maintenance of the one-room school facility.

More recent direct community support for one-room school construction and upkeep took place near Davis, California. Parents there constructed a one-room, red cinder block building to serve as the school structure for their children. The central office closed it due to the high cost per student to remain in operation. Parents convinced the board of education they could take over some of the financial obligations and the school was re-opened. Parents now serve lunches, supervise playgrounds, clean the facility and through this have developed "community centered education supported by community minded parents" (Gulliford, 1985, p. 12).

#### *One-Room Schools as the Center of the Community*

The 19<sup>th</sup> and early 20<sup>th</sup> century one-room school served the rural populace not only as an educational setting but also as a center of community focus and activities (DeYoung, 1995; Gulliford, 1996; Stern, 1994; Wilson & Woodard, 1998). It was frequently the social focus of people's lives outside the home. An early settler in Kansas wrote that the capitol of Prairie View was "a small white painted building, which was not

only the schoolhouse, but the center – educational, social, dramatic, political, and religious -- of a pioneer community of the west” (Tyack, 1974, p. 15).

Within this context, America’s rural populace often did not see the value of advanced education.

Rural Americans in the nineteenth century often valued schools as sites of all manner of community activities....Local communities were frequently organized around the community schoolhouse, which was often the only building within a community other than homes or churches (DeYoung, 1995, p. 35).

Since the one-room school was often the only social institution with which people had regular contact, it came to reflect the community. Tyack (1974) noted the close relationship between school and community by titling an entire chapter in his book on one-room schools “The School as a Community and the Community as a School” (p. i).

Other authors have documented the central role of the one-room school in the community. Fuller (1982, p. 45) said the one-room school “brought scattered families together in a common effort, provided a community where none existed, and gave the people who lived among the empty stretches of hills and plains a sense of belonging to a place.” It gave the community its identity. One might have been a participant, in the one-room school, at a social function, parent of a student, attendee at church or all of the above. DeYoung’s (1995) research documents the rural school as a community center that provided or “at least used to provide social cohesion and social identity functions over and above those specifically related to the instruction of children(p. 177).”

One instance of especially strong school-community relations occurred with the ‘moonlight school’ movement envisioned and championed by Rowan County Kentucky

Superintendent, Cora Wilson Stuart between 1911 and 1920 (DeYoung, 1991). This movement was in response to a national perception of “Kentucky’s adults as having greater than average rates of adult illiteracy” (DeYoung, 1991, p. 189). As a result of this, Superintendent Wilson developed and championed a large adult education program. This program operated out of rural, one-room school structures and was funded by philanthropic contributions and state education department funds. Teachers volunteered their time at these rural schools in this undertaking (DeYoung, 1991). Members of the entire community, regardless of age, were given the opportunity to benefit educationally from the rural schools and their teachers. This was a short lived program, but DeYoung (1991) called it “probably [a] quite effective educational innovation” (p. 189).

#### *Status of One-Room Schools 1980 to today*

The closing of the last one-room school in West Virginia in 1987 mirrored a trend that was taking place across the nation, closing one-room schools in favor of larger facilities. Kindley (1985) found that “as recently as 1930 there were 149,000 one-room schools [out of 238,000 elementary schools in operation] in the United States. By 1950 their numbers had been reduced to 60,000 [out of 128,000 elementary schools]... by 1970 there were 1,800 [out of 66,000 elementary schools] (p.119). Muse & Moore (1988) had more recent data on one-room schools still in operation. In 1980, 920 one-room schools were found in 28 states from Maine to Alaska; four years later, their numbers were reduced to 837 in 28 states. Nebraska with 385, Montana with 99 and South Dakota with 87 one-room schools had the highest number of facilities in 1984 (Muse & Moore, 1988).

As for the future of one-room schools, Muse & Moore (1988) reported the number as stabilized. Kindley (1985) reported in his article, “studies show that small schools exist where people can afford them” and that “where there is a choice...people choose to keep the small schools” (p. 126). By 1996, Muse & Moore would be proven wrong in their assumption that the number of one-room schools had stabilized.

*American School and University Magazine* (1997) reported that 447 public, one-room schools were in operation in the 1995-1996 school year. Twenty-four states reported at least a single one-room schoolhouse. However, the magazine found that private groups operated 1,189 one-room schools during the same year, with almost 80% of these being operated by Amish and Old Order Mennonites. This represents a significant growth of these privately operated institutions over the past 10 years.

One-room schools continue to exist today to meet the needs of our nation’s rural youth. Even with their current, limited level of existence, research on one-room schools has primarily focused on their instructional practices in a historical context (DeYoung, 1995; Gulliford, 1996). Often this research focuses on data from memoirs of rural teachers in their rural, one-room school. Typically, this research...

Discussed the hardships of providing instruction in inaccessible places far removed from main roads or other transportation avenues. The teachers usually talked about their pedagogic convictions, difficulties heating and cooling their schoolhouses, the sorts of learning materials available to their children, and the games children played before school and during recess (DeYoung, 1995, p. 40)

Other research has also taken an autobiographical approach to one-room schools, their teachers and their students (C. Williams, 1995; Wilson & Woodard, 1998).

Research on administrative practices in one-room schools reveals the role of the teacher as the day-to-day administrator (Kindley, 1985; Slacks, 1938). Information regarding the barriers to undertaking visits by supervisors or superintendents to one-room schools including distance from the central office, political machinery, and poor road conditions is available in regard to West Virginia specifically (Ambler, 1951; Hepler, 1988; Trent, 1960).

Extensive information exists on staffing and the gross inequity in pay in regard to gender and hiring (Gulliford, 1985; Leight & Rinehart, 1992; Theobald, 1993). A substantial amount of research has also been undertaken in regard to school-community relations within the one-room school setting, both historically and in current administrative practice (Gulliford, 1996; Gulliford, 1985; Stern, 1994; Wilson & Woodard, 1998). Research on day-to-day administrative practices undertaken by the teacher in the one-room school is limited in its scope and in the depth with which it addresses the seven administrative functions outlined by Gulick and Urwick (1936). Research on how central office administrators undertook to implement the seven administrative functions outlined by Gulick and Urwick (1936) in one-room schools is also limited. This research is especially limited in how administrators undertook these practices in schools they may have only visited once per year.

### *Social Reproduction Theory*

This study attempts to address certain administrative practices undertaken in the one-room school facility and tie those with certain components of social reproduction theory. This theory focuses on efforts, either covert or overt, to maintain the status quo of certain groups in society and to “maintain differences between social classes” (Spring,

1991, p. 98). The perceived purpose in doing this is to maintain and insure the current level of social stratification economically and educationally (Bourdieu, 1990; Lareau, 2000). Actions undertaken in the one-room school facility, within the community and from the central office were analyzed in regard to this theory to determine if certain practices contributed to social reproduction or if they allowed persons, especially women, to break out of the cycle of social reproduction and advance in society, professionally and/or economically.

This study attempts to fill some of the gaps in research on administrative practices, school-community relations and Social Reproduction in one-room schools. Through interviews with former teachers, administrators and a community person and analysis of primary source documents, I attempted to understand and describe one-room school administrative practices and preserve knowledge regarding one-room schools that is in danger of being lost. Chapter III addresses, in depth, the procedures I utilized in collecting data for this study.

## Chapter III

### Methods

The research practices undertaken for this study were qualitative in nature. Qualitative data are described by Bogdan & Biklen (1998) as “rich in description of people, places, and conversations, and not easily handled by statistical procedures. Research questions are not framed by operationalizing variables; rather, they are formulated to investigate topics in all their complexity, in context” (p. 2). Qualitative researchers do not “approach the research with specific questions to answer or hypotheses to test” (Bogdan & Biklen, 1998, p. 2). This framework for research fits with the purposes of this study.

This study utilized interviews and primary source documents to analyze the implementation of administrative practices in one-room schools that were in operation from 1935-1950, in Mason County, West Virginia. Initially, five former teachers and administrators of one-room schools in Mason County, West Virginia, were interviewed. Through these interviews and other efforts to find former one-room school teachers and administrators, six additional persons who are former one-room school teachers were identified. An additional key informant, a community person, familiar with one-room schools in Mason County, West Virginia, was identified during the interviews. Her position as longstanding secretary of the Mason County Fair made her very familiar with the Mason County School system.

A total of twelve persons were interviewed for this study; eleven of these were former one-room school teachers and one is a community leader. Of the eleven former one-room school teachers, two were also central office administrators, one superintendent

and one supervisor. These two persons were responsible for central office level oversight of one-room schools as part of their positions as central office administrators.

Primary source documents were also utilized. These primary source documents are legal documents in that they are Mason County Board of Education meeting transcripts from the time period of study, 1935-1950.

My interest in the topic of administration of one-room schools was in the what, how and why components of these practices. My goal, through this study, was to provide an increased understanding of the administrative practices undertaken in one-room schools in Mason County, West Virginia, from 1935-1950. My interest was “in participants’ perspectives rather than my own” (Merriam, 1995, p. 52). I was able to satisfy this interest by using the practices outlined above.

### *Research Design*

This study was orientational qualitative inquiry in its implementation. Patton (1990) describes this process as one that, “does not even attempt any pretense of open-mindedness in the search for grounded or emergent theory, nor does it present multiple perspectives” (p. 86). In some ways, my study used a traditional qualitative inductive phenomenological approach but it also fit with Patton’s (1990) orientational qualitative inquiry in that

Oriental qualitative inquiry begins with an explicit theoretical or ideological perspective that determines what variables and concepts are most important and how the findings will be interpreted. But, the focus of the inquiry is determined by the framework within which one is operating and the findings are interpreted

and given meaning from the perspective of that preordinate theory (Patton, 1990, p. 86).

In this study, the base model was Gulick and Urwick's (1936) model of the seven functions of the administrator with additional analysis tied to the social reproduction theory.

### *Sampling*

Purposeful sampling practices as outlined by Patton (1990) were used in identifying and selecting those to be interviewed. According to Patton (1990), this method is a key qualitative research practice since the "logic and power of purposeful sampling lies in selecting *information-rich cases* for study in depth" (p. 169). These "information rich cases are those from which one can learn about issues of central importance to the purpose of the research" (Patton, 1990, p. 169). In this study, the issues of central importance were those that directly related to implementation of administrative practices in the one-room school setting in the time frame and geographic area of study. Interviews with former teachers and administrators of one-room schools formed the core of research data.

Through past experiences with the 4-H program in Mason County, West Virginia, I have met four former one-room school teachers and an administrator. These four one-room school teachers and one county office administrator were 4-H leaders at their neighborhood schools and have continued in this role, in some capacity, throughout their lives. This initial list of five key informants formed the core sample for biographic interviews and for reference sources of information in locating additional informants. Through their referrals, chain or snowball sampling was utilized to identify and locate

additional persons. Seven additional key informants were added to the initial list of five former one-room school teachers and administrators through snowball sampling.

Patton (1990) defines snowball or chain sampling as “an approach for locating information-rich key informants or critical cases” (p. 176). This approach allowed the researcher to use initially identified key informants as a resource for identifying additional informants who are unknown to the researcher. Through this process, the core of key informants, in this study five, was increased as additional informants were identified.

Specific questions were incorporated into the interview to assist in locating critical cases. These included questions like, “Who knows a lot about \_\_\_\_\_?” or “Whom should I talk to about \_\_\_\_\_?” By asking the initial sources who else to talk with, the snowball became bigger and bigger and subsequently the pool of potential informants grew. As more initial informants were interviewed and asked these questions, “the chain of recommended informants will typically diverge initially as many possible sources are recommended, then converge as a few key names get mentioned over and over” (Patton, 1990, p. 176).

Purposeful sampling was also used in document selection as data sources. Primary source documents directly relating to the geographical area and time of study (1940-1955) were used. Sampled primary source documents focused on administrative issues such as staffing, budgeting, and directing of one-room school teachers. Key primary source documents chosen for selection were those directly addressing administrative practices as they fit into Gulick and Urwick’s (1936) seven functions of the administrator and as they relate to school-community relations. This involved a

potential pool of 360 school board meeting transcripts, this based on two meetings per month, twelve months per year over the span of fifteen years. This study focused on those Mason County board meetings that specifically addressed issues regarding one-room schools, including but not limited to the assignment of staff to one-room schools for the coming school year, establishment of the budget for the school system, issues addressing one-room school teacher or administrator evaluations, and one-room school administrative visits. This involved 51 board transcripts over the span of fifteen years.

### Data Collection

Qualitative methods are comprised of three types of data collection. According to Patton (1990), these are “(1) in depth, open ended interviews (2) direct observation and (3) written documents” (p. 10). This study used two of these three methods. Since one-room schools are no longer in operation in the region of this study, direct observation of administrative practices in one-room schools was not possible. Data collection methods for this study included interviews with former Mason County teachers, administrators and a community person directly involved in one-room schools and collection of information from Mason County primary source documents, from the period of study.

This research was conducted with personal biases in place. The prime bias is my deep affection for one-room schools. A conscious effort was made to control personal bias while undertaking this research so as to document both the positive and the negative administrative practices. My other bias would be as a result of his life-long residency in Mason County, West Virginia: Having a strong emotional bond to this county, as it is the only home I have ever known. I also realize that given my long residency and

relationship with Mason County, West Virginia, I had to make a conscious effort not to assume or take for granted background information that I have accepted as a given based upon my past experiences. Through this research, I had to be fully aware and in control of this so as to not glorify this geographic area or take for granted background knowledge based upon my past associations but unknown to outside persons. Rather, I attempted to provide insight into administrative occurrences within Mason County's one-room schools during the time period of study.

### *Documents*

This study used primary source documents. Primary source documents can lead to questions or lines of questioning to pursue in the semi-structured interview. Primary source document analysis provides a “behind-the-scenes look at the program that may not be directly observable and about which the interviewer might not ask appropriate questions without the leads provided through the documents” (Patton, 1990, p. 245). Added value from primary source documents comes from their ability to generate questions and to “reveal goals or decisions that might be unknown to the evaluator” (Patton, 1990, p. 233). Johnson and Christensen (2001) define primary source documents:

A primary source is a source in which the creator was a direct witness or in some other way directly involved or related to the event. Examples of primary sources; a diary, an original map, a song or ballad, a transcript of an oral interview conducted with a person who participated in an event, the minutes of a board meeting (p. 349-350).

The use of legal documents in qualitative research provides a solid support to interviews in the acquisition of data for the study. According to Brundage (1997) primary source documents include “any handwritten or typewritten record or communication that has not been printed or otherwise duplicated in significant quantities for public dissemination” (p. 16).

When using primary source documents, the issue of authorial authority does not come into play. Authorial authority involves the issue of the author’s proximity to the actual events, how close or involved they were to the events of record (Howell & Prevenier, 2001).

In the case of the primary source documents used for this study, these are actual Mason County Board of Education minutes of meetings held during the time period of interest. The secretary typed each meeting’s minutes and then each set of minutes is signed and dated by the board president and school superintendent in office at the time of each meeting. The original meeting transcripts have been bound in their original state into books covering spans of five years. These documents came into my possession when a friend of my family, Louise, passed away and the documents were given to me by her family. At that time, they were mixed in among boxes with other books and photos.

The documents used for this study were used to generate questions, support reported data from the interviews and follow the paper trail of administrative practices in Mason County’s one-room schools. Without the documents, this study would have been weakened due to its reliance on interviews alone.

### *Interviewing*

Bogdan and Biklen (1998) describe an interview as “a purposeful conversation, usually between two people.... that is directed by one in order to get information from the other” (p. 93). In- depth, semi-structured individual interviews with former teachers, administrators and others directly involved with one-room schools were utilized as the core method of data collection. I followed a semi-structured interview schedule with the key informants included in this study. According to Bogdan and Biklen (1998), interview schedules allow for “open ended responses and are flexible enough for the observer to note and collect data on unexpected dimensions of the topic” (p. 71). According to Berg (1998) “the researchers should develop sets of questions relevant to each of the outlined categories” (p. 65). The outlined categories that provided the framework for this study are Gulick and Urwick’s (1936) administrative functions and school-community relations in the one-room school setting within the geographic and historical time of study.

According to Patton (1990), “the basic thrust of qualitative interviewing is to minimize the imposition of predetermined responses when gathering data” (p. 295). This means that the questions should permit respondents to respond in their own words and terms. Further, according to Patton (1990, p. 296), “the truly open-ended question does not presuppose which dimension of feeling or thought will be salient for the interviewee. The truly open-ended question allows the person being interviewed to select from among that person’s full repertoire of possible responses.” These interviews were conducted with former teachers, administrators and a community leader associated with one-room schools in Mason County, West Virginia, from 1935-1950.

A key to obtaining an effective interview is the establishment of rapport with those being interviewed. In the case of this study, rapport was established through my direct efforts as the researcher. Prior to undertaking an interview, each person was contacted to insure they were interested in participating in this study. A time and place were mutually agreed upon to conduct the interviews, with priority given to the convenience of those being interviewed. Additionally, a newspaper article was published in the Point Pleasant, West Virginia, newspaper, *The Point Pleasant Register*. Point Pleasant is the county seat of Mason County and this is the only newspaper published in Mason County. This article was about this research project and included background information, a current photograph and a statement guaranteeing the anonymity of those to be included in the study. This article also asked for additional contact persons to be a part of this study. This article assisted in establishing rapport with those interviewed as it helped get the word out in the local community about my research on one-room school administrative practices in Mason County, West Virginia. I also became better known by being asked to speak at the monthly, retired teacher luncheon in Mason County. The former Mason County Superintendent of Schools recommended the group ask me to visit this meeting. When asked, I gladly accepted.

The interviews were all conducted at the time and place mutually agreed upon. Patton (1990) gives a detailed description of types of interview questions. Descriptions of these follow along with example questions that are relevant to this study:

*Experience/Behavior Questions*—“These are questions about what a person does or has done. These are aimed at eliciting descriptions of experiences, behaviors,

actions and activities that would have been observable had the observer been present” (Patton, 1990, p. 290).

1. Describe your experience in the one-room school.
2. What did you look for when you walked into a one-room school to evaluate a teacher?

*Opinion/Values Questions*—“These are questions aimed at understanding the cognitive and interpretive processes of people. Answers to these questions tell us what people *think* about some issue” (Patton, 1990, p. 291).

1. Do you feel one-room schools were effective in providing a quality education?

*Feeling Questions*—“These are questions aimed at understanding the emotional responses of people to their experiences and thoughts” (Patton, 1990, p. 291).

1. How did you feel about having the administrator visit your school? (Follow up—what did you do to prepare the school and yourself for the visit?)

*Knowledge Questions*—“are asked to find out what factual information the respondent has. The assumption here is that certain things are considered to be known—these things are not opinions and they are not feelings; rather, they are things that one knows, the facts of the case” (Patton, 1990, p. 292).

1. How did teachers interact with community leaders?
2. Did gender play a part in hiring teachers or administrators for one-room schools?

*Sensory Questions*—“These are questions about what is seen, heard, touched, tasted, and smelled. The purpose of these questions is to allow the interviewer to enter into the sensory apparatus of the respondent” (Patton, 1990, p. 292).

1. Describe the one-room school’s outside appearance.

*Background/Demographic Questions*—“These questions concern the identifying characteristics of the person being interviewed. Answers to these questions help the interviewer locate the respondent in relation to other people” (Patton, 1990, p. 292).

1. Why did you decide to become a teacher or administrator?
2. What training or education did you have before starting your job?

Each interview was taped by use of a micro cassette recorder to insure all oral information provided by each person was preserved. Each participant was assured of the confidentiality of his or her responses prior to undertaking any formal interviewing. Spradley (1979) attests to the importance of assuring the respondent of the confidential nature of their responses. After completion of each interview, the data were transcribed verbatim from the tapes into written text form as soon as possible. Observer comments, including observations and insights experienced during the interviews, were added to the interview transcripts.

### *Confidentiality*

Prior to undertaking an interview, each informant was assured of his or her anonymity and the confidentiality of his or her responses. This assurance of confidentiality was taped onto the tape recorder as verification of this practice. Insuring

the confidentiality of responses is a critical component of interviewing and obtaining data for this type of study. In the narrative report of this study, each informant was referred to by a pseudonym first name. The true identity of those interviewed is known only to me and all tapes and transcripts are locked in my personal files. These will remain in security to assure the continued confidentiality of those interviewed. After a period of ten years, the tapes will be erased.

Confidentiality of those identified in the documents was also insured. These documents include certain identifiers, names, titles and even addresses, of persons involved in one-room school education in Mason County, West Virginia, from 1935-1950. As with the interviews, care was taken to protect the privacy of those identified in the documents

#### *Data Coding and Analysis*

Upon completion of the data collection phase of the research, the question of “Now what?” arises. This experience has been described by Bogdan and Biklen (1998) who provide an excellent analogy:

Imagine a large gymnasium in which thousands of toys are spread on the floor. You are given the task of sorting them into piles according to a scheme that you are to develop. You walk around the gym looking at the toys, picking them up, and examining them. There are many ways to form piles. They could be sorted according to size, color, country of origin, date manufactured, manufacturer, material they are made from, the type of play they encourage, the age group they suit, or whether they represent living things or inanimate objects (p. 171).

The above described activity is a good analogy of the coding process undertaken by qualitative researchers with their acquired data. A coding system is necessary in order to provide a semblance of order and a method of retrieving the assembled data. According to Bogdan and Biklen (1998), “certain words, phrases, patterns of behavior, subjects’ ways of thinking and events repeat and stand out” (p. 171). For this study, the acronym POSDCORB [Planning, Organizing, Staffing, Directing, Co-ordinating, Reporting and Budgeting] (Gulick & Urwick, 1936), which has been discussed in greater detail earlier, and school-community relations, formed the skeleton framework of *a priori* coding categories, along with school-community relations. Other categories were created as needed for data that did not fit into the *a priori* categories. The data from the interviews and source documents were coded into the seven administrative functions comprising POSDCORB and school-community relations. These formed the rubric of codes used to sort the collected data.

The type of codes that tie the data to the POSDCORB and school-community relations framework fits within the broad schema of an Event Code. As explained by Bogdan and Biklen (1998), Event Codes are those that are “directed at units of data that are related to specific activities that occur in the setting or in the lives of the subjects you are interviewing” (p. 175). In this study, much of the data fell within the categories under POSDCORB and school-community relations.

Upon completion of the interviews and their transcription, information on specific events or occurrences in one-room schools as documented through interviews or documents or both were linked with the POSDCORB and school-community relations framework. Each event was addressed as to if and where it fit into this framework.

POSDCORB and school-community relations formed the framework within which the entire study fits. The Social Reproduction Theory was addressed as to how practices within this framework contributed to or allowed someone to break out of the cycle of social reproduction. Following the POSDCORB and school-community framework is in line with the assertion by Wolcott (1990), that the “analysis be as strong in coding and as systematic as possible” (p. 35). The data was coded by hand.

Following these established functions and using them as the skeleton upon which to attach the meat of the study fits with the core question addressed by this study, ‘In the one-room school setting, how were administrative practices undertaken in the time period and geographic area of study?’ The *a priori* codes stated above then formed the initial guideline for coding and subsequent analysis. After the initial coding process, trends emerged that required a second level of coding due to large amounts of data that emerged under certain first level, event codes.

#### *Reliability and Validity*

According to LeCompte and Preissle (1993); “Reliability refers to the extent to which studies can be replicated. It assumes that a researcher using the same methods can obtain the same results as those of a prior study. This poses an impossible task for any researcher studying naturalistic behavior or unique phenomena” (p. 332). This means for qualitative research, the laboratory with highly controlled designs does not exist as a mode of data collection. Rather qualitative research is undertaken in a natural setting and, “often is undertaken to record processes of change, so replication is only approximated, never achieved” (LeCompte & Preissle, p. 332). The nature of qualitative research makes an exact duplication of any study virtually impossible.

It is not the point or goal to generalize the findings or the outcomes of qualitative research to any other population. Likewise, it was not my intent to generalize the findings of this study to other small, rural schools. According to Onwuebguzie (2000), the ability to generalize research findings in qualitative research outside the study's realm is limited. The generalization of the findings of this study to other situations or even other one-room schools in the same time frame was neither the purpose nor the intent of this study. Merriam (1995) argues that each case has value and in depth study of it lends information to the greater understanding of a phenomenon. In the case of my study, the findings may not be generalizable to other situations, but the insights provided through my study could contribute insight into the study of similar situations and practices. However, it is hoped that the information gained about past administrative practices in Mason County, West Virginia from 1935-1950, will be useful to current educational administrators and policymakers.

Validity is "the extent to which conclusions [of a study] effectively represent empirical reality" (LeCompte & Preissle, 1993, p. 323). By "going to the sources," qualitative research offers the method and opportunity to ascertain truth (Brundage, 1997, p. 1). "Informant interviews, a major ethnographic data source, are phrased in the empirical categories of the participants; they are less abstract than many instruments used in other research designs" (LeCompte & Preissle, 1993, p. 342).

Member checks were utilized where possible to "strengthen the internal validity" of this study (Merriam, 1995, p. 54). Member checks entailed taking transcribed interviews back to the interviewees and allowing them to read through the transcript. This allowed them to see if what has been written has the ring of truth.

Triangulation, through multiple sources and methods of data collection, was also utilized to strengthen the validity of this study. Multiple sources and methods of data collection included interviews with one-room school teachers, administrators and a community leader, along with primary source documents.

The phenomenon I studied, administrative practices in one-room schools in Mason County, West Virginia, from 1930-1955, had a number of components. Interviews with one-room school teachers and administrators and a community person associated with one-room schools and primary source documents from the time period of study were used. This provided a number of perspectives to the “phenomenon being studied,” thus strengthening the validity as compared to studying a single perspective (Merriam, 1995, p. 59). Through the interviews and documents it was the intention of the researcher to try to ascertain a high measure of truth about the administration of one-room schools in this time and geographic region, at least in terms of the perspectives of those Mason County teachers, administrators, and a community leader who were directly involved with one-room schools.

Within the framework of the subjectivity issue surrounding qualitative research and personal biases on the part of the researcher, the question of validity is also raised. Wolcott (1990) delineates strategies to be used in order to maximize the validity of the findings and analysis:

1. Talk Little. Listen a Lot.
2. Record data accurately. Record as accurately as possible and in precisely their words.

3. Begin writing early....Begin making detailed notes immediately upon initiating field work.
4. Let readers see for themselves.
5. Report fully...Additional themes and functions may emerge as part of the getting to the truth of the study.
6. Be candid.
7. Seek feedback. Allowing the participants to review portions of the evolving document promotes accuracy in reporting factual information.
8. Try to achieve balance. During writing and revision, the researchers should re-read all field notes to cross check data against the conclusions being drawn in the manuscript.
9. Write accurately...The truth of those experiences should not get lost in imprecise language or academic jargon (Wolcott, 1990, p. 134).

The above nine points served as guideposts through the collection, analysis and writing of the data for this dissertation.

## Chapter IV

### A school, a teacher, and the community

The last three chapters of this study center upon discussing and analyzing the data collected, discussing the implications of the study and presenting questions for further study. Chapter IV introduces the reader to Mason County, West Virginia, and the persons associated with one-room schools who were interviewed for this study. It also describes the role of the one-room school as an integral part of the local, rural community.

### Mason County, West Virginia

Mason County is located along the Ohio River on West Virginia's western border with Ohio. It is due north of Huntington, West Virginia, and due south of Parkersburg, West Virginia. The county seat, Point Pleasant, is located at the confluence of the Kanawha and Ohio Rivers. The Kanawha River serves as a natural divider of the county into a northern and a southern half. Politically, the county is divided into ten magisterial districts. Of these ten magisterial districts, nine had one-room schools in operation during the time period of this study. Three magisterial districts with one-room schools, Hannan, Clendenin and Arbuckle, are in the southern half of the county. Seven magisterial districts--Cooper, Cologne, Union, Robinson, Waggener, Graham and Lewis--are in the northern half of the county. Lewis district serves the county seat of Point Pleasant. This district has few rural, open areas and during the time period of study. Lewis district also had no one-room schools.

The mid-point school year of this study, 1943-1944, was chosen to provide a rough indication of the number of one-room schools per district in Mason County. They are as follows:

Arbuckle District	12 one-room schools
Clendenin District	15 one-room schools
Cologne District	7 one-room schools
Cooper District	12 one-room schools
Graham District	3 one-room schools
Hannan District	14 one-room schools
Robinson District	3 one-room schools
Union District	15 one-room schools
Waggener District	2 one-room schools

A total of 83 one-room schools were in existence in Mason County, during the school year 1943-1944. During this school term, three of the participants in this study were employed as teachers in one-room schools. One each was employed to teach in Hannan (White Oak Grove School), Graham (Vernon School), and Cooper (Roanoke School) districts. Of these 83 schools, 27 were taught at some point by at least one teacher involved in this study. All nine magisterial districts were represented in the 26 one-room schools taught by the eleven former teachers involved in this study.

#### Twelve Teachers, Two Administrators and one Community Leader

The participants in my study were all closely associated with the one-room schools in Mason County, West Virginia. A total of twelve persons were interviewed for

this study; eleven former one-room school teachers and one community leader. The one-room school teachers in this study involved nine women and two men. Of the eleven former teachers; two, one man and one woman, left teaching in one-room schools to serve as central office administrators overseeing one-room schools in Mason County, West Virginia. The man, Walter, became a superintendent and the woman, Virginia, became a supervisor. The ages of the participants for this study ranged from seventy to ninety-six years of age. All of the teachers spent at least one and a half years teaching in a one-room school and all of them taught in at least two one-room schools.

The community person interviewed for this study was also a woman. Ellen never taught in a one-room school, although she attended a one-room school for eight years. The one-room school she attended is still standing today and she can see it each day from her kitchen window. She was very active in the Mason County Fair and has been an excellent referral source for finding existing one-room school structures. Ellen is seventy-eight years old and is a past Mason County Fair Board Member, including holding the office of secretary of the Mason County Fair. It was decided to interview her as a community person, since through her association with the Mason County Fair for nearly forty-years she knows the county and its schools well. Her father was a patron at the one-room school she attended.

The following subsection will address how these teachers came to be involved with one-room schools in Mason County. These one-room school teachers entered the profession due to a variety of different circumstances. For some of them, politics, in the form of knowing the right person, played a significant role in their employment as one-room school teachers. Others were hired, with little formal teacher training, to fill a need.

Some had completed college level, teacher training coursework and some had no formal teacher training upon starting to teach in the one-room school setting. Following the discussion on how these individuals became involved in teaching, I will discuss the nature of their relationships with the one-room school communities in Mason County. Regardless of how they were hired and became involved with one-room schools, these former one-room school teachers and administrators taught in schools that were closely associated with their immediate communities in Mason County, West Virginia. This intertwining relationship will be discussed in depth in this chapter.

### *Entering the Teaching Profession*

The teachers interviewed for this study entered teaching through different avenues. For some of the teachers involved with this study, politics in the form of knowing the right person came into play regarding their hiring. Others were hired to fill a need in the one-room schools in Mason County while their college coursework was still in progress, while still others were recruited to teach with no prior college coursework when an even worse teacher shortage developed. World War II seems to have been the event that caused a teacher shortage in this geographic area.

Teaching positions in one-room schools were in short supply before the outbreak of World War II; this seems to have led to knowing the right person playing a role in determining who was to be hired for open teaching positions. Even teachers who held a two-year teaching certificate had difficulty finding a job before the outbreak of World War II. After the outbreak of World War II, a shortage of teachers occurred and people were recruited to go into the education field or hired to fill an immediate local need. Due

to the severity of the need, teachers were hired with little or no formal training in teacher education.

*Knowing the right person*

Politics in the form of knowing the right person seems to have played a part in the hiring practices of the Mason County School system in the years immediately before the outbreak of World War II. When asked about how she was hired to teach, the responses from one teacher provide some interesting insight into the importance of knowing the right person or people. Diane was hired to teach in the 1941-1942 school year. She taught in two different one-room schools over the span of her three years in the one-room school setting.

Doug: How did you get hired to teach?

Diane: My dad went to see somebody.

Doug: What did they look for in hiring a teacher?

Diane: Probably a standard normal and the right politics.

The role of politics in hiring was important to another one-room school teacher hired in the years before World War II; 1941-1942 was his first year of teaching. As with Diane, knowing the right person was the key to gaining employment.

Doug: How did you get hired in your first school?

Thomas: Well, that there is a real good question. Back in those days you had to have a little bit of pull they called it. It was hard to get a school, hard to get a job. I knew Samuel, well, Samuel and I used to play music together. Samuel was a musician and I played a guitar and we had music parties and evidently he just liked me and gave me a job.

After the outbreak of World War II, teachers were in short supply. This allowed some people to be hired as teachers who would not have been able to do so in different circumstances.

*Taking advantage of an opportunity*

According to the data gathered through this study, Mason County teachers were in short supply during World War II and in the years immediately after the conclusion of the war. Whereas before the outbreak of the war, teaching jobs were in short supply and politics helped in gaining a job, during and after the war, people were recruited into teaching, often with limited or no training, to fill numerous vacancies in the one-room schools. For some people in Mason County the door to entering the teaching field was opened due to the wartime shortage.

For potential teachers, the interest was there and the need led them into being hired into the teaching profession. When asked how she was hired for her first position, Beth gave the following response:

I don't know. Things were different; this was the war years. All of the men were gone. The women were all involved in other things. I was approached by our Superintendent....Ok, then I had a job.

Doug: What were your qualifications?

Beth: Not very much....A willing attitude. My first job, you can see the date on there, [gesturing to a sheet of paper listing all of her teaching experience] I think, I only had less than 32 hours from Marshall under by belt. They were giving temporary certificates and I just kept going. I just took classes in the evening and in the summer. Some were here in town and some were in Huntington. I really

wanted to become a teacher. It was all I ever wanted to do, except maybe become a 4-H Extension Agent. The pay was about the same, so I decided to follow my first love and go into teaching.

Another teacher had a very similar experience in being hired; she was also lacking a college degree when she was hired.

Ann: Well I just put my application in and I taught before I was graduated from college. It was soon after the war see and people went off; had gone off to work in the factories and stuff and they still continued to change over and make supplies because there was more money for that. They was hardly any money during the Depression years and all of that; all the way up until World War II.

Doug: What kind of people were they looking for [in] prospective teachers?

Ann: Anybody that could teach or wanted to teach or had a little bit of college education. I had a year and half before I started.

By her comments, and the comments of the other teachers, it would seem that an interest in teaching was as important as college training during this time of teacher shortage. Perhaps to administrators, in Mason County, searching for prospective teachers, the thought was that given the shortage of certified teachers, persons who were at least interested in teaching would be the next best thing to professionally trained teachers when considering people for entry into the education profession. This may have opened avenues to entering the profession for some for whom teaching would have been impossible in a different time period of history. By entering the field to fill a need, these teachers were able to earn a salary, which could be used to pay tuition and pursue a college education. According to some of these teachers, without the job, college

attendance would have been an impossibility. For example, Stella explained how she had to budget her pay from her teaching time in the one-room school:

A month, a month I made \$92.00. And had to pay probably \$28.00 a month for board....Then I had to put back a little bit each time for college tuition, for courses in the summer.

Another teacher gave an almost identical description of how she had to budget her money in order to cover everything.

Beth: Pay for me wasn't much. I think when I made \$98.00 a month, I thought I was rolling in the dough. No one had any money, the Depression had been going on and board money had to come out of that paycheck. I was living away from home then; I had to [live] out at Leon. I saved my money too of course to go on to summer school.

For another teacher, employment as a one-room school teacher opened doors to a career and a college education that had always seemed to be beyond her financial means, even though it had been a longstanding dream.

Virginia: I guess when I was in the 6<sup>th</sup> grade...my teacher...told me after I started teaching, she said, "You know, that's what you said you wanted to do when you were in the 6<sup>th</sup> grade." And I had never thought about it because I knew we couldn't afford it. It was not long after the Depression and the war had just ended and I had been working up at Goodyear. I never dreamed I could ever teach.

From these responses, it seems money was tight in the area and for these teachers at least, the financial means to attend college without working were not available.

Clearly, the one-room school teacher shortage, during and immediately following World

War II, allowed some persons to become employed and complete a college degree who would not have been able to do so otherwise.

*Filling a need*

In addition to taking advantage of educational and occupational opportunities, women hired during the World War II teacher shortage were filling needs in their local communities. The shortage of teachers in Mason County's one-room schools necessitated efforts to find people to teach, even if they had no formal college training in teaching. Central office administrators went into local communities to find people to fill teaching vacancies. One teacher relayed her experience of being recruited to teach before she had even finished high school.

Stella: I have to think about it...when we first began teaching, which was kind of interesting because we graduated from high school and R\_\_\_\_\_ was superintendent. He came up to school and asked if anyone was interested in being a school teacher. So one of the P\_\_\_\_\_ girls and I can't remember her name and I\_\_\_\_\_ and myself we went to work.

Her collegiate level training to be a teacher consisted of one course she took the summer before she started teaching in the fall, "Teaching to Read," from Rio Grande College. She also had an unusual entry into teaching, as she worked the first two months without pay:

Stella: When we were 18 we had a certificate. I was 17 because my birthday came in November and I was at Union [School] in Union [District] and I taught until November without being paid because I was too young to receive a certificate.

Other teachers entered the profession after the word got out that they were interested in teaching; even though they had only limited or no college training for teaching. For example, one teacher's entry into teaching resulted from a letter from a former teacher who felt she might make a good instructor.

Virginia: I got a letter from my 6<sup>th</sup> grade teacher, I \_\_\_\_\_, and she said.... we are badly in need of teachers and I kept an eye on you all these years and I think you would make a good teacher. And she said [to] go down to the board of education and apply. So I did. I went to it [the board office]. It was in 1946, summer of 1946. See they knew there was such an emergency; they had all gone to the army and navy, everything to the service. So that made a shortage of teachers and they were accepting almost anyone that would come in off the street, maybe not that bad, but almost...She [the superintendent] made me an appointment for the next Saturday. She said there was a one-room school that they needed a teacher for. So, I went back the next Saturday....And so she [the superintendent], they [the board of education] hired me that day to teach.

The hiring of this teacher, through her former teacher's recommendations, led to the hiring of her sister Irene as a teacher in a different one-room school setting. Neither of the sisters had completed a college degree or program in teaching upon being hired to teach. Rather, they were hired based upon an immediate staffing need in the one-room schools in Mason County. When asked how she was hired to become a teacher, Irene gave the following response:

It kind of got about that we were going to school and they needed teachers. They asked us if we would teach. See you taught then if you had gone to a college, I

believe one semester or two semesters, they would hire you because of the war that was going on. They just didn't have teachers and so that's how we got hired.

The need for teachers in Mason County seems to have opened doors that allowed them to enter into the teaching profession. I was able to interview the man who was Superintendent of Schools in Mason County during this time. He commented on the shortage of teachers and his efforts to overcome this shortage.

Samuel: When the war started, we really had a shortage and that's when we worked out a program with Marshall. We had in-service training certificates towards entering their program and we met in different parts of the county. We talked of things like how to make out your register and your reports and things of that sort. And Marshall sent teachers to teach the methods. The teachers got credit for it on their certificate.

Mason County's close proximity to Marshall University, then known as Marshall College, and the University of Rio Grande, then known as Rio Grande College, enabled relationships like this to develop. All of the persons involved in this study, except one, attended one of these institutions for their teacher education training. The county seat of Mason County, Point Pleasant, is only 45 miles from Marshall University and 15 miles from the University of Rio Grande. Therefore, close proximity to a college with a teacher training program also assisted the participants in this study in gaining a teaching certificate and a college degree.

For the teachers who participated in this study there were a number of different avenues to entering the teaching profession. Prior to World War II, politics in the form of knowing someone directly connected to the Mason County school system seems to

have been the key to gaining employment. Through this connection, even informally with a key person, employment as a teacher occurred. After the outbreak of World War II, a shortage of teachers seems to have led to a change in hiring methods in Mason County. This shortage seems to have led to recruitment of interested persons into teaching, even if they had limited or no college training for teaching. For those recruited to teach, opportunities for economic and educational advancement were opened that may not have otherwise occurred in Mason County.

### The School and the Church Were the Community

#### *Community Relationship*

The one-room school was closely involved with the community in Mason County. According to West Virginia state law, during the time of this study, no student could be required to walk more than two miles to the nearest school (Ambler, 1951). This meant the distance from a home to the school was less than two miles, so the school was in close physical proximity to the homes of the area. But the closeness between the school and the students' homes was more than physical proximity; it involved strong relationships that extended beyond issues directly related to education. The one-room school setting, in Mason County, provided a comfortable environment for the teacher and the students that allowed emotional bonds to develop.

The participants in this study discussed the family-like bonds experienced in the one-room school by some teachers in Mason County. Virginia said, "It was like a family really is the only way I can describe it....It was a wonderful time to be alive in those little communities."

One teacher related a story of just how close she became with one family when she was teaching in a one-room school. She [Ann] described the relationship she developed as a one-room school teacher and its endurance even after the one-room school was no longer in existence: “An example of that, [is that] it’s been around fifty years that I have been getting a Christmas card from one of those parents every year.”

This certainly seems like the type of strong bond that would be found in families. Other teachers also talked about the close and enduring nature of the relationships they had with those they met through their one-room school teaching experience and the emotional ties that developed. Irene discussed her perceptions of this relationship, “Well, working together, having unity, and everybody seemed like they loved one another. There was goodness, a good feeling among the children and the parents. I think that’s a lot of it.”

Another teacher follows up on the issue of the emotional bonds between one-room school teachers and parents. Diane was involved closely with her students and felt comfortable in developing these close relationships with them. This is exemplified by her statements regarding home visits:

Diane: I did spend two or three nights a year visiting my children but not boarding.

Doug: So you spent the night with them?

Diane: Yes.

Doug: What was that like?

Diane: Kind of fun, interesting. I don’t remember anything in particular. You know teachers were encouraged to go and stay with their children some.

Diane was the only teacher who mentioned staying all night with the children, even though she said it was encouraged in Mason County. It is also interesting that she remembered it as enjoyable instead of a hindrance. There was no mention of worry or fear about going to student's homes to spend the night. Rather, she seems to have been comfortable with them and enjoyed the experience; almost as one would have enjoyed staying with a relative or friend.

The strength of these one-room school and community bonds in Mason County's one-room schools emerged in this and other interviews. For some this involvement continues even today, long after the one-room school has closed. Even though Diane does not live in the community where she taught as a one-room school teacher, she is still very close to that community. She is active in the Hannan High School Alumni Association, the high school she attended. She could also name six of her former one-room school students and give their places of residence today.

The community person interviewed for this study addressed the enduring close-knit relationships she has had with people from her one-room school. Her ties also remain strong to her home community; except for a two-year stint working in Akron, Ohio, she has not left the very farm on which she was born and raised and the one-room school she attended is easily visible through her kitchen window. From a one-room school student's perspective, she discusses how she viewed the teacher and how intricately the school and her family were connected.

Ellen: Some of the teachers would visit some of the student's houses and parents and get acquainted with them....

Doug: What was that like having the teacher come to your house?

Ellen: Oh my great. That's when they get to calling you the teacher's pet....My mom and dad, especially my dad, would sit down and talk to her and more or less interview her. My dad taught school. When he first started out, he was a teacher; he taught one or two years or so. He always liked the teachers, liked to talk to them. He was a patron at Board School over there. The new teachers would meet with him....Usually in the evening....I believe that maybe Mom maybe had her [the teacher] out for a meal....She could come anytime she wanted to and we had her out.

Ellen's comments indicate the high degree of respect people in the community felt for the teachers and the close relationship the one-room school teachers had with members of the community in Mason County. The teacher, in this case, seems to have had a close association with the patron's family outside of school to the point of being welcome in their home at any time.

#### *Schools Giving to the Community*

The one-room school had the responsibility of formally educating the children of the community in Mason County. This provided a direct benefit to the community as an investment in the community's future through the education of its youth. In undertaking this endeavor, the teacher provided an important service to the community. Perhaps because of the close family-like bonds among one-room school teachers and their students, this service often included serving as a supportive listener to problems facing the students or their families.

For example, Stella discussed the sharing time she had each morning with her students and how lunch time was spent each day:

Then you all sat around in the schoolhouse, if it was pretty you went outside sat around on the grass, and ate your lunch and talked. There was conversation. You talked to the students and they talked to you and it wasn't that they couldn't speak to a teacher because of being afraid; they wanted to talk to the teacher and be near her.

Doug: Like what would they say?

Stella: Something that they felt, or something that they had gotten hurt, or if someone had gotten hurt at home, or something that they had dreams that they had had and just anything. And the little people, just, and I always called them little people, the primary people wanted to cuddle up around you, and they sat on your feet, your legs, and your hands and all over you.

The students desired both physical and emotional proximity to their teacher. They wanted to be near the teacher and wanted to share personal information with him or her. This is more indicative of a family-like relationship than a teacher to student relationship. The one-room schools, in Mason County, these teachers described were characterized by a family-like atmosphere, with the teacher being a more integral part of the child's life.

The one-room school was an important part of the entire local community structure in Mason County. The school and community associations are summed up in the words of one former teacher:

Stella: I think it was a close knit community...they were all in the community and everyone knew everyone. They knew about you and you knew about the students and they knew the school...It [the one-room school] and the church were the community.

### *Community center*

The one-room school in Mason County provided a location for functions above and beyond the academic education of a community's youth. For many communities it provided a facility for community gatherings and functions, including church services and funerals.

Virginia: In those days, you know transportation in the 30s, I'm talking about. I remember O\_\_\_ W\_\_\_ was the teacher [at Mountain Flower School] and one of the neighbors died and was close to the school. They had the funeral in the classroom in the schoolroom, just bunched the kids--the kids were there too for that funeral; just bunched those kids over in chairs against the walls and made room for the family and friends and all. I remember I was there and I got to see some of my friends that went to Mountain Flower [School] and they all wanted to sit with me you know. But it was used for a little bit of everything in the community. Church, it was the church; we went to church at Roanoke [school]. The morning services were there.

### *Social Function*

The one-room school gave the community a social outlet by providing opportunities for social interaction among those who lived in the immediate area. The one-room school provided a social function in the lives of those living in its immediate area. For those living in Mason County at this time, entertainment options considered standard today were non-existent. One teacher discussed the entertainment he was able to provide after the school day during his time as a one-room school teacher.

Samuel: I taught Little Forest one year and then I taught White Church three years and some of the parents knew I played a fiddle. They asked me to teach music, though music wasn't a part of the curriculum at that time, especially in a one-room school. So they brought instruments after school and we got pretty good. We had a little six year old [who] was a natural alto and my cousin, she was around eight, and she was a natural tenor. Then the other girls I taught some different instruments....Those were great old days.

Television or transportation options for the one-room school neighborhoods were limited or unavailable during the time of this study. Therefore, the one-room schools undertook a social function, in Mason County, in addition to the educational function for which they were constructed. Social events included school holiday programs, fundraisers, and other activities within the one-room school as a community center.

### *Programs*

Communities also came together in the one-room school to celebrate the successes and accomplishments of the students and the teacher. The one-room school's students and teacher put on programs for the parents and community members. These programs provided a social outlet for the community, which were a regular and expected part of the school setting. The programs were usually held as part of holiday celebrations for Thanksgiving, Christmas, Easter, and at the end of the school year. These allowed the students to demonstrate their knowledge and skills through a school play for the holidays or their physical expertise at races and games at the end of the year. For the parents and community people, the programs were a time to meet together at the school, see the children in action in a play or in a race, and to interact with the teacher.

Thomas: Every year we'd have children bring in sheets to make curtains and there was a wire across the front of the room to hang them on....We'd practice on that program sometimes for weeks and kids would stand up and say their recitations and sing songs and you know these patrons, those parents, they looked forward to that as much as the kids. That was one of the greatest things in the world, they would come in and every one of them would sit at the children's seats....There wasn't much entertainment then, Doug, like there is now. Didn't have television or transportation, they looked forward to these. That was one of the big events of the year for them.

Another teacher described an experience she had with a Christmas program in a Mason County one-room school. Her comments provide insight into the importance of the program to the students, teacher, community people, and to the school itself.

Beth: F\_\_\_ B\_\_\_ was in 8<sup>th</sup> grade there with me, you remember F\_\_\_....He became very ill ...with pneumonia and at that time he could draw anything he wanted to, just pick up a pencil and draw. I stopped by to see him, to see if he would be well enough to visit the school. It was time for the Christmas program; we had a big Christmas program. He would play the fiddle too and draw these sketches. He was to have dressed up and been the surprise at our program. Well on the day of the program, all of the parents were there. My schoolhouse was full and here comes the children [and] all of them were whispering, "Santa Claus, Santa Claus." I saw him coming, a man helping him on each side. He came as Santa Claus and played *Silent Night* on that fiddle. There was not a dry eye in the place. It was beautiful. That is one of my favorite memory stories of that school.

Doug: Yes, did the [other] children perform in the program too?

Beth: Of course; they were the ones there at the front. They saw him coming out the door too. The parents had their backs to him. You started [preparing] for your Christmas program right after Thanksgiving. If you were a teacher of good salt, [i.e. good quality] you did this without losing or stopping too much instruction time. But it was a big thing and sometimes the last day of school program was a big thing.

This is quite an extravagant program, it seems, for that time. The teacher put forth a great deal of effort to make sure it was a good program. She also seems to have done some juggling in preparing for the program while not losing too much instructional time. Another teacher also discussed the importance of holiday programs for the local community members who attended programs at schools regardless of whether or not their own children attended the one-room school at this time.

Stella: Everyone would come, they were social events. Just like at Christmas. At Christmas everyone would have a Christmas program and there would be a wire across the front of the school. Each child would bring a sheet and a pin and you'd divide it off and present your play. So all the schools around now like out on Baden [road] there would be Hill [School] and Wood [School] and Red Mud [School] and then you could go on over to Yauger [School]. But everyone checked with everyone to see what time they were having those because the community went from play to play. Then they told you which one was bad.

Doug: So you checked with the other teachers so that you didn't conflict?

Stella: Yes, because it would be a conflict of the schedule and the people in the community, and even the mail carrier would sometimes do this. He went around and checked to see when everyone was having their play and you would always have them as close to the end of the week as you could. Some people would start at nine and then the other people would have it at eleven and it was all right if you went through the lunch hour; no one starved, you know. Then someone else would be at one and things like that so that everyone could travel and take in all the programs.

According to these comments and those of other teachers, the programs were a vital and expected part of the one-room school experience for the teacher, the students, the parents, and other community people. The one-room school provided important services to the community. These included educational and social functions. The community also provided key services to the one-room school in Mason County.

#### *Teacher service*

The one-room school teacher provided additional services to the community above and beyond leading instruction in the one-room school. As a central person within the community structure, the teacher often had to undertake community duties as part of the teaching duty. One teacher, Irene, discussed actions she undertook in the community when she and her sister taught in adjoining one-room schools.

Virginia [her sister, also a one-room school teacher] sprained her ankle one time and I taught Grant [school] out here, there wasn't any hills or anything. She [Virginia] taught [at] Franklin Hall [school] and she had to go down a hollow and everything so we traded schools and taught that way.

She went on to provide a comparison of this autonomy then compared to teacher roles and expectations today.

Irene: Gay [her husband] sang and I played the piano for the funerals in the community around. When there'd be people you knew really well and friends and there wasn't any back then, there wasn't any piano players around. You couldn't say well someone else will do it. So I just thought of that. They just insisted that I would play and I thought well, I can't take off from school to do that. So I went down to the office and asked the superintendent about it. I told him the circumstances and everything. He said, "Anytime that needed to be," he says, "You just dismiss school at noon and you go and play"....So I did

#### *Community Giving to the Schools*

The one-room school, with its single teacher, was more than a place of instruction; it became an integral part of the community in Mason County. Families within the community provided a high degree of support to the school. This included providing land to construct the school, day-to-day support for the school, providing the teacher for the school, and financial support for the one-room facility. One teacher, discussed how closely involved she and her family have been throughout the history of a one-room school.

Beth: I taught in my home school, Mud Run. I was at Mud Run when I was married. My family still owns the building....I went there and taught there for one year and a half and my father had also taught there. The land was given, that triangle, for the school by my great-grandfather and my Dad taught there of course, so did I, and then when it was closed, it came back to us, to my family.

Later in the interview additional discussion provided information about innovations undertaken by the community to improve the one-room school setting.

Beth: One-room schools even had a hot lunch program. People don't remember that. Mud Run had a hot lunch program that was started by my mother as a 4-H leader as part of her 4-H program....She would cook things like staples, beans, cornbread. There was no, I don't recall if there was any charge. The school board provided the food with some kind of welfare program and she did the cooking for nothing and the 4-H club helped and that was a community project.

The connection of this teacher and her family to their school, Mud Run, was strong and longstanding. The actions she discussed, such as her mother cooking for the school and her family giving land for construction of a building are comparable to what someone would do for their family members or others very close to them. Often, according to the data gained from through this study on Mason County's one-room schools, not only did the community provide the land for the school, it also provided the teacher for the one-room school.

#### *Home grown teachers*

During the course of the interviews for this study, a number of the teachers reported returning to their local childhood community to teach. Some of them even taught in the same school they had attended as a child.

Beth: I taught in my home school, Mud Run [School]...Valley Ridge and then Mud Run....Even in the community where the people knew me and had watched me grow up, there was a feeling of that respect. I learned that from my dad, who was also a teacher.

Another teacher also returned to her home school to teach. She [Irene] and her sister [Virginia] both attended this one-room school and both became teachers, “She and I both went all of our years to Roanoke [school], all eight years as students. Then we both taught it when we were teachers.”

Her sister validated this statement in her interview.

Virginia: They [Board of Education] hired me that day to teach [at] Roanoke [School}, which was right down my alley because that was where I had gone to school for eight years. I started [teaching] in that one-room school in 1946...

That’s the one I went to for eight years. And I had a boy that went to school when I did. [He was] in my class when I taught.

These teachers returned to their community school to provide instruction for the community’s youth.

The teacher in this study who began teaching the longest time ago and was the oldest person involved in this study, also returned to teach in her home, one-room school. Her first teaching experience was in Kanawha County from 1924-1929, and then she returned to her home county of Mason and taught in her home school.

Mary: I was satisfied with my schools. I taught Graham [School] and I had gone to school there. We had a farm where the plant is now and I went to school at Graham [School] and then I taught there....That was in the 30s and we lived where the Sporn Plant is. We were in a flood or two there. We lived across a field there.

Other teachers also relayed stories of being hired to teach in their former school

when they entered the teaching profession. For example one teacher returned as a teacher to the one-room school she had attended and her former teacher had moved up to become the Assistant Superintendent of schools in Mason County.

Diane: When I taught at White Oak Grove School, I walked from my home, which would have been a good mile. I also walked it as a child because that is where I attended school... The Assistant Superintendent was married to my cousin Clara...I had him for a teacher too see; this was really kind of a mixed up affair.

Many of the participants in this study reported teaching in a school that was either the same school they had attended as a child or a school that was in close proximity to their childhood homes. This may have been due to the low number of people entering the field of education as a profession. Thus when someone from a certain area was interested in teaching or had some training, the inclination of the central office may have been to locate them close to their home area. This idea is documented from Board Minutes:

June 5, 1939: Patrons from Eagle School appeared before the Board requesting that Mrs. Thomas be placed at Eagle because Mrs. Thomas lives in the neighborhood.

From these minutes, it seems the local community wanted to keep or have a local person as their teacher in their one-room school. This may have been due to convenience, familiarity, comfort level, or simply wanting someone whose actions and mannerisms they knew previously instead of risking an outside person unfamiliar to the area.

*Fundraisers*

The community recognized the role and importance of the one-room school in their area by providing the land for the school or the teacher for the school in Mason County. Further, when the school was in need of financial support or repair, the community responded to the need. The community undertook the responsibility for conducting fundraisers to raise money for the one-room school. Ice cream and pie socials were, according to the individuals interviewed for this study, popular fundraising functions. They were also important social occasions for the community. One teacher provided a detailed description of an ice cream and pie social and why it was held.

Virginia: We had our ice cream social and we painted our classroom down at Franklin Hall [school]. We made it pretty and had enough to buy some new books with. Oh we were just tickled to death....I spearheaded it and all they [parents] had to do, they helped wait on the people. They set boards for counters you know. Have you ever been to an old fashioned social?

Doug: No, what was it like?

Virginia: Oh, those were fun. They, we'd have several freezers of ice cream. We'd have cakes and pies and I don't recall just what all we did have, but then we had cake walks and we sold pies. People would bring a pie, young girls usually, then the boys would bid on it, and the one who bid the highest got to eat the pie with the girl that made the pie. But it was nice. I remember we got seventy-some dollars out of that first, cleared, we cleared that much. That was quite a lot back then.

Another teacher, Diane, reported a similar procedure for setting up and conducting the fundraising social within the one-room school, “People would bring pies or cakes and the community people, parents usually and then other people would bid on them at the night of the social and it was a pretty big affair.”

The above descriptions of ice cream and pie socials were provided by former Mason County one-room school teachers. Following is a description of the socials from the perspective of a community member who did not teach in the one-room schools. From her comments, the importance of these socials in her community life is obvious.

Ellen: They would have a festival every now and then at the school. Ice cream socials is what they called them. An ice cream social is something....We didn't have a lot of places to go and it was a big deal if you were invited to go to the social.

A different type of fundraiser was described by Thomas. This fundraiser seems to have been larger and more elaborate than the pie and ice cream socials.

Then we had these, these here radio guys in and put on a show down here at Board School. I don't know if you have ever heard of Old Bobby Cook and The Texas Saddle Boys. Oh they was well known in Huntington. I finally talked them into coming out to Board [school] to put on a program to make a little money. We was trying to build up our library. And you know, that school wouldn't even hold a third of them. They [the community people] was around on the outside looking in the windows at the program. We made quite a little money on them.

For another teacher, Stella, the fundraiser had a comical aspect that was not reported or discussed by any of the other teachers, administrators, or the community person.

Ok, with an ice cream social, you would have home-made ice cream and then people would bring pies and cakes and you would sell the cake by the piece or the pie by the piece. Then also...they would have a cake walk. People would pay; they would walk for a cake. Then you always had a guess pie; some lady in the community would make a pie as pretty as she could and then put strange things in it; like moths, or anything like that, and it was called a guess pie. People would guess and it was quite the thing to win the pie and take it home because it was just a fun thing...to see who could be the most creative in what they put in the pie.

The fundraisers had a dual purpose; to raise money to support the one-room school and to provide social opportunities for the community. Whatever the purpose, the one-room school was at the center of the action. The community also was a part of the day-to-action and interaction occurring at the one-room school facility.

#### *Community Involvement in day-to-day One-room School Functions*

In addition to supporting fundraisers for the one-room school, community members also participated in the day-to-day functioning of the school. This often consisted of peripheral support for the one-room school teacher's instruction. Thomas discussed the role community people played in his day-to-day activities as a teacher in a one-room school.

Well they'd [community people] come in and [do] anything they [students] might need and they would bring in magazines or some kind of reading material for the

children. A lot of times they would bring in, have little lunches, bring in sandwiches and things you know [for the children]....They were more or less on call if you needed something, if you wanted them to do something. I had several and they would come in and volunteer and help me a lot.

Another instance of community participation in the school's day-to-day functions involved the father of the teacher and his actions that improved the 'status' of a Mason County one-room school in addition to making its water source more convenient.

Virginia: We had to carry our water and the school had a cistern and when my dad found out that I was going to teach at Roanoke, I said, "Pop is there any way we can have our own water there?" He grinned and he said, "Probably." I said, "Well how?" He said, "Well just do it like you would any cistern." And I said, "Dad will you do it for me?" He said, "Well I guess I could." So he and some other ones cleaned out our cistern and wiped it down till it was just bare and put some chlorine in it and that was our drinking water and we went up the [social] ladder, you know, because we had our own water.

During the time period of this study, one-room schools in Mason County played important roles in the communities. The communities supported their schools and the schools supported their communities. The communities supported the schools through fundraisers and upkeep. The schools supported the communities by providing social functions including entertainment activities and a meeting place for even non-education based meetings and functions. For Mason County one-room school teachers, this community relations function was part of their job as teachers. Throughout these endeavors between the one-room schools and the communities, emotional bonds were

being developed and strengthened between the teacher and the students in the one-room school setting.

Completing other administrative functions were also a part of the one-room school teachers and the central office administrators' responsibility. These additional functions will be discussed in Chapter V.

## Chapter V

### Implementation of Gulick and Urwick's Seven Administrative Functions

Gulick and Urwick's (1936) seven administrative functions have been defined in Chapter II of this document. It is difficult to isolate each function from the others as a clean separate entity. Overlap between them exists and to delineate what falls under one function as opposed to another one is a judgment call, I feel, on the part of the researcher. For many of the administrative practices undertaken in the one-room schools, the argument can be made that some practices fit under more than one administrative function, this meant for some of the data in this study it was almost a case of splitting hairs to determine under which function certain practices best fit. It was my intent to follow the protocol of what fits under each function that was followed in Chapter II.

This chapter addresses the implementation of Gulick and Urwick's seven administrative functions (planning, organizing, staffing, directing, coordinating, reporting and budgeting) in one-room schools in Mason County, West Virginia from 1935-1950. The findings of this study should not be generalized to other geographic, time or one-room school settings. Generalization of findings was not the intent of this study. This study covers the earliest years under the county unit system of educational administration in Mason County, West Virginia, from 1935, through the years following World War II, to 1950. Each administrative function is addressed separately as a part of this chapter, with the data gained for the analysis through interviews and primary source documents.

#### *Planning*

Gulick and Urwick (1936) define the planning function of administration as, "working out in broad outline the things that need to be done and the methods for doing

them to accomplish the purpose set for the enterprise” (p. 13). For this study, the data gathered in regard to the planning function of administration in one-room schools focused on the day-to-day planning for instruction and flexibility in planning in the school facility to the planning by the Mason County Board of Education on which one-room schools to open and close each year for instruction.

*Planning each day’s instruction*

The data in the first section focuses on the planning of the day-to-day instruction as perceived by the teachers interviewed. The Mason County one-room school teachers in this study had no control over curriculum or textbook selection, but they did have responsibility for planning the instruction itself. As a part of this, the one-room school teacher undertook the task of planning the school day. This involved all subjects taught to the potential of eight grade levels in a one-room school facility. This was not an easy task and it was undertaken at the outset with little if any direction from the central office. When asked about planning the day’s instruction, former teachers discussed the difficulties in undertaking this. For example, Irene discussed the difficulties related to “the time element. You had to teach so many subjects....in a small frame, time frame. There was a limit on what could be taught because you didn’t have the facilities, you know, like they have today.” Along the same lines, Virginia described how she learned, with some assistance from family members, to plan a daily instructional schedule.

You did have to kind of crowd it in. I know the first day I went to a one-room school, my two aunts....had fixed me out a schedule to follow. Well, it was nine to twelve you know, and then from one to four. Well,

mine [instructional day] was done at twelve. I didn't know how to teach you know; I had been out of school three years and I had that all done by twelve o'clock noon. I could have gone home. So I just started over; I had it all over again.

The school day itself was organized by the teacher who developed his or her own schedule, so as to include all subjects and all grade levels. From the time of arrival, until dismissal, the teacher was the person in charge of the classroom, from starting the school year, to setting and keeping the schedule, to dismissing at the end of the day and at the end of the year. In one-room schools, the teacher was the administrator who made these decisions. A 'grand tour' description of the one-room school instructional day was provided by one former one-room school teacher:

Stella: We always started with the flag pledge and "God Bless America." Then you kind of stopped there and checked your attendance even though you could look out there and see there were 19 people. It was very important to call everyone's name. Sometimes they didn't hear their names too often, but you always called it early, none of this looking around and wondering. Then usually we had someone read a scripture or someone read poetry. Then we had sharing, anything they wanted to tell us we shared in that...like any problems in the community or new brothers or sisters or marriages, it was a social time. And then the next thing was always penmanship. We started with positioning the paper and practicing the skills, shaping the letters and all of those things. Now it lasted about, you know, penmanship was about 10-15 minutes and you really stressed it. Then you went from penmanship.... [to] reading and you would make the

assignment and the intermediate people would start. [To] begin their classes you'd explain it to them and answer their questions. They would start working because you would read their books and then read the questions at the end of the chapter or they would have a list of words to look up in the glossary and things like that. But as they would start working on that the teacher would start working with the primary people and as you got through, everyone had to read everyday. But by the time you finished all of that it was getting close to 10:15 and in between those you could start people on English or spelling. Then you would have recess which is 15 minutes and everyone would go out and play. And usually the teacher, if they were young and active, was invited to play. They would go out and play dodge ball, baseball, and Annie-over, and red rover, red rover...I tossed that one in there; you can't play that one anymore...and hop scotch, just any of those very active games. Jumping ropes. Then for lunch, there was an hour, 12:00 till 1:00. So everyone, if they did go home....you just sat and had lunch....In the afternoon when you came in from the lunch, it would be 1:00 and I always read to them for a half an hour and sometimes the teacher would start a book and read the book all of the way through. Like you read *Heidi*; you read *Uncle Tom's Cabin*; you read those with them, and they liked it. At Christmas time you tried to read them Christmas stories and the like of that. I read and by this point we are getting close to 2:00 and you would start on Social Studies or Science and any of those other subjects. The afternoons were more relaxed; you moved at a slower pace but a lot of the children had walked as far as the teacher that morning and they were tired.

This description of the typical day was similar to those provided by other Mason County one-room school teachers in this study. Without any formal direction or guidance, it seems, of how to organize and set up the school day, based upon my interviews and data collection, the day was fairly uniform in organization from one-room school to one-room school in Mason County.

*Flexibility in planning*

The one-room school did allow the teacher some flexibility in the school day. When students needed some flex in the schedule to fit in or finish up something the teacher had that autonomy to decide on the changes in the schedule. Not having an office controlled bell system made it easier for the teacher to make decisions regarding instruction on the spot based on immediate need. When asked about the daily schedule, Thomas replied:

Well it was flexible. I had a daily schedule; you had to have, but...sometimes you had to deviate from it you know. First you had your reading classes, then your math, science, and so on. In fact, when I started out, I was straight out of school. I didn't have enough time for each class to get through their lessons, so I had to consolidate the language arts; put them sort of together like spelling, English, reading. After I did that it was not too much to make out the schedule...but there was a lot of times you had some hardships with them, some of the kids, and had to make some adjustments in your schedules and things.

One-room school teachers, according to one teacher interviewed in this study, even had flexibility in planning the make up of the students in the one-room school

classroom. This teacher, Ann, discusses her decision to include children with disabilities in her one-room school.

When I was teaching right here at this school, Buckeye, there was two children in the community who were really severe special ed. And you didn't have to take special ed. children in school. Now LD, you didn't recognize them as LD, you just recognized them as slow learners. But these were special ed. You could tell you know by talking with them and looking at them. You didn't have to take them and the parents, the two parents came to me and asked if they could send their children to school and you know it was a dilemma because you had so much to do and everything, you really didn't have and I told them yes, but don't expect too much you know in the way of academics. Because I just didn't have time to spend with the children so I said they could come for the social, the socializing reason, so I had two special ed. children.

*Central office planning on school location*

A key function of the central office was deciding where to build a one-room school. One teacher, Ann, discussed the location choice for one of her one-room schools: Flatrock, this school was built on a flat rock. Now people built the school where land wasn't you know really useful for farming and you see a lot of these one-room schools on a hillside or something like that.

The decision of where to locate a school seems to have been affected not only by student need but also by future use options for the land.

*Central office planning for opening or closing one-room schools*

Whereas planning for daily instruction was the responsibility of the one-room school teachers, the responsibility and authority for planning to open or close schools resided with the central office and the board of education. For the one-room school teacher this meant that while undertaking to improve instruction and student achievement, the one-room school teacher also faced the possibility of the one-room school being closed, even in the middle of the year. According to Mason County Board of Education documents, the board could decide to open or close a one-room school based on enrollment and ADA (average daily attendance). Mason County one-room schools could even be closed in the middle of the school year if the ADA fell too low. For example the following board minutes address this procedure.

January 6, 1940: “On motion of Mr. S\_\_\_\_\_, seconded by Mr. R\_\_\_\_\_, it was ordered that Hill School, Cologne District, be closed, effective January 17, 1941, because of low attendance.

“On motion of Mr. W\_\_\_\_\_, seconded by Mr. R\_\_\_\_\_, it was ordered that Pleasant Vale School, Arbuckle District, be closed, effective January 17, 1941.”

Even after formally closing a one-room school, factors could lead to its being reopened. The central office administration could plan to close a one-room school; however factors could influence or even change this plan. Community action and protest was one factor that could result in a change in plans.

January 20, 1941: “A delegation from Rising Sun School appeared before the board in regard to the closing of their school, effective January 17. The committee reported to the board that four additional pupils had enrolled in the school;

which made a total enrollment of eighteen. After consideration of the matter the board ordered that the school be reopened, effective January 21, 1941.

“A delegation from Pleasant Vale School appeared before the board in regard to the closing of their school, effective January 17, 1941. The board of education reconsidered their action, but decided that the pupils were within two miles of the bus route and that the attendance was too low to justify reopening the school.”

Teacher plans to remain in a one-room school could also be affected by the mid-year decision to close a school. Based upon board of education action, Mason County one-room school teachers could find themselves moved to a different one-room school facility in the middle of the school year.

January 27, 1941“On motion it was ordered that Hopedale School, Cologne District, be closed and the children transported to Leon, and that [teacher] Mrs. C\_\_\_\_\_ K\_\_\_\_\_ be transferred to Buckel School, Clendenin District.”

Number of students attending seems to have directly affected the plans to open or close a one-room school. Other factors including distance to bus stops and parental protest, could affect the decision to close or open a one-room school in Mason County. West Virginia was still under a law requiring that students not have to walk more than two miles, one way, in order to attend school (Ambler, 1951). One teacher explained how the ADA, average daily attendance, directly affected his employment. He also discussed the important role played by parents in attempting to keep a one-room school open. This parental involvement in the one-room school will be addressed in greater depth under the administrative function of maintaining school-community relations.

Thomas: During the term, I believe there was thirteen students, grade one to eight. The money, so to speak was getting a little short. So Mr. R\_\_\_\_\_ [the superintendent of schools] told me and they was going to close Hartzell [School] in the middle of the term. Of course I didn't have anything to say about that. But the parents, they liked the school. They liked what I was doing and getting along. So they had formed a little posse and went into the board and they kept it open. They didn't close it.

### *Organizing*

The definition given to the organizing function of administration by Gulick and Urwick (1936) was “the establishment of the formal structure of authority through which work subdivisions are arranged, defined and co-ordinated for the defined objective” (p. 13). For this study, the formal authority structure was in the county seat of Mason County, Point Pleasant. This was where the board of education office was located. Formal administrative positions in the board included a superintendent and an assistant-superintendent. A supervisor of instruction was added in the late 1940s. Data for this study was collected from a former superintendent and a former supervisor of instruction in Mason County. The data on the organizing function of administration will focus on the role of the administrators and the role of the one-room school teachers within the “formal structure of authority” (Gulick & Urwick, 1936, p. 13), what happened when problems arose within this structure, and barriers to solving those problems.

### *Organizing an administrative visit*

Each one-room school was to be visited once per year by a central office administrator. In Mason County, the superintendent and assistant superintendent had the

responsibility for determining how this administrative task would be organized.

According to the former superintendent, Samuel, they divided the school visits within the county.

He [the assistant superintendent] would visit one and maybe make it to three [schools] in one day. I usually stayed; I got to the school at 9:00 and go to the first recess. Then I left 15 minutes to [get to] the next school. I could usually get there and stay until noon. Then I would go to the next school and I would get four schools [in a day] in that way.

West Virginia state law mandated at least one visit to each one-room school per year. The superintendent and assistant superintendent seem to have set out to visit a number of schools each day. There was no mention of how the Mason County was split between the two to complete the visits.

*Organizing a response to problems in the one-room schools*

When the superintendent or assistant superintendent visited the schools, it seems inevitable that some problems would be found. Repairs needed by the older school structures were one area requiring attention that might be discovered during the visits. When asked about what occurred if something needed repair, the former superintendent discussed the need for repairs to the heating stove in the one-room school.

Samuel: Well, we only had one man that tried to go around. Now that was a job in one-room schools. Burnside stoves, there were three different makes of Burnside stoves and they weren't interchangeable. You had to know whether it was a number one or a number two or number three. There was one company in Huntington [West Virginia] that used to make them and....the guy [repairman]...

usually he had carried stovepipe with him and parts for the stove.

By these statements, it seems one man was responsible for the repair of the stoves in the one-room schools, so all requests or needs for repairs had to go to him. Other demands for structural repairs or improvements were given to the superintendent. The former superintendent discussed some instances he faced that required he immediately organize an action to respond:

I had several experiences, for example down at Daisy [School] and this usually happened right before school was supposed to start. Somehow they got me word that they had a hard rain and it flooded the cistern and they needed the school to start on Monday. So I took my wife with me and my daughter was about six years old and we went down to Daisy and....in the middle of the road there was a ditch about this deep [motioning with his hands]. And I had to straddle the ditch to get down there and see about it and try to find somebody that would clean it out. I don't remember who I got, but someone that would clean it out, and of course we would pay them. But my daughter thought that my car would get in that ditch and turn over and she got out and walked. Another experience I had, they called in the bus driver up at Elmwood [School]. He couldn't drive the bus and they didn't get me word until Saturday evening. Well Sunday, after church and everything, it was late in the evening before we could get away and my son-in-law went with me. We went up there to find a bus driver and the fog came in. I got a bus driver to take the bus on Monday morning. But coming out of there, the fog was so bad, it was night, and my son-in-law said, "I believe you're off the road." And he got out and we were in the middle of a

cornfield. But there was a road where the farmers had been going in.

The barrier to organizing a solution to the problem in both cases was certainly poor road condition compounded by the need for an immediate solution. With both of these problems in Mason County's one-room schools, he [the superintendent] organized the response himself and solved the problem on the spot, without the approval of the board of education or even discussing the issue with others in the central office. This is consistent with other organization issues discussed in this section. The organization responded to emergencies or immediate need in order to gain an expeditious solution.

### *Staffing*

The staffing function, according to Gulick and Urwick (1936), "is the whole personnel function of bringing in and training the staff and maintaining favorable conditions of work" (p. 13). Data gathered in regard to the Staffing function of administration in one-room schools for this study focused on the hiring of the superintendent, teacher certification and barriers to women in staffing practices. Data on teacher hiring in Mason County was discussed in Chapter IV as a part of school-community ties as the teacher for one-room schools was often hired from the community immediately surrounding the one-room school.

### *Board responsibility in hiring a superintendent*

The Mason County Superintendent of Schools was hired by a five-member elected board of education. According to West Virginia State Law, no more than two board members could be elected from each magisterial district in a county (Ambler, 1951). For this study, a former superintendent of schools and a former supervisor were interviewed as part of the data collection. The superintendent interviewed as part of this

study was the second superintendent in Mason County, under the county unit of administration. As was discussed in Chapter II, the county unit of administration replaced the district level of administration in West Virginia. Prior to the county unit of administration, the superintendent of schools was a directly elected position. When asked about the authority of the board of education to hire a superintendent, Samuel discussed a situation that arose in regard to his hiring:

But when Mr. Starkey was elected there was something in the law that there couldn't be more than two [board members] or something from a district. The same thing happened in another county and they found for the superintendent. But for me I think it was politics, I was without a job since Mr. Starkey couldn't be elected with two people from that district. They brought F\_\_\_\_ B\_\_\_\_ in; he was one of the finest school principals. He was a high school principal, a real nice man. In August the same board that cancelled my contract asked me if I would come back because he hadn't filled any of the jobs that were vacant. He hadn't made the reports that were due to be made.

In this, case the organization of the board of education decided to change the person holding the office of school superintendent in Mason County. When this didn't work, the board decided to change it back. For the interim, under the leadership of F\_\_\_\_ B\_\_\_\_, based on the data collected from Samuel, the organization of the school system was lacking in quality and efficiency, therefore the a change in organization occurred with the reinstatement of the former superintendent. Both the organizational structure of the school system as well as the staffing function of administration were under the direct control of the board of education.

### *Certification*

The school board, with superintendent recommendation, had the authority to assign and hire for all jobs within the school system. These jobs included full-time teacher positions, part-time janitor jobs, and even a limited number of central office positions. Teachers hired to teach in Mason County's one-room schools had varying levels and degrees of training and certification. A former school superintendent described the different teaching certificates.

Samuel: At that time there was a bunch of different certificates. There was a first grade certificate, like examination, if you make so much on the teacher's uniform examination, that was first grade, and a little bit less, I forget how much, you would have got a second grade. Then way down the line, you had a third grade certificate. Then if you had, I believe it was sixty hours of credit from a college, you could get a normal school certificate. They called it a standard normal. Oh yeah and thirty-two hours you got—let's see not standard normal. Anyway it was a little below a standard normal. And all these different ones had different pay rates. Now there were very few teachers that had a four year certificate that was in the one-room school. They only required it [a four year certificate] at high school; high school teachers had it.

Under the County Unit System of Administration, efforts were undertaken to improve the training of teachers employed to teach the county's children. Excerpts from one school board meeting give insight into the efforts to improve teacher certification status.

May 3, 1935: It is ordered that no new teachers be employed at any school

having more than two teachers who do not hold at least a Standard Normal certificate, or equivalent, and that no new teachers be employed in the county who do not have at least a First Grade certificate issued upon school credits. And that teachers now employed, who do not have qualifications equivalent to those set forth above, shall be required to earn at least six semester hours credit each year until they attain the said qualifications, unless excused by the Board of Education.

It seems the central office and the board of education were trying to upgrade the training level of teachers in schools having at least two teachers to a minimum of a Standard Normal teaching certificate. This suggests that teachers in one-room schools were exempt from this ruling so students in these schools were possibly under teachers with less training than students in more urban, multi-room school settings. However, later in the excerpt, all teachers currently employed were to hold at least a First Grade Certificate and no new person would be employed to teach unless they had received this level of certification.

Presently employed teachers were also to meet certain other criteria at this time in regard to training and certification. These criteria are spelled out in board minutes.

May 3, 1937: On motion the following teachers were tentatively selected for the school year 1937-38. In order to make their employment valid those teachers who have not met the requirements of the county and state board of education must meet these requirements in full by September 1, 1937. Such teachers are elected conditionally.

Of the 193 teachers elected or employed at this meeting, only ten were elected conditionally. All of these elected conditionally in Mason County had been employed to teach in one-room schools. This represents less than 5% of the total teaching staff. This provision would only stay in place a short eleven-month period. The very next year it would be overturned by board action.

April 4, 1938: By unanimous consent the Board agreed that the 6 hours school work required of all teachers annually who held certificates lower than a Standard Normal be removed.

The certification status of the Mason County one-room school teachers involved in this study varied. The researcher was unable to locate someone who had taken the county level teacher's examination and could remember any of the questions or type of questions asked. Many of the teachers in this study were hired without even taking the teacher's examination, during and immediately after World War II, when a teacher shortage was in effect. The researcher was also unable to find a pay scale that gave the differences in pay for each certification status. It would have been interesting to see if the financial increases for higher certification were enough to make it financially feasible for teachers to pursue additional college training.

#### *Barriers against women*

In addition to the financial burden of added college, there were barriers to women advancing to administrative positions. It was through formal board action that some of the barriers against women in teaching were enacted. For example, in the May 4, 1936, Mason County Board of Education minutes the following motion was noted: "On motion of Dr. S\_\_\_\_, the Board's rule against hiring teacher with children under three years of

age was amended to read “two years.” This motion replaced an earlier, July 3, 1933, motion. In the earlier motion, the limitation on women was even more wide reaching: “Motion by Mr. L\_\_\_\_ and seconded by Mr. M\_\_\_\_ that women with a child or children under three years of age be not employed to teach in Mason County.” These provisions were amended through Mason County Board action again, four years later. Minutes from a meeting on September 20, 1940 show: On motion of Mr. S\_\_\_\_, seconded by Mr. B\_\_\_\_, it was ordered that the Board not sign a contract with any lady teacher who had a child under one year of age, that states for the opening of school.”

This represented a large barrier to women in the teaching field. It also virtually guaranteed that a woman would be unable to teach, have children, and earn a pension. This premise regarding pension eligibility is based upon the following school board meeting transcript excerpt:

August 3, 1938: Mr. A.C. K\_\_\_\_’s application for a pension was discussed by the Board. The Board agreed that in order to be eligible for a pension in Mason County the applicant should have at least fifty years of continuous service in the Schools of Mason County and have no other source of income.

No mention was made, during this meeting’s minutes, of men who have children under a certain age being barred from employment. However, minutes from a later meeting did mention men and the status of the wife as compared to the husband in the school system.

May 1, 1938: The Board discussed the employment of teachers for the school term 1939-40. The Secretary made the following recommendations with regards to the teachers now teaching in the county, who are applicants for positions for the school term 1939-40. The Secretary’s recommendations reads as follows:

In cases where husband and wife have both been employed I recommend that the husband be reemployed. I wish to call your attention to the fact that out of 204 teachers now employed, 64 are men and 140 are women. Of the 140 women, 72 are married and 68 are single. Our county needs more young men. I recommend the adoption of the policy of encouraging deserving young men to continue in the profession by giving them advancements when their work merits.

It was 1946 before a woman was hired as a central office supervisor. Excerpts from the interviews with Virginia reflect on her role as the first woman to be hired as a central office supervisor: “I was the only woman in the office, outside the secretaries. And he [the superintendent] even put my name on the letterhead, not all the time, but after I was there for a while he did.”

When asked, “Was it hard for a woman to become a supervisor?” This was her response:

Virginia: Well, it wasn't for me because the superintendent wanted me. See what happened, the state department was working with us and I was at the school up there that was demonstrating how to teach. I was in the state department meeting and she [the state department supervisor] knew about me, and read about me, and was pleased with me and so forth. She went back and told Mr. R\_\_\_\_. She said, “You give her that job.” She said, “She can handle it, she will do alright.” So, Mr. R\_\_\_\_, he had to see for himself. He had given me my diploma, you know, when I graduated [from high school]. He was superintendent back then; he was superintendent more than once. So, he came up and he was watching, he was

observing. I know I was teaching...fractions [to] my little first graders. It impressed him. So he told me to come by the office he wanted to talk to me or something. So when I did, he offered me the job. Never dreamed I could do it. But, yeah, I did.

Doug: Did you feel you were opening the way for other women?

Virginia: Yeah, not really. I was just; I was just doing my job and everything.

No, I didn't realize I was making history.

This woman shared a wealth of information that crosses the administrative functions in regard to her job as supervisor of instruction, overseeing the one-room and graded schools in Mason County. Her quotes will appear in the discussion of almost every administrative function. Two other women had been superintendents, but Virginia was the first woman to hold the position of supervisor in Mason County.

### *Directing*

The directing function of administration was defined by Gulick and Urwick (1936) as, "the continuous task of making decisions and embodying them in specific and general orders and instructions and serving as the leader of the enterprise" (p. 13). Data gathered in regard to the Directing function of administration in one-room schools focuses on the direction provided to the teacher by the central office administration and on the direction provided to the students by the one-room school teachers. This includes direction in terms of instruction as well as discipline procedures, direction in terms of school improvements, and direction and evaluation provided as part of the administrative visits and discipline procedures in the one-room school. A large quantity of data regarding this administrative function came from both interviews and school board

minutes. Day-to-day direction of the one-room school was provided by the one-room school teacher. The day-to-day direction was covered under the planning and organizing function of administrative practices. The data in this function will focus on the direction provided by someone charged with overseeing the one-room school teacher and the one-room school teacher overseeing his or her pupils.

*Administrative visits to one-room school teachers*

The State of West Virginia ranked schools during the time period of this study. The central office was responsible for directing the process necessary for a school to be ranked as first class. In order for a one-room school to be considered first-class, certain criteria had to be met. One part of this criterion was completion of administrative visits as the former Mason County superintendent explains:

We had about 100 [one-room schools] when I was first superintendent. We had about 100 one-room schools, and....if they wanted to be first class, the superintendent or the assistant had to make at least three visits. Well, most of them wanted to be first class.

Doug: So what else did they have to do to get first class?

Samuel: There was something about libraries and things of that sort. I think their attendance had to be so good. I had a checklist, but I don't have a copy of that.

Doug: Did a lot of one-room schools get first class?

Samuel: Quite a few of them did [got first class]. Those were usually the best teachers too.

The supervisor, who started as a Mason County one-room school teacher and later moved to the central office to oversee one-room schools, discussed two instances where

she provided direction to teachers in one-room schools as part of her job as supervisor.

When asked about what she would do as part of her visit to the one-room school, Virginia provided this response:

One time I went to Arbuckle. It was a one-room school. There was too much wrong with it. She [the teacher] was dirty and I left there just, almost in tears. I was just so disappointed. I remember I turned around and I went back there and said, "L\_\_\_ could I have a few words with you?" I said, "Can you get your kids busy?" So I sat down with her and all that, I talked to her, just heart to heart. I said, "L\_\_\_ you look so nice when you are dressed up." I said, "I would love to see you do it, for the kids to see how you look when you are dressed up. Why don't you have a clean up day, like on Friday afternoon and straighten up the bookshelves, put this junk away." I said, "That's the way we did. The kids like it, they like that." And she said, "Yes, she would." And I said, "Now I am going to come back in two weeks and see how you have done." When I went back, you wouldn't have believed it was the same school and she looked nice and of course I complimented her. When I got back to the office I wrote her a letter thanking her for the change that she had brought about there. And I said, "Even the kids acted happier and you had a nice smile on your face and stuff like that." When she died, her son was a principal here in Mason County and she had saved that letter because it was [from] her supervisor see. So he thanked me for that letter and even brought it to me....I had forgotten about that. Then another time I, was called to observe a teacher....The parents were complaining about her because she wasn't teaching the social studies and science....So I had a conference with her,

but before I had got to the school, I was so nervous....because she had been one of my one-room school teachers. I had been to her home, stayed all night, had been friends with her since. But I just pulled over to the side of the road and prayed that I would know how to handle that and to give me the knowledge and courage to do what I had to do. That just went so smooth. Everything was adjusted; it was right what she wanted to do, [but] she didn't know how to do it, how to crowd it in and so forth. What she was doing, she was teaching like science one semester and maybe history another semester or something like that. So I showed her how to include both of them.

These data provide insight into how the one-room school teacher was given direction for improvement in his or her practices.

*Barriers to providing administrative direction*

There were barriers to actually undertaking administrative visits. This study is focusing on administrative practices fifty to sixty-five years ago. Many of the roads in West Virginia at the time of study were gravel or mud. Transportation from the central office to the rural areas was not easy. One central office administrator reflected on difficulties he encountered in trying to visit Mason County's one-room schools.

Samuel: Like I told you we [had] horses. In fact, I won a horse one time and left it out on [route] 87. I could get right to it to some of those schools out there [since they were along better roads]. Down at Hannan, this was before they had improved the road much; WPA [Works Progress Administration] did a lot of good work. But we would try to visit the schools early in the year before the roads got bad, maybe just have one in the spring. At that time we had a county nurse, and it

was an older lady. So I told her that we could go together because she didn't drive very much and we went out to visit a school up in Union District. And as you go down the road across the creek and I had a Model A Ford at that time and the tie bars came off and here I was in the creek. But she got enough so that she could get out and she walked up to the school while I got the car out. And I found a bolt in something that I could take out and fix it by the time she got back. When I went to Black Jack, and there was one called Burning Flats; anyway they told me I could take a shortcut and it wasn't a road; it was up a hill. In fact I got off and almost had to pull my horse up the hill.

The same barriers and frustrations the Mason County administrators faced in visiting schools were faced by one-room school teachers trying to get to the central office to file reports, pick up mail, etc. These barriers as experienced by the one-room school teachers will be addressed under the reporting function of one-room school administration.

*Teacher perceptions of administrative visits to provide direction*

Teachers had differing perceptions of administrative visits while they were teaching in the one-room schools of Mason County. Their perceptions varied from pride in seeing the administrator appear at their school's programs to "shaking in my boots" at the very thought of having an administrative visit. Stella even reported having gone an entire year of teaching without a single administrative visit.

The first year that I taught school, no one from the county school office came to visit. And the second year, I had one visit. That's basically what you looked for. The superintendent or the assistant superintendent usually comes

past, make[s] an appearance once a year....They just, they just came in and sat down and looked around to see how things were going and when you saw them coming you told the students who they were. They just sat there and listened and usually they would spend the morning or the afternoon, then have a brief conference with you. They were always very considerate, they would talk about how nice the school looked, how clean the school was, how well behaved they were, how relaxing it was, you know. And how far of a walk it was from the main road.

Another teacher relayed a similar scenario for an administrative visit to her school. However, she goes further to discuss reasons the administrator might return for additional visits during the same school year.

Beth: The superintendent and the vice superintendent and the school nurses sometimes [made visits]. I think maybe once a year, unless something was real good, then they would bring others with them to watch you and then also if things were real bad, they, meaning the superintendents would come back more often.

Doug: Did they ever come to visit you more often?

Beth: Just to see the special things I would do.....Well like the Friday activities or the programs. It was something if the superintendent came to your Christmas program and I remember him showing up to one of mine and applauding afterward.

The teacher, Mary, who was the oldest and had started teaching the earliest, discussed the infrequent administrative visits she had over her nearly forty years of teaching.

Not very much [visiting] because they had too many they had to watch.

They would just pop in and see what you were doing. They usually didn't bother you.... [They would] just check our records and see what we were doing and usually they would have maybe a record. Usually the parents didn't leave anything on the record, but some of the parents were really happy with what we were giving them. They would sometimes know when they were coming and would be there to talk to them, to let them know how happy they were with what I was doing there.

This was the first and only reference to parents knowing the Mason County Superintendent was coming to visit their one-room school. One teacher, Irene, provided data on a visit from the assistant superintendent and how this visit was somewhat humorous in nature.

One time when I was teaching out here to Grant [school], we always had a ball diamond that we went to at noon and recesses to play ball and it was really interesting. Kids were competitive you know. They just really had a good time, it was a regular ball diamond, and other, I mean, they had every, like the bases and everything. So this particular day, the assistant superintendent came and the art director came out. We had just eaten at noon and we were just getting ready to start over there to the ball diamond. And I told them we were. I said, "We were just starting over there." They said, "Well we'll go with you." And they went over there and played ball with us and they wouldn't, didn't go in, we all didn't go in until they [the central office administrators] wanted to; until about 2 o'clock

or something. And we always made it a point to go in at twelve, you know. But they didn't, they were having such a good time, they didn't want to go in.

I asked the former superintendent who was the person responsible for many of these visits about any fear or intimidation factors in the visits he undertook.

Samuel: I thought of that and I tried to make them comfortable.

Doug: What did you do to make them more comfortable?

Samuel: Well I guess I wasn't dynamic and I didn't say, "Now you gotta do this or you gotta do this." But I said, "What can we do to help you, what's your problem? What do you need?"

*Document data on administrative direction*

The board of education documentation is very limited in its notations of the administrative visits undertaken to provide direction to the one-room schools. The majority of the data that are available from the accessed school board minutes focus on parental efforts and actions to report problems or need for administrative visits and direction to a particular school. These reports would then possibly require an additional visit from the central office personnel to investigate or to correct the matter. The following is an example of this type of report and the subsequent action taken by the board.

January 5, 1942: Several patrons of Sizemore School appeared before the Board complaining of punishment inflicted upon their children by the teacher, E\_\_\_\_ A\_\_\_\_. After carefully considering the matter, the Board ordered that Mr. S\_\_\_\_ investigate and make a report to the Board.

Later Board meeting transcripts do not mention what action was taken or not

taken by the Assistant Superintendent. However, three months later, this school and its teacher again appeared in the board minutes.

April 6, 1942: A large delegation from Sizemore School appeared before the

Board to bring charges of immorality against their teacher, E\_\_\_\_ A\_\_\_\_\_.

A number of the patrons spoke before the Board charging Mr. A\_\_\_\_\_ with immoral conduct at the school. After all the patrons had been heard Mr.

A\_\_\_\_\_ was asked to state his case. Mr. A\_\_\_\_\_ denied all the charges which were brought against him and presented several witnesses on his behalf.

After carefully considering the matter, the Board decided that Mr. A\_\_\_\_\_ and Mr. J\_\_\_\_ C\_\_\_\_\_ would be asked to exchange schools. The Ass't

Superintendent was instructed to request Mr. C\_\_\_\_\_, who is now teaching at Pine Grove in Clendenin District to exchange schools with Mr. A\_\_\_\_\_

These concerns seemed to mandate administrative action, at parental request or report, to provide direction in the course of the one-room school's practices.

*One-room school teacher direction for student discipline*

The teacher in the one-room school was responsible for the day-to-day occurrences in the one-room school. Whereas in a multi-room, graded school facility, the teacher could look to the onsite administrator for assistance in providing direction to students creating discipline problems; the teacher in the one-room school had no other professional to turn to for immediate assistance. Instead, responses to the occasional behavior problems were the responsibility of the one-room school teacher who sometimes received support or assistance from parents.

Stella: You see in those days we didn't have much [discipline problems]. Usually you just spoke to them or you just kept them in at recess....It worked because they also knew that when they got home the other kids were going to tell. Their parents probably knew it before they had come home that they had been in trouble again....One big girl once I remember just threw a real temper tantrum and went storming out and said she was going home and did and there wasn't anything that I could do about it because she went the opposite direction while I was coming back this way. When I got to school the next morning, when I opened the door, I saw her mother standing by the stove getting warm. Here I am eighteen years old and I don't know how to handle this. And the lady says, "I understand L\_\_\_\_\_ gave you some sauce yesterday" and I said, "Well yes she did." I explained briefly what happened and she said, "Well you just don't worry about that." She said, "If this happens again, you just send her home with a note and blank," she called her father by name, "And blank will take care of that lady." And that was the end of that.

It is interesting that this Mason County one-room school teacher did not mention trying to contact someone for advice or assistance in this problem. Rather the parent took the initiative and contacted the teacher to offer support. Another teacher relayed a behavior problem he encountered in the one-room school and how he handled it discreetly without parental involvement and provided direction to the student so it would not happen again.

Thomas: I had a little difficulty at a couple of schools with the older boys, getting up in 8<sup>th</sup> grade, some of them was as big as I was. I had a problem with them and

tobacco. I wouldn't allow no tobacco in the school. One of the boys....was chewing tobacco. I just couldn't catch him. Well these outside toilets...the vent [was] coming out of the pit, like a box vent to help keep the smell down. Well and I knew this boy was chewing tobacco. You know whenever they wanted to go to the bathroom, to the toilet, they would always raise their hands and I never did refuse a child a trip to the toilet. Of course I knew sometimes this boy was chewing tobacco. I used the same toilet as the children did. I noticed a slit in the vent so I got to investigating and he had that rigged so he could raise that vent up and down [and] in that vent he had his tobacco hid....I tell you what I did. I waited till school's out and I said, "Sammy, I want to see you before you go home." I didn't punish him and I said, "I know where your tobacco is and I want it to stay at home. I'm not going to punish you but if you even bring it again, I'll have to.

Some teachers struggled with discipline and felt not up to it without assistance. Diane discussed how she handled a behavior episode that occurred during her time as a teacher in a one-room school.

I had a problem my first year. When I talked to you the other day on the phone [to set up the interview] I said I felt so inadequate that first year. There was this boy that was just a little, big trouble maker and he would stick his feet out and trip the little ones. He was bigger than me....I tried to paddle him. Back in those days you paddled and you had to have discipline. But I don't remember paddling very many.

### *Coordinating*

Gulick and Urwick (1936) defined the coordinating function as “the all important duty of inter-relating the various parts of the work” (p. 13). The implementation of this administrative function focuses on the support provided to the teacher in the one-room school in carrying out instruction by persons not employed as teachers or administrators by the Mason County Board of Education.

#### *Coordination of the heating and cleaning*

One area of coordinated support was the undertaking of insuring the school was ready each morning for the teacher and the students to enter and begin the instructional day. For the Mason County one-room school, this involved starting the fire to warm the building and cleaning and maintaining the one-room school building. The person responsible for starting the fire and cleaning the school building was the janitor or custodian. These two titles were used interchangeably by the Mason County teachers interviewed for this study. The janitor or custodian could have been an older student at the one-room school or an adult who lived near the school, was hired by the board of education and paid a nominal sum for their work.

Stella: The custodians would come in the morning and build a fire. But all the schools I was in, I was fortunate enough to have an adult that did it and I think they were paid \$5.00 a month. They came every morning and built the fire and then they would sweep in the evening and the morning. Most of them came back in the evening. It was kind of a social time to catch up on the news, what had happened around before they went home and to check on the school. Everyone was interested in their schools, not just the parents.

For another teacher, Thomas, the students in his one-room school were hired to assist with preparing the one-room school for instruction each day.

I had three students, the Gills children, took care of the school, when they'd go to school and start the fire in the winter and then they would sweep the building in the evening while they waited on the bus. It was just a big one-room with the desks in aisles, down the aisles..... [They were paid] very, very little....They would build the fire and in the evening after school was out, they would clean up, but it was a chore. I can't remember what they did get, but they got paid once a month, but it wasn't very much. But it did help the family out. Some of these children, it's sad, but a lot of them didn't have any income, any money, and they appreciated that....The board usually [hired them] or if they didn't have someone, they would come to me, but I would rather the board would [hire them] because sometimes there would be several different homes that wanted the job and then if I had the say of it, then they would be upset with me if they weren't chosen. If the board hired them, then I was free of that. But I never did have no problems with anything like that.

Sometimes the teacher had to take on the custodial responsibilities in addition to teaching as Irene explained:

When I taught out here at Red Mud, I had to be janitor a lot. I mean the one that was a janitor wasn't there a lot. And I'd have to sweep and build the fires and everything....I wasn't paid for it, it just had to be done and I did it.

*Patrons and overseers*

The responsibility for assisting teachers with day-to-day problems or issues that arose was the responsibility of the school's patrons. Some patrons were selected formally and in other cases they may have included all of the parents of students attending a particular school. The role this group took in one teacher's life is detailed in the description below. This teacher called them overseers.

Stella: You sorta had this group of people, they were called overseers. Some of them were really very good at doing their job and some weren't, but they were these faithful young men and they were close to the school. I remember one was Mr. W\_\_\_\_. You would only get to know one, but there would be two or three, but then they would oversee the school and come and repair things. Of course you only had a one-room building and they were well maintained....You had a metal roof, you know, and they didn't leak and you had like a pot belly stove in the center [with] a coal bucket. They lasted a long time but people took care of things very well....It was probably people that expressed an interest. It was a lot in those days of asking people to do this and people would do it. I remember one school that I taught in, that as I walked by the school, by the overseer's house, because he was supposed to check me every morning to see that the school began at nine and we were to get dismissed at four. He had to check to make sure I had enough time and if he thought I was a little slow, he would come in and say, "You're gonna have to hurry, you just might be late today."

A different perspective was provided by the daughter of a patron at a one-room

school. Ellen discussed the topic of expected teacher behavior in the one-room schools and hints at some of the power and authority vested in the patrons or overseers of the one-room schools.

Well they [the teachers] always looked nice and they always, well we just looked up to them, just like you would look up to your president. We respected them and I don't know. Most of us respected our teachers.

Doug: What happened if the patrons didn't like a teacher?

We had one teacher one time and they [the patrons] hollered about she painted up pretty good. Some of them around thought she shouldn't be like that in school as a teacher to set that example for the kids. She did that make up [gesturing to her cheeks and face]....She was just there one year and, so no she didn't come back.

I think about one year was about all they had her here.

### *Reporting*

The reporting function is described by Gulick and Urwick (1936) as, "keeping those to whom the executive is responsible informed as to what is going on, which thus includes keeping himself and his subordinates informed through records, research and inspection" (p. 13). Data gathered in regard to the Reporting function of administration in one-room schools, focused on what reports or communications were necessary between the one-room school and the central office personnel. Data were also collected on how these reports were completed in the one-room school and the process by which the reports were then submitted to the central office.

Keeping attendance and submitting the monthly attendance report were at the core of the reporting function of administration in the one-room school. It would seem to

have been a simple task to count which students were present and which students were absent, yet it was a formidable task for some teachers.

Thomas: At the end of the month that was my biggest headache. I hated that. We had to take down all the attendance and then you had to put the ADA, Average Daily Attendance, and the percentage attendance. Now that was pretty much of a job. Of course when you got into the upper schools, you got a secretary [and] they did that. They took care of all the reports. In fact it was easier as far as the principal part in an upper school than it was when you were in a one-room school for those reports....Because when you were in a one-room you had to do every bit of that. You had, we had a secretary [at the county office], and boy she was fast on it....And if you went in, and there was one little, just one little mistake, she wouldn't correct it for you. She would make you take that back and bring it in the next week. She was real strict, which I got so that I didn't have much trouble with it...But it was a lot of work, extra work. I'd do mine most generally at night. We had a daily register, of course, you probably keep those too. It was at the end of the term, term reports was quite a bit too. You had to turn that in at the end of the term. Everything had to work out just perfect or they would make you do it over.

This would seem to many people to be an exaggeration of the power of this secretary and the importance placed upon the correct completion of reports during this time period in Mason County. However, the same story involving the same person was told to me again and again, although involving different secretaries. Each teacher reported their encounter with the central office secretaries and their mandate to insure the

reports were exactly correct and if errors were found, they were to be taken back and corrected and then brought back to the county office.

Once a month you completed your register and filled out your monthly attendance report. Then on Saturday, you reported down to the Superintendent's office and [the secretary] would check your attendance report. If everything was correct, you took your register with you and you took these reports you had done. If it was correct, then you went across the hall and the secretary would give you a check.

One teacher did remember greater details about the reporting function than the others. She was the one best able to provide details of what was entailed, other than attendance, in completing the monthly reports.

Irene: We had to make our reports once a month. That was a pretty difficult thing because it, of course, had to correspond with your registers and all of that you know. It was kind of hard to make out. Some of our teachers, that even had taught a long time, they'd get it wrong. Then the office, the secretary would have to help her straighten it out and things like that. But it was difficult to make out....[It included] your expenditures and your attendance, and if you took any money in. That had to be there. I don't remember all of it, but....if you bought books, you had to keep a count of that you know.

### *Budgeting*

The budgeting function of administration was defined by Gulick and Urwick (1936) as "all that goes with budgeting in the form of fiscal planning, accounting and control" (p. 13). The requirement of having to report all incomes and expenditures

undertaken in the one-room school overlays with the budgeting component of administration. Data gathered in regard to the budgeting function of administration in one-room schools focused on teacher pay and administrative pay. It also includes data on the expenditure of funds from fundraisers in support of the school and its instructional practices.

By today's standard, pay was meager for one-room school teachers. The actual amount varied by teacher experience and certification status. All teachers were paid on a nine month pay scale. However, they felt the pay was not inadequate for the job.

Beth: Pay for me wasn't much, I think I made \$98.00 a month. I thought I was rolling in dough.

Irene: I wouldn't swear to this, but I'm pretty sure it was, let's see, \$105 a month I believe. Seems like too, but I think that was after the raise though. I think it was when we first started, it was like \$85 or \$95 a month. But we thought that was a lot then, you know. We didn't feel underpaid, we just felt like that was quite a bit you know.

Garnet: No, they didn't pay much. It depended on your education more than anything else. I doubt if I made ninety or a hundred dollars a month when I moved [away from Mason County] to go to Columbus. That was big money then. Wasn't anybody making very much then, you know. It was during the Depression days, I had a job and I was glad. Wasn't any money around.

For the teachers in this study who started the longest time ago, these sums would have seemed like a lot of money. Consider the teacher who started teaching in the 1920s at "thirty-something dollars" a month for seven months. This meant she made less than

three-hundred dollars a year. For the Mason County Superintendent of Schools, the pay was better.

Samuel: My highest pay, I started out at \$240.00, I believe a month. And I told my dad that I would sign up for life if they'd sign me up because when I taught in a one-room school, I made \$85.00 a month. And so that was a big raise, but the highest I made was \$8,000.00 as superintendent... [for] 12 months. It was just a little bit under that...the state raised the pay. I never did ask for a raise, and I think the superintendents were, it was up to the board of education of what they would pay them. We had a high school principal up to the big school was making more in eight months than I was in twelve months and I didn't complain.

*Spending money from fundraisers*

The budgeting component of administration also involves decisions about how to spend funds raised in the one-room schools through fundraisers. The methods of raising funds through fundraisers were discussed in Chapter IV. The data in this section will focus on who decided about the expenditure of the funds and how the funds were spent. One teacher, Stella, describes what occurred after her school had held a fundraiser.

For my school a hectograph was very important...A hectograph was a little thing that had like gel in it; you couldn't use lined paper or anything. So see now we just call it memo graphic paper, but back then they called it plain white paper. It was quite a thing to purchase some of that because if you had to provide this yourself this was quite the thing and sometimes if you needed window shades, you could use the money for that. But some teachers bought pretty pictures to put

on the walls or curtains. We didn't have fire marshals come. You could use curtains on the windows to make it more attractive. You could use it [fundraising money] to buy a ball. You know it was wonderful to have a football or to buy a bat and a ball or jump ropes, so things like that.

This teacher, indirectly, said she was the person responsible for deciding the expenditure of the funds garnered through the fundraisers. Her indication was that if the money was not raised through a fundraiser, then the teacher would purchase the necessary items out of her or his own pocket. Other teachers discussed buying similar things for their schools when a fundraiser was completed. One teacher, Irene, even decided to use the money to directly improve the school facility.

Like Red Mud [school], I'll use it as an example. It was terrible when I started teaching in it. It was just awful and no one had any socials or any money to do anything about it. The superintendent came out one morning and he said, "This doesn't look like your school." And I said, "Well it will before too long because I'm having a social and we'll use the money to paint it."

This seems to have been a decision she directly undertook to improve the school facility; she saw a need and responded. It would seem that if it had been seen as a community need, then something would have been done in the years before this woman arrived to teach.

One teacher indicated that instead of using the money to buy supplies or improvements for the one-room school, she had to purchase supplies for the student's day-to-day use. This may have been an instance where she was in a very high poverty area within the county; perhaps even to a greater degree than other teachers: "I would

use the money for supplies and several [students] at that time; their parents just did not have the money to buy supplies which the children needed to use.”

## Chapter VI

### Conclusions and Implications

The final chapter of this study focuses on comparing the findings of this study to the literature accessed for Chapters I and II. The first section of Chapter VI is a review of the findings of this study related to each of Gulick and Urwick's (1936) seven functions of administration—planning, organizing, staffing, directing, coordinating, reporting and budgeting—compared to accessed literature. Following the discussion on each of the administrative functions is a discussion of school-community relations in the Mason County one-room schools as compared to literature on this topic. The next section of this chapter addresses the administrative functions in Mason County's one-room schools in relation to the Social Reproduction Theory. The final two sections focus on implications of the findings of this study for school administrators and questions for future research.

During the period of 1935-1950, the responsibility of Mason County one-room school teachers for the implementation of Gulick and Urwick's (1936) seven administrative functions varied from function to function. The one-room school teachers who participated in this study took the initiative to implement some of these administrative functions, often with little training or support. However, some administrative functions were beyond the scope of control of the one-room school teachers; organizing, staffing and budgeting tasks were accomplished primarily by the central office administration.

Especially noteworthy is that the one-room school teachers had almost sole responsibility for the development and maintenance of school-community relations. Gulick and Urwick (1936) did not address community relations as an administrative task

in their text *Papers on the Science of Administration*. This may be related to the fact that this text was written to address the question of what all administrators do, not just school administrators. However, school-community relations are an important administrative function (Gallagher, Bagin & Kindred, 1997). Within the one-room school facilities in Mason County from 1935-1950, the teacher undertook this administrative function. The one-room school, with the teacher as its day-to-day overseer, was intricately involved with the community and the community was intricately involved with the school in an often mutually beneficial relationship. The responsibility of the one-room school teacher was to develop and maintain this relationship. This issue will be discussed more fully in a later section on school-community relations.

### *Planning*

A key function of planning in regard to one-room schools was to decide the location for the school structure. For this study, all of the one-room schools had been built before the first year, 1935, of this study. One teacher, Ann, did provide information on how the decision was made on where to locate one of her schools. The data gained on school location through this study supports the findings of another researcher on the same topic. According to Swain, the one-room school was usually built “on an unprofitable piece of land” and was located in, “the area it was designed to serve” (Swain, 1969, p. 1). This study supports Swain’s findings. Through the comments of Ann in Chapter IV, it seems that the location of one-room schools was decided not only by need for a school facility but also through availability of land that was unsuitable for other purposes, in this case farming.

The planning function of administration addressed in this study also involved planning to close a one-room school. Fleming's (1995) and Fuller's (1982) research on this topic suggest that one-room schools were closed to move control away from the local citizenry. The data from this study indicated that Mason County one-room schools were closed to move children to graded school facilities where there was day-to-day oversight provided by an onsite administrator. However, none of the participants in this study said or implied that removing the control of the one-room schools from the community was a reason for their closing. Rather, the closing of the one-room schools seems, according to participants in this study, to have been influenced primarily by declining enrollment and improvements in the road system. This process of closing and consolidating schools continued even after the last one-room school closed. It is interesting to note that in 1944 there were 83 one-room schools and ten graded elementary schools in Mason County. Today, there are a total of nine graded elementary schools and no one-room schools in Mason County and by September 2003, there will only be eight graded elementary schools in the county. This means that many communities and towns lost their community schools over the past 60 years. In terms of student population, in 1944 there were 4006 students enrolled in grades 1-8 in Mason County Schools. Of these 4006 students, 1550 attended one-room schools and 2456 attended multi-room schools. This meant that 38.7% of students in grades 1-8 attended a one-room school (Trent, 1944). Interestingly, the total school enrollment, pre-K-12 in Mason County Schools in 2002 is just over 4200 students.

### *Organizing*

The one-room school teacher was visited by a central office administrator periodically (Theobald, 1993). The data generated in this study support Theobald's assertion. Teachers and administrators interviewed for this study reported that administrative visits were undertaken once a year for most one-room schools. Only those who were striving to attain a higher ranking, first class status, were visited more often; three times per year in this case.

The close relationship between the one-room school teacher and the visiting administrator was documented by Kenny (1990). Kenny's (1990) research documented the close working relationship that was almost like a partnership between the one-room school teachers in his study and the visiting administrator. The former superintendent and supervisor interviewed for this study described the same type of professional relationship. As was documented in Chapter V, the superintendent and supervisor did not try to intimidate the one-room school teachers; rather the relationship was cordial and involved suggestions for improvements instead of demands for improvements. The administrators seemed to look at the situation and what the teacher had to work with and then work with this situation for improvement instead of demanding sweeping changes.

### *Staffing*

As was discussed in relation to other administrative functions, this study also found that rural, one-room schools in Mason County often lacked a fully certified teacher. Cockerille (1963) found one-room schools were three times as likely as other schools to have a teacher with less than four years of college (p. 4). This sometimes added to the responsibility of the visiting administrator as they had to provide suggestions

on how to improve the teaching practices in the school facility being led by a teacher not fully trained to complete their job. Weiler's research (1994) also addressed the issue of inexperienced teachers who were isolated in their rural schools. This study also found the superintendent, Samuel, discussing the isolation of the teacher as a barrier to administration since the parents had to report one-room school teachers who were neglectful in their instructional duties in Mason County. Had an onsite administrator been present, the teacher infractions would have come to the immediate attention of the administrator.

As a result of the parental reports, this study documented a need for an administrative visit to the one-room school. If the teacher who was reported to the board by the parents had been under the day-to-day oversight of an administrator or been teaching in a school in close, convenient proximity to the central office, then the problem could have been addressed in a timely manner.

The one-room schools in Mason County provided jobs, either as a teacher or as a janitor, to members of the immediate community. These jobs in the one-room school facilities were a source of economic support to those employed in these communities; they provided opportunities for income and in some cases further education. Those employed to teach in the community's one-room school did not have to out-migrate, as many from Appalachia did, to find employment (Rice, 1985). Rather their job was in their immediate community area.

Politics, in the form of knowing the right person, was involved in the staffing practices of the one-room schools in Mason County. This is consistent with the research of DeYoung (1991) that stresses the importance of knowing the right person in rural

school hiring practices. Instances of the community requesting certain persons as teachers in the one-room school were also documented in this study. This is also consistent with DeYoung's (1995) findings. His research and the data collected in this study both reported community persons and parents going to board of education meetings and naming the exact person they wished to be hired as the teacher in their school.

This study also documented the preference for men over women in hiring for one-room school teaching positions. According to Theobald (1993) and Gulliford (1985), women were hired to teach in one-room schools when a man could not be found for the position and sometimes women were hired until a man could be found to replace them. The Mason County data indicate similar practices in regard to giving men preference over women in hiring practices. As was discussed in Chapter V, the school board in Mason County preferred to hire men rather than women for open positions. Additional discussion of this issue will be provided in the section on the Social Reproduction Theory.

### *Directing*

An overlap in the administrative functions of organizing and directing seems to exist. Data on the superintendent's and one-room school teacher's responses to problems were discussed under the organizing function; as they had to organize a response to a problem. However, the superintendent also had to provide direction on how to solve or respond to a problem. This provides an overlap in these administrative functions so that they seem almost inseparable without splitting hairs under each function and even this would be a judgment call on whether certain actions were best discussed under the organizing or directing functions of administration.

The data related to this administrative function parallels the research of Rylance (1981). Rylance's research, focused on North Dakota's one-room schools, revealed problems with insufficient teacher supervision that were also found in the current study. As was discussed in Chapter V, teachers sometimes did need additional direction from an outside professional and when this did not occur the parents responded by bringing the problem to the attention of the board of education.

Rylance's research also found problems with the school buildings being unsuitable for instruction. Likewise, the superintendent in this study reported that facilities were sometimes inadequate and he reported instances of being forced to direct an immediate solution to facility problems.

Weiler's (1994) research addressed the problems facing supervisors and administrators in visiting rural schools. The barriers to directing a response to a problem were addressed in Weiler's (1994) research on rural school supervisors in California. Similar barriers were documented from the data gained from the administrators interviewed for this study in Mason County. As in Weiler's (1994) research, directing a response to a problem in Mason County's one-room schools involved transportation difficulties and barriers due to poor road conditions.

This study also provides some insights about the discipline practices and issues faced in the one-room school. Directing, according to Gulick and Urwick (1936), involves decision making and giving instructions while overseeing the enterprise. Maintaining discipline in the one-room school facility involves overseeing the enterprise. I was unable to find other research on the problems or issues of discipline in the one-room school setting. The teachers in this study reported few discipline problems and

strong community support for the problems that did arise. DeYoung (1995) found an increase in discipline problems when small schools were combined into a larger school unit. In one-room schools, when problems did arise, the one-room school teachers in this study took responsibility for directing a solution, often with parents' support. The close school-community ties may have contributed to this support for the teacher as maybe no one in the community wanted to be known as having the disruptive child. Additionally, the close proximity, less than two miles, of the school to the homes enabled the teacher to work closely with the parents to solve any problems that might arise. The one-room school teacher, according to this study, also often had the benefit of having more than one child from each family in the classroom. This allowed children to tattle on brothers or sisters when school was dismissed and the children sent home. This gave the teacher an additional method for getting behavior information home to the parents.

New information that came from this study that was not found in any other accessed literature involved the different levels of status of one-room schools. The superintendent interviewed for this study discussed some of the procedures and requirements necessary for a one-room school to be identified as having "first class" status. The central office administrator played a key role in this process as a minimum of three visits was required to each one-room school in Mason County trying to attain first-class status. Other literature on one-room schools does not address this topic; this may have been a provision only applicable to classifying and improving West Virginia's one-room schools. However, these findings in relation to the efforts to improve the status of one-room schools in Mason County, as measured by certain criteria, do go against the perceived inferior status of rural schools in general (DeYoung, 1991). The inferior status

of rural schools was a key reason for the closing of the rural schools in Braxton County, West Virginia, according to DeYoung's research (1995).

### *Coordinating*

The data included within this function in Chapter V focused on the coordination of peripheral activities in support of the one-room school facility. These included preparing the building for daily instruction, cleaning and heating the building, and the patrons and overseers from the community who were responsible for assisting and overseeing the one-room school teacher.

Anderson's (1987) limited research on the responsibilities of cleaning one-room schools found it to be a community function, as the community members took on these tasks. The janitors or custodians who cleaned the one-room schools in Mason County were paid nominal sums for their work. For the one-room school teachers in this study, these people performed a vital support service. In Cockerille's (1963) research, he found that sixty percent of one-room school teachers completed their own janitorial work. Only one of the participants in this study of one-room schools in Mason County reported that she had to clean her own school. One interesting point that came out through this study that was not addressed in other accessed research was the hiring of older students to perform these duties. By hiring students as janitors in the one-room schools, these young people and their families became stakeholders in the school. The continuance of the one-room school took on a greater value to these people as the one-room school was a source of income for them and their families. Other references to the hiring of support staff in the literature centered on this being an adult responsibility with adults being employed in these positions (Tierney, 1983).

For adults hired as teachers or janitors, the one-room school positions represented sources of income. This meant a job, even if it was part time, which was available in the local community. For someone who did not have transportation to more distant jobs, these jobs were some of the few sources of local employment. When consolidation resulted in the closure of these schools and the subsequent loss of janitor jobs, this had an impact that reached into the community households financially. DeYoung (1995) discussed the loss of jobs in rural communities when their school was closed in the name of consolidation.

Alkire's (1982) research addressed the role of one-room school patrons. He found that the patrons wanted to feel important within their roles and responsibilities in the school. The research for the current study did not uncover the patrons wanting to feel important or acknowledged for their work. Rather, based on the research for this study, the patrons simply did what they needed to do; they were not paid for their efforts. Their motivation for completing their tasks may have been the strong ties they as community members had to their one-room school. As members of the community that included the school, they may have seen the success and continuation of the one-room school as important to the success and continuation of the community itself.

### *Reporting*

As described in Chapter V, teachers in Mason County's one-room schools had to fill out reports and make sure they were completed and delivered to the central office on time. Just as was found by Kenny (1990), teachers in one-room schools in Mason County found completing reports to be stressful and felt pressure to insure the reports were completed accurately. According to Kenny (1990), one-room school teachers

identified the completion of reports as a reason for leaving the one-room school facility. The key reporting function addressed in my study was completion of the monthly report, an activity discussed in Chapter IV. Whereas Anderson (1987) found that teachers of one-room schools also had to report building repairs, none of the teachers in the study of Mason County's one-room schools discussed having to report repairs to the one-room school facility.

In regard to reporting, the main difference with teachers today is the scope and scale of reports. The one-room school teacher had one main report to do each month, whereas today's teachers have a substantially larger number of reports to complete each month. However, it should be remembered that one-room school teachers had to keep everything with pen and paper; computers were unheard of. Further, the transportation difficulties that were encountered by administrators visiting one-room schools were also faced by teachers trying to get to the central office each month to submit reports. Whereas the central office administrator may have only visited the teacher one time per year, the teacher had to visit the central office each month school was in session.

The components of the reports one-room school teachers in Mason County completed mesh with the findings of C. Williams (1995). According to his research on one-room schools, the monthly report included all income and expenditures for fundraisers, in addition to attendance. According to the Mason County teachers interviewed for this study, income and expenditures from fundraisers were a necessary component of the monthly reports as well.

### *Budgeting*

In the one-room school setting, budgeting involved the teacher deciding upon expenditure of funds gained through community fundraisers. This often involved purchasing supplies or enhancing the school facility; in other words, the teacher used the money to fill a need. The teacher was the person who perceived and responded to the need. This goes with the idea of the one-room school teacher seeing a need and responding to it. The decision on how to spend funds rested with the teacher. This gave them a direct stake in the fundraising process.

The importance of these fundraisers as a support to the one-room school educational offering was documented by the research of C. Williams (1995) who discussed the inadequate materials he found in his first one-room school teaching job and the necessity of purchasing additional materials with funds gained through fundraisers. Similarly, the Mason County teachers involved in this study reported meager supplies and materials and the need to raise money to purchase additional items.

Theobald's (1993) research on one-room schools in the mid-west discussed the controversial nature of the provision of free textbooks to all students and the efforts to secure free textbooks through state level legislation. The provision of free textbooks was resisted, according to Theobald's (1993) research, by people who did not want to pay higher taxes in order to fund free textbooks. The teachers involved with this study of Mason County reported textbooks, albeit old ones, were free to all of the students attending the one-room school. Theobald's research on this topic dealt with the late 19<sup>th</sup> and early 20<sup>th</sup> century. My study dealt with one-room schools in the middle 20<sup>th</sup> century. Provisions for providing free textbooks to all students in Mason County's one-room

schools were in place prior the focus time period of this study so any controversy regarding providing funding for free textbooks would have been settled prior to the first years of this study.

Cockerille (1963) found that one-room school teachers were paid less than their graded school counterparts. A pay scale for teachers in Mason County's was unavailable for the time period of study. The only reason for a possible discrepancy between the one-room school teachers and the graded school teachers would have been due to the different levels of certification held by graded and one-room school teachers. The superintendent of schools interviewed for this study reported that pay was tied to certification level in Mason County. Had a copy of this pay scale been available, this might have confirmed Cockerille's (1963) findings that one-room school teachers were paid less than their graded school counterparts.

This study found Mason County one-room school teachers often had to budget their paychecks to cover tuition and to purchase materials for their one-room schools. A number of the teachers in this study reported that if they didn't have socials to raise money, then they had to purchase items out of their own pocket.

### Community Relations

The integral role the one-room school played in the community is documented in Chapter IV of this study. The school gave to the community and the community gave to the school. The two had an almost symbiotic relationship that was mutually beneficial. The findings of this study support the idea of the one-room school contributing to the community by being a site of work, a site of social interaction, and a site of instruction.

These findings fit with the research of Gulliford (1996) who described the one-room school as a center of community focus and activities. Also, DeYoung (1995) documents the rural school as a community center that provided “social cohesion” and “functions above and beyond those related to instruction” (p. 177).

Further, according to Gulliford (1996), the one-room school and its teachers “were the intellectual [and] social leaders of communities” (p. 73). The findings of this study confirm the leadership role held intellectually and socially by the one-room school and its teachers. The community person interviewed for this study even compared the status of the teacher to the respect shown the president.

Mason County one-room school teachers interviewed for this study reported they were the better educated members of their community. This added level of education was looked upon by members of the community as valuable and afforded the one-room school teachers a higher level of respect. This was not only a level of respect afforded the individual teacher, it also seems to have been respect for the teaching profession and the one-room school teacher was the embodiment of this profession in the small communities with one-room schools.

Socially, as was discussed by one of the Mason County teachers, the one-room school teacher was often the oversight person for the community’s social functions. He discussed his efforts to secure an outside band to perform in the one-room school. As was found with C. Williams’ (1995) research in Eastern Kentucky’s one-room schools, the Mason County one-room school teachers often initiated these social functions as a part of their efforts to improve the one-room school either physically or instructionally.

Only the church housed additional social functions in many small communities. However, as was reported in the previous chapter, the one-room school sometimes even housed the church functions. Tyack (1974) also found that the one-room school facility doubled in function as the site of church services. This meant that the institution overseen by the one-room school teacher was the only social center in the community. These findings fit with those of Slacks (1938) whose writings on West Virginia's education system suggest that one-room schools and their teachers were the social centers of their rural communities.

The people involved in this study also described the social events occurring in the one-room school and the high level of community attendance at these functions. These functions included fundraisers for the school and the school serving as a meeting place for other community functions. This is almost identical to the findings of Tyack (1974) who found that the one-room school served as the "educational, social, dramatic, [and] political" center of the community (p. 15). Rankin's (1981) research documented the use of the one-room school as a meeting place for "autopsies and funerals" (p. 37). Likewise the Mason County one-room schools served as the locations for a funeral and even for evening music classes. The reason for the use of the one-room school facility for a variety of non-educational meetings seems to be that no other facility was available or accessible given the transportation limitations during this time in Mason County.

Tyack (1974) addressed the responsibility undertaken by the community to maintain the one-room school and the schoolhouse's important role in the community structure and identity. Similarly, this study found the one-room school to be the center of rural Mason County communities. As was discussed in Chapter IV, the one-room school

was the center of social contact and interaction within the community. However, the local community, according to the research for this study, did not necessarily undertake the responsibility of maintaining or repairing their one-room school facility.

Fuller's (1982) research found that the one-room school brought the community together; all were participants in its existence. It "provided a community where none existed" (Fuller, 1982, p. 45). This matches the data collected for this study of Mason County's one-room schools as, according to the people interviewed, the one-room school did provide cohesion and identity for the people in its surrounding community. The one-room school brought the community together. This may have been for a fundraiser or a school program or even a church service held within the one-room school. The Mason County one-room schools provided meeting sites for the community and facilities that were representative of this unity. This substantiates DeYoung's (1995) research on how rural schools serve as a center of the community, a site for community activities and a source of community cohesion. He went on to document the loss of the community identity when the school was closed. This study of Mason County's one-room schools did not address the issue of loss of the community identity when the one-room school was closed.

The one-room school's role and place within the immediate community cannot be overstated. The school filled a need for the community. It provided education for the community's youth at a convenient, accessible location and provided a site social functions in the community.

### Teacher autonomy

The autonomy experienced by one-room school teachers as part of implementing the administrative functions in one-room schools was described in Chapter V. The autonomy allowed these former Mason County one-room school teachers to take the initiative and meet the varied/multi-faceted needs of their one-room schools.

The autonomy and responsibility of these teachers, as the only adult in the one-room school setting, fits with other research on the same topic. Kenney's (1990) research on one-room schools described teachers being responsible for making decisions in the one-room school and living with the results of their actions; they could not, "pass the buck" (p. 53). In this study, Mason County teachers discussed practices that displayed a great deal of autonomy in decision making in the one-room school setting. As was discussed in Chapter IV, the teacher herself decided to dismiss school for a funeral. Further, she and her sister themselves decided to switch schools due to a medical need. This is indicative of the strong degree of empowerment in day-to-day decision making that had an impact even outside the physical school structure. The actions taken by the one-room school teachers in Mason County reached into the community itself and influenced not only the children in the school, but even adults in the community. This teacher autonomy to make decisions fits with other research on one-room school teacher autonomy (Gulliford, 1996). According to Gulliford (1996) the one-room school teacher provided the day-to-day leadership and direction for the school with occasional district level oversight. For this study, the one-room school teacher in Mason County was the person responsible for the day-to-day functions and running of the school. As with Gulliford (1996), only periodic central office level oversight--often only once per year--

was provided at the one-room school site. Day in and day out it was the teacher in Mason County's one-room schools who was responsible for what occurred within the school's walls.

According to this study, one-room school teachers in Mason County made relatively autonomous decisions regarding flexibility in scheduling, need for additional supplies or improvements, and day-to-day instructional issues. Other displays of autonomy discussed in this study included decisions on acquiring additional instructional materials when the selected textbooks were not adequate and deciding to enroll or not to enroll students with disabilities in the one-room school's classroom.

### Social Reproduction

Social Reproduction, as was discussed in Chapters I and II, involves practices or procedures that keep a person or people in their social strata with very limited opportunities for advancement; therefore the social class status quo is reproduced. The education system can play a role in insuring that inequities between social classes are maintained and opportunities for transformation to a different, higher social class are unavailable (Spring, 1991). This study suggests that the ways some administrative practices were undertaken in the Mason County one-room schools were socially reproductive.

At the teacher level, the organization of the one-room schools in Mason County reproduced social limits in some instances. Either covertly or overtly, the one-room school educational institution was a way to keep teachers from organizing for improved wages or working conditions. Central office control existed over some administrative

practices in Mason County's one-room schools, like staffing and budgeting, but these were beyond the teacher's scope of control to change could not be improved due the isolation of all of the one-room school teachers. This, in addition to the geographic isolation, inhibited any unified, organized efforts on the part of the one-room school teachers in Mason County to demand better conditions and benefits. Further, since the teacher was seen often only once per year by an administrator, it may have been easy to overlook the one-room school teacher when higher level jobs, such as administrative positions, came open.

The administration of one-room schools in Mason County also maintained the social status quo in terms of gender, according to data gathered for this study. Especially for women in the one-room schools in Mason County, teaching was an occupation with limited opportunities for upward mobility. However, within the local community, many of the persons involved with this study viewed the one-room school teaching jobs as good paying jobs. Nonetheless, mobility to even higher paying administrative jobs within the central office was limited.

Institutional barriers enacted by the board of education from the central office inhibited the movement from one-room school teaching positions into administrative positions or even the movement from teaching into retirement. The fifty year continuous service requirement and the stipulation that women with a child or children under the age of three could not be employed to teach (discussed in Chapter V), suggest that a woman would be unable to teach, have children and hope to gain a pension. If a woman taught and left the profession to have a child and then returned to teaching, it would be almost impossible for her to gain fifty years of continuous service upon her return. There is even

mention (discussed in Chapter V) that men would be given advancement when their work merits, but no mention or hint that the same would apply to women.

This policy also served as a barrier to women in advancing to central office administrative positions, as women who had young children were unable to enter the teaching force. Also, as stated in Chapter V, the board of education passed a motion giving men preference over women in jobs that would lead to advancement in their career. According to the data gathered for this study, only through the recommendation of a West Virginia State Department of Education employee was a one-room school teacher able to move into the central office as the first middle-level, female administrator. For this study, the one woman who did advance to the central office did so based upon her high merits as well as recommendations from the State Department of Education as a result of her service as a demonstration teacher in a demonstration school. It is interesting to note that she was unmarried during her time as a teacher and administrator; she did not marry until she retired from the school system.

The one-room school, however, did provide opportunities for people to break out of the cycle of social reproduction. As was discussed in Chapter IV, the teacher shortage in Mason County following the outbreak of World War II allowed some women, who probably would not have been able to do so otherwise, to become teachers and attend college. This fits with the research of Rose (1997) who found teaching in the one-room school offered one of the few opportunities for women to gain “independence and authority” (p. 40). Due to the income received from teaching, some of the one-room school teachers interviewed for this study were able to attend college and complete an advanced education in addition to holding a teaching position. Also, these teachers were

no longer viewed as ordinary community members; when they were hired as teachers, they were held in higher regard within the community. The one-room school teaching job enhanced their standing within their community.

According to the data gathered for this study, the administration of one-room schools in Mason County was socially reproductive and also socially transformative for the individuals involved in the teaching profession. One-room school teachers in Mason County, especially female teachers, faced formal and informal institutional barriers to advancing in the education profession. However, within the local community, one-room school teaching jobs were personally and socially transformative due to the increased opportunities and respect afforded them as a result of their employment. For some teachers in this study, teaching in a Mason County one-room school opened educational opportunities for post-secondary education that would have not been possible without the teaching job and its subsequent pay check.

#### Implications for School Policy and Administrators

One-room schools still exist in limited numbers in rural settings across the nation. This study focused on the administrative practices undertaken historically in the one-room schools in Mason County, West Virginia. According to the findings of this study, one area that deserves the attention of policymakers and administrators overseeing rural schools today is the value of close, positive, and purposeful school-community relations. The development and maintenance of positive school-community relations was vital to the one-room school setting. With the consolidation and subsequent loss of a number of

community schools in rural areas, this community association with the local school has been lost (DeYoung, 1995).

In order to regain these kinds of close school and community bonds, administrators and teachers may need to revisit the practices undertaken in the one-room school to develop and maintain these relations. Pie suppers and cake walks may not be relevant today but the welcoming attitude towards the community and the recognition of their value to the one-room school are very relevant today.

An additional idea for administrators involved in rural school settings today is the recruitment and hiring of local persons as teachers. With the reported coming teacher shortage, it may be that the practices for recruiting persons from the local community to teach in rural schools that were undertaken fifty years ago deserve re-examination. This is really an expansion of the idea of the community giving to the school. In this case the community is providing a teacher who is familiar with local ideas, values, and morays. They may already be a part of the community structure and may find it easier to develop and maintain strong, successful ties between the school and the community. A person from outside the community could cross local customs and expectations before ever being able to demonstrate their effectiveness as a teacher.

Not only would recruiting local persons as teachers make it easier to maintain community values and relationships, it would also fill a need for a teacher. Local recruitment would also employ people from the immediate community who hold a commitment, through their residency, to that community and its school. As was discussed in Chapter IV, the persons recruited as teachers in Mason County's one-room schools showed a strong commitment to the school and its community.

A possible disadvantage of this practice that is also a negative aspect of the one-room school setting is the diversity component of the children's education. One-room schools served the immediate community in Mason County around their geographic location. This involved very limited if any diversity of student or teacher population. If the local school board solely recruited locally, this could mean that exposure to persons from diverse backgrounds would not be a part of the children's school or social experience.

Finally the issue that seems to naturally flow from this study is, 'Should the one-room school be an option for a larger number of rural, elementary school aged children?' Certainly the one-room school had its benefits and its shortfalls during the time period and geographic area of this study. Given the road conditions in the early-mid twentieth century in rural West Virginia; the one-room school was the only option. Today road conditions have improved. However, length of time on the road each day coming from and going to school is as much an issue as poor road conditions were fifty or sixty years ago. In a current news article entitled, *Broken Promises*, parents facing the consolidation of their local school reported transportation safety was one of their core reasons for keeping their local, rural school (Eyre & Finn, 2002).

This study did not directly address curriculum and instruction strengths or weaknesses in the one-room school. This is a question for future research.

### Questions for Future Research

After the completion of the data collection and through its subsequent analysis, some questions have emerged that warrant further research. These may have been discussed in the interview of just one person or may have arisen out of the document research or may have even been tangents that were only discussed briefly and merit in-depth study.

*Were the instructional and curriculum practices in the one-room schools as strong and rigorous as their urban, multi-grade counterparts?* If the one-room school is found to be comparable to its urban counterparts, then the one-room school is a facility option worth re-exploring in rural settings today. Some indication of this in the data collected in this study did come forth. However, additional research is needed to fully investigate the educational performance of students in small, rural schools versus the performance of students in larger, consolidated schools.

*Why did a teacher shortage occur after the outbreak of World War II?* Within the exploration of this question, the possibility exists of employed teachers leaving the profession as a result of being drafted into the armed services. However, this would seem to have been the case with only a small number of teachers, as most teachers at that time were women and it was primarily men who were being drafted. The key questions for exploration may be, *“Did teachers leave teaching during World War II for higher paying, war time industry jobs?”* and if this is the case, *“Did those teachers who did leave teaching for industrial jobs return to teaching after the end of the war?”*

The experiences of special needs children in the one-room school setting, is also an issue that deserves further study. One key question would be, *“What was the status*

*of special education children in one-room schools?”* Only one teacher provided information on the status of this population of children. This question warrants further investigation and research. In depth or further research on this topic could reveal this as an isolated case or the normal practice in the one-room school setting. This could be especially interesting since small, one-room school settings where the same teacher knew and worked with the same children over many years, were settings that involved mixed ability grouping by design. The additional research for this could focus on special education students in one-room schools from a parental, teacher, legal or even student perspective.

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## Appendix A

## Semi-structured interview questions--Teacher

*Background-Opening Questions*

When were you a teacher in a one-room school?

What was the school's name(s) and where was it (they) located?

What happened to the school building after it closed?

*Staffing*

How were you hired?

What kinds of people were they looking for in prospective teachers? Tell me more about that.

What qualifications did you have to teach? Tell me about how you got those and kept them current.

*Organizing*

If you needed something for the school, what did you do?

Tell me about how you got materials for the school like books or supplies. How were these chosen?

What happened if your school needed repairs?

*Budgeting*

Tell me about fundraisers for the one-room school.

Tell me about pay and salary.

*Planning*

How were decisions made about textbook selection?

How did you decide what to teach (curriculum)? Or when to teach (calendar)?

*Reporting*

What reports did you have to keep and turn in to the central office? Tell me how you did that.

How did you keep in contact with other teachers?

What other communications or contacts were necessary between individual schools and the central office? Tell me more about that

*Directing*

What role did the administrator take in your day- to-day activities?

I have read that you were to be observed once per year by an administrator. What did you do to prepare the school and yourself an administrative visit? (*Planning too*)

Walk me through what usually happened on the day the administrator came to visit.

*School-community*

How did the one-room school fit into the local community?

What activities were held at the school for the community?

How were activities set up in the school for the community and what was the purpose of these?

How did you interact with community leaders?

*Closing*

Why do you think the one-room schools closed?

What could we learn from one-room schools?

What do you think was positive about the administration of one-room schools?

What do you think was negative about the administration of one-room schools?

If I wanted to talk to other people about the management one-room schools, who would you say knows a lot about them?

Is there anything else I should know about how one-room schools were run?

## Appendix B

### Semi-structured interview questions--Administrator

#### *Opening-background*

When were you an administrator of one-room schools and what was your job title?

What were the names of some of the schools?

What happened to the one-room schools after they closed?

Why did you become a school administrator?

#### *Staffing*

What were the qualifications required for your job? How did you get these and keep them current?

How were you hired?

How did you hire new teachers? What did you look for?

#### *Directing*

I have read that you had to visit each school once per year—Is that true?

Walk me through a typical day when you visited a one-room school

Describe what the trip to and from the school was like. What did you think about?

Do you remember visiting an outstanding one-room school? Tell me why it was so good.

#### *Reporting*

What paperwork did the teachers have to submit to you? How did you get this?

What communications or contacts were necessary between individual schools and the central office? Tell me more about those.

#### *Coordinating*

Tell me about the textbooks for the schools-- How were they chosen?

How did word of things like school calendars or snow days etc. get to the one-room school?

### *Organizing*

What barriers were there to you completing your job? How did you work through these? Do you remember any days where you just wanted to quit? Tell me about those.

### *Budgeting*

How was the yearly budget set up for the one-room schools? Tell me about pay and salary for teachers. Administrators.

### *Directing*

What role did the elected school board play in the management of one-room schools? How were decisions made on where to build one-room schools? How was a decision made to close a one-room school? Were politics a part of the board? Tell me about that.

### *School-Community*

How did the community work with the one-room school? What things did the community do to help the school?

### *Closing*

What would you want people to remember about the one-room school? Why do you think the one-room schools closed? What do you think was positive about the administration of one-room schools? What do you think was negative about the administration of one-room schools? If I wanted to talk to other people about one-room schools, who would you say knows a lot about them? Is there anything else I should know about how one-room schools were run?

## Appendix C

## Semi-structured interview questions—Community Person

*Background/Opening*

I was told you were someone who knows a lot about one-room schools, why would I have been told that?

When were you involved with one-room schools?

*School-Community*

Describe the relationship between the one-room school and the local community?

What did people in the community think about their school?

What activities were held at the school for the community?

How were these activities set up in the school for the community and what was the purpose of them?

How did word get out about events coming up in the school?

Tell me about fundraisers for the one-room school.

Were politics a part of the local school system? Tell me about that.

What would you want people to remember about the one-room school?

Why do you think the one-room schools closed?

If I wanted to talk to other people about one-room schools, who would you say knows a lot about how they were run?

Is there anything else I should know about how one-room schools were run?