

CORA WILSON STEWART AND THE "MOONLIGHT SCHOOL" MOVEMENT

BY

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CORA WILSON STEWART AND THE "MOONLIGHT SCHOOL" MOVEMENT

In 1911, Cora Wilson Stewart, an ambitious, talented, Kentucky mountaineer, began a crusade against illiteracy that dramatically improved the quality of life in Appalachian Kentucky. The "Moonlight School" Program--a night school for illiterate adults--made her a beacon of hope to the mountain people of Eastern Kentucky and a legitimate hero in their eyes. "My mother thought she hung the moon," observed one Morehead State University educator, while a Kentucky legislator reportedly said that "he always told his children he wanted them to see two people, Buffalo Bill and Cora Wilson Stewart."¹ Her memorabilia is still cherished and handed down in Rowan County families today.

By the early twentieth century Appalachian Kentucky was a land of despair that desperately needed Cora Wilson Stewart's help. While many Americans worried about the Supreme Court's anti-trust stance or the unfolding split in the Republican party, Eastern Kentuckians "made do."² They had learned their survival lessons the hard way, because both geography and historical experience had separated them from the American mainstream. The Civil War had been particularly devastating.³ The people of Appalachian Kentucky--caught between warring armies--expressed divided sentiments. The majority supported the North, but strong Confederate ties existed, too. The resulting local conflicts divided families and destroyed friendships. When the war ended,

the bitter hatreds remained and feuding continued into the twentieth century.⁴

Other horrible aftereffects of the war were less evident than the feuds but equally debilitating. When "home rule" returned to Kentucky following the Compromise of 1877, Democratic, ex-Confederates again assumed control of the state government and took revenge against their war-time opponents from the mountain counties through political and economic retaliations.⁵ Not surprisingly, the quality of life in Appalachian Kentucky grew worse as roads and schools suffered from discriminatory funding.

When this plight was "discovered" nationally, a great missionary intrusion to the mountains began. Thousands of teachers and preachers came "with souls afire" to life the people of Appalachian Kentucky from their "cultural depravity."⁶ In retrospect, one of the great ironies of this mountain mission was the fact that, during this same period, the Kentucky mountaineers produced their own hero in the war against illiteracy, and her efforts won national and international recognition. She was Cora Wilson Stewart and her "Moonlight School" program destroyed illiteracy in her home county and became a model for similar adult education programs throughout American and eventually the world.⁷

Cora Wilson was born to Dr. Jeremiah Wilson and Annie Eliza (Hally) Wilson in 1875 and reared in Farmers, a community in the western part of Rowan County. She attended Morehead

Normal School and the National Normal University in Lebanon, Ohio and then began a teaching career in her home county in 1895. She quickly earned a reputation as an outstanding educator, and in 1901 Rowan Countians elected her to serve as county school superintendent.⁸

Success in Rowan County soon brought recognition from regional educators who often invited Mrs. Stewart to address teacher training sessions and other groups interested in advancing public education. She was a "graceful, forceful speaker with a direct, clear message,...a rich vocabulary, and...an easy and attractive manner," observed E.C. McDougle of Eastern Kentucky State Normal School. McDougle, who heard Mrs. Stewart lecture on "That Child of Yours and His Parent" in 1908, commended her "fine presentation of some school problems that should be carefully studied by both teacher and parent" and felt that it would "do good wherever heard."⁹ Her other regional presentations were equally well received.¹⁰ Following an address in Elliot County, the Superintendent of County Schools, D.F. Gray, commended her efforts "to urge our boys and girls into something higher and nobler in life" and pledged his support if Mrs. Stewart sought the Presidency of the Kentucky Educational Association: "I think it would be real nice to have one of our home county girls at the head of educational affairs of our state, and I hope you will not hesitate to take advantage of any opportunity that may come your way." Voicing the sentiment of so many persons who heard her speak prior to 1910, Gray wrote: "We all enjoyed your lecture but nothing you said gave me greater

pleasure than your statement that the remainder of your life would be devoted to the cause of education."¹¹

Many others noted Mrs. Stewart's great commitment to public education. She was re-elected Superintendent of Rowan County Schools in 1909, and two years later she was elected the first woman president of the Kentucky Educational Association.¹²

Most state educators echoed the sentiments of J.G. Crabbe, President of Kentucky Normal School, who warmly congratulated Mrs. Stewart and pledged support of her efforts, "Count on me," he promised. "I am sure the Association will prosper under your leadership."¹³

Buoyed by this statewide support, Mrs. Stewart determined, as an addition to Rowan County's overall educational program, to launch an experimental program called the "Moonlight School" that was designed to combat illiteracy among the county's adult population. Cora Wilson knew many of the 1,152 illiterate persons living in Rowan County in 1911, and, having "served as a secretary" to many of them, she knew how much they needed and wanted to learn how to read and write.¹⁴

One older woman who lived by herself often walked seven miles to Mrs. Stewart's office in Morehead whenever she received a letter from her daughter who worked in Chicago. After a particularly long absence, the woman arrived with a letter one morning. In reply to Mrs. Stewart's offer of assistance, she reported that she could answer it for herself for she had learned to read and write. The lonely mountain woman had determined to break down "the wall" between her and her absent daughter Jane

and had purchased a speller and studied "'til midnight and sometimes 'til daylight." She proudly demonstrated her success by reading the letter and penning a reply with Mrs. Stewart's advice.¹⁵

Mrs. Stewart had many other touching personal encounters with Rowan County adults who genuinely wanted to escape the bondage of illiteracy. One middle-aged businessman cried when he confessed that he could not read or write and declared that he would gladly exchange twenty years of his life for the ability to read and write. Another man, a young ballad singer, sadly told Mrs. Stewart that he had forgotten many beautiful songs that had been passed down to him by his ancestors "before anybody came along to set 'em down."¹⁶

Against this backdrop of educational need, Cora Stewart fashioned her plan. She decided to hold classes at night, since the majority of illiterates were employed during the day. She informed Rowan County teachers of her plan, and they unanimously volunteered their assistance. On September 4, 1911, county teachers visited each home in their district and personally invited attendance at the first session that was scheduled to begin the following night. Approximately one hundred and fifty were expected; 1,200 arrived. One thousand, two hundred persons with 1,200 sad stories about why they could not read and write came determined to improve themselves. They wanted to read their Bibles, write to their children, and sign their names rather than make "their mark." The youngest was eighteen; the oldest was a "school girl" of eighty-six. They applied themselves diligently.

Many learned to sign their name the first night. Soon the county was a beehive of new writing activity, and people who had long led lives of quiet, illiterate desperation wrote their names whenever and wherever the opportunity arose. Many deposited their meager savings in banks for the first time for the pure joy of signing their names to the checks. That January, Sherman Porter, managing editor of the Lexington Herald, congratulated Mrs. Stewart "on behalf of the people of all Kentucky" for her devotion to her work and the special efforts she was making on behalf of "our best citizens when they are properly understood and appreciated."¹⁷

Encouraged by this huge response, Cora Stewart began writing a short newspaper, The Rowan County Messenger, as a reader for her adult students. The paper was a combination of homilies and local news and also included lessons in history, arithmetic, and some memory work from literary classics like Longfellow's "Psalm of Life." The Messenger inspired much good-spirited interscholastic competition which resulted in physical improvements to the buildings as well as personal progress for the students.¹⁸

The next year, Rowan Countians requested a continuance of the "Moonlight School." In preparation for this second session, Mrs. Stewart sponsored an "Institute" or in-service training session. Teachers attended on a voluntary, non-compensated basis and discussed both teaching and recruiting methods. It was an opportunity for them to share their progresses, their sacrifices, and their disappointments, and to renew their commitment to another arduous year of working day and night. It was also

one of America's first formalized studies of adult education methodology. Cora Stewart's extensive correspondence with educators in Kentucky and throughout the nation reflected both a growing interest in her work and a recognition of the "courage and sacrifice of the teachers in Rowan County,"¹⁹

The second year of the moonlight school was more successful than the first. One thousand, six hundred students enrolled and 350 of them learned to read and write. Some individual progresses were remarkable; a lumberman doubled his salary after six weeks of schooling and two postmasters and four preachers learned to read and write. Children brought their parents and teachers brought their spouses. It was a time of progress and a rebirth of community pride. One trustee noted that the school in his district used "to drag along and nobody seemed interested." After three weeks of moonlight school, the people of his district "got together right" and made significant improvements in their schoolhouse. These revitalized schoolhouses once again became genuine community centers and the site of many civic and religious meetings. Also, during the second session, a "home department" of the moonlight school was established and teachers like Gladys Thompson taught in the homes of individuals who were too old or ill to attend night classes.²⁰

The success of the first two years prompted a third-year goal of wiping "illiteracy out of the county" completely. Before the school year began, school trustees canvassed their districts and took a census of the remaining illiterates. This list was given to the teachers who in turn recruited their

recently "converted" students to help them. "Each one teach one" was their motto, and, as part of a great competition that was developing between districts, they zealously sought out all remaining illiterates and taught them without mercy. Like all competitions, this one occasionally transcended the sublime and reached the absurd. One trustee, for example, declared that he felt confident that illiteracy would soon be totally removed from his district, since "there's only one illiterate over there, and he's a tenant on my place; I'm going to run him over into Fleming County." Whenever a district reached its goal, a ceremony was held in the schoolhouse and the former illiterates were presented with new Bibles as a reward for their accomplishments. Remarking on this phenomenon of change, one long-time resident said, "It used to be moonshine and bullets; but now it's lemonade and Bibles,"²¹

When this enormous educational crusade commenced in 1911, Rowan County had numbered 1,152 illiterates. By 1914 only 23 remained--by Mrs. Stewart's count. Of these, six were blind or had sight problems; five were bed-ridden invalids; six were defined as "imbeciles and epileptics;" two had only recently moved to this county and four "could not be induced to learn." For promotional reasons, Mrs. Stewart undoubtedly inflated the success rate by employing a very casual definition of literacy. Her qualitative results, however, remain unchallenged.

Cora Stewart did not stop to rest on her laurels. She immediately broadened her horizon and prepared to wage war against illiteracy in Kentucky.²³ In 1913, she wrote Governor James B. McCreary and proposed a state commission

that would focus on the state's 208,084 illiterates and eventually place Kentucky "in a better light before the world." The Governor responded positively and, in 1914, inspired by Mrs. Stewart's speech which reportedly "swept the Legislature off its feet," the General Assembly unanimously created the Kentucky Illiteracy Commission, headed by Mrs. Stewart. Other members included President J.F. Crabbe of Eastern Kentucky State Normal School, H.H. Cherry, the president of the Normal School in Western Kentucky, and Miss Ella Lewis, the superintendent of Grayson County Schools. Barksdale Hamlett, Superintendent of Public Instruction, also served as an ex-officio member.²⁴

To promote the state effort against illiteracy and, at the same time, to reward her original Moonlight School teachers, Mrs. Stewart took her Rowan County teachers on a vacation of the Northern United States and Canada. A trip to Niagara Falls highlighted this tour. Financial and moral support from private organizations, like the Colonial Dames, and from many church groups and civic-minded individuals soon followed.²⁵ The Kentucky campaign against illiteracy quickly won national attention from both supporters and cynics.

As a teaching device, in 1915, Mrs. Stewart developed an adult reading book entitled Country Life Reader, First Book which encouraged reading by dealing with a wide variety of subjects; including agriculture, politics, economic development, sanitation, and thrift. The following excerpt illustrates her dual emphasis on adult content and "moral" instruction:

I shall pay my taxes.
 I pay a tax on my home.
 I pay a tax on my land.
 I pay a tax on my cattle.
 I pay a tax on my money.
 I pay a tax on many other things.
 Where does all this money go?
 It goes to keep up the schools.
 It goes to keep up the roads.
 It goes to keep down crime.
 It goes to keep down disease. 26
 I am glad that I have a home to pay taxes on.

World War I rudely interrupted the quiet progress of Cora Stewart's educational programs. The European conflict that began in 1914 prompted America's declaration of neutrality. Soon, however, continued violations of U.S. maritime rights awakened American preparedness and military ardor. President Woodrow Wilson was re-elected in the fall of 1916 and the following April he asked Congress for a declaration of war against Germany to make the world "safe for democracy." By June, thousands of American men between the ages of 21 and 31 were registering for military service. The 700,000 illiterate national registrants included 30,000 Kentuckians. 27

Cora Wilson Stewart and the Kentucky Illiteracy Commission responded immediately. Realizing that the regularly scheduled fall session of the moonlight schools would be too late to serve the special needs of Kentucky's soldiers, Mrs. Stewart made a special appeal to the teachers of Kentucky, and by July 23, a summer school was in session. 28 In genuine desperation, the soon-to-be soldiers assaulted their lessons. Letters and literacy took on an urgent, new, personal meaning to many young men who had never been away from their homes and "hollers." 29

As she had done with other groups of adult learners, Cora Stewart wrote a special reader for the unique needs of Kentucky's recruits. The Soldier's First Book was patriotic in cover, color, and content. An armed soldier on the cover of the red, white, and blue text, introduced lessons that dealt with war, guns, camps, flags, tents, bulletin boards, parade grounds, and the "rule of kings."³⁰

The bewilderment and humiliation that illiterates experienced in basic training was sad, but eloquent, testimony to the continuation and extension of Cora Stewart's work. Some carried letters in their pockets for days before gathering the courage to ask someone to read the home news and pen a reply. Others were frequently transferred because their commanding officers, themselves unschooled in many respects, confused inability to read and understand orders with lack of cooperation and commitment. A few were even imprisoned for "disobeying orders" simply because they could not read and understand them. Typical of the illiterates' despair, one young soldier timidly requested that a Y.M.C.A. volunteer worker address twelve envelopes to his mother. "Are you planning to write every day?" the volunteer queried. "You must be a dutiful son." "No, these are to last me a year," the soldier replied. "I promised my mother that I'd get some envelopes backed and that once a month I'd slip a dollar bill in one and mail it to her and by that she'd know that I was still alive."³¹

During the war years of 1917 and 1918, Mrs. Stewart again focused attention on the soldiers' needs by prompting the Kentucky Illiteracy Commission to hold special moonlight school sessions for the wives, mothers, sisters, and sweethearts of Kentucky's fighting men. General John Pershing, Commander of the American forces in Europe, had requested that American women write "long cheerful letters telling everything that happens in the old home town," because the men were "hungry for news..." Meanwhile, The Soldier's First Book had been revised by the Y.M.C.A. as a teaching aide for all of our country's soldiers. 32

When the war ended in 1918, Cora Stewart again adopted her campaign against illiteracy to the prevailing circumstances. A government agency distributed fifty thousand copies of her Country Life Reader to American soldiers in Europe. This new adult reader aided their educational progress while preparing them for a return to the current issues of civilian life-- voting, taxation, soil conservation, transportation, and health. As the war was concluding, many former students of America's moonlight schools were adapting Cora Stewart's program to European needs. 33 Meanwhile, on the Kentucky home front, Cora Stewart and Sergeant Willie Sandlin, Kentucky's counterpart to Tennessee's Alvin York, were touring the state and promoting the work of the Kentucky Illiteracy Commission. 34

The success of the Moonlight School Program and the contribution it made to the state, the nation, and the war effort encouraged the state legislature to make a small post-war appropriation to support the traveling expenses of 75 field

agents for the Illiteracy Commission. These agents continued the program that Cora Stewart had started in Rowan County and constantly sought to educate the state's adults within the context of the major social and political issues of the day. A new dimension to the crusade against illiteracy in Kentucky involved extending the program to the state penal institutions. In 1919, literacy became a condition of parole, providing additional incentive to the learning efforts of state prisoners. The Literacy Commission also expanded its efforts by taking a census of the remaining illiterates in the state, thus charting a course for future action.

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Many other states launched adult education programs that were carefully patterned after Cora Wilson Stewart's Moonlight School and the Kentucky Illiteracy Commission. As the movement grew, it received support and encouragement from the National Educational Association and other national organization. By the end of the second decade of the twentieth-century, the campaign against illiteracy had blossomed into a national crusade. Ironically, after 1920 the social and political climate of Kentucky changed, and the state legislature did not refund the Kentucky Illiteracy Commission.

As Americans moved into the Roaring 20s and embraced new ideologies and adopted new heroes, the campaign against illiteracy became a part of the American dream and Cora Stewart achieved national prominence. In 1923, she was elected

to serve a one-year term on the Executive Committee of the National Educational Association. That same year, she presided over the illiteracy section of the World Conference on Education in San Francisco. She subsequently played similar roles at Edinburgh in 1925, at Toronto in 1927, at Geneva in 1929, and at Denver in 1931. From 1929 to 1933, she chaired the Executive Committee of the National Advisory Committee on Illiteracy. 38

This decade of national prominence also brought the story of Cora Wilson Stewart before the American public, and the "Moonlight School Lady" won awards and ever increasing recognition. In 1925, she received Pictorial Review's \$5,000 achievement prize for her "contribution...to advance human welfare." She was also honored by the Kentucky Educational Association and the General Federation of Women's Clubs. A decade of honors and appointments culminated with her receipt of the Ella Flagg Young Medal for distinguished service to education in 1930. 39

Throughout the 30s and 40s, the "Moonlight School" idea was adapted to meet the increasingly diverse needs of the national adult education movement. Meanwhile, advancing age and health problems forced Cora Stewart to accept a cameo role in this national epic-drama. She moved to Pine Bluff, Arkansas, to be near her sisters and subsequently moved to various rest homes in North Carolina. She died in South Carolina on December 9, 1958 and is buried in Tryon, North Carolina. 40

In retrospect, Cora Wilson Stewart emerges as a significant pioneer leader in America's burgeoning twentieth-century adult

education movement. She also merits recognition as a major figure in the national crusade against illiteracy, although her methodologies have been challenged and altered by subsequent generations of educators. Her greatest achievement, however, was the human progress she fostered among the mountain people of Eastern Kentucky. As a role model, a friend, and a champion of personal and regional advancement, Cora Stewart earned the love and respect of the people of Appalachian Kentucky. Their progress is an enduring tribute to her hard work, self-sacrifice, and vision for a brighter future. Their success is her greatest monument.

FOOTNOTES

¹George T. Young, interview, November 19, 1979;
Quoted without reference to the author in the Cora Wilson
Stewart Papers, Box 1, Department of Special Collections, the
University of Kentucky Libraries, Lexington, Kentucky (hereinafter
cited as CWS Papers UK). The author is deeply grateful to
Mrs. Grace Yoder of Morehead, Kentucky for sharing materials
that her parents, the late George and Sadie Brown, had left to her.

²There is no definitive study of the Appalachian experience
in Kentucky. For a synoptic overview, see Carol Crowe-Carraco,
The Big Sandy (Lexington: The University Press of Kentucky, 1979).
For some insight into the difficulties encountered by Appalachian
miners of this period, see John W. Hevener, Which Side Are You On?
The Harlan County Coal Miners, 1931-1939 (Urbana: University
of Illinois Press, 1978), pp. 1-11 and Howard B. Lee, Bloodletting
In Appalachia: The Story of West Virginia's Four Major Mine Wars
and Other Thrilling Incidents of Its Coal Fields (Parsons, West
Virginia: McClain Printing Company, 1969), passim. See also
Archie Green, Only a Miner: Studies In Recorded Coal-Mining Songs
(Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1972), ch.7.

³For an eloquent elaboration on the Civil War's role in
the Appalachian experience, see Cratis Williams, "The Southern
Mountaineer in Fact and Fiction" (Ph.D. dissertation, New York
University, 1961). This monumental, three volume, 1,600-page
study was abridged and edited by Martha H. Pipes and published

in four successive issues of Appalachian Journal beginning with vol.3, no.1, Autumn 1975. An interesting reassessment of the theme of Appalachian isolation is Gary S. Foster, "Appalachian Isolation in Perspective," Appalachian Heritage, vol.8, no.1, (Winter, 1980), pp. 34-47.

⁴
Some well-known examples of violence, emanating from the Civil War, in Eastern Kentucky include the "Underwood War" in Carter County, the Hatfield-McCoy Feud which resulted in twenty-six deaths in Pike County, Kentucky and Logan County, West Virginia, the Brammer Gap Killings in Lawrence County, the feuds of "Bloody Breathitt," and various guerilla conflicts that occurred after Appomatox. For more information see Harold Wilson Coates, Stories of Kentucky Feuds (Knoxville, Tennessee: Holmes-Darst Coal Corporation, 1942) pp.3-46; Henry P. Scalf, Kentucky's Last Frontier (Pikeville, Kentucky: Pikeville College Press, 1972), p. 279. G. Elliott Hatfield, The Hatfields (Stanville, Kentucky: The Big Sandy Valley Historical Society, 1974), p.12-14, 24; Virgil Carrington-Jones, The Hatfields and the McCoys (Chapel Hill, North Carolina: The University of North Carolina Press, 1948, passim, esp. p.18. Mrs. A.J. Davidson, Josie M. Davidson: Her Life and Work (Prestonsburg, Kentucky: Privately printed, 1922), pp.1-10; J. Tandy Ellis, Report of the Adjutant General of the State of Kentucky: Confederate Kentucky Volunteers' War, 1861-1865 (Frankfort: The State of Kentucky, 1915), vol.1, pp. 338-342.

⁵
An elaboration of this theme, as it applies to the Appalachian experience in Western North Carolina, is found in

James H. Horton, Theda Perdue, and James M. Gifford, Our Mountain Heritage, edited by Clifford R. Lovin, (Franklin, North Carolina: The North Carolina Humanities Committee and the Mountain Heritage Center, Western Carolina University, 1979), pp.70-123.

6
For an interesting historical overview, see Richard B. Drake, "The Mission School Era in Southern Appalachia, 1880-1940," Appalachian Notes, vol.6, nos.1-4 (1978), pp.1-8. See also F. Scott Rogers, "The Missionaries Effect on the Appalachian Self-Image," Appalachian Notes, vol.1, no.4 (Fourth Quarter, 1973), pp.1-8, esp. p.2 and Jim Wayne Miller, "Where Do You Come From, Where Do You Go? Appalachians as Immigrants in Their Own Land," Mountain Review, pp.40-41 and Bill Best, "A Case for Appalachian Scholarship," Mountain Life and Work (Nov., 1970), pp.16-18.

7
The only adequate scholarship that focuses on Cora Wilson Stewart's life and contributions is Willie Everette Nelms, Jr. "Cora Wilson Stewart: Crusader Against Illiteracy" (M.A. thesis, University of Kentucky, 1973). This gracefully written study focuses "on her career as an educational reformer...and her contributions to adult education..." (hereinafter cited as Nelms, "Crusader Against Illiteracy"). A more specialized, synoptic, published version of this study is Willie E. Nelms, Jr., "Cora Wilson Stewart And The Crusade Against Illiteracy In Kentucky," The Register Of The Kentucky Historical Society, vol.74, no.1 (January, 1976), pp.10-29. Another helpful work is Mrs. Stewart's promotional recollections, Cora Wilson Stewart, Moonlight Schools For the Emancipation of Adult Illiterates (New York: E.P. Dutton and Company, 1922). This work is, in spite of biases induced

by purpose and time, a valuable primary source (hereinafter cited as Stewart, Moonlight Schools).

8

Some basic biographical information on Cora Wilson Stewart can be found in a small brochure used to commemorate the restoration of the "Little Brushy School" on the campus of Morehead State University in 1973. Harold Rose, ed., "The Cora Wilson Stewart Moonlight Schoolhouse" (Morehead, Kentucky: Morehead State University, 1973). See also Autograph Books I-II, CWS Papers UK.

9

E.C. McDougale addressed "To Whom It May Concern," 30 July 1908, CWS Papers, Box 2, UK.

10

See, for example H.R. Dysard, lawyer in Grayson, Kentucky, to Cora Wilson Stewart, 29 July 1908, Mannie E. Fields, Superintendent of Morgan County Schools, 25 September 1908, and C.C. Adams, Superintendent of Schools, Grant County, Kentucky, to Cora Wilson Stewart, 7 October 1908, CWS Papers, Box 2, UK.

11

O.F. Gray, Superintendent of Elliot County Schools, to Cora Wilson Stewart, 12 August 1910, CWS Papers, Box 2, UK.

12

Kentucky Educational Association, Proceedings of the Fortieth Annual Session (Louisville, 1911), p.9. A brief chronology of some of Cora Wilson Stewart's achievements introduces the index to the Cora Wilson Stewart Papers. See "Biographical Information." CWS Papers, Index, UK. See also Helen Deiss Irwin, Women in Kentucky (Lexington: The University Press of Kentucky, 1979), pp.119-120.

13

Everett L. Dicks to Cora Wilson Stewart, 30 June 1911 and J.G. Crabbe, President of Kentucky Normal School, to Cora

Wilson Stewart 6 July 1911, CWS Papers, Box 2, UK. See also J.S. Dickey, President, Bowling Green Business University, to Cora Wilson Stewart, 30 July 1911, E.C. McDougale to Cora Wilson Stewart, 30 June 1911, and W.C. Kozes, Superintendent of Carter County Schools, to Cora Wilson Stewart, 1 July 1911, CWS Papers, Box 2, UK.

¹⁴ U.S. Census Bureau, Thirteenth Census of the United States (1910) Population, vol.2, p.749.

¹⁵ Stewart, Moonlight Schools, pp.8-13.

¹⁶ Ibid.

¹⁷ Glenna Flannery Gearhart, interview, December 12, 1979; Stewart, Moonlight Schools, ch.3; Sherman Porter, Managing Editor of the Lexington Herald, to Cora Wilson Stewart, 29 July 1912, CWS Papers, Box 2, UK; Conie Mauk Foster, interview, January 4, 1979.

¹⁸ Stewart, Moonlight Schools, pp.21-31; Glenna Flannery Gearhart, interview, December 12, 1979.

¹⁹ Stewart, Moonlight Schools, pp.32-37; George T. Young, interview, November 19, 1979. Mrs. Lafon Riker, Chairman of the Health Committee of the Kentucky Federation of Women's Clubs to Cora Wilson Stewart, 9 February 1914, CWS Papers, Box 2, UK.

²⁰ Stewart, Moonlight Schools, pp.38-46; Glenna Flannery Gearhart, interview, December 12, 1979; Louisville Courier Journal, December 29, 1912.

²¹ Stewart, Moonlight Schools, 47-56.

²² Ibid, p.55; Louisville Courier Journal, February 18, 1912.

²³ Stewart, Moonlight Schools, pp.57-69.

24

Cora Wilson Stewart to Governor James B. McCreary, 16 December 1913 and McCreary to Stewart, 19 February 1914, quoted in Stewart Moonlight Schools, pp.58-61; Lexington Herald, February 12, 1914 and Frankfort State Journal, February 14, 1914. Kentucky Illiteracy Commission, First Biennial Report, 1914-1915 (Louisville,1916), p.8.

25

Glenna Flannery Gearhart, interview, December 12, 1979; Stewart, Moonlight Schools, pp.62-63.

26

Cora Wilson Stewart, Country Life Reader, First Book (Atlantic: B.F. Johnson Publishing Company, 1915).

27

Stewart, Moonlight Schools, p.82, see also pp. 145-194.

28

Cora Wilson Stewart, President, Kentucky Illiteracy Commission, "To The Teachers of Kentucky," n.d., quoted in Stewart, Moonlight Schools, pp. 82-85.

29

Stewart, Moonlight Schools, pp.81-105.

30

Cora Wilson Stewart, The Soldier's First Book (New York: Association Press, 1918).

31

Stewart, Moonlight Schools, pp.81-105, esp. p.97.

32

Ibid, 101-103.

33

Ibid, 103-105.

34

See a poster proclaiming "public speaking tonight at the Presbyterian Church, 7:30, Mrs. Cora Wilson Stewart, eloquent Kentucky woman, and Sergeant Sandlin, famous World War speaker, on the most interesting topics of the day." CWS Papers, Box 1, UK. On September 26, 1918, Sergeant Willie Sandlin single-handedly destroyed three German machine gun nests and killed twenty-four German soldiers. See Harry M. Caudill's

Boone Day Address, "Eastern Kentucky and the History of our Commonwealth," The Register of the Kentucky Historical Society, vol.79, no.4 (Autumn, 1979), p.291.

35

Stewart, Moonlight Schools, pp.112,117, and 122;

Nelms, "Crusader Against Illiteracy," ch.III.

36

Stewart, Moonlight Schools, ch.12, passim. The Cora Wilson Stewart Papers, housed in the University of Kentucky Libraries, contain a wealth of information, including letters and photographs, of the "Moonlight School" adaptation in other states.

37

For more detail, see Nelms, "Crusader Against Illiteracy," ch.IV.

38

CWS Papers UK, passim; Nelms, "Crusader Against Illiteracy," ch.V.

39

"Biographical File," CWS Papers UK.

40

CWS Papers, Box 1, UK; Rose, ed. "The Cora Wilson Stewart Moonlight Schoolhouse," The Cora Wilson Stewart Moonlight Schoolhouse contains several showcase displays of Stewart memorabilia.

To commemorate her efforts in the state, national, and international crusade against illiteracy, Morehead State University acquired and restored the one-room school where Cora Wilson Stewart began her teaching career. The "Little Brushy School" stands on the University campus today as a museum and monument to her work and a constant reminder to the educators who continue her mission of educational services in the mountain regions of Kentucky.