

A KENTUCKY EPISODE

Apropos Murray and Morehead Normal Schools

Recently it was decided, in Kentucky, to establish two state normal schools. Two state attorneys, Judge Young and Judge Wells, engineered the project. Wells was interested in the western counties; Young was partial to the eastern counties, being employed by the coal interests.

A special commission of eight members was appointed to investigate and select sites and to start the schools. Three were state senators and five were state representatives. The senators were free agents but the representatives were "selected" by Young and Wells. This commission was dined and wined from one end of the state to the other, but on every site offered, no matter how good, the vote was always negative until Morehead and Murray came forward. Morehead is the home of Judge Young and Murray is the home of Judge Wells.

As a condition, in order to secure the school, a town had to furnish \$100,000 toward its development. The property selected at Morehead had been a private school of some sort and on it there was one brick building which cost \$10,000 to build and three frame buildings which could not have cost more than \$20,000 together. Mr. Joseph (firm of Joseph and Joseph) of Louisville, being in close touch with Frankfort, was

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selected to view these buildings, and he valued them at not less than \$130,000. They were therefore accepted by the Commission as Morehead's contribution toward the normal school. Incidentally this tract was obviously inadequate for the purposes of the school, as it has already been necessary to lease outside lands.

At Murray the property selected was a flat, small, and not sightly tract belonging to Judge Wells; and the price paid was three or four times its generally accepted market value. Furthermore, in the center of its frontage is Judge Wells' own house and lot which was not included in the normal school purchase.

Finally Mr. Joseph was "given" the commission for the \$100,000 building erected at Murray as Murray's contribution toward the school; and he so located it that its front opens almost into the back yard of the Wells homestead.

Judge Wells is "deeply interested" in the success of the Murray Normal School; he "loves Murray his old home town" and he is "sentimentally attached" to his home there!

This is the inheritance left by the special commission appointed to establish two state normal schools in Kentucky. Each school has now been put in charge of

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a Board of Regents under the general direction of State Supervisor of Education McHenry Rhodes who seems to be a strong, straight man familiar with the ways of Frankford but not a politician.

E.C.W.

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