MOONLIGHT SCHOOLS

Established in Rowan County, Ky., in 1911, by Mrs. Cora W. Stewart, "to emancipate from illiteracy those enslaved in its bondage." Because the people had to labor by day it was decided to have the schools on moonlight nights so the moon could light the way. The schools were taught by volunteer teachers. Movement soon spread nationally and internationally.

1967

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Ky Historical Plaque located on the campus of Morehead State University. It identifies the Cora Wilson Stewart Moonlight School formerly known as the Little Brush School in Rowan County

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LETTER OF TRANSMITTAL.

DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR,
BUREAU OF EDUCATION,
Washington, D. C., April 4, 1913.

SIR: I submit herewith, for publication as a bulletin of the Bureau of Education, a statement showing in some detail the amount of illiteracy in the United States among men, women, and children over 10 years of age according to the Federal Census of 1910; also a brief statement of an experiment which has been conducted for nearly two years in one of the mountain counties of eastern Kentucky having a large number of illiterates in its population, to ascertain if it were possible to teach these illiterate grown-up men and women and older children to read and write, and whether other men, women, and children with very meager education would respond to the opportunity to learn more of the arts of the school. The success of this experiment, made under very difficult circumstances, has been so great as to inspire the hope that, with the cooperation of schools, churches, philanthropic societies, cities, counties, States, and the Nation, the great majority of the five and one-half million illiterates over 10 years of age in the United States may, in a few years, be taught to read and write, and something more; while millions of those whose school days were very few and who are little above the line of total illiteracy may be helped to make good to some extent their deficiencies due to lack of opportunity in childhood.

This bureau expects to have ready for publication soon some account of other efforts in this country to teach illiterates to read and write, and also some account of the efforts which some foreign countries have made to eliminate illiteracy. These statements are submitted for publication at this time because of the fact that a bill, introduced near the close of the last session of the Sixty-second Congress, looking to the reduction of adult illiteracy in this country will probably be introduced early in the Sixty-third Congress.

Respectfully submitted.

P. P. CLAXTON,
Commissioner.

The SECRETARY OF THE INTERIOR.

LITERACY IN THE UNITED STATES AND AN EXPERIMENT FOR ITS ELIMINATION.

The Federal Census for the year 1910 shows that at the time the nsus was taken there were in the United States 5,516,163 persons years of age and over unable to read and write. This was 7.7 per nt of the total population 10 years of age and over. The full mean- g of these figures will be better understood when it is remembered at the number of illiterate persons 10 years of age and over in the nited States is less by only a few thousands than the total popula- on 10 years of age and over in all the New England States, or in the tates of Montana, Wyoming, Colorado, New Mexico, Arizona, Utah, evada, Idaho, Washington, Oregon, and California, and more than the pulation 10 years of age and over in the cities of Boston, Baltimore, ashington, Buffalo, Cleveland, Detroit, Cincinnati, Pittsburgh dianapolis, Louisville, New Orleans, St. Louis, Kansas City, innеapolis, St. Paul, Seattle, Spokane, San Francisco, and Los ngeles. In double line of march, at intervals of 3 feet, these 16,163 illiterate persons would extend over a distance of 1,567 iles—more than twice the distance from Washington City to cksonville, Fla. Marching at the rate of 25 miles a day, it would quire more than two months for them to pass a given point. A ighty army is this, with their banners of blackness and darkness scribed with the legends of illiteracy, ignorance, weakness, helpless- ss, and hoplessness—too large for the safety of our democratic stitutions, for the highest good of society, and for the greatest degree material prosperity.

Their ignorance is not wholly nor chiefly their own fault. To a rge degree it is due to the lack of opportunity, because of the overty or negligence of the States and communities in which they ent their childhood.

Of these illiterates, 3,184,633, or 58 per cent, were white persons, 534,272, or 28 per cent, were native-born whites, and 1,650,361, or 0 per cent, foreign-born whites; 2,227,731, or 40 per cent, were groes. The remaining 2 per cent were Indians, Chinese, Japanese, nd others.

Of the total number of illiterates, 1,768,132 lived in urban commun- ties and 3,748,031 in rural communities, in small towns, villages, and he open country. Of the urban population, 5.1 per cent were illiter- te· of the rural population, 10.1 per cent.

Of the total rural population of the United States, 4.8 per cent of the native white persons and 40 per cent of the negroes 10 years of age and over were illiterate.

Of the urban population, 0.8 per cent of the native white persons and 17.6 per cent of the negroes were illiterate. The per cent of illiterates among the foreign-born whites of the urban population was much larger than that of the native white population. In the New England, Middle Atlantic, and East North Central States, the percentage of illiteracy was greater in the urban than in the rural population. For the rest of the country, illiteracy in the rural population was from two to five times greater than in the urban population.

The following tables show that the per cent of illiteracy in the population from 10 to 20 years old was much less than in the population over 20 years of age. Of the total 5,516,163 illiterates, only 818,550 were between the ages of 10 and 20, while 4,697,613 were over 20.

ILLITERATES BY AGE PERIODS.

		Per cent.
10 to 14 years of age:		
Total	370,136	4.1
White	144,675	1.8
Negro	218,555	18.9
15 to 19 years of age:[1]		
Total	448,414	4.9
White	226,432	2.8
Negro	214,860	20.3
Males nearly 50 per cent.		
20 to 24 years of age:		
Total	622,073	6.9
White	367,669	4.6
Negro	245,860	23.9
25 to 34 years of age:		
Total	1,102,384	7.3
White	702,962	5.2
Negro	380,742	24.4
35 to 44 years of age:		
Total	940,510	8.1
White	569,403	5.4
Negro	152,132	27.7
45 to 64 years of age:		
Total	1,436,907	10.7
White	821,957	6.7
Negro	584,514	52.7
65 years of age and over:		
Total	573,799	14.5
White	342,420	9.4
Negro	219,255	74.5

[1] The proportion of illiterates among males 15 to 19 years of age was nearly 50 per cent greater than that among females of the same age.

The census reports show that in 1910 there were 2,273,603 illiterate males of voting age, that is, 21 years of age and over, of whom 617,733 were native-born whites, 788,631 foreign-born whites, and 819,135 negroes. The per cent of illiteracy of the total male population of voting age was 8.4; of the native-born white men, 4.1; of the foreign-born white men, 11.9; of the negroes, 33.7. The total number of illiterate men of voting age in the entire country was greater than the total number of men of voting age in the States of Kentucky, Tennessee, Alabama, Mississippi, Delaware, and the District of Columbia. In some States, and in many counties, the illiterate voters hold the balance of power in any closely contested election.

The problem of adult illiteracy is no longer one of race or of section. In 1910 the total number of white illiterates was greater by 956,902 than the total of negro illiterates, and the number of illiterate white men of voting age was greater by 585,229 than that of illiterate negroes of voting age. Massachusetts had 7,469 more illiterate men of voting age than Arkansas; Michigan, 2,663 more than West Virginia; Maryland, 2,352 more than Florida; Ohio, more than twice as many as New Mexico and Arizona combined; Pennsylvania, 5,689 more than Tennessee and Kentucky combined.

Boston had 24,468 illiterates over 10 years of age; Baltimore, 20,325; Pittsburgh, 26,627; New Orleans, 18,987; Fall River, 12,276; Birmingham, 11,026; Providence, 14,236; Nashville, 7,947; Washington City, 13,812; Memphis, 8,855.

The per cent of illiterates in the population over 10 years of age was, in New Bedford, Mass., 12.1; in Dallas, Tex., 4; in Lawrence, Mass., 13.2; in Wheeling, W. Va., 3.2; in Amsterdam, N. Y., 10.3; in Little Rock, Ark., 6.5; in Passaic, N. J., 15.8; in Augusta, Ga., 10.9; in Green Bay, Wis., 5.7; in Paducah, Ky., 1.8; in Woonsocket, R. I., 9.1; in Dubuque, Iowa, 0.9; in Bayonne, N. J., 9.1; in Knoxville, Tenn., 6.5; in Utica, N. Y., 8.2; in Roanoke, Va., 6.9.

These figures indicate that, if all classes of population are considered, no section can claim even approximate freedom from adult illiteracy.

The tables following show: (1) Number of illiterates in 1910 who were 10 years of age and over; (2) illiterate males 21 years of age and over in 1910; (3) per cent of illiteracy in cities having 100,000 population and over in the United States, 1910; (4) per cent of illiteracy in cities having 25,000 to 100,000 population in the United States, 1910.

Number of illiterates in 1910 who were 10 years of age and over.

States.	All classes.	Native whites.	Foreign-born whites.	Negroes.
Alabama	352,710	84,768	2,063	265,628
Arizona	32,953	3,776	13,758	122
Arkansas	142,954	55,025	1,466	86,398
California	74,902	7,509	50,292	1,329
Colorado	23,780	8,133	13,897	856
Connecticut	53,665	3,583	49,202	792
Delaware	13,240	3,525	3,359	6,345
District of Columbia	13,812	960	1,944	10,814
Florida	77,816	14,871	3,390	59,503
Georgia	389,775	80,203	875	308,639
Idaho	5,453	707	2,742	37
Illinois	168,294	40,486	117,751	9,713
Indiana	66,213	40,955	18,200	6,959
Iowa	29,889	11,541	16,894	1,272
Kansas	28,968	9,472	13,787	5,341
Kentucky	208,084	146,797	3,300	57,900
Louisiana	352,179	85,359	12,085	254,148
Maine	24,554	9,824	14,394	93
Maryland	73,397	18,952	12,047	42,289
Massachusetts	141,541	9,163	129,412	2,584
Michigan	74,800	17,846	54,113	826
Minnesota	49,336	5,838	40,627	215
Mississippi	290,235	28,699	1,364	259,438
Missouri	111,116	65,242	22,631	23,062
Montana	14,457	736	8,445	114
Nebraska	18,009	4,278	12,264	482
Nevada	4,702	187	1,344	26
New Hampshire	16,386	2,839	13,485	51
New Jersey	113,502	12,253	93,551	7,405
New Mexico	48,697	30,338	6,580	191
New York	406,020	36,318	362,025	5,768
North Carolina	291,497	132,189	477	156,303
North Dakota	13,070	1,413	9,474	26
Ohio	124,774	47,310	66,887	10,460
Oklahoma	67,567	33,569	3,828	17,858
Oregon	10,504	1,841	6,120	46
Pennsylvania	354,290	59,680	279,668	14,638
Rhode Island	33,854	3,253	29,781	752
South Carolina	276,980	50,245	399	226,242
South Dakota	12,750	1,239	4,896	38
Tennessee	221,071	120,966	1,488	98,541
Texas	282,904	90,591	67,295	124,618
Utah	6,821	832	3,636	49
Vermont	10,806	4,495	6,239	69
Virginia	232,911	81,457	2,368	148,950
Washington	18,416	1,836	11,233	239
West Virginia	74,866	51,407	13,075	10,347
Wisconsin	57,769	11,468	43,662	113
Wyoming	3,874	298	2,548	102
United States	5,516,163	1,534,272	1,650,361	2,227,731

Illiterate males 21 years of age and over in 1910.

States.	All classes.	Native whites.	Foreign-born whites.	Negroes.
Alabama	124,494	30,633	1,028	92,744
Arizona	14,463	1,297	7,447	64
Arkansas	53,440	20,728	661	32,013
California	42,787	3,175	28,921	556
Colorado	11,343	2,936	7,468	373
Connecticut	23,562	1,637	21,532	314
Delaware	6,272	1,740	1,692	2,829
District of Columbia	5,082	391	810	3,801
Florida	29,886	5,189	1,439	23,219
Georgia	141,541	30,085	376	111,037
Idaho	3,416	353	2,036	16
Illinois	79,433	18,863	55,907	4,349
Indiana	33,583	19,594	10,602	3,312
Iowa	14,204	5,675	7,779	626
Kansas	14,716	4,647	7,497	2,380
Kentucky	87,516	60,147	1,382	25,958
Louisiana	118,716	29,026	5,211	84,176
Maine	13,070	5,222	7,676	55
Maryland	31,238	8,620	5,037	17,484
Massachusetts	61,909	3,872	56,504	1,186
Michigan	38,703	9,398	28,034	397
Minnesota	23,603	2,489	19,947	123
Mississippi	107,843	11,270	593	95,702
Missouri	51,284	30,217	10,848	10,068
Montana	8,812	394	5,885	75
Nebraska	8,545	2,044	5,886	231
Nevada	2,399	95	968	15
New Hampshire	8,413	1,468	6,909	29
New Jersey	51,086	5,423	42,347	3,052
New Mexico	16,634	8,680	3,630	88
New York	170,563	17,826	148,703	2,295
North Carolina	107,563	49,710	274	56,669
North Dakota	5,467	493	4,929	16
Ohio	62,998	22,567	35,160	5,169
Oklahoma	28,707	14,824	2,188	7,396
Oregon	6,460	914	4,033	24
Pennsylvania	179,982	23,625	149,592	6,479
Rhode Island	14,456	1,260	12,793	345
South Carolina	90,707	17,599	206	72,857
South Dakota	5,550	604	2,323	24
Tennessee	86,677	47,743	628	38,273
Texas	109,328	31,196	28,191	49,699
Utah	3,477	372	1,959	26
Vermont	6,039	2,561	3,439	38
Virginia	92,917	33,680	1,297	57,867
Washington	10,580	840	6,993	121
West Virginia	35,040	21,022	8,528	5,457
Wisconsin	27,038	5,432	20,433	58
Wyoming	2,594	157	1,810	50
United States	2,273,603	617,733	788,631	819,135

Per cent of illiteracy in cities having 100,000 population and over in the United States, 1910.

Cities.	In population 10 years of age and over.				Males 21 years of age and over.			
	All classes.	Native white.	Total white.	Negro.	All classes.	Native white.	Total. white.	Negro.
Albany, N. Y.	3.2	0.4	3.2	4.2	3.8	0.4	3.8	5.0
Atlanta, Ga.	8.6	2.0	2.2	20.9	8.1	1.6	1.9	21.7
Baltimore, Md.	4.4	0.6	2.8	13.2	4.7	0.6	3.0	13.4
Birmingham, Ala.	10.4	1.2	2.4	22.1	10.7	0.9	2.3	23.0
Boston, Mass.	4.4	0.2	4.4	3.5	4.5	0.2	4.5	2.6
Bridgeport, Conn.	5.4	0.3	5.4	5.2	5.5	0.3	5.5	4.9
Buffalo, N. Y.	3.7	0.4	3.7	4.1	4.4	0.5	4.4	5.4
Cambridge, Mass.	3.0	0.2	2.9	5.6	3.2	0.1	3.1	5.3
Chicago, Ill.	4.5	0.2	4.5	4.0	5.1	0.2	5.1	3.1
Cincinnati, Ohio.	3.1	0.8	2.4	14.3	3.5	0.8	2.6	16.0
Cleveland, Ohio.	4.6	0.2	4.6	4.1	5.3	0.2	5.3	3.8
Columbus, Ohio.	2.9	1.2	2.4	8.7	3.4	1.0	2.9	9.1
Dayton, Ohio.	2.3	0.5	2.0	9.5	2.8	0.6	2.4	10.9
Denver, Colo.	2.1	0.3	2.0	6.0	2.2	0.3	2.0	5.0
Detroit, Mich.	5.0	0.4	5.0	3.5	6.5	0.4	6.5	3.2
Fall River, Mass.	13.2	1.7	13.2	8.1	15.6	2.1	15.7	4.5
Grand Rapids, Mich.	2.5	0.2	2.5	4.8	2.7	0.2	2.7	3.4
Indianapolis, Ind.	3.0	0.9	2.0	12.4	3.5	0.9	2.5	13.1
Jersey City, N. J.	5.6	0.4	5.6	4.9	6.8	0.3	6.9	3.6
Kansas City, Mo.	2.3	0.4	1.5	9.6	2.3	0.4	1.6	8.6
Los Angeles, Cal.	1.9	0.2	1.7	6.0	2.0	0.2	1.8	4.5
Louisville, Ky.	5.3	1.2	2.1	18.7	5.9	1.4	2.3	20.3
Lowell, Mass.	6.0	0.5	6.0	2.7	7.2	0.6	7.3	0.0
Memphis, Tenn.	8.0	0.5	1.4	17.6	7.1	0.3	1.2	16.4
Milwaukee, Wis.	3.6	0.2	3.6	2.9	4.6	0.3	4.6	2.3
Minneapolis, Minn.	2.4	0.2	2.4	2.9	2.6	0.2	2.6	3.2
Nashville, Tenn.	8.8	1.6	1.9	22.0	9.4	1.9	2.1	25.3
New Haven, Conn.	7.0	0.3	7.0	4.5	7.5	0.2	7.6	4.0
New Orleans, La.	6.9	1.1	2.7	18.3	6.5	0.9	2.6	17.1
New York, N. Y.	6.7	0.3	6.7	3.6	6.4	0.3	6.5	2.9
Newark, N. J.	6.0	0.5	5.9	7.5	6.0	0.5	6.0	7.2
Oakland, Cal.	3.0	0.4	2.8	3.3	3.5	0.4	3.3	2.7
Omaha, Nebr.	2.7	0.2	2.5	6.3	3.3	0.3	3.2	5.8
Paterson, N. J.	6.9	0.8	6.8	11.3	7.0	0.8	6.9	11.0
Philadelphia, Pa.	4.6	0.5	4.4	7.8	4.7	0.6	4.5	7.5
Pittsburgh, Pa.	6.2	0.4	6.2	6.6	8.5	0.5	8.6	7.1
Portland, Oreg.	1.2	0.1	1.1	1.9	1.3	0.1	1.2	1.3
Providence, R. I.	7.7	0.7	7.7	9.7	8.3	0.7	8.2	10.6
Richmond, Va.	8.2	1.2	1.5	19.6	8.6	1.4	1.7	20.8
Rochester, N. Y.	3.8	0.3	3.8	1.4	4.5	0.3	4.5	2.0
St. Louis, Mo.	3.7	0.6	3.0	12.4	4.1	0.6	3.5	11.4
St. Paul, Minn.	2.1	0.2	2.1	2.3	2.2	0.2	2.2	1.7
San Francisco, Cal.	2.1	0.2	1.9	5.1	2.0	0.2	1.7	5.2
Scranton, Pa.	8.9	0.9	8.9	3.3	12.2	1.1	12.2	2.3
Seattle, Wash.	1.1	0.1	1.0	2.7	1.4	0.0	1.3	2.0
Spokane, Wash.	1.3	0.1	1.1	2.4	1.8	0.0	1.5	1.3
Syracuse, N. Y.	4.9	0.5	4.9	5.1	6.3	0.5	6.3	6.2
Toledo, Ohio.	2.8	0.7	2.7	4.3	3.4	1.0	3.4	4.2
Washington, D. C.	4.9	0.5	1.5	13.5	4.9	0.6	1.6	13.8
Worcester, Mass.	5.0	0.4	5.1	3.5	6.0	0.4	6.0	2.3

Per cent of illiteracy in cities having 25,000 to 100,000 population in the United States, 1910.

Cities.	In population 10 years of age and over.				Males 21 years of age and over.			
	All classes.	Native white.	Total white.	Negro.	All classes.	Native white.	Total white.	Negro.
Alabama:								
Mobile	12.3	0.8	1.2	25.9	11.6	0.5	1.1	25.1
Montgomery	13.4	0.9	1.1	25.1	11.7	0.6	0.7	24.6
Arkansas:								
Little Rock	6.5	1.9	2.0	15.8	6.3	1.9	2.0	15.7
California:								
Berkeley	1.4	0.1	1.2	3.8	2.0	0.1	1.8	.....
Pasadena	1.2	0.4	0.9	6.0	1.7	0.5	1.2	4.0
Sacramento	1.4	0.2	1.2	5.5	1.4	0.1	1.1	4.3
San Diego	1.6	0.3	1.4	9.6	1.8	0.3	1.7	9.9
San Jose	3.2	0.4	3.0	2.5	3.8	0.5	3.3	.....
Colorado:								
Colorado Springs	0.9	0.2	0.6	6.9	1.0	0.3	0.8	4.7
Pueblo	5.6	0.9	5.4	10.6	7.1	1.2	6.9	12.2
Connecticut:								
Hartford	5.0	0.3	5.0	4.8	5.0	0.3	5.0	4.6
Meriden town	4.2	0.3	4.2	2.7	4.6	0.4	3.9	.....
New Britain	9.2	0.3	9.3	.....	9.1	0.5	9.1	.....
Norwich town	6.6	0.6	6.4	12.3	7.2	0.7	6.9	15.2
Stamford town	6.0	0.4	6.0	4.5	5.8	0.5	5.8	.....
Waterbury	6.2	0.3	6.2	5.2	7.2	0.4	7.2	4.0
Delaware:								
Wilmington	6.6	0.6	5.1	18.7	8.0	0.7	6.4	20.9
Florida:								
Jacksonville	7.9	0.4	0.7	14.7	7.0	0.2	0.5	13.6
Tampa	7.5	1.2	6.2	11.5	5.5	0.4	3.9	10.3
Georgia:								
Augusta	10.9	3.3	3.3	19.9	9.9	3.2	3.2	18.9
Macon	10.3	2.3	2.6	19.6	9.9	1.8	2.1	20.1
Savannah	14.6	0.9	1.6	26.5	12.8	0.6	1.4	23.9
Illinois:								
Aurora	2.0	0.3	1.9	8.8	2.5	0.3	2.4	11.0
Bloomington	1.2	0.4	0.9	8.8	1.3	0.6	1.1	7.7
Danville	2.4	1.3	1.7	13.5	2.7	1.6	1.9	12.2
Decatur	1.3	0.6	1.1	8.6	1.5	0.7	1.2	10.8
East St. Louis	5.5	0.7	4.5	14.6	7.1	0.6	6.1	14.9
Elgin	2.8	0.4	2.7	16.3	3.1	0.5	2.9	.....
Joliet	5.8	0.3	5.8	10.6	8.4	0.5	8.3	11.8
Peoria	1.3	0.4	1.1	7.2	1.2	0.4	1.0	7.3
Quincy	1.8	0.6	1.2	13.7	1.7	0.7	1.0	14.6
Rockford	2.0	0.1	2.0	5.1	2.4	0.1	2.4	.....
Springfield	4.7	0.9	4.1	13.9	5.6	1.1	5.0	13.1
Indiana:								
Evansville	3.4	1.4	1.8	18.7	3.9	1.4	1.7	21.9
Fort Wayne	2.2	1.6	2.1	7.0	2.0	1.3	2.0	5.6
South Bend	3.3	0.6	3.3	3.5	3.7	0.7	3.6	5.3
Terre Haute	1.7	1.0	1.4	6.9	1.8	1.0	1.5	7.2
Iowa:								
Cedar Rapids	1.4	0.4	1.4	6.5	1.6	0.6	1.6	.....
Clinton	1.8	0.4	1.7	8.9	2.2	0.4	2.1	7.7
Council Bluffs	2.8	0.5	2.2	12.4	4.7	0.7	3.5	15.0
Davenport	1.1	0.2	0.9	11.4	1.2	0.3	1.1	10.3
Des Moines	2.0	0.6	1.7	8.8	2.2	0.8	1.9	9.2
Dubuque	0.9	0.3	0.9	.....	0.8	0.3	0.8	.....
Sioux City	1.7	0.2	1.7	0.4	2.2	0.2	2.3	0.8
Waterloo	1.4	0.3	1.4	.....	1.9	0.4	1.8	.....
Kansas:								
Kansas City	3.9	0.5	3.1	10.0	4.6	0.6	3.9	9.4
Topeka	2.6	0.4	1.7	10.4	2.9	0.5	2.0	11.3
Wichita	1.5	0.5	1.2	7.3	2.1	0.7	1.8	8.4
Kentucky:								
Covington	2.5	0.9	1.3	20.7	2.8	1.2	1.5	22.6
Lexington	12.5	1.3	5.9	28.6	14.9	7.9	6.9	32.9
Newport	1.8	0.8	1.6	12.2	1.9	0.9	1.6	14.4
Louisiana:								
Shreveport	15.8	0.6	2.0	29.7	12.9	0.5	1.9	27.3
Maine:								
Lewiston	8.4	2.0	8.4	.....	11.0	2.4	10.9	.....
Portland	2.8	0.2	2.8	2.9	3.2	0.3	3.2	.....
Massachusetts:								
Brockton	2.6	0.2	2.6	3.8	3.0	0.3	3.0	4.0
Brookline town	1.0	0.1	1.0	0.5	1.0	0.2	1.0	.....
Chelsea	8.1	0.4	8.1	4.4	7.8	0.7	7.8	.....
Chicopee	7.0	0.6	7.0	.....	8.5	0.6	8.5	.....
Everett	1.6	0.2	1.6	2.7	1.9	0.2	1.8	4.4
Fitchburg	6.3	0.7	6.3	.....	7.6	0.9	7.6	.....

Per cent of illiteracy in cities having 25,000 to 100,000 population in the United States, 1910—Continued.

Cities.	In population 10 years of age and over.				Males 21 years of age and over.			
	All classes.	Native white.	Total white.	Negro.	All classes.	Native white.	Total white.	Negro.
Massachusetts—Continued.								
Haverhill	4.0	0.3	4.0	4.8	4.8	0.4	4.8	5.0
Holyoke	6.8	0.8	6.8	.....	8.4	1.3	8.4	.....
Lawrence	13.2	0.7	13.1	27.7	14.8	0.8	14.7	43.0
Lynn	3.0	0.2	3.0	6.2	3.4	0.3	3.4	6.9
Malden	2.2	0.1	2.1	7.9	1.8	0.1	1.7	7.6
New Bedford	12.1	1.1	11.8	23.7	14.5	1.5	14.2	23.2
Newton	3.7	0.1	3.7	8.9	5.3	0.1	5.2	10.0
Pittsfield	3.6	0.4	3.6	3.1	4.4	0.3	4.4	3.9
Quincy	2.4	0.3	2.4	.....	2.9	0.3	2.1	.....
Salem	6.0	0.5	5.9	2.8	8.0	0.5	8.0	.....
Somerville	1.9	0.1	1.9	6.6	2.4	0.2	2.3	.....
Springfield	4.5	0.5	4.4	4.6	5.2	0.5	5.2	5.3
Taunton	9.4	1.1	9.2	33.3	12.4	1.3	12.1	.....
Waltham	3.3	1.4	2.4	.....	3.5	1.3	3.5	.....
Michigan:								
Battle Creek	0.6	0.3	0.6	4.1	0.9	0.2	0.7	6.1
Bay City	3.6	1.3	3.6	3.7	4.5	1.9	4.5	.....
Flint	1.2	0.3	1.2	0.9	1.6	0.3	1.6	.....
Jackson	2.1	0.3	2.0	8.7	3.0	0.4	2.8	9.0
Kalamazoo	1.8	0.7	1.7	5.0	2.1	1.1	2.1	2.4
Lansing	1.5	0.3	1.5	7.0	1.9	0.4	1.9	4.4
Saginaw	3.1	0.6	3.0	5.7	3.6	0.9	3.6	6.3
Minnesota:								
Duluth	2.7	0.3	2.7	0.8	3.2	0.4	3.2	1.0
Missouri:								
Joplin	1.7	1.4	1.4	11.7	1.6	1.4	1.4	9.2
St. Joseph	2.4	0.9	1.7	12.9	2.8	1.1	2.1	13.8
Springfield	2.4	1.6	1.6	14.9	2.5	1.7	1.7	16.6
Montana:								
Butte	1.7	0.2	1.6	4.5	1.7	0.2	1.5	2.6
Nebraska:								
Lincoln	3.6	0.3	3.6	5.6	3.3	0.3	3.3	4.0
South Omaha	5.3	0.3	5.3	7.6	7.3	0.3	7.3	8.6
New Hampshire:								
Manchester	5.9	0.8	5.9	.....	7.3	0.9	7.3	.....
Nashua	6.8	0.7	6.8	.....	8.0	0.9	8.0	.....
New Jersey:								
Atlantic City	4.5	0.6	3.6	7.6	4.8	0.7	4.2	6.3
Bayonne	9.1	0.4	9.1	7.8	11.3	0.4	11.3	7.8
Camden	4.4	0.6	3.7	14.0	5.1	0.7	4.4	15.0
East Orange	1.3	0.2	0.9	7.4	1.1	0.2	0.8	7.1
Elizabeth	6.9	0.5	6.8	8.4	8.6	0.6	8.5	9.8
Hoboken	4.5	0.4	4.7	0.9	5.0	0.3	5.0	.....
Orange	6.6	0.5	6.5	7.6	7.7	0.4	7.9	7.1
Passaic	15.8	0.7	15.9	11.9	15.0	0.8	15.0	12.8
Perth Amboy	9.9	0.5	9.9	7.0	11.6	0.5	11.6	.....
Trenton	5.9	1.0	5.8	10.7	7.0	1.3	6.8	11.7
West Hoboken town	2.4	0.2	2.4	.....	2.2	0.2	2.1	.....
New York:								
Amsterdam	10.3	0.4	10.3	.....	12.3	0.5	12.3	.....
Auburn	4.5	0.3	4.5	2.9	5.1	0.4	5.2	4.2
Binghamton	2.8	0.4	2.8	3.7	2.8	0.7	2.8	2.9
Elmira	2.5	0.3	2.4	9.5	2.9	0.4	2.7	14.2
Jamestown	2.6	0.2	2.6	.....	3.2	0.3	3.2	.....
Kingston	4.3	0.8	4.2	9.0	5.3	1.1	5.2	10.7
Mount Vernon	4.1	0.1	4.0	6.1	4.9	0.2	4.9	5.1
New Rochelle	6.5	0.2	6.3	9.3	7.9	0.3	7.8	9.2
Newburgh	3.0	0.3	2.9	3.6	3.5	0.3	3.5	3.2
Niagara Falls	5.8	0.2	5.7	10.5	8.0	0.2	7.9	9.3
Poughkeepsie	2.8	0.5	2.8	3.2	3.0	0.4	3.1	1.4
Schenectady	5.4	0.4	5.4	3.3	6.7	0.3	6.7	.....
Troy	2.0	0.4	1.9	4.5	2.1	0.4	2.1	3.1
Utica	8.2	0.5	8.2	7.5	9.5	0.6	9.5	7.4
Watertown	4.6	1.9	4.6	.....	6.9	1.3	6.9	.....
Yonkers	8.4	0.3	8.4	7.0	10.6	0.4	10.6	7.4
North Carolina:								
Charlotte	10.1	2.3	2.3	24.4	9.4	1.8	1.8	26.2
Wilmington	14.9	3.0	3.1	28.2	13.1	2.5	2.7	27.0
Ohio:								
Akron	3.0	0.4	2.9	8.9	3.9	0.3	3.8	11.8
Canton	3.4	0.4	3.4	2.0	5.1	0.3	5.1	2.3
Hamilton	1.3	0.7	1.1	10.2	1.7	0.9	1.4	9.8
Lima	1.5	0.9	1.3	5.6	2.0	1.3	1.8	7.0
Lorain	5.6	0.2	5.6	2.3	7.0	0.2	7.0	3.3
Newark	1.3	0.5	1.2	7.1	1.6	0.5	1.5	7.7

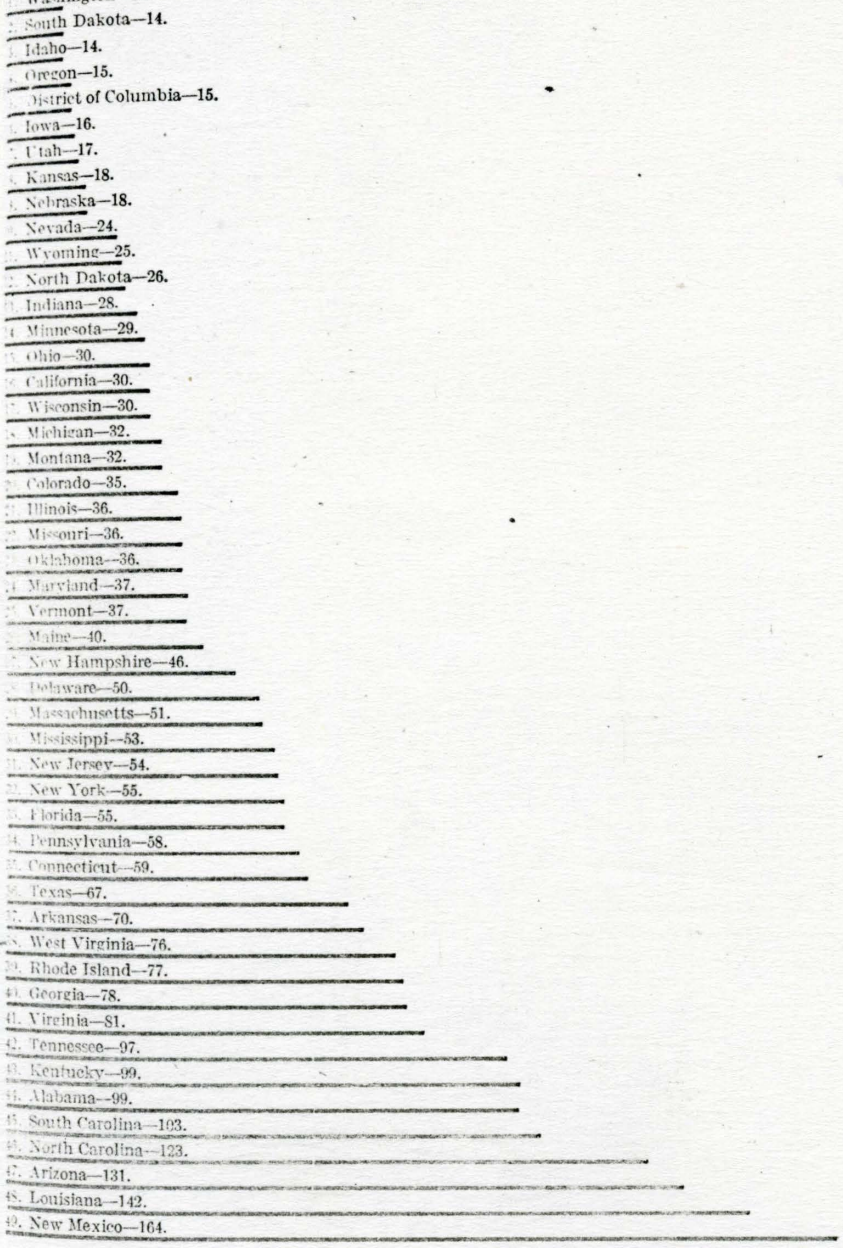
Per cent of illiteracy in cities having 25,000 to 100,000 population in the United States, 1910—Continued.

Cities.	In population 10 years of age and over.				Males 21 years of age and over.			
	All classes.	Native white.	Total white.	Negro.	All classes.	Native white.	Total white.	Negro.
Ohio—Continued.								
Springfield	2.1	0.5	1.4	8.5	2.6	0.6	1.7	9.6
Youngstown	7.1	0.4	7.2	5.8	9.0	0.3	9.1	6.6
Zanesville	2.2	0.9	1.8	8.7	2.7	1.1	2.3	10.8
Oklahoma:								
Muskogee	4.2	0.6	0.7	12.1	3.9	0.4	0.5	12.6
Oklahoma City	1.4	0.3	0.8	6.7	1.5	0.2	1.0	6.2
Pennsylvania:								
Allentown	3.0	0.9	3.0	2.6	2.5	0.6	2.5	.....
Altoona	3.1	0.8	3.1	3.8	3.9	0.6	3.9	2.4
Chester	6.6	0.7	5.6	13.8	9.1	0.7	8.2	14.9
Easton	2.6	0.8	1.8	3.8	2.4	0.5	2.4	.....
Erie	3.7	0.4	3.7	6.0	5.2	0.7	5.2	8.2
Harrisburg	2.5	0.9	1.8	11.5	2.9	0.9	2.1	12.8
Hazleton	10.0	1.6	10.0	.....	11.3	1.4	11.3	.....
Johnstown	9.0	1.0	9.0	5.0	13.3	1.4	13.4	3.8
Lancaster	1.7	1.0	1.5	13.1	2.0	1.2	1.8	13.5
McKeesport	4.1	0.4	4.0	6.7	4.9	0.6	4.8	7.3
New Castle	6.4	0.5	6.3	10.8	8.9	0.6	8.7	14.8
Norristown borough	8.8	4.0	8.5	15.8	9.7	4.4	9.3	19.9
Reading	3.0	1.1	3.0	3.4	3.7	1.0	3.7	3.7
Shenandoah borough	23.7	2.5	23.7	.....	28.6	3.7	28.6	.....
Wilkes-Barre	6.9	0.8	6.9	8.1	8.6	1.0	8.6	7.7
Williamsport	1.4	0.6	1.2	7.0	1.8	0.7	1.6	7.3
York	2.7	2.1	2.5	11.6	3.0	2.2	2.8	11.5
Rhode Island:								
Newport	2.9	0.3	2.6	5.8	3.5	0.3	3.3	6.7
Pawtucket	5.4	1.1	5.4	5.8	5.6	1.2	5.5	.....
Warwick town	10.6	2.8	10.6	9.0	12.6	3.2	12.6	.....
Woonsocket	9.1	2.3	9.1	.....	11.9	3.3	11.9	.....
South Carolina:								
Charleston	15.3	0.9	1.5	27.9	14.0	0.9	1.7	26.8
Columbia	17.4	5.5	5.6	32.2	16.2	5.2	5.3	32.3
Tennessee:								
Chattanooga	9.9	2.3	2.5	20.7	10.1	2.1	2.2	21.9
Knoxville	6.5	4.3	4.3	14.2	6.0	3.4	3.4	15.2
Texas:								
Austin	7.8	2.6	4.2	18.8	8.7	3.6	5.0	21.3
Dallas	4.0	0.6	1.1	15.4	3.8	0.5	1.1	15.1
El Paso	13.3	3.1	13.4	9.5	11.4	2.3	11.5	8.8
Fort Worth	3.8	0.7	2.0	12.0	4.4	0.6	2.7	12.0
Galveston	5.1	0.9	2.8	12.2	5.5	0.9	3.5	12.0
Houston	6.4	0.7	1.9	16.4	5.9	0.6	1.8	16.4
San Antonio	10.1	4.3	9.7	13.2	9.4	3.6	8.9	13.0
Waco	5.1	0.6	1.4	16.8	5.2	0.4	1.2	18.5
Utah:								
Ogden	1.5	0.3	1.3	2.7	1.9	0.3	1.6	0.9
Salt Lake City	1.6	0.2	1.3	4.6	2.0	0.3	1.5	4.3
Virginia:								
Lynchburg	9.3	1.1	1.4	25.3	9.3	1.2	1.8	28.2
Norfolk	9.0	1.2	2.3	19.7	8.6	1.1	2.5	18.6
Portsmouth	9.8	1.0	1.7	24.5	8.5	1.0	1.6	23.1
Roanoke	6.9	2.0	2.2	22.7	7.2	2.3	2.4	25.8
Washington:								
Tacoma	1.8	0.1	1.7	3.6	2.1	0.2	1.9	3.1
West Virginia:								
Huntington	5.1	4.5	4.5	13.3	5.6	4.7	4.7	14.8
Wheeling	3.2	0.9	3.0	9.0	4.0	1.3	3.8	8.0
Wisconsin:								
Green Bay	5.7	2.8	5.7	.....	7.6	4.3	7.6	.....
La Crosse	2.5	0.3	3.0	.....	2.9	0.4	2.9	.....
Madison	1.6	0.1	1.5	5.2	2.2	0.1	2.0	.....
Oshkosh	2.7	0.3	2.7	.....	3.4	0.4	3.4	.....
Racine	3.6	0.2	3.6	3.9	4.7	0.1	4.7	.....
Sheboygan	3.2	0.3	3.2	.....	3.9	0.2	3.9	.....
Superior	2.7	0.2	2.6	1.2	3.1	0.2	3.1	.....

Number of illiterates per thousand in the total population 10 years of age and over in 1910.

1. Iowa—17.
2. Nebraska—19.
3. Oregon—19.
4. Washington—20.
5. Kansas—22.
6. Idaho—22.
7. Utah—25.
8. South Dakota—29.
9. Minnesota—30.
10. Indiana—31.
11. North Dakota—31.
12. Ohio—32.
13. Wisconsin—32.
14. Michigan—33.
15. Wyoming—33.
16. Illinois—37.
17. California—37.
18. Colorado—37.
19. Vermont—37.
20. Maine—41.
21. Missouri—43.
22. New Hampshire—46.
23. Montana—48.
24. District of Columbia—49.
25. Massachusetts—52.
26. New York—55.
27. New Jersey—56.
28. Oklahoma—56.
29. Pennsylvania—59.
30. Connecticut—60.
31. Nevada—67.
32. Maryland—72.
33. Rhode Island—77.
34. Delaware—81.
35. West Virginia—83.
36. Texas—99.
37. Kentucky—121.
38. Arkansas—126.
39. Tennessee—136.
40. Florida—138.
41. Virginia—152.
42. North Carolina—185.
43. New Mexico—202.
44. Georgia—207.
45. Arizona—209.
46. Mississippi—224.
47. Alabama—229.
48. South Carolina—257.
49. Louisiana—290.

Number of illiterates per thousand of the total white population 10 years of age and over in 1910.



Number of illiterates per thousand of the native-born white population 10 years of age and over in 1910.

1. Washington—3.
2. Idaho—3.
3. Wyoming—3.
4. Oregon—4.
5. South Dakota—4.
6. Utah—4.
7. Montana—4.
8. Nevada—4.
9. Massachusetts—5.
10. California—5.
11. Minnesota—5.
12. North Dakota, 5.
13. District of Columbia—5.
14. Nebraska—6.
15. Connecticut—6.
16. New York—8.
17. Iowa—8.
18. Kansas—8.
19. Wisconsin—9.
20. New Jersey—9.
21. Michigan—11.
22. New Hampshire—11.
23. Pennsylvania—13.
24. Illinois—13.
25. Rhode Island—13.
26. Ohio—15.
27. Colorado—16.
28. Vermont—19.
29. Maine—20.
30. Indiana—21.
31. Maryland—26.
32. Missouri—29.
33. Delaware—29.
34. Oklahoma—33.
35. Arizona—42.
36. Texas—43.
37. Florida—50.
38. Mississippi—52.
39. West Virginia—64.
40. Arkansas—70.
41. Georgia—78.
42. Virginia—80.
43. Tennessee—97.
44. Alabama—99.
45. Kentucky—100.
46. South Carolina—103.
47. North Carolina—123.
48. Louisiana—134.
49. New Mexico—149.

Number of illiterates per thousand of the negro population 10 years of age and over in 1910.

1. Minnesota—34.
2. Oregon—34.
3. Washington—43.
4. Wisconsin—45.
5. Vermont—48.
6. Utah—48.
7. North Dakota—48.
8. New York—50.
9. Wyoming—50.
10. South Dakota—55.
11. Nevada—55.
12. Michigan—57.
13. Connecticut—63.
14. Idaho—64.
15. Montana—70.
16. California—71.
17. Nebraska—72.
18. Arizona—72.
19. Maine—80.
20. Massachusetts—81.
21. Colorado—86.
22. Pennsylvania—91.
23. Rhode Island—95.
24. New Jersey—99.
25. Iowa—103.
26. Illinois—105.
27. New Hampshire—106.
28. Ohio—111.
29. Kansas—120.
30. District of Columbia—135.
31. Indiana—137.
32. New Mexico—142.
33. Missouri—174.
34. Oklahoma—177.
35. West Virginia—203.
36. Maryland—234.
37. Texas—246.
38. Florida—255.
39. Delaware—256.
40. Arkansas—264.
41. Tennessee—273.
42. Kentucky—276.
43. Virginia—360.
44. North Carolina—349.
45. Mississippi—356.
46. Georgia—365.
47. South Carolina—387.
48. Alabama—401.
49. Louisiana—484.

Number of illiterates per thousand of the total male population 21 years of age and over in 1910.

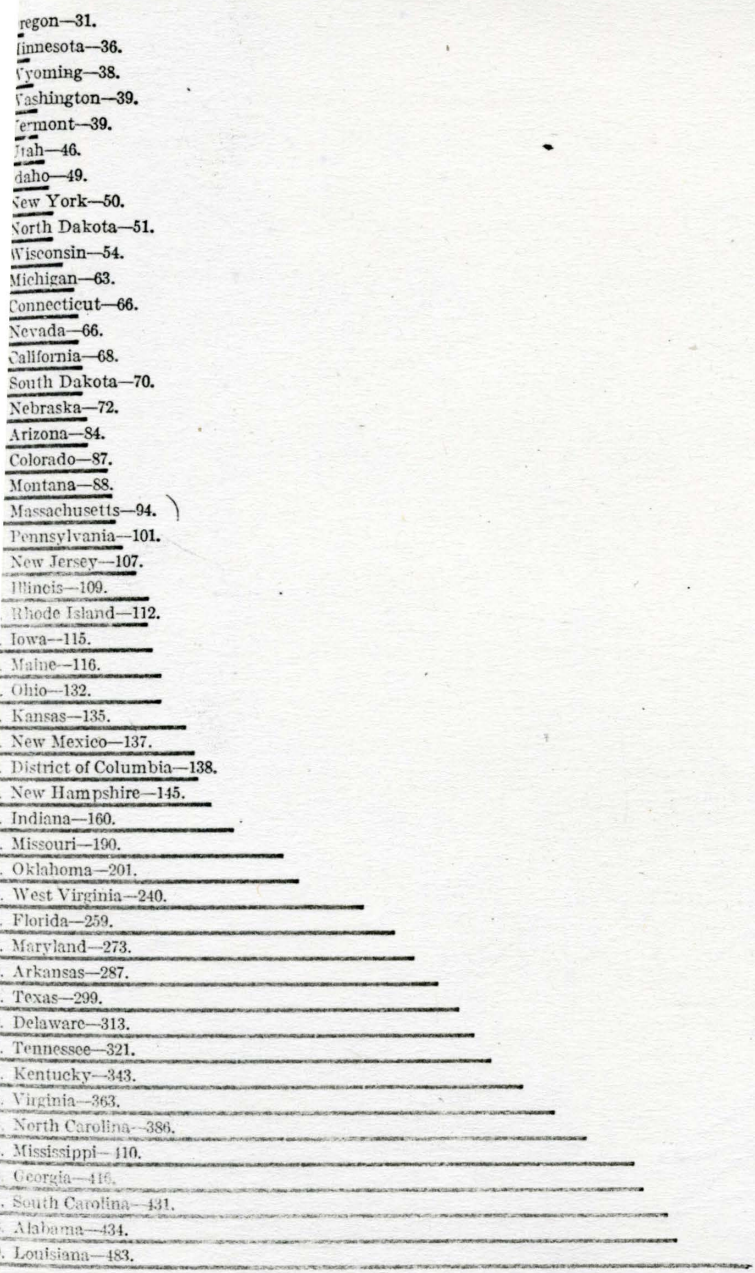
1. Iowa—21.
2. Washington—24.
3. Nebraska—24.
4. Oregon—25.
5. Kansas—29.
6. South Dakota—31.
7. North Dakota—31.
8. Idaho—31.
9. Utah—33.
10. Minnesota—37.
11. Wisconsin—40.
12. Indiana—41.
13. Wyoming—41.
14. Ohio—42.
15. Colorado—42.
16. Michigan—44.
17. Illinois—46.
18. California—46.
19. District of Columbia—49.
20. Missouri—53.
21. Vermont—53.
22. Maine—55.
23. Montana—57.
24. New York—60.
25. Nevada—60.
26. Massachusetts—61.
27. New Hampshire—62.
28. Oklahoma—64.
29. New Jersey—66.
30. Connecticut—68.
31. Pennsylvania—78.
32. Maryland—85.
33. Rhode Island—88.
34. Delaware—101.
35. West Virginia—104.
36. Texas—109.
37. Arkansas—135.
38. Florida—140.
39. Kentucky—145.
40. Tennessee—157.
41. New Mexico—176.
42. Virginia—177.
43. Arizona—195.
44. North Carolina—213.
45. Georgia—228.
46. Alabama—243.
47. Mississippi—253.
48. South Carolina—271.
49. Louisiana—286.

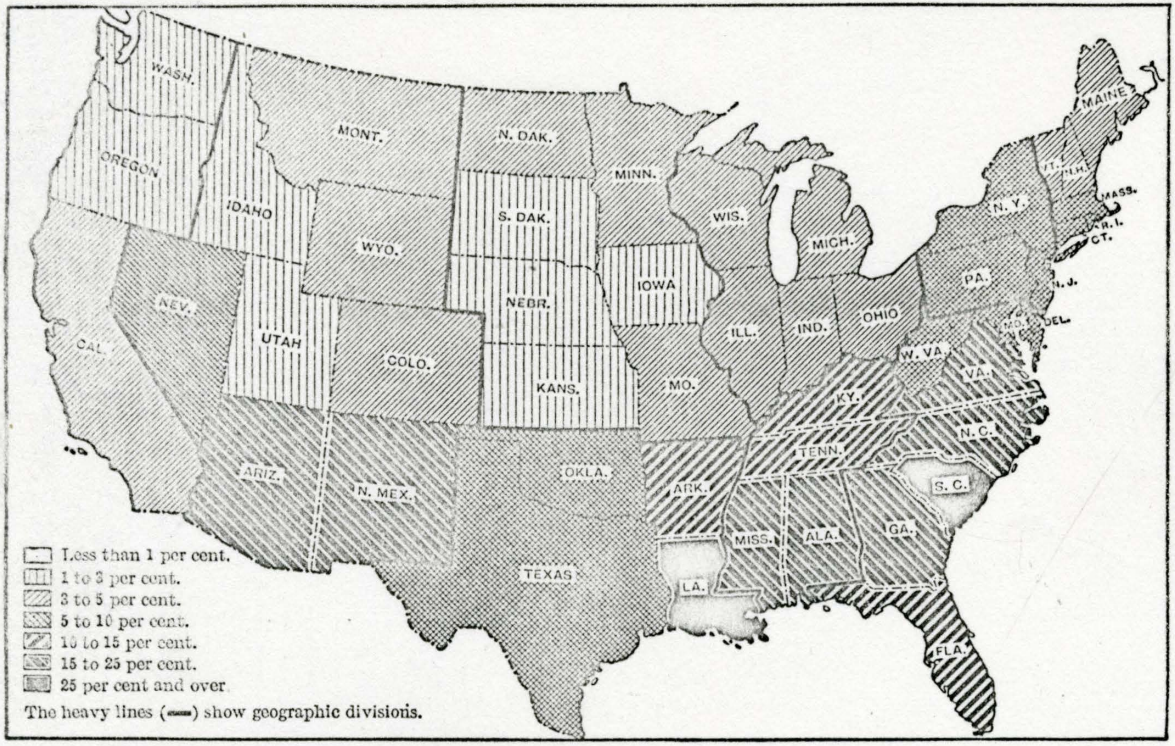
Number of illiterates per thousand of the total white male population 21 years of age and over in 1910.

Number of illiterates per thousand of the native-born white male population 21 years of age and over in 1910.

1. Washington—3.
2. Montana—4.
3. Idaho—4.
4. Wyoming—4.
5. Nevada—4.
6. Oregon—5.
7. Utah—5.
8. North Dakota—5.
9. South Dakota—5.
10. California—6.
11. District of Columbia—6.
12. Massachusetts—7.
13. Minnesota—7.
14. Nebraska—8.
15. Connecticut—9.
16. New York—11.
17. Iowa—11.
18. Kansas—11.
19. New Jersey—12.
20. Wisconsin—13.
21. Colorado—15.
22. Rhode Island—15.
23. Pennsylvania—16.
24. New Hampshire—16.
25. Illinois—17.
26. Michigan—17.
27. Ohio—20.
28. Indiana—28.
29. Maine—28.
30. Vermont—29.
31. Arizona—33.
32. Maryland—34.
33. Missouri—38.
34. Oklahoma—40.
35. Delaware—40.
36. Texas—43.
37. Florida—49.
38. Mississippi—60.
39. West Virginia—75.
40. Arkansas—75.
41. Georgia—87.
42. Virginia—97.
43. Alabama—106.
44. South Carolina—108.
45. Tennessee—113.
46. New Mexico—114.
47. Kentucky—119.
48. Louisiana—136.
49. North Carolina—140.

ber of illiterates per thousand of the negro male population 21 years of age and over in 1910.

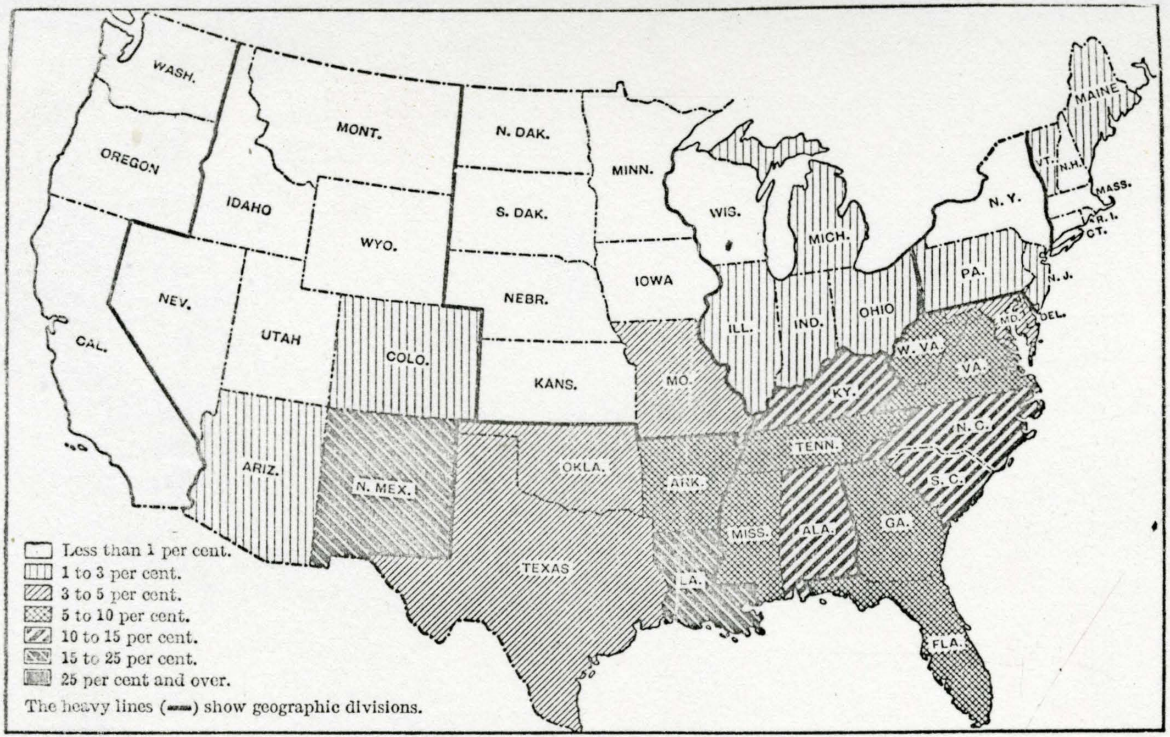




TOTAL POPULATION.

PERCENTAGE OF ILLITERATES IN THE POPULATION 10 YEARS OF AGE AND OVER, 1910.

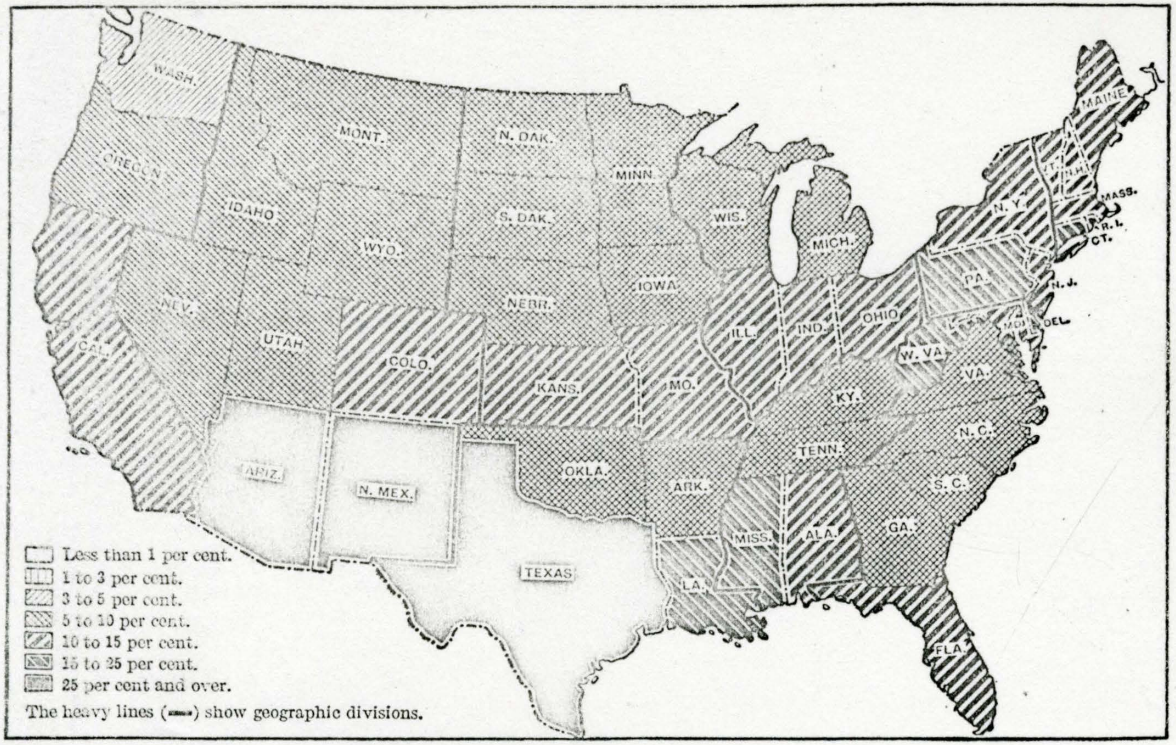
(From the Abstract of the Census, 1910, page 246.)



NATIVE WHITES OF NATIVE PARENTAGE.

PERCENTAGE OF ILLITERATES IN THE POPULATION 10 YEARS OF AGE AND OVER, 1910.

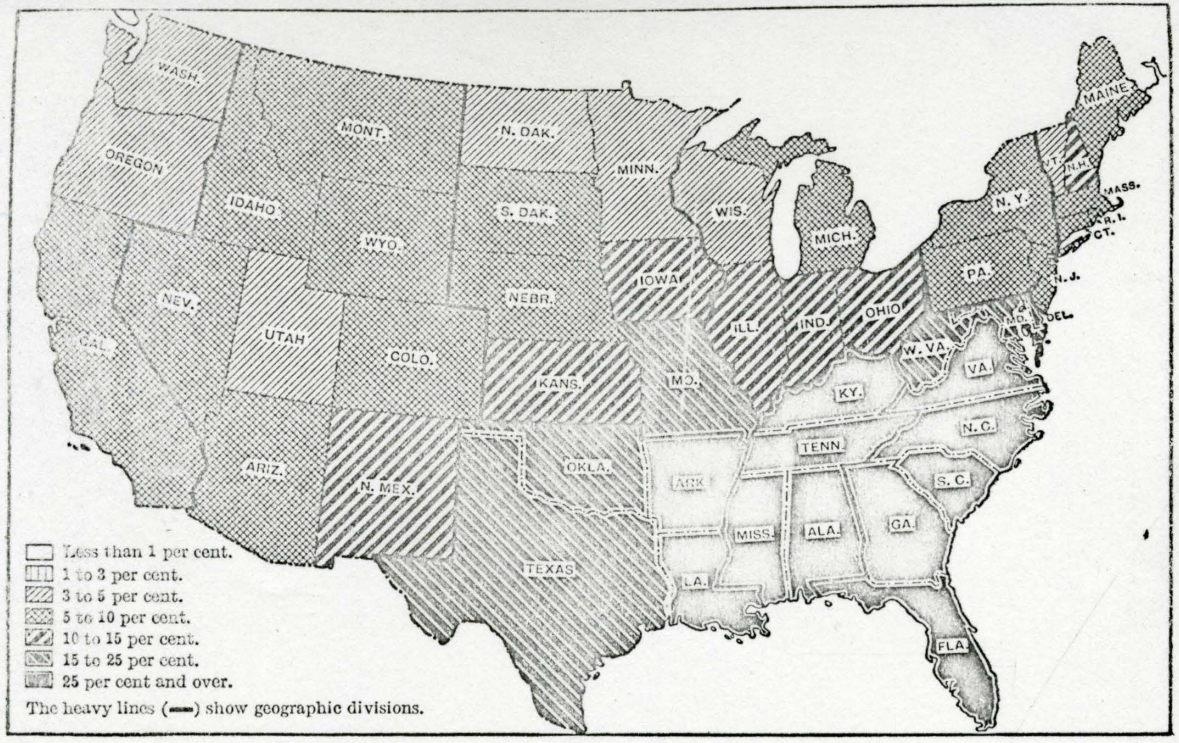
(From the Abstract of the Census, 1910, page 246.)



FOREIGN-BORN WHITES.

PERCENTAGE OF ILLITERATES IN THE POPULATION 10 YEARS OF AGE AND OVER, 1910.

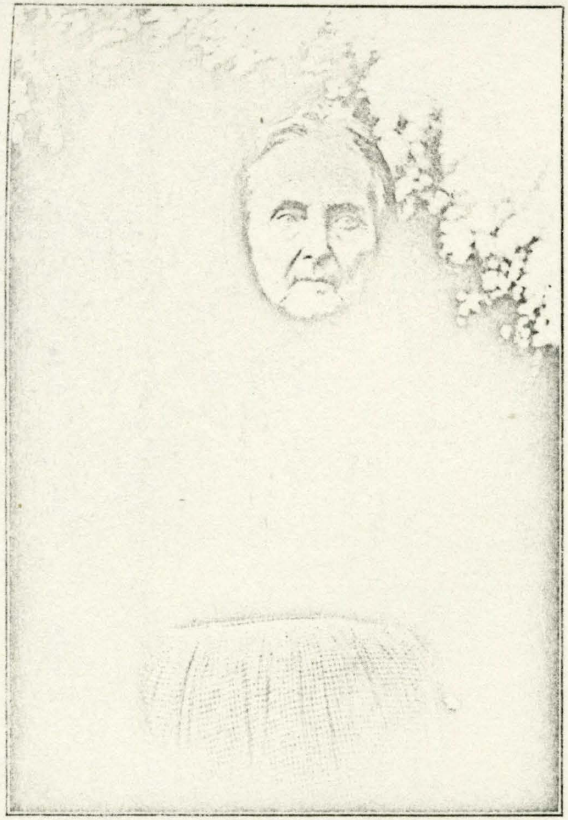
(From the Abstract of the Census, 1910, page 247.)



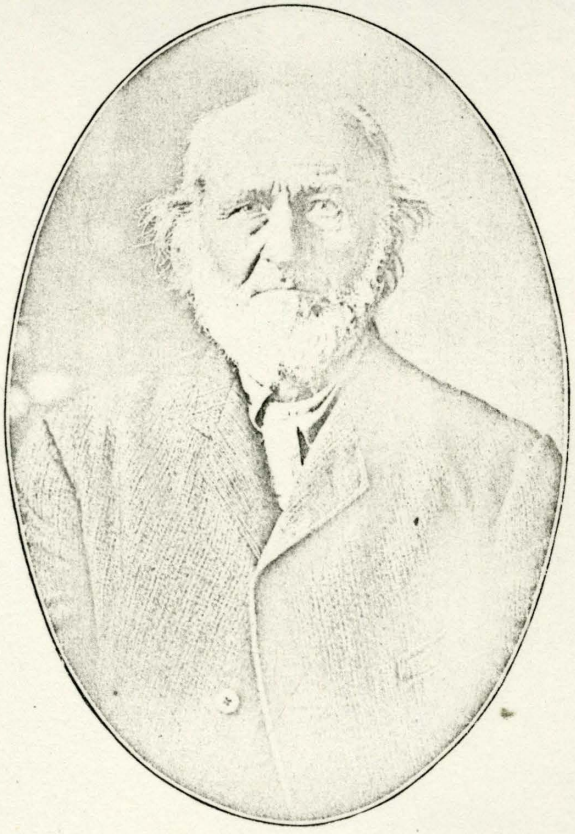
NEGROES.

PERCENTAGE OF ILLITERATES IN THE POPULATION 10 YEARS OF AGE AND OVER, 1910.

(From the Abstract of the Census, 1910, page 247.)

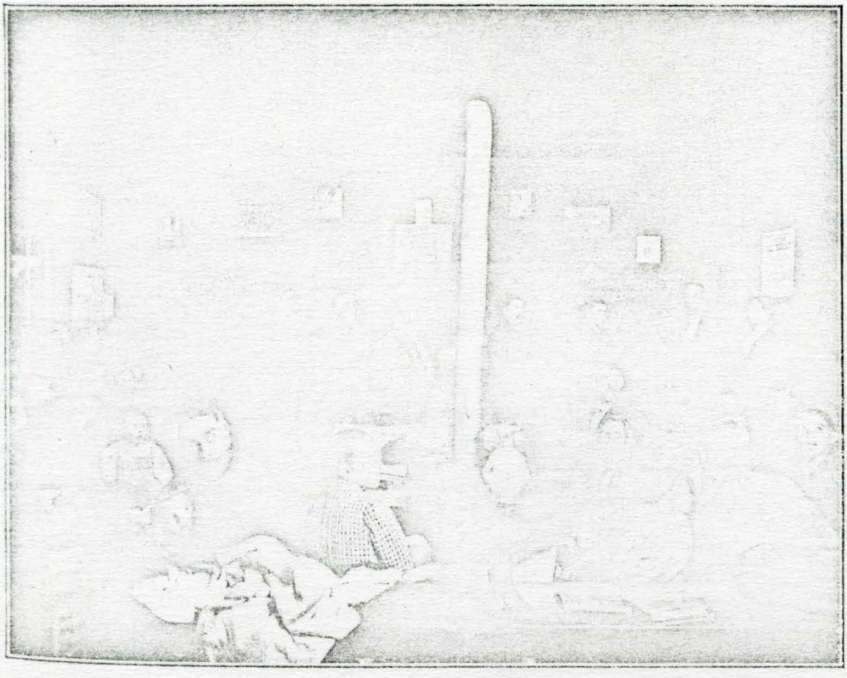


A. ELIZABETH PRINCE, 70 YEARS OF AGE.
She learned in eight weeks to write her first letter.



B. UNCLE MARTIN SLOAN; AGE, 87.
The oldest pupil in the moonlight schools of Rowan County.

A. A LESSON IN READING WITH A NEWSPAPER AS THE TEXT.



B. FOUR GENERATIONS REPRESENTED IN THE SAME SCHOOLROOM.

conducted the first moonlight schools instructed others who wished to do work of this kind in Rowan and adjoining counties, and in the fall of 1912 the movement spread to 8 or 10 other counties, while the enrollment of adults in Rowan County reached nearly 1,600.

The success of the men and women proves that it is not so difficult for illiterate grown-ups to learn to read and write as is generally supposed. They learn in a very short time, if given the opportunity. Reading, writing, and arithmetic are simple subjects when mature minds are concentrated upon them. A child of ordinary mind can be taught to read and write in three or four weeks; and the adult can do at least as well. One man, aged 30, after four lessons in the evening school, wrote the county superintendent a legible letter. Another man, aged 50, wrote a legible letter after 7 nights' attendance. A woman, aged 70, wrote a legible letter after 8 nights of study. These cases are, of course, exceptional; but experience has shown that a few weeks' attendance at the night schools has been sufficient to enable the adult pupils to pass over the dark line of illiteracy and to get into the class of literates. Several succeeded in securing a Bible, which had been offered as a prize by the superintendent to those who would learn to write a letter during the first two weeks of the moonlight school term.

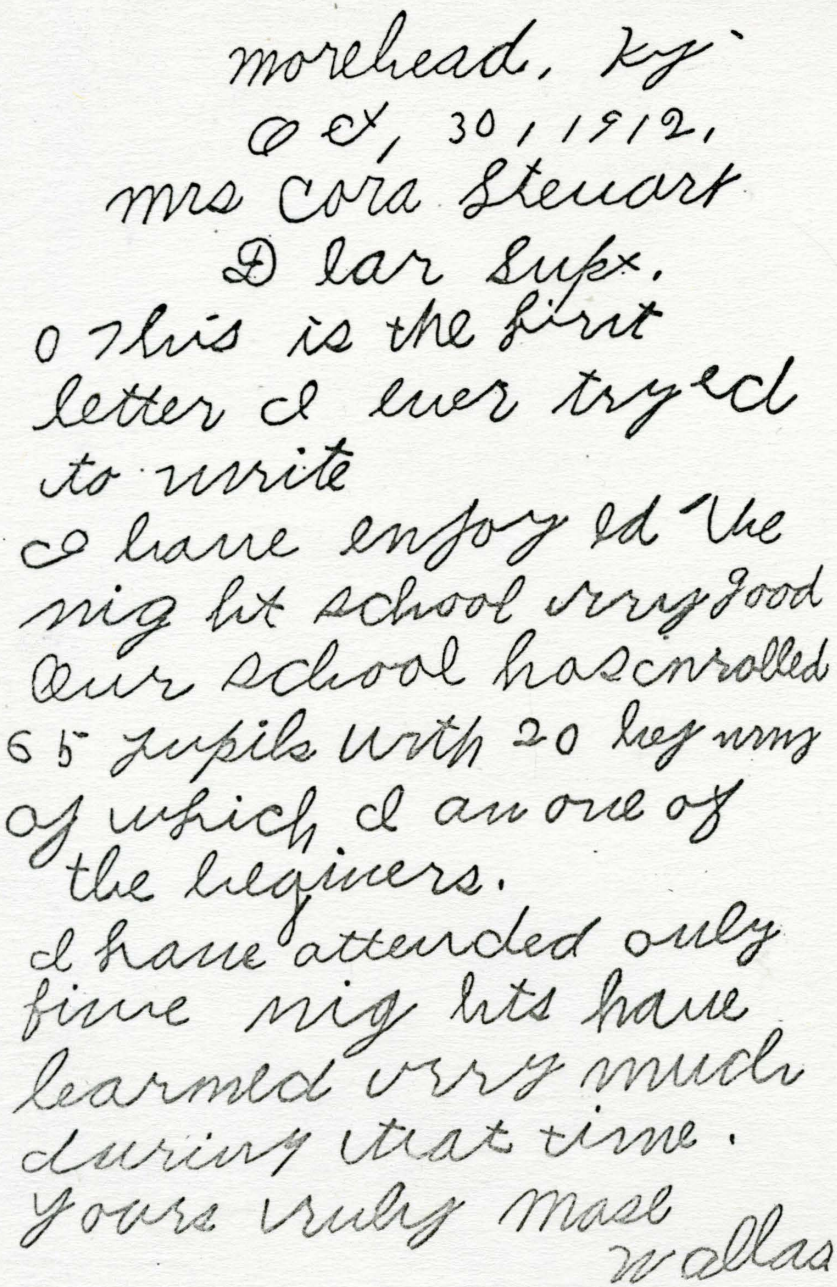
In some of the districts the enrollment of adults exceeded the enrollment of children. In two districts the enrollment ran as high as 70, and in several as high as 65.

One teacher, 18 years old, had only four adult pupils in her class, but one of these was a preacher who learned to read his Bible and a newspaper after a few weeks of earnest study. After 4 lessons he signed his name to a paper for the first time; and after 7 lessons, to quote the words of the county superintendent, "he wrote an enthusiastic letter, with a period at the close of each sentence as large as a bird's eye."

In another night school, of 65 enrolled, 23 were illiterates, and there were 3 preachers in the class. Several octogenarians were enrolled in these schools; one a woman 85, another a man 87. Some of the men and women entered the schoolroom for the first time in their lives when they enrolled as night pupils.

One of the significant facts brought out in this experiment is that adults of limited education have taken advantage of the opportunity to return to school and to increase their knowledge. Of the 1,600 adult pupils attending night school during the second term, 300 were unable to read and write at all, 300 were from those who had learned in September, 1911, and 1,000 were men and women of meager education.

In a number of instances adults from the night schools have enrolled as pupils in the day schools; and the superintendent states

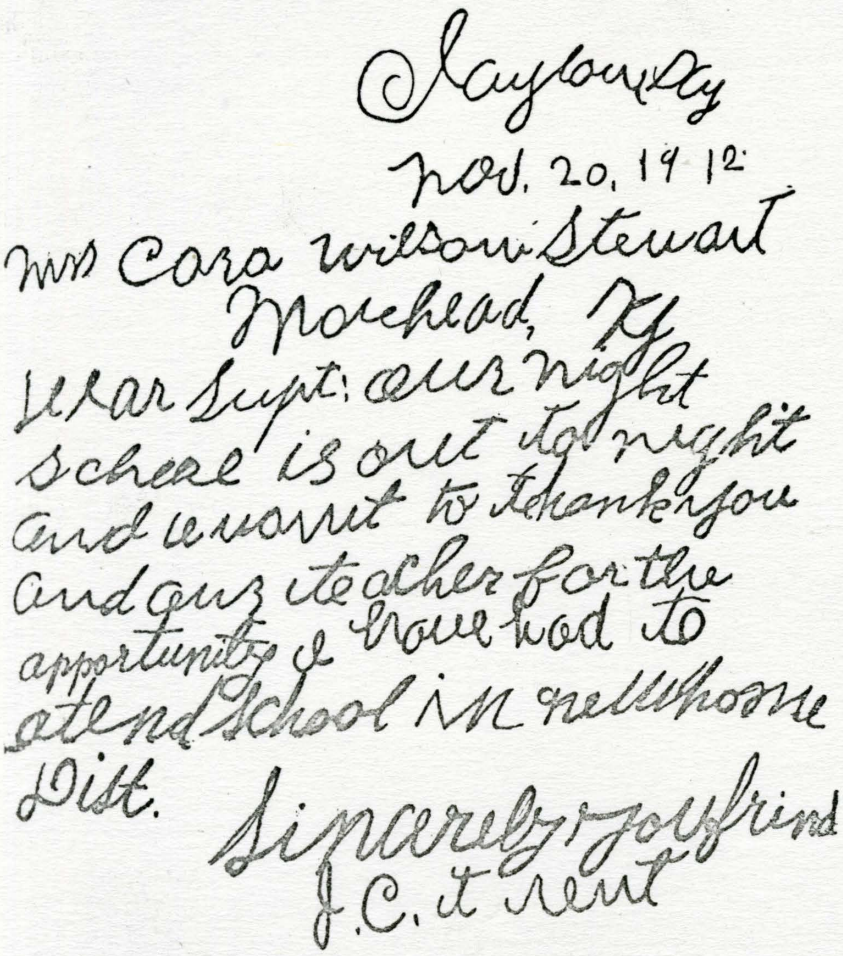

Morehead, Ky
Oct, 30, 1912.
Mrs Cora Stewart
Dear Supt.
O this is the first
letter I ever tryed
to write
I have enjoyed the
night school very good
our school has enrolled
65 pupils with 20 beginners
of which I am one of
the beginners.
I have attended only
five nights have
learned very much
during that time.
Yours truly Mose
Wallas

LETTER NO. 1. THE RESULT OF FIVE NIGHTS' INSTRUCTION.
The writer, Moses Wallace, is 32 years old.

that the presence of a determined man or woman in the school has proven an inspiration to.pupils and teacher.

The change in the attitude of the community toward the school, where the night school has been undertaken, is in itself significant. A school trustee thus describes the change in his community:

I have lived in this district for 55 years and I never saw any such interest as we have here now. The school used to just drag along, and nobody seemed interested. We never had a gathering at the school, and nobody thought of visiting the school. We had not had night school but three weeks until we got together right. We papered


Saylorsburg
Nov. 20, 1912
Mrs Cora Wilson Stewart
Morehead, Ky
Dear Supt: our night
schoal is out tonight
and I want to thank you
and our teacher for the
apportunity I have had to
attend School in our little
Dist.
Sincerely your friend
J. C. Trent

LETTER NO. 2. THE WRITER'S FIRST LETTER. HE IS THE FATHER OF SEVEN SONS.

the house, put in new windows, purchased new stovepipe, made new steps, contributed money, and bought the winter's fuel.

Now we have a live Sunday school, a singing school, prayer meeting once each week, and preaching twice a month. People of all denominations in the district meet and worship together in perfect unity and harmony, aged people come regularly, and even people from the adjoining county are beginning to come over to our little schoolhouse.

The remark of one old woman of 70 probably voices the feelings and sentiments of all the adults who have learned to read and write in

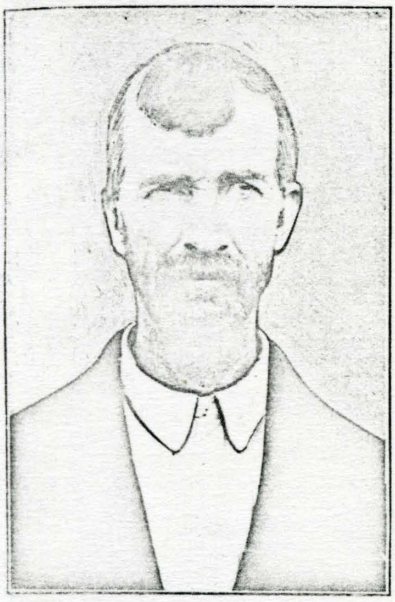
these night schools. When asked what benefit the moonlight schools had been to her, she said, "Oh, to be able to read my Bible and to write to my children and grandchildren! I would not take anything for the privilege."

The studies pursued in these moonlight schools are reading, writing, arithmetic, and spelling. Brief drills are given in the essential facts of language, history, geography, civics, sanitation, agriculture, and horticulture. The reading text is the Rowan County School Messenger, edited by the county superintendent, published weekly for the special benefit of the adult students, and furnished free of charge. This paper deals largely with school and county affairs, and the news is made up in short sentences designed to help the pupils in their efforts to read.

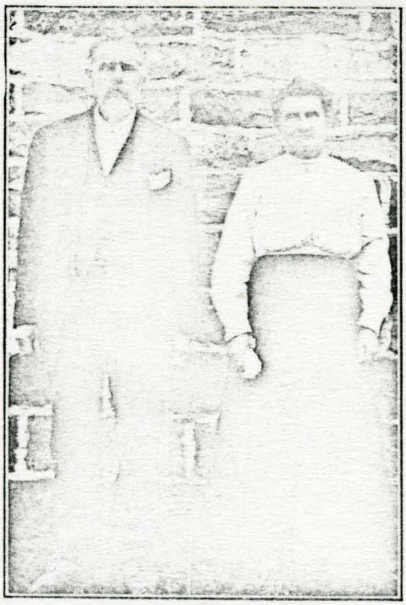
This experiment in Rowan County, Ky., shows that it is possible to bring help to illiterate men and women even under the most difficult and adverse circumstances.

The following extracts from an article in the Louisville Courier-Journal of December 29, 1912, show the spirit of this work so well that they are included here:

> The teachers gladly gave volunteer service and received no compensation whatever. A few prizes were offered to stimulate teachers and trustees and were to be awarded on the highest enrollment, the largest attendance, and the number of illiterates taught, but teachers and trustees announced that any prizes won by them would be donated to the district for libraries and other needed improvements. The teachers are in the main natives of Rowan County, young in years and in experience, deeply in sympathy with the people and their needs, consecrated to the cause of education, and determined to wipe out illiteracy from the county and to make of each and every citizen, high or low, an intelligent, active, happy factor in the school. They possess a high degree of intelligence, an average amount of scholarship, and the mission spirit, the most essential qualification of a teacher, in the highest degree.
>
> If obstacles presented themselves, the teachers promptly removed them; and if excuses were made, they met them with argument and persuasion and overcame them. Several married teachers who lived at home and rode on horseback to school each day left their homes when the night-school term began and took up their abode in the district. Teachers who lived or boarded long distances from the schoolhouses remained at school from the time the day school began at 8 o'clock in the morning until the night school ended at 9 o'clock in the evening, making a 13-hour day. Some canvassed their districts regularly during the few hours which intervened between the close of the day school and the beginning of the night school and started many who were too diffident to come to school to writing at home, and after they were slightly advanced persuaded them into the school. One widow, who not only taught, but was burdened with household cares, walked back and forth 3 miles with her two children twice each day to the schoolhouse to instruct the pupils in both the day and night school sessions. School was conducted for two hours each evening on four nights during the week, Monday, Tuesday, Wednesday, and Thursday evenings, leaving the teachers three nights for complete rest and relaxation to refresh them for the work of the next week. None showed any particular evidence of strain or fatigue or overwork, and each and every one declared the work a most delightful and fascinating one and one which even greatly increased the interest and added to the success of the day school.



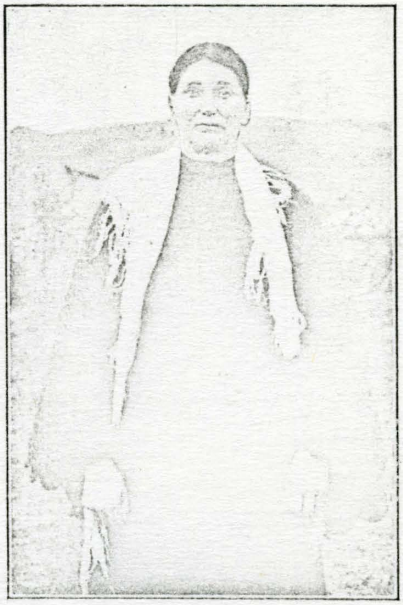
A. MARTIN DE HART, A PRIZE WINNER.



B. SCHOOLMATES.

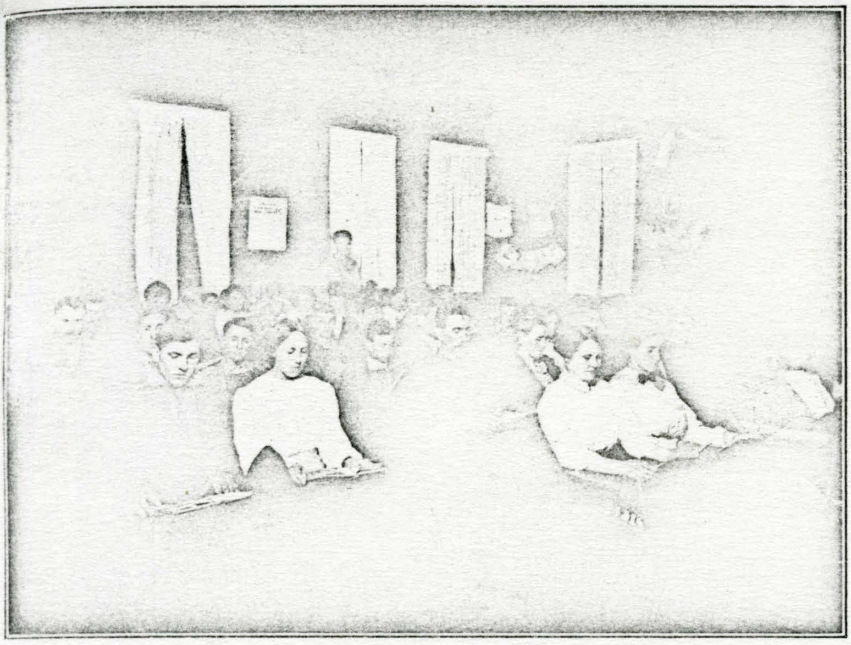
The man is 72; the woman, 68.

C. UNCLE RANS BURTON; AGE, 76.



D. MRS. A. J. WHITE.

PUPILS IN THE ROWAN COUNTY MOONLIGHT SCHOOLS.

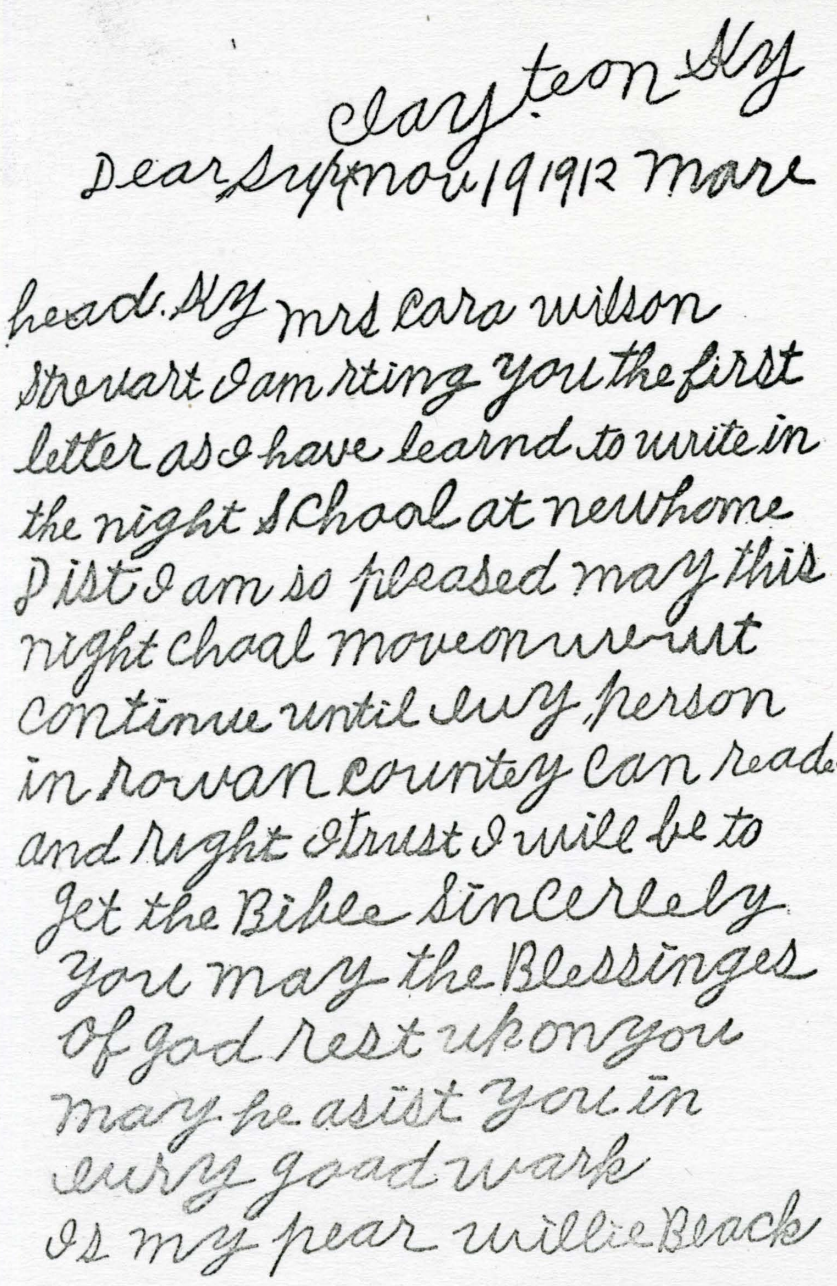


A. NIGHT SCHOOL AT OPEN FORK.

The oldest pupil was 73.

B. A GROUP OF EAGER STUDENTS.

Too much credit can not be given these teachers—faithful, earnest, heroic servants of the Commonwealth—who volunteered to teach by night as well as by day. In


Clayton Ky
Dear Sir Nov 1 1912 Mare
head. Ky mrs Cara wilson
Stewart I am riting you the first
letter as I have learnd to write in
the night School at newhome
Dist I am so pleased may this
night chool move on we ust
continue until every person
in Rowan County can read
and right I trust I will be to
Get the Bible Sincerely
you may the Blessinges
of god rest upon you
may he asist you in
every good work
Is my pear willie Black

LETTER NO. 3. FROM THE FATHER OF TEN CHILDREN.

no crusade or march of progress has more self-sacrifice or heroism been shown than has been displayed by them. Patriots they are, of the truest kind.

From this school, under the instruction of an 18-year-old girl, a beginner in the profession of teaching, a preacher 50 years of age was graduated in reading and writing for the terms of graduation were only that he should be able to read his Bible and the newspaper with reasonable facility, and should write a legible letter, and both of these he now can do to his unspeakable pride and joy.

He signed his name to the assessor's list, for the first time, after four nights' instruction, and wrote the superintendent a legible, four-page, enthusiastic letter with a period at the close of each sentence as large as a bird's-eye, when he had been a pupil of the school but seven evenings. The youthful teacher was inclined to apologize for the few that she had enrolled, and said: "I didn't have as large school as the others—just four—but they were in earnest, and I did my best for them, and told them that I would teach as long as one of them would come," and then she said with a twinkle in her eye, and an evident thrill of pride, "but I taught a preacher to read and write, and that was something, wasn't it?"

One school of 65 pupils had 23 illiterates, all of whom were taught by a young teacher to read and write. Three preachers were enrolled in this school, and added much by their interest, their zeal, and their influence. In fact, all ministers in the rural sections aided much in the work. They assisted in campaigning and organizing, and the more learned assisted in teaching, while those who were unlearned sought more eagerly than any others to acquire some education. Four preachers were taught to read and write. These and all other beginning students in the night school who learned to read and write and who wrote the superintendent their first letter received as a prize a Bible with their names engraved upon it.

On one of her visits to a moonlight school the writer watched the eager, happy throng come trooping through the moonlight, laughing and talking together in free and easy schoolmate fashion, and as they entered the door noted that there were not only students of all ages, from the maid of 18 and the youth who had just attained his majority to the grandame of 50 and the grandfather of 80, but there were a carpenter, a merchant, a manufacturer, a postmaster, a magistrate, a doctor, a preacher, school trustee, five former teachers, farmers and farmers' wives and their sons and daughter, many educated persons and eight illiterates. That the thirst for knowledge and the determination to reach a more elevated station in life were not confined to any age or any class seemed self-evident, and that the moonlight school met the demands of those in any age and of all these various classes was proven by the fact that they came again and again, and plead for a longer term when its sessions closed.

The studies pursued were, essentially, reading, writing, spelling, and arithmetic, but brief drills were given on the most significant facts in language, history, geography, civics, sanitation, agriculture, and horticulture. With beginners, writing was the most fascinating study, while the more advanced were divided in their preference between arithmetic and agriculture and made most rapid progress in the study of each. Horticulture was discussed and fruit grafting was performed in some schools.

The reading text was a little newspaper, the Rowan County School Messenger, edited by the county superintendent and published weekly for the special benefit of the adult students and furnished to them free of charge. Its motto and the motto of the moonlight schools was:

> The riches of the commonwealth
> Are free, strong minds and hearts of health,
> And more to her than gold or grain
> Are cunning hand and cultured brain.

This paper dealt largely with school and county affairs and was made up of short sentences intended to inspire effort and to arouse the curiosity of the beginner so that he would immediately seek to read the next sentence. And it had the desired effect, for no sentence in any book could have spurred the reader on to seek further as did the announcement that "John Brown has moved to Kansas," for immediately

he desire to know, such as impels the reader of fiction, what was going to happen ext, or what had happened, was uppermost, and so there was renewed zeal and ffort to master the next sentence and to see who else had moved, and who was visiting, nd who had painted or built a new house.

The statements of school improvements, too, served two purposes, one for practice reading, and the other to arouse the readers to make their district excel the one hich was being exploited, and this, also, was effective, for when the people of Slab amp read the statement "They are putting up window shades and hemstitching urtains for the school at Chestnut Grove," they at once decided that Slab Camp was ot going to be behind the rest, and that what Chestnut Grove could do Slab Camp ould do, and shades and curtains went up, without delay, in Slab Camp schoolouse, too. And if one school read that another was germinating seed corn or grafting ruit trees, the same course was adopted by them then and there.

The newspaper contained one poem, running in sections, a stanza or two was to be memorized each week. This was Longfellow's "Psalm of Life," and was learned more for its sublimity of thought, the training of expression, and the acquisition of new words and phrases than as a memory drill. All drill questions on the various branches were published in the paper. Among them all none created a more genuine interest than the drill in language. Drills in the correction of such words as "crick," "kiver," "git," "yit," "hit," "seed," "hyeard," "tuck," "fust," "hain't," "skeered," and many others caused much merriment among even those who had been in the habit of employing them, as well as those who were accustomed only to using the proper forms. All joined heartily in drilling on the correct forms, and afterwards took great pride in using them. Drills on words ending in "g" resulted in the correction of the careless habit of saying "doin'," "goin'," "readin'," "writin'," and of other words which had been abridged in the same way.

The text used in arithmetic was a small book recently published and dealing entirely with the problems of rural life, and meeting adequately the needs of a rural people. This book became most popular and took rank next to the Bible in many homes.

Another school trustee, who attended the night school through the same sense of obligation, received an inspiration and is now a student in the day school, along with his own children, every day.

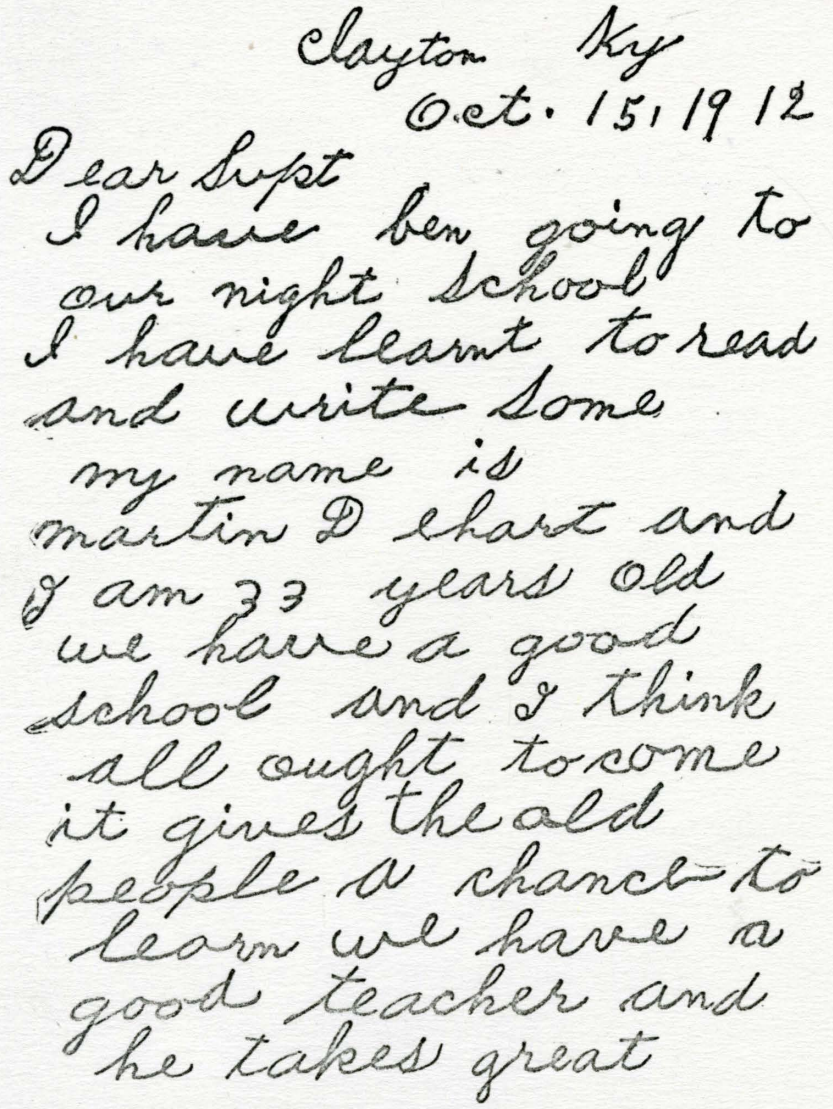
This man is at present secretary of the county board of education, and those who enter a certain remote schoolhouse will not only have turned to them the eager face of his 6-year old son, but will be greeted by the inspired face of this man past 40, a face lighted up with an unusual intellect, high character, and noble purpose. A hungry, appealing look it is at present, for he has high aspirations, and realizes that it is a long step up to them; but one of them is almost within his grasp, and with his spirit of determination and persistence he will reach it, and that is the ambition to be a teacher, and to lead others, as he was led, along the night-school road to a higher education.

One justice of the peace and one ex-magistrate enjoyed the advantages of the night school and afterwards enrolled in day school. In several day schools may be found the child of 5 and the man or woman of 40, and, in every instance, the presence of a determined adult has proven to be an inspiration to both pupils and teacher.

An aged father and mother, parents of 14 children, all of whom had gone beyond the rooftree, and grandparents of 84 grandchildren, learned to read and write, and absent ones, to their surprise and excessive joy, learned that father and mother had been attending Moonlight School and could read and write, and not only was a new world of communication opened to the aged couple, but a new joy and a new uplift and a new dignity was given to their absent ones, making them, doubtless, better citizens of their adopted States.

What has been accomplished in Rowan as a county system has been accomplished in districts here and there this year in other counties. In the Sandy Valley hundreds have enrolled, 400 in Lawrence County alone. In Boyd County in one district it

was tried, and the people responded to the number of 60. In Madison a school was conducted among the tenant class, and was thronged with eager students. At the close of a two weeks' session all these tenants could read and write, and one of them was so elated with his acquirements that he wrote to his landlord, a State official, and informed him that he no longer had an ignorant tenant.



Clayton Ky
Oct. 15, 1912

Dear Supt
I have ben going to
our night school
I have learnt to read
and write some
my name is
martin D hart and
I am 33 years old
we have a good
school and I think
all ought to come
it gives the old
people a chance to
learn we have a
good teacher and
he takes great

LETTER NO. 4. THE NIGHT SCHOOL LETTER WHICH WON FIRST PRIZE.

In Garrard County, at Buena Vista, a noble teacher opened the school for night sessions, and found an anxious crowd of adults to greet her each evening, students who plead for a lengthened term.

One middle-aged man was so fascinated by the ability to write his name that he wrote it over and over again for two whole days, and was the more elated at every stroke.

One father and mother came into a school one night with six grown sons, three of whom were married, and all voters. Within two nights both parents and sons could write their names, and within two weeks they could all write a respectable letter.

John Dehart declares in his first letter that he would not take $10,000 for what he has learned. Doubtless, besides the increased happiness and usefulness, the knowledge which he has gained will add that much to his earning capacity during the rest

delight in learning
us i am glad I
have ben coming
we have enrolled
44 and hope to have
more before it closes
our oldest pupil
is m re Slone who is 87
years old
i think the night
school is the
greatest thing
ever has ben
gotten up
yours truly

martin Dehart

LETTER NO. 4—Continued.

of his lifetime, for he is but 25 years old and belongs to a family of remarkable vigor and noted longevity. John has come to realize his possibilities, and has caught a vision of higher achievements, and has enrolled as a regular scholar in the day school since the night school closed.

In fact, more than one adult has found in the day school a lengthened opportunity, after the night-school sessions were over. Last year a school trustee of limited education attended the school at night, partly as an official duty, and also to accompany

his wife, who was the teacher. During the session he caught a glimpse of possible power and service, and enrolled immediately in the day school, and attended every day, being taught by his wife. When the day school closed, he entered a private normal school, applying himself assiduously until summer, when he secured a certificate to teach. This year he is one of the most earnest and successful teachers in Rowan County and in both day and night school he manifests a spirit of consecration only possible to one who has come into the service along a rugged path, beset by many difficulties. He, at least, can sympathize in the fullest with his adult students as they bend over book, copy book or newspaper.

As every teacher was inspired with the idea that he was upbuilding the Commonwealth, as well as uplifting humanity, every citizen had pride in assisting his neighbor to be and in making of himself a more useful factor of society and a more intelligent citizen. A man redeemed from illiteracy became at once a source of pride and admiration to his neighbors, as well as to himself and his family, and, like most new converts to a cause, he exceeded the old adherents in zeal and loyalty and became a most enthusiastic advocate of the cause of education, faithfully supporting the compulsory school law, the school improvement league, the library, and all the aids to education.

The solution of many of the problems of the day school have come about through the night school; parents who, after they became students and inmates of the school, came to see the necessity of certain improvements to which they had hitherto been apparently blind. In one district for 20 years children had hopped across the creek from one stone to another and had scrambled up a steep, slippery bank to the school. The parents and grandparents had hopped and scrambled but a few nights until they discovered that a footbridge across that stream was an immediate necessity, and the agitation for a footbridge was at once begun.

○

contest work came from the need of attention being directed thru our schools toward practical home work. Living in an agricultural state with a course of study slightly touching the agricultural needs, the farmers, the bankers, and rural-school people urged a vitalized school curriculum.

C. THE MOONLIGHT SCHOOLS OF KENTUCKY

CORA WILSON STEWART, PRESIDENT, KENTUCKY ILLITERACY COMMISSION, FRANKFORT, KY.

The various impressions which have obtained thruout the country as to the moonlight schools of Kentucky, as expressed in letters to me, have been most interesting and amusing indeed. Some have conjectured them to be schools where children studied, scampered, and played on the green like fairies in the moonlight; some have imagined them to be ideal courting schools where lovers strolled arm in arm, quoted poetry, and told the old, old story by the light of a bewitching moon; while others have speculated as to their being schools where moonshiners, youthful and aged, were instructed as to the most scientific method of extracting the juice from the corn and the most secretive method of providing successfully against government interference.

Three years ago there was established in Rowan County, Kentucky, the institution known as "moonlight schools." They were so called because in the beginning they were held only on moonlight nights. These schools were designed primarily to emancipate all the men and women in the county who were enslaved in the bondage of illiteracy. They were intended, also, to afford an opportunity to those who possessed a limited education.

First, the public-school teachers of Rowan County were called together and informed of the conditions and needs, an appeal was made to them, especially on behalf of the eleven hundred and fifty-two men and women whom the schools of the past had left behind, and they were asked to volunteer for night-school service. Those teachers received the plan and purposes of the moonlight schools with sympathy and enthusiasm, and not only volunteered to teach at night, free of charge, but to canvass their districts in advance and to inform the people of the purpose of these schools and to urge them all to attend. That they did their work well, and that they met with hearts responsive and minds hungry for learning and souls that yearned for higher things was attested by the fact that when the first session opened on the bright moonlight evening of September 5, 1911, instead of the lone and solitary student or the straggling few at each school, as was anticipated, they came thronging up out of the hollows and over the hills, they came hurrying in groups, they came walking for miles, they came carrying babes in arms, they came leaning on canes and bent with age—they came twelve hundred strong. There were overgrown boys who had dropped out of school at an early age and had fallen behind their classes

and who had felt ashamed to re-enter school and be classified with "tiny tots"—and they came to catch up again; there were maidens in their teens who had been deprived of an education earlier by reason of isolation, home duties, invalidism, and other causes, but whose souls had yearned for better things than ignorance dense; there were women who had married in childhood, practically, as is too much the wont of our mountain girls, and who for years craved that which they knew to be their inherent right, their mental development; there were their husbands by their sides, who had too often known the sting of humiliation when making their marks in the presence of the educated and when they had asked the election officers to cast for them a vote for the candidates of their choice; there were middle-aged men, who had seen a hundred golden opportunities pass them by because of the handicap of illiteracy, whose mineral and timber and material stores, as well as their time and energy, were in the control of the educated men, making them but beggars, as it were, on the bounty of those whom they enriched; there were women who had seen their children grow up and vanish from the home, some of them into the Far West, and, when the spoken word and the handclasp had ceased, there had been no heart-to-heart communication, for a third person as an interpreter between mother and child is but a poor medium at the best; there were grandfathers and grandmothers who had heard the Bible read and the gospel propounded but had never had the privilege of reading and verifying the precious promises of that Book of Books with their own eyes—these and other folks, such as make up the average rural community in the southern mountains, some half-educated, and some more, made up these schools. "Just to learn to read my Bible" was the cry of many a patriarch and many a withered dame. "To write my children with my own hand and read their letters with my own eyes" was the earnest wish of the mother's heart. "Just to learn to write my name—to escape from the shame of making my mark!" was the appeal of the younger men, while "Just to have a chance with other folk, to be something and do something in the world!" were the desires expressed by the younger people. The youngest student was aged eighteen and the oldest was eighty-six. It was a scene to bring tears to the eyes, and yet to make the heart rejoice, to see these robust young people and those hoary-haired old people, as they sat at their desks and studied together or stood at the blackboard and wrote their names for the first time with inexpressible pride, or stood in a row and spelled.

They learned to read and write during the first session and wrote letters to their friends and loved ones. Two school trustees, who could read and write but possessed little other literary attainment, received encouragement and inspiration from their rapid progress in the night school and entered the day school when the night school closed, pursuing their studies with unsurpassed diligence, and they are today two of the most faithful members of the corps of teachers in that county. One man, who had labored for

years at the low wage of $1.50 and had seen many men less worthy promoted above him from time to time, specialized in mathematics, mastering the principles of the branch which dealt with his particular business, lumbering, and at the close of the night school was promoted at a salary double the one which he had previously earned. There were a hundred instances of individual development and individual achievement which are on my lips to tell you tonight if time would but stay its hand. The joy in achievement, simple achievement tho it was, is beyond the power of mortal tongue to describe. The newly learned wrote their names with frenzied delight on fences, posts, barns, logs, barrel staves, and every available scrap of paper, and those who possessed even meager means drew their store from its hiding-place and deposited it in the bank and wrote their checks and signed their names with satisfaction. Friction and factional feeling, which existed in some districts, gave place to a spirit of co-operation. A community spirit and Sunday schools and other organizations were direct results of the moonlight schools.

The institution was too popular and too fruitful of results to abandon. When the teachers entered their districts the next year they were greeted with a chorus of inquiries, "When will the night school begin?" A teacher who hesitated was a teacher who lost the good will and esteem of his patrons. We conducted a six weeks' session the second term, running forty-eight schools. We surpassed our first year's record in every particular. Sixteen hundred students were enrolled, 350 were taught to read and write, and a man aged eighty-seven came and put to shame the record of the proud school girl of eighty-six of the session before. The moonlight schools were now an established institution in Rowan County and had been adopted in some one or more districts in eight or ten other counties in the state, and whether it was in the bluegrass county of Madison, among the tenant class, or in Garrard in the distillery section, or in Johnson among the miners, or in Lawrence among the farmers, it had always been with the same results: there had been men and women in large numbers who came and eagerly welcomed the opportunity and who strove with all their might to make up for the years which they had lost and who plead for a longer term when the session closed.

When the third session of moonlight schools opened in Rowan County, in August of 1913, it was destined to be the most strenuous campaign against illiteracy that the world had ever known. The teachers had met in the month of March and had agreed with their superintendent to wipe illiteracy finally from that county. We had employed each trustee in April to take a careful census of the illiterates of his district, and when the reports came in each individual case was investigated and an illiteracy record made. On this record we had not only the name and age of every illiterate in the county, but the history of each and every one, his religious preference, his political faith, his weaknesses, tastes, his peculiarities, his family ties, his

home environment, and the influence or combination of influences thru which he might be reached. Each teacher was provided with the record of illiterates in her particular district, with instructions to call and cultivate these people—like good politicians—before the session of night school began. We established a home department, in which the feeble and those disinclined could be instructed by the teacher or by someone under the teacher's direction in the home. We enlisted every educated person possible to campaign, to speak, or to teach. Ministers, doctors, lawyers, stenographers, merchants, school children, and even many of the illiterate themselves as soon as they passed out of the illiterate class began to teach members of their families and their friends. We tried by every means, fair and foul, to get every man in the county to learn to read and write. An overwhelming majority accepted the opportunity with joy and gratitude. A few had to be coaxed. Four in their ignorance had a false conception of the movement and stubbornly and persistently refused to attempt to learn; six were afflicted with defective eyesight or total blindness; five were confirmed invalids languishing on beds of pain; six were imbeciles; and two who moved in at the close of our session did not learn to read or write, leaving us twenty-three illiterates in all. A few weeks ago a Rowan County teacher, whose school had closed, took a sudden and peculiar notion to go and board a while with one of the stubborn old women who had refused to learn and to pay her an exorbitant price for board. She induced the woman to teach her to knit and as they sat and knitted together they became fast and familiar friends, and when the time was ripe this teacher said:

> Now you have been so kind as to teach me something which I have always wanted to know, I am going to be as kind to you. I am going to teach you to write to Elias in the state of Washington and to Jacob in Illinois and to Charles in Indiana. I know how glad they will be to have a letter from their mother and how happy you will be to read a letter from them.

And all the time she was talking the teacher was getting her paper and pencil and materials together, and this old woman, either from a long-smothered desire to communicate with her absent loved children, or from the fear of losing a valuable boarder and charming companion, or from some other inducement, was soon at work copying the letter "E," the first letter of her name. On last Thursday, this earnest little teacher came up the stairway and knocked at my door. I opened, and, with shining eyes but without a word, she laid that old woman's first letter on my desk. Oh, those Rowan County teachers! They have the spirit and they know the method, and I do not believe that any illiterate within their reach has a chance to escape them!

Illiteracy is an easy thing to eradicate. It does not take long for an adult to learn to read and write. Saul Dehart, aged thirty-eight, states in this his first letter that it took eight evenings' instruction to achieve it. S. P. Johnson, a Baptist preacher aged fifty, says that he could only write

one letter in his name when the night schools began, the letter "S." In four days, he signed his name to the assessor's list for the first time and after seven lessons wrote me this, his first letter, pleading that we should not let the night schools go down. Mose Wallace says that it required five evenings for him to learn sufficiently to write me this, his first letter. Tom Stapleton says that four evenings sufficed for him. Burr Harfield says that he learned in two evenings, and is very happy, and his teacher verified his statements. Henry Kissick says that the school supervisor taught him in the woods, where he was making ties, and I have his and the supervisor's affidavits stating that he had never attempted to write before he learned to write and wrote this note, which was done after only two hours' instruction and practice.

While we were reducing our illiteracy in Rowan County, we had time to organize and direct night schools in other whole counties and in individual districts in twenty-five other counties in the state. In Grayson County, where we organized twenty-two night schools last August, a man ninety-four learned to read and write and wrote me this letter which I hold in my hand, and which may be plainly read, and which, it is needless to say, I treasure more than fine gold.

These statements as to the rapidity with which some men have learned to read and write and the achievements of these venerable students may meet with skepticism in some. They are too unusual and too remarkable, I realize, to meet with fullest credence from those who have known no such experience and have never witnessed such efforts and results. And, notwithstanding the fact that all the world knows that it is risky to dispute a Kentuckian's word, I should cringe and cower to stand before this intelligent audience and make such assertions did I not have in my possession proofs to substantiate them.

I hold in my hand photos of the most remarkable group of students in the world: Dulcina Morefield, aged eighty-three; Dicie Carter, aged eighty-six; Martin Sloan, aged eighty-seven, and John Hatfield, aged ninety-four. To every apostle of education seated in this audience, the desire and the determination and the efforts of these men and women to escape from ignorance, even as they stand at the very portals of the grave, should be an inspiration and a stimulus to a newer and fuller and completer consecration to the great and noble profession in which those assembled here have chosen to engage. It should stimulate us to a consecration which would hold us to the task beyond the shining hours of day and impel us by some means to pry open the doors of all the schoolhouses in this country for the use of the people at night. There sit in this audience men and women who are superintendents of rural communities. The United States Census Bureau reports that illiteracy exists in the rural communities in almost double the proportion that it does in the urban, and this despite the fact that a stream of illiterate foreigners is pouring into

the urban districts daily. I want to ask you who are superintendents of rural schools, whether section, township, county, or state, if there is any good reason why a night school should be a city product and a city institution only. Is there any just reason why our sturdy pioneers, who were deprived of an education in the strenuous duties of pioneer life in the newly-developed sections, and our pure-blooded Anglo-Saxon retarded mountaineers of the Appalachian highlands, and our American farmers should be condemned to everlasting ignorance, while illiterate foreigners who enter this country may find the schoolroom door wide open in the cities where they land?

A day school in every community! Once it was a doubtful experiment, and it has come up only thru trials and tribulations and struggles innumerable. But it is firmly established, and forever so. A night school in every community! If a cultured community, a night school for more culture, for specialization, for social development; if an ignorant community, a night school for the emancipation of illiterate men and women and for their new birth into the realms of wisdom and power. I believe that the public school should be as liberal in its policy as is the church. I do not believe it has any right to say to men and women, "If you embrace me not early I will close my doors to you at a certain time or a certain age." The hour of a man's opportunity should be that hour in which he awakens to his need, whether that be at the age of six or one hundred and six.

Kentucky is awake on the subject of her adult illiteracy and her heart beats a sympathetic response to the cries of "Wait" from her men and women whom the schools have left behind. Kentucky's governor recommended in his message to the general assembly, which is now in session, that an illiteracy commission should be created to study and to relieve the condition of adult illiterates in the state. I was privileged to be present when the lower house passed that measure with a unanimous vote, and some of its members were so enthusiastic in its favor that not content with voting once they voted twice, shouting "Aye! Aye!" One week ago today I received this message telling of the disposition of the measure in the Senate:

Dated C. H. Frankfort, Ky. 18
To Mrs. Cora Wilson Stewart,
Morehead, Ky.

"Your illiteracy bill passed the Senate this morning by unanimous vote and many complimentary remarks about you and your noble work in the state of Kentucky."

(Signed) Starling L. Marshall

This commission is designed to organize the other counties of the state to do in six years what one of its counties accomplished in three—to practically wipe out illiteracy.

Hasten the day when the rural dweller, wherever he may be, whether in the mountains or by the sea, in the cotton fields or on the western plain,

may have a school that is not only open to his children and his grandchildren by day but is open to his wife, his grown son, his aged father, his hired man, and himself by night. Hasten the day when there shall be no men and women in this country who have eyes to see but see not the splendid truths which have been written in books, and who have hands to write but write not the thoughts which, if recorded, might stamp with genius someone whose wisdom the world, in its urgent need, is seeking tonight.

THE FOUNDATIONS OF EDUCATIONAL ACHIEVEMENT

EDWARD L. THORNDIKE, PROFESSOR OF EDUCATIONAL PSYCHOLOGY, TEACHERS COLLEGE, COLUMBIA UNIVERSITY, NEW YORK, N.Y.

A minister of the gospel who was asked to enumerate the foundations of the religious life answered, "Everything in God's world and its proper use." Doubtless the proper use of everything in the world of knowledge and skill and conduct is not too wide a description of the fundamentals of educational achievement. You do not, however, expect anybody to outline an entire educational creed and practice in thirty minutes. What you wish, I judge, is that, as a representative of educational psychology, I should report any contribution that recent psychology has to offer to your work of making schools more efficient—of increasing educational achievement.

There is such a contribution, and, as I hope to convince you, an important one in the general view of human nature which recent studies of human thought and action support.

About fifteen years ago the point of view of students of human nature showed the first clear signs of what has been a rather abrupt change toward thinking of a man's mind as the sum total of connections between the situations which life offers and the responses which the man makes. Up till then the mind had been thought of primarily as a set of magical faculties or powers—attention, memory, inference, reasoning, choice, and the like—or as a collection of certain contents—sensations, images, thoughts, volitions, and the like. Today the progressives in psychology think of a man's mind as the organized system of connections or bonds or associations whereby he responds or reacts by this or that thought or feeling or act to each of the millions of situations or circumstances or events that befall him. Their customary name for the mind is the connection-system; their ideal of psychology is a science which can predict what any given situation or stimulus will connect with or evoke in the way of thought, feeling, word, or deed in any given man; their offering to education is an offering of knowledge of the laws whereby connections in thought and behavior are made and broken, are preserved and weakened, and are of help and hindrance one to another.

It is merely a simple formulation of principles and methods that are obvious—or should be.

Probably you have been saying, "Homewood has confused recreation and life." You are right. Homewood has confused recreation and life. That is why Homewood has made its recreational life efficient and its community life efficient. No more than education, is recreation a thing apart from life. Recreation is life itself, for without it life will not go on.

There are thousands of Homewoods. This simple recreation program is transforming community life everywhere. When you have this recreational program, or a large part of it, read into the life of your community, you will have it started well on its way toward the millenium.

Why? Because the efficient operation of these principles inevitably makes for the right state of mind—community mind. Organized recreation is doing something together for the joy of the doing. Organized recreation is that which puts zip, fire, force, spirit, *élan*, driving power, organization, cooperation, into the community.

THE ELIMINATION OF ILLITERACY

CORA WILSON STEWART, PRESIDENT, KENTUCKY ILLITERACY COMMISSION, FRANKFORT, KY.

The movement to eliminate illiteracy started in Rowan County, Kentucky, in the year 1911, when the moonlight schools were first establisht for the redemption of illiterate women and men. Moonlight schools now dot portions of a territory extending from the coast of Maryland to the coast of California, and from Michigan in the north to Louisiana in the south. And even in quarters where the movement exists and does not bear the name of the moonlight school, it bears the unmistakable stamp of an idea that emanated solely from it. In 1914, the first illiteracy commission in the world was created by the Kentucky legislature, its purpose being to seek illiterates and to bring to them speedy relief. Now the popular fancy of statesmen wise and great, who wish to prove their devotion to the people and their interest in the welfare of the state, is to create illiteracy commissions. The time will come when this age when counties have their thousands, cities their tens of thousands, and states their hundreds of thousands of illiterates will be known in educational history as one of the dark ages. Excuses will be sought for our long negligence and explanations will be made for our seeming indifference. Relief from illiteracy will appear so simple that such a waste of human intellect will seem unnecessarily criminal.

Some of us now excuse our negligence of the adult illiterate by saying that he is difficult to approach. Others say that, in reality, he does not wish to learn. "This is the most unkindest cut of all"—to deny him his

portion and then to say that it is done by his own desire. It is unkind, first, because it is untrue. Then it is unkind because, even if he chose to remain in ignorance, his judgment should not be accepted in this any more than in any other matter vital to himself and to the state. But he does not choose to remain in ignorance. He craves to learn. He hungers and thirsts for knowledge. You seldom find an illiterate who does not accept with joy and gratitude an opportunity when that opportunity is offered in a spirit of sincerity and good faith. In Rowan County, out of 1152 illiterate, we found but four who refused instruction, and these did not refuse it, I am sure, because they did not want it, but simply because they in some way misunderstood. Our county illiteracy agent in Leslie County last year visited 1000 illiterates to offer them instruction in the moonlight schools. He found but two out of the thousand who were not eager and glad to learn.

Most of the illiterates labor under the fallacy which has been communicated to them by those who are educated, and ought to know better, that the state of plasticity of the mind is limited by the law which fixes the age of school attendance, and that at twenty and twenty-one, or whatever the limit of the school age may be in the different states, the undevelopt brain dries up or evaporates, or that the walls thicken and nothing can penetrate. One of the first needs in the elimination of illiteracy is to remove the doubt of illiterates and to convince them that they can learn; next to teaching them, this is the highest privilege that I know. No sweeter revelation was ever made to mortal than that which is made to an illiterate when a friend of education and of his tells him that simple truth, that he can learn to read and write much more quickly than can a child. Whether it is his earnestness of purpose, whether his hunger for knowledge long denied, whether because of an already large store of knowledge gained in the school of life and needing but the perusal of a book to crystallize it or the use of a pen to express it, or whatever may be the cause, it is true that he can learn, if normal, within a time so incredibly short that those who never saw him do it cannot even conceive. Of course, there are some dense minds, and there are teachers who make learning a long-drawn-out process—a tiresome thing. Mrs. A. J. White, the woman who wrote the first letter to me from the moonlight schools, learned to read and write in ten lessons.

The best way of eliminating illiteracy is to teach the illiterates. The best plan we have found for reaching illiterates is to approach them in person in a humble spirit and offer them an opportunity. Since they cannot read placards, letters, nor notes of invitation, how else are you going to reach them? The best hour to teach them is at evening time; for illiterates, more than any others, are chained to labor by day, and evening is their leisure time. The best place that we have found for teaching them is in the moonlight school. There are other places, I grant, but since

illiteracy is twice as prevalent in rural as in urban sections, of necessity, the moonlight school, which is a rural and small-town institution, will minister more largely than any other in its elimination. We have moonlight schools principally in the public schoolhouses; but not in the schoolhouses alone. In Kentucky, we have moonlight schools in the schoolhouses; moonlight schools in homes; moonlight schools in the women's clubs; moonlight schools in distilleries and factories; moonlight schools in the mines; moonlight schools in penitentiaries and jails. The proper persons to teach the illiterates are the public-school teachers. They are trained, prepared, and stationed for the work. It is their duty and their privilege and their opportunity for distinguisht patriotic service. We should not expect laymen, or church people to cure an evil in our field, nor should we submit to their performing a duty, which is so clearly and essentially our own. No paid service to illiterates can equal that of the volunteer teacher. His service has in it a spirit which paid service can never approach. Some day I expect to see institutions in all communities, rural and urban, where grown men and women receive elementary instruction, and to see them provided with salaried teachers, but I prefer not to see it while the purpose of such schools is solely the emancipation of illiterates; for I do not believe that there should be a charge for helping a brother out of the ditch, nor for loosing his fetters, nor for unlocking his prison door.

I repeat that there is but one way to eliminate illiteracy and that is to teach the illiterates. There is but one time to teach them, and that is now. It is a problem which has come up in this decade for solution and it will not down until we have solved it and given to every illiterate his chance. They cannot wait for a system of state or governmental aid. We must work out such a system at the same time that we are eliminating illiteracy, so that illiteracy once rooted can never appear in alarming numbers nor blight any individual long in the future. We must so quicken the public conscience that the pages of statute books, now so silent as to the treatment of adult illiteracy, will have on them laws both for its prevention and its cure. We must create such overwhelming sentiment in favor of providing opportunities for illiterate women and men that states will vie with each other in provisions for their redemption. We must make illiteracy statistics appear so shameful, so lurid, and so startling as to appall all who read them. We must bring those who read them to see in such figures the pathetic picture of the benighted men and women which they represent. We must make them understand that behind those figures there are facts, fearful, appalling, startling facts, for behind them lurk most of the poverty, the degradation, lawlessness, the shiftlessness, the crime to be found in this country. We must create such public sentiment that the county or state with an illiterate in it must explain and feel compelled to explain, and being unable to explain, will apologize and reform. We must so perfect our methods of taking the census that every illiterate in county or state will be

known and will know that he is known, and unfavorably known, to the entire citizenry. We must create a wholesome contempt for a wilful illiterate, a profound pity for a helpless one, and an extreme pride in a redeemed one.

If the states which are striving to eliminate illiteracy are attempting an impractical and impossible thing, if they are wasting time and energy chasing a will-o-the-wisp, then the leaders here can do no more kind or noble deed than to restrain them from further effort, to dissuade them from their course. If, on the other hand, they are solving a vital educational problem and solving it successfully; if they are eliminating illiteracy and with it are eliminating its attendant evils, then, those from states which are neglecting their illiterates and leaving them to grope in darkness must feel that they are guilty of a serious omission, if not a flagrant wrong.

You who live in states where illiteracy has not concerned the public conscience, and where its elimination has not been agitated nor discusst, and where no effective remedy has been proposed or tried, may believe it when the skeptic tells you that it cannot be done, that it is not worth while, or that the time might be more profitably spent in the elimination of child illiteracy alone. But let the skeptic tell it to Ambrose Witton, that Kentucky teacher who taught eighty-two illiterates within six weeks last year—all that his district had—let him tell it to Leslie County, where six hundred illiterates broke their chains and escaped last fall from the bondage of illiteracy; let him tell it to Tatnall County, Georgia, where from 1835 illiterates, they have subtracted all but 50, and these they propose to subtract this year. Let him tell it to North Carolina, where, says Dr. Joyner, they taught 10,000 to read and write in one month of moonlight school last year; let him tell it to old Kentucky where, in two years, we have taught 40,000, and where, by the year 1920, we intend to wipe it out. Let him tell it to any who have ever known the thrill of teaching a single illiterate and have witnest his ardent pursuit of knowledge, his ready mastery of the subjects taught, his joy in the discovery of a single truth, his gratitude for a little help; let him tell it to those who know that next to his own development the dearest gift that can be bestowed upon a child is an enlightened parentage, and that if it cannot come before his birth and before his own development, it had better come after than not to come at all. Let the skeptic tell it to any of these and read in their eyes the measure of pity for one so deluded.

Those who delight in transferring to canvas the beauties of earth and sky, in tracing fair form and beauteous color may do it; those who delight in transforming marble block into figures of noble proportion and speaking likeness may do it; those who delight in perfecting the form and fragrance and color of flowers and in enriching the flavor and hue of fruits may do it; those who delight in impressing first lessons upon the plastic mind of a little child, molding his character and coloring his very soul, may do it;

but let it be mine to carry the light to the illiterate man as he sits in his mental darkness, straining his eyes gazing after his vanished opportunity, and agonizing in his secret soul over the precious thing which he has lost. Let it be mine to bring to him a new opportunity, a new hope, and a new birth. It is a task too holy, too Christ-like for me, I must confess, but I crave that merit and that alone which will fit me for this task.

FIRST AID TO THE COUNTRY TEACHER—A SUGGESTION AS TO VITALIZING THE COUNTRY SCHOOLS THRU OUR PRESENT TEACHERS

J. D. EGGLESTON, PRESIDENT, VIRGINIA POLYTECHNIC INSTITUTE, BLACKSBURG, VA.

In the time at my disposal, it is impossible with so large a subject to give more than a bare outline of suggestions. What is here outlined is being done in spots, here and there, in the country districts. It needs to be done everywhere. Nothing is suggested here that has not been tried successfully.

From examination of statistics publisht in 1913 by A. C. Monahan, of the United States Bureau of Education, it is perfectly obvious that, for the next generation or two, at least, from 30 to 40 per cent of all children who live in the open country will remain in the hands of teachers in the one-teacher schools. The instability of the rural teaching force of the United States is well known. In fact, statistics show the average term of office of rural teachers in the United States to be about three years. What is the preparation of these teachers for the business of citizen-making? A study made by the superintendent of public instruction of Kansas shows that of the total number of rural elementary teachers in both one- and two-room schools, less than 5 per cent were college and normal graduates; 31 per cent were high-school graduates; 4 per cent had a partial college or normal course; 20 per cent had partial high-school courses; and 36 per cent had no high-school education at all. The number of experienst teachers was only 20 per cent of the whole. Statistics from other states show that similar conditions exist thruout the country.

If all the teachers in our rural schools were competent citizen-makers; if they were men and women not only with energy and foresight, but also with the proper training and the vision of the country community as it might and should be; if they were all backt by school boards anxious and able to make their work effective—then it might be excusable to drop them down into their respective schools to do their work with only such help as the county and state superintendents can give them, supplemented by teachers' institutes, summer normal courses, and the very limited forms of extension work which the states offer. But, however well the modern

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now creaking and grinding, trying to solve things politically that cannot be determined in that way. This great machine of ours may go down with a crash without that kind of leadership.

Chairman Morrison: Secretary Wilbur, in the early part of his address, pointed out the difficulty of getting a certain scientific principle across to the cow and to the bacillus. I thought he was going to add the third party, the legislature.

On behalf of the two organizations here, the thousands of you assembled and the thousands of others who have listened in, Secretary Wilbur, we thank you for taking this time out of your busy days to give us this proof of your interest and this vision of our future.

PRESENTATION TO DR. ALBERT EDWARD WINSHIP

Chairman Morrison: It is now my privilege to turn the meeting over for a moment to my chief, the President of the Department of Superintendence, who has a very genuine surprise in store for you. Mr. Cody.

President Cody: It is a rare privilege at this time to perform a very pleasant duty. For sixty-five years one of our best known men has labored in the cause of education. He is your friend; he is my friend. For fifty-eight years he has attended meetings of this Department. So by order of the executive committee of this Association, and I know by your unanimous wish, it is my pleasure at this time to confer upon Dr. Winship an honorary life membership in the Department of Superintendence. Dr. Winship! (The audience arose and applauded).

Dr. Winship: The most popular man in the new world today is popular for what he does not say. Thank you.

PRESENTATION TO CORA WILSON STEWART

President Cody: At this time it is my pleasure to present Miss McSkimmon, former president of the National Education Association. She will speak for herself.

Miss McSkimmon: Through the courtesy of the President of this Department, I am enabled to do a piece of work assigned to me by one of the organizations of this Department, the Administrative Women in Education, of which Miss Olive Jones is the president. It is my duty at this time to recognize the nationwide service that has been performed and is continuing to be performed by the lady to whom her association is awarding the Ella Flagg Young medal for distinguished service in education, Mrs. Cora Wilson Stewart. At this time, Mrs. Stewart is the executive secretary of the Illiteracy Commission appointed both by the President of the United States and by Secretary Wilbur.

It has not been unknown to everyone in this organization that the real spirit underlying our educational growth in the dark quarters of our land was led years ago by Mrs. Stewart, who taught us all that the people may be reached if we get after our problem in the way that meets their need. I

am sure that no one who heard Mrs. Stewart years ago in the old Lowell Building in the city of Boston has ever forgotten the picture of those people, old and worn in the battle of life, many of them, coming with lantern in hand over the rough paths at night to the little schoolhouse where they might learn the blessed gift of reading.

Mrs. Stewart's spirit and example are living and will live in this land today. It was one of our own poets who said to us in words so simple that they come back to us from our childhood—

> Whene'er a noble deed is wrought,
> Whene'er is spoken a noble thought,
> Our hearts in glad surprise
> To higher levels rise.
>
> The lady with a lamp shall stand
> In all the annals of our land,
> And noble hope of good,
> Heroic womanhood.

I have the honor, Mrs. Stewart, to present to you, in the name of my organization, this medal. (Applause)

Mrs. Cora Wilson Stewart: I can think of nothing that would strengthen the heart more or give more comfort than to have the approval of the members of one's own profession, and to have this testimonial of approval from the women leaders of one's profession is to a woman a peculiarly sacred and satisfying thing.

In making this award, the National Council of Administrative Women in Education was not influenced by any merit of my own, I am sure, and they had no thought of the personality. This is a recognition of a great cause. I have been chosen this morning as the symbol of that cause and as the representative of thousands of educators and citizens who have rendered valiant service in the fight to rid our nation of illiteracy. In behalf of that cause and of my comrades and myself, I humbly thank the National Council of Administrative Women. We shall take this not as an award only, but as a commission, as a mandate to carry on, for we have made only a beginning. We take this as a mandate from the National Council of Administrative Women to carry on in this fight against illiteracy to the finish until the victory is won. I thank you.

EDUCATIONAL ADVANCE THROUGH RESEARCH

A. J. STODDARD, SUPERINTENDENT OF SCHOOLS, PROVIDENCE, R. I.

In an address before the Walter Hines Page School of International Relations at Johns Hopkins University in 1925, Mr. Owen D. Young said:

> We desire to outlaw war. Not so long ago we desired to outlaw the yellow fever. We desired to outlaw typhoid. We desired to outlaw diphtheria. We desired to shake off the enervating shackles of the hookworm. . . . How was it accomplished? You all know the dramatic story. The patient research worker in his laboratory,

seeking facts, building theories and testing them by experiments, showing not only devotion to his work, but frequently a selfsacrifice which led to his death, came through victor. . . . So with war. It is not enough to have government departments of administration. It is not enough to have an industry of foreign relations. We must supply a science, a systematic body of things known, if we desire to make our aspirations for peace effective. But again, someone will inquire whether research or science, in the sense in which I am using them, can be advantageously applied to this field. My answer is that facts can be applied in any field. Our curse is ignorance. Facts are our scarcest raw material. This is shown by the economy with which we use them. One has to dig deep for them, because they are as difficult to get as they are precious to have.

One line of work after another has yielded to the scientific method of treatment, but education, being one of the most difficult to measure and appraise, was slow in adopting research. Many educational policies and procedures are still determined by intuition and rule-of-thumb methods. But there has been a very rapid tendency in recent years toward supplanting guesswork and opinion, as the basis of judgment, with the accurate and thorough collection, organization, and interpretation of facts. Approximately one-third of all our cities between fifty thousand and one hundred thousand in population now maintain research departments in their public school organizations, while this proportion increases to seventy percent in the larger cities. When it is considered that the first city school research departments were established less than twenty years ago, the trend becomes very significant. The development of the use of educational research has been correspondingly great in the colleges and universities. The whole movement has received effective encouragement and support from several great foundations, voluntary organizations, potent publications, and the National Education Association.

Despite the enormous progress that has been made, in recent years, in the application of research to the problems of education, the movement is but in its infancy as compared with the use made of research in commerce, business, and industry. During the present school year the cities in the United States with populations in excess of fifty thousand will spend approximately a million dollars for all phases of public school research, or about one-sixth of one percent of their total budgets. During the same period two of our great industries will together spend more than forty times as much for research as the total of the 133 largest city school systems.

Brokerage firms advise their clients to make sure that an institution is keenly alive to the importance of scientific research before investing in its securities. Banks will not lend as readily to an institution if there is no attempt to keep up with the developments of science, or a little in advance of them. Therefore, it is but natural that, as the amount expended for education increases, the investing public should demand not only that the existing methods and procedures be carefully appraised, but also that plans for further progress be based on the results of research. Inefficiency and waste in the business world are gradually eliminated through competition and the necessity for producing material dividends. As competition is eliminated in

delay in coming to their relief, I feel as Thomas Jefferson must have felt when he, himself a slaveholder, contemplated the institution of slavery and said, "I tremble when I remember that God is just!"

Among our five and a half million illiterates, 1,600,000 are foreign born. The remainder, nearly 4,000,000 in number, are native born. For the foreign born to be ignorant of our government, our laws, and our traditions is deplorable indeed, but for the native born to be ignorant of them is not only a menace but a disgrace. We are attempting to Americanize foreigners, an excellent thing to do, but let us not forget to Americanize the people of the Abraham Lincoln and Booker T. Washington type.

It is no longer a question of the right or the need of the illiterates in this country to enlightenment. It is not now a question of their joy in book and pen, but it is a question of national welfare, of bringing five and a half million more people speedily into intelligent sympathy with our war aims and enlisting their support.

This is a war in which international law, justice, human rights, and even common decency have been cast to the four winds by the enemy. To none of these have we any appeal. There is but one thing that will win this war—and that thing may be exprest in just one word. That word is *power*. Would it not then be the part of wisdom for the leaders of this country first to determine the source of power and then speedily to increase it? Had it not been said and demonstrated countless times thru the ages that "knowledge is power," it is being demonstrated at this time, in this very hour, when we behold the nation which has the lowest percentage of illiteracy holding the world at bay, and the one of our Allies which has the highest percentage broken down, disrupted, unable to enjoy her long-coveted and hardly won liberty and unable, we fear, to sustain a democracy now that she has one. The nations to which I refer are Germany, with only five out of every thousand of her population illiterate, and Russia, with six hundred and ninety out of every thousand unable to read and write.

What is the relation of the five and a half million illiterates in this country to the war, or rather what ought their relation to be? The government expects of them intelligent cooperation. Ignorance cannot cooperate. The entire propaganda to arouse the people to intelligent, sympathetic cooperation is a printed propaganda, and the very first step toward intelligent response is a written subscription or pledge.

The illiterates are the people who do not, as a rule, attend public meetings. Our speakers, whether four-minute men or forty-minute men, have mist them. Only two methods of enlightening them, then, may be considered. One would be to send conversationalists among them to tell them just what the war means and what the government expects them to do. Russia tried this. Returned soldiers went from village to village, talking, talking, talking, to the people. It was too slow. It has not succeeded. There is just one other plan, and that is to teach the people to read and

write, ther so to simplify the printed propaganda that they may read it, or better, to let them read and write the propaganda while learning. If the constructive forces of this country do not enlighten them some organization like the I.W.W. may get them in its pernicious grasp. In this illiterate mass—

> There is a poor blind Samson in this land,
> Shorn of his strength and bound with bands of steel,
> Who may in some grim revel raise his hands
> And shake the pillars of the commonweal.

When five millions of men in this country have gone to defend our liberties on foreign soil, with a corresponding number of nurses, doctors, engineers, and mechanics, the conditions of life will become so altered, the need of sustaining our industries and supporting those at the front, our brave defenders, but non-producers, will be so great as to demand the efficient service of every man, woman, and child in this country. Every illiterate, whether twenty or thirty years of age, or fifty or sixty, must be educated and made available to take the places vacated by those who have gone to the front.

We owe something to the illiterate mothers of this country, whose sons have been drafted by the government and sent three thousand miles away from home to defend the flag. We owe it to them to teach them enough to enable them to read letters from those absent sons and to write letters to them, if nothing more.

We owe something—yes, everything—to the boys who have gone to give their lives for our native land. War has turned on the searchlight, like lightning's lurid glare, and has revealed conditions in education, as well as in other lines, that call for immediate remedy. Too clearly do we see the need of a relief for the illiterates when the registration cards of this country show 700,000 young men registered by mark.

When around the council table after the war they examine the workings of a democracy and an autocracy and seek to know what each has wrought among the people, one of the first things that the representatives gathered there will doubtless ask will be this question: "What are the educational benefits and status of each?" I believe that around that table the good of the peoples of the earth will be the one thing considered. Autocracy and democracy will clash there with argument as they are clashing now with sword. Democracy will charge autocracy with militarism, with despotism, cruelty, injustice, and intrigue. Autocracy will charge us with many things. May she not have the satisfaction, in that hour, of saying that we have kept five and a half million people in ignorance!

When after the war the world looks to America for leadership, when Russia comes to study our educational conditions, shall she find hope for her millions of illiterate peasants or shall she find school doors closed to men and women and illiterates condemned to everlasting ignorance? When

Italy comes to study our institutions, shall she find a remedy for the illiteracy of her southern peninsula? Mexico will look to us for an example. Shall she catch the fire from Texas and New Mexico to educate her illiterate peons? Porto Rico, Hawaii, the islands of the sea will look to this nation for their ideal of democracy. Shall they find a democracy founded on the sinking sand of the intelligence of part of the people, or founded on the solid rock of the enlightenment of all?

CHARACTER EDUCATION

MILTON FAIRCHILD, NATIONAL INSTITUTE FOR MORAL INSTRUCTION, WASHINGTON, D.C.

These distressing times call for constructive thinking rather than for fault-finding. No matter what the neglects of the past have been, the school must now plan to furnish the education which the children of the United States, living in these modern times, really need. The basis of the life-career for each child is character, interpreted in a broad sense, and this basis must be furnisht by education. I like the term "character education" much better than "moral education," because it is not subject to misunderstandings and is a broader term. The term "character education" suggests and implies the unfolding of the child's better self by the processes of growth and under the stimulation and guidance of the teacher. The purpose of character education should be the growth of the child out of its weaknesses and crudities and superficialities of character into strength, depth, breadth, and harmony of character.

The scope of character education is indicated by the following list of fields of thought as subdivisions of the general, inclusive term: (1) instruction (formal and informal) in the wisdom of human moral experience; (2) formation of opinions as to morality on the part of children themselves; (3) the development of motives for right conduct; (4) conduct-resolves by children; (5) training (teacher and self-training) in habits of right conduct. This is undiscovered territory. Not a human being living knows much about character education. We have various theories as to how results in character development can be secured; there have been "working hypotheses" announst as supported by modern thought in the human sciences, but no one has gone thru the scientific process by which these theories and hypotheses are verified and proved to produce results.

And yet the present emergency in the life of the nation necessitates an improvement in this phase of education, and the demand will surely be made that ways and means be provided in the public schools for producing the strength, refinement, and righteousness of character which are needed among the masses of the people, both rich and poor, of a republic. The United States of America has become a world-power and a leader in

the moonlight schools in Rowan County. Mr. Ferris Cooke, who had served as the teacher in the previous building which burned in 1909, was the first teacher.

Under the administration of Superintendent Roy Cornett, an additional room was erected in 1936 and the school's first lunch program was introduced in 1941.

Because of the consolidation of the schools in that area of the county and construction of the Tildon Hogge School, the school was closed in 1963.

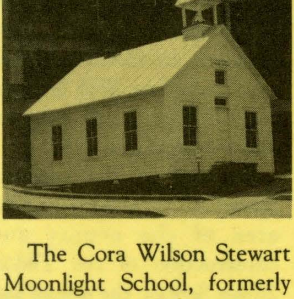
One of the last one room schools in Kentucky to close was the Daniel's Creek Elementary School located in Floyd County. It closed at the end of the 1986-87 school year.

The "Little Brushy School" building was donated to Morehead State University by Mr. William Dailey, Morehead, Kentucky.

For tours or more information contact the:

Special Collections Dept.
Camden-Carroll Library
Morehead State University
Morehead, Kentucky
Phone (606) 783-2829.

Cora Wilson Stewart
Moonlight School
Rowan County, Kentucky



The Cora Wilson Stewart Moonlight School, formerly known as the Little Brushy School, was originally located on Kentucky Highway 32, eight miles north of Morehead in Rowan County. This building replaced two earlier school buildings on the site, both of which had been destroyed by fire. The original building dated back to the turn of the century.

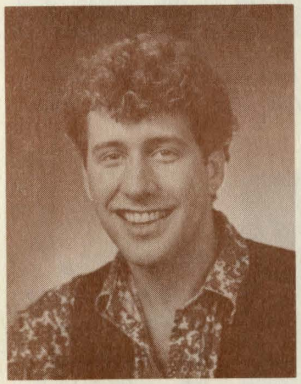
In 1973 Morehead State University acquired and restored the "Little Brushy School" where Cora Wilson Stewart began her teaching career. Renamed the Cora Wilson Stewart Moonlight School, it stands on the university campus today as a museum and monument to her work.

This building was constructed in 1910 by William Jasper Johnson and Henry Perry. One point of interest is that Mr. Johnson's son was one of the first students to attend school in the new building. The building was erected during the administration of Superintendent Cora Wilson Stewart and used as one of

Laura Lee Duncan

A native of Morehead, Kentucky, Laura is the daughter of John and Gretta Duncan. Coming from a family of educators, the role of women in education is of particular interest to her. Currently, she is a performing Artist-in-Residence at Morehead State University. Laura received her training in oral interpretation from Eastern Michigan University. In 1987, she was named Outstanding Performer in the United States, the highest honor possible for a collegiate performer.

In 1989, she toured with a one-woman performance based on the poetry of June Jordan. Benefit performances of this show made it possible for a continuing theatre scholarship to be available for students entering Morehead State University. Laura was awarded a major grant in 1990 from the Kentucky Foundation for Women to further her work as a performing artist. She lives in an isolated one-room cabin near Carter Caves, Kentucky and treats every day of her life as living art.



Michael O'Connell

At Eastern Michigan University, Michael was a two-time national champion in competitive performance and was named one of the top ten collegiate performers in the nation. Since that time, Michael has performed his own musical vaudeville show in theatres throughout the country. In addition to "Miss Cora," Michael and Laura also perform childrens' shows, storytelling, and music concerts. Together, they will be performing original, interpretative works internationally for adults and children. He is a lover of waterfalls and Gypsy folktales.

The creation, performance and tour of "Miss Cora" are made possible through the generous support of Morehead State University, in conjunction with Citizens Bank of Morehead, Investor's Heritage Life Insurance Co., Kentucky Department of Education, Kentucky Foundation for Women, Kentucky Humanities Council and the National Endowment for the Humanities, Kentucky Oral History Commission, Lexington Herald-Leader, and the Office of Equal Educational Opportunity/ Kentucky Department of Education.

"Miss Cora" offers one and two-day residencies as well as single performances. These residencies include a variety of performances, storytelling, and writing workshops. Longer residencies can be arranged. For booking information, contact:

Laura Lee Duncan
Performing Artist-in-Residence
Cora Wilson Stewart Moonlight School Project
Morehead State University
204 Rader Hall
Morehead, Kentucky 40351-1689
Telephone 606-783-2793

or

Laura Lee Duncan
Sugar Mountain Artist Colony
P.O. Box 17
Elliottville, KY 40317
Telephone 606-286-2200

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APPEARING

Eloquent Kentucky Woman

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"Miss Cora"

The Moonlight Lady

"The story of the Moonlight School is so outstanding that it is only a matter of time until poets, sculptors and artists will here find a theme for their art."

- Cora Wilson Stewart, 1913

"Miss Cora"

The Moonlight Lady

An interpretative performance based on the life of Cora Wilson Stewart, founder of the Moonlight School Movement.

created and performed by

Laura Lee Duncan

with

Michael O'Connell

music by White Horse String Band

"Miss Cora" is one of the first dramatic productions to illustrate the literacy movement of the early 1900's. As such, it is an original and vital depiction of our Appalachian heritage.

- Dr. John C. Philley
Dean, College of Arts & Sciences
Morehead State University

Cora Wilson Stewart

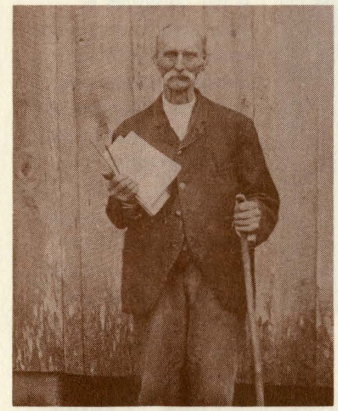
1875-1958

Reared in Farmers, Kentucky, Cora was the daughter of Dr. Jeremiah and Annie E. (Halley) Wilson. "Miss Cora" was the founder of the Moonlight School Movement, a plan to educate illiterate adults. Initially, the moonlight school classes were conducted only on moonlit nights so the students could see to travel. For this reason, Cora Stewart called the classes the Moonlight Schools.

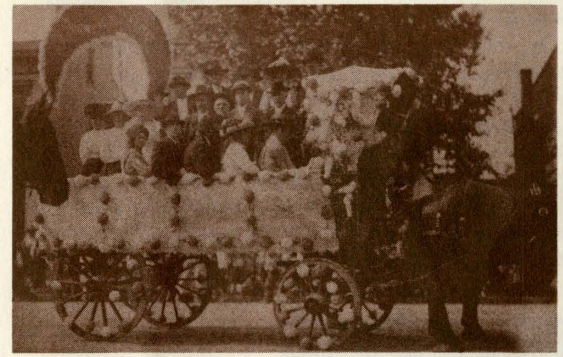
The Moonlight Schools began on September 5, 1911 in Rowan County, Kentucky. Cora Stewart later said, "It was the brightest moonlit night the world has ever seen." She had expected 150 students. But more than 1,200 men and women came to the 50 Moonlight Schools. The youngest was 18 years old and the oldest was a schoolgirl of 86. Stories about the success of the Moonlight Schools spread around the state. Other counties set up schools and Cora wrote adult texts for her students.

Cora Wilson Stewart was the first woman President of the Kentucky Education Association, and the Kentucky Illiteracy Commission. She continued her commitment to literacy internationally by serving on the board of the National Education Association and headed the illiteracy section of the World Conference on Education. Cora was the second woman to be nominated for President of the United States.

Laura Lee Duncan brings to life the historic account of an Appalachian heroine.

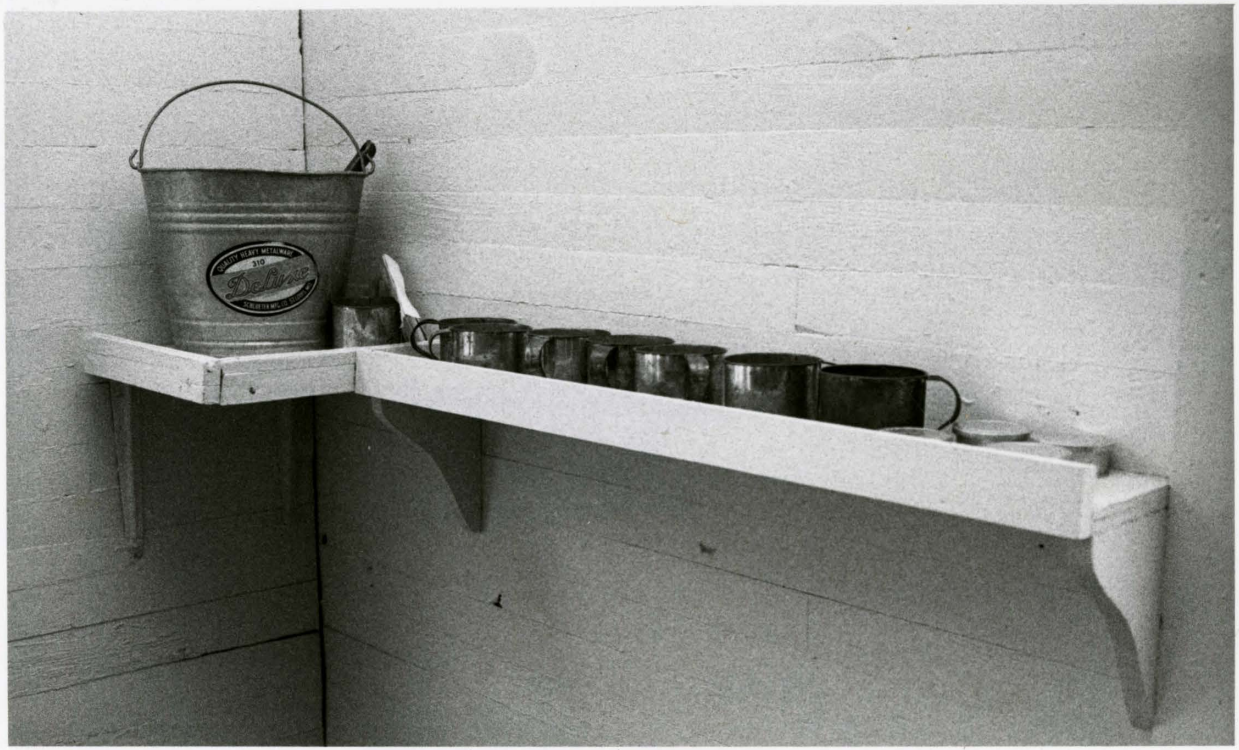


Uncle Bob Roan, 76 years of age, learns to read and write.



Pupils of Rowan County Moonlight School, 1912. This float won "most unique float" in a Louisville parade.

"Uncle Ed," a mountain student of Bell County, Ky., challenged "Aunt Patience" to a spelling match and won. "Schoolmates," but not so congenial after the spelling battle.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Deluxe

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RURAL SCHOOL IN ROWAN Co
WATER BUCKET AND
A TIN DRINKING
~~CUP~~ CUP FOR EACH
STUDENT

CORA WILSON STEWART
ROWAN COUNTY SCHOOL
SUPERINTENDENT 1902-1906,
AND 1910-1914. ALSO
FOUNDED THE MOONLIGHT
SCHOOLS IN 1911.
(PHOTO: SAM McKINNEY
PAINTING + MSU - CCL.)

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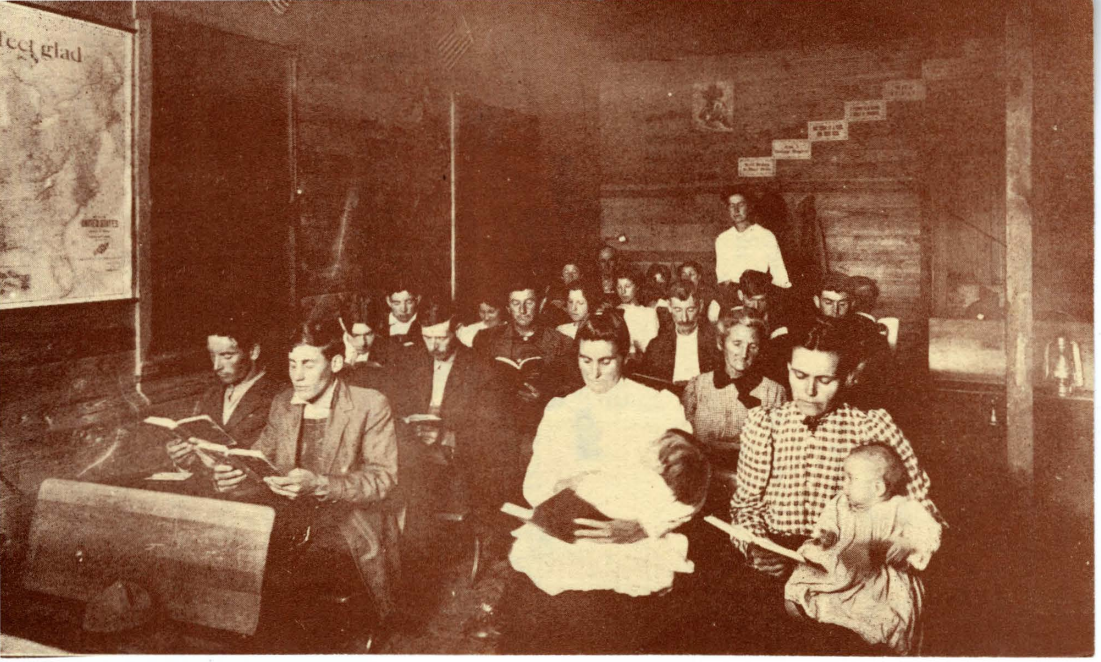
glad

WHO Taught IN The MOONLIGHT
Schools IN 1912 on a free
Trip To Niagra Falls, NY.
Sitting 5th From The Left:
CORA WILSON STEWART
(Photo MSU ARCHIVES)

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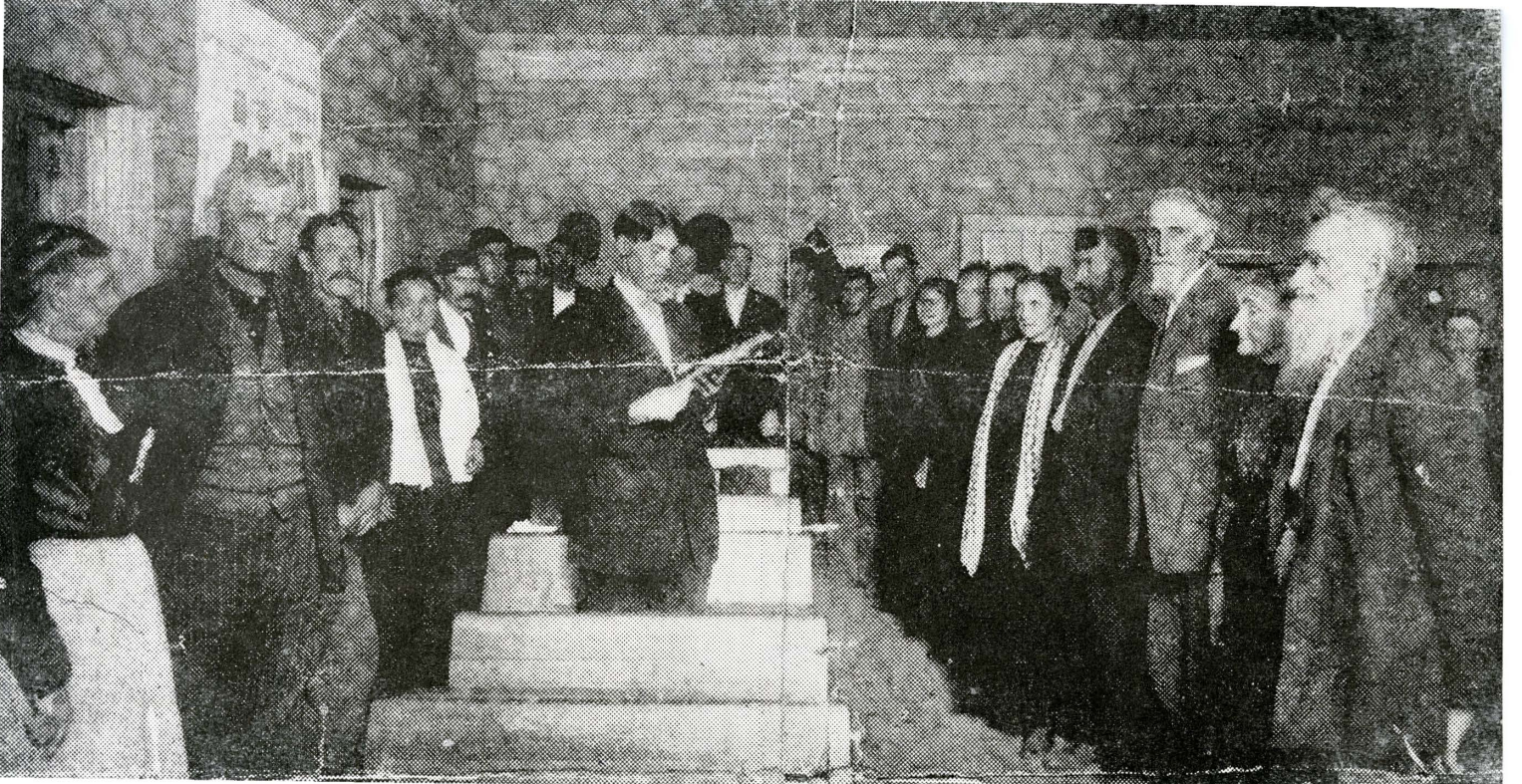

JM BUTCHER, A TEACHER IN THE MOONLIGHT SCHOOLS AT TABOR HILL IN 1912 - CONDUCTED A STUDENT SPELLING MATCH / Photo donated by Chi

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Date _____ From _____

Mrs. Cora Wilson Stewart, Director National Illiteracy Crusade, Washington, D. C.

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19205

CORA WILSON STEWART
FOUNDER MOONLIGHT SCHOOLS
ROWAN COUNTY © 1913 -

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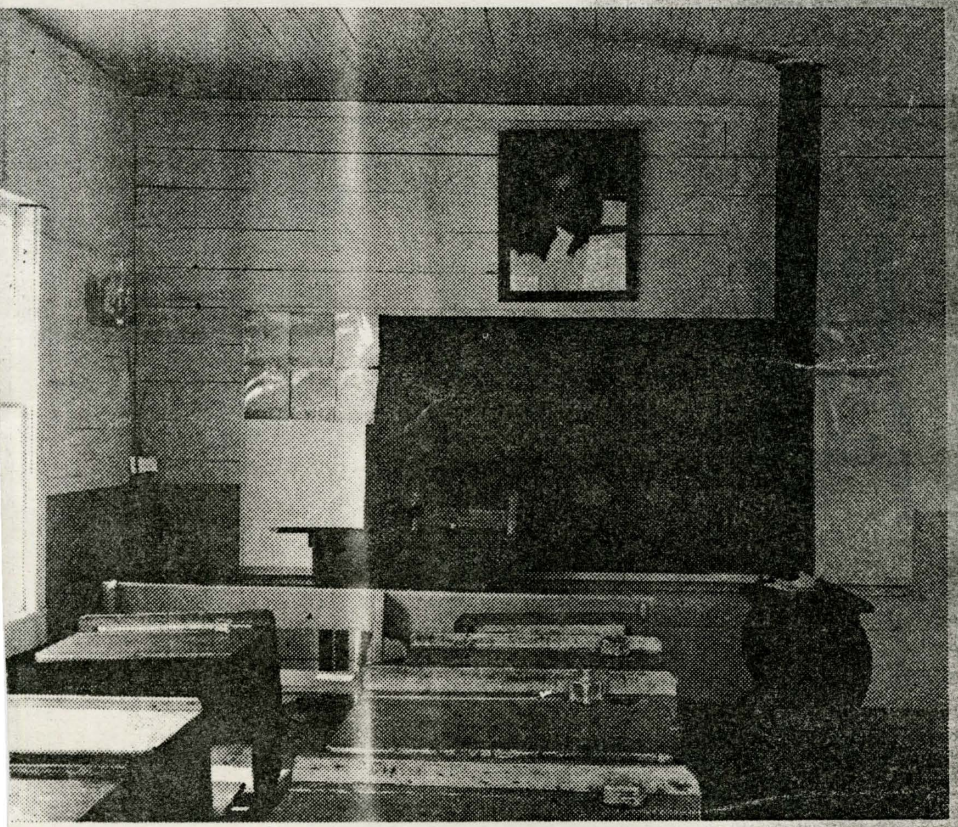

Inside the Cora Wilson "Moonlight" School

Moonlight school on visitor's list

By PAUL WRIGHT

The Cora Wilson Stewart moonlight schoolhouse, located on campus, has been named to the Kentucky bicentennial list of interesting places to visit.

The school house, named for Cora Wilson Stewart, the superintendent of Rowan County schools from 1904 until 1912, was donated to the University by William Dailey of Morehead. It now houses a museum containing artifacts and pieces relating to the education of that "moonlight," era.

The museum is open Monday through Thursday from 8:30 — 10 a.m. and on Sundays from 1 to 4 p.m.

Jack Ellis, director of libraries and an associate professor of library science at MSU, said that the school "could be established, as it is added to and enlarged, as a state historical shrine."

He said that some of the pieces in the museum were donated by the Old Normal School Club, a group which meets annually here in Morehead.

George Eyster, director of the MSU Appalachian Adult Education Center, said the schoolhouse is now being used as a museum, but he sees it in the future being used as a practical teaching aid in education or history, but the uses are now limited because of the building's facilities.

He said the University has set up a committee to study future utilization of the schoolhouse. It will meet in the fall and the meeting will be open to any persons interested.

LITTLE BRUSHY SCHOOL ON RT 32. (THIS BUILDING IS NOW MOONLIGHT SCHOOL BUILDING ON MSU CAMPUS)
TEACHER "DOT" ELLIS. NOTICE HOME MADE PLAY GROUND EQUIPMENT DOT ELLIS WAS JACK ELLIS' MOTHER (1945)

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[illegible]7473

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Local And Area Deaths

Dennis Littleton

MOREHEAD — Dennis Littleton, 66, of Rt. 4, Olive Hill, died Thursday, Feb. 28, at his residence after suffering an apparent heart attack.

Born in Lewis County, he was the son of the late Jesse and Lizzie Howard Littleton.

Survivors include his wife, Ethel Mae Mabry Littleton; three sons, Bradley Littleton, Mansfield, Ohio; Elvis Littleton, Ashland, Ohio, and Dennis Cheyenne Littleton, Olive Hill.

Eight daughters, Delmis McKee, Audrey Feagin and Virgie Baer, all of Mansfield, Ohio; Barbara Littleton, Grayson; Patty Gee, Lexington, Ohio; Rachel Jessie, Soldier; Beverly Littleton, Lima, Ohio, and Holli Ann Morefield, Fairborn, Ohio.

A step-son, Billy Fultz, New Castle, Ind; three step-daughters, Mable Adkins, Morehead, and Violet Nickell and Opal Hinton, both of Toledo, Ohio.

Five brothers, James Littleton, Tom Littleton and Johnny Littleton, all of Olive Hill; Clyde Littleton, of West Virginia, and Richard Littleton, Masnfield, Ohio.

Also, a sister, Dora Hall, Mansfield, Ohio; 14 grandchldren; two great-grandchildren; 11 step-grandchildren and 21 step-great-grandchildren.

Services were conducted Sunday, March 3, at Northcutt and Son Home for Funerals Memorial Chapel with the Revs. Clifford Price and Kenneth Hamilton officiating. Burial was in the Webb Family Cemetery at Olive Hill.

Pallbearers were David McKee, David Morefield, Jeffrey Robertson, Billy Fultz, Robert Hinton and Jerry Jessie.

Josh O. Reynolds

MUNCIE, IND. — Josh O. Reynolds, 79, of Muncie, Ind., died Feb. 13 at Ball Memorial Hospital in Muncie after a brief illness.

Born in Rowan County, he moved to Muncie in the 1940s where he was employed at Warner Gear until his retirement in 1969.

Mr. Reynolds was a member of the Primitive Church of God, the United Auto Workers Local 287 and the Warner Gear Retirement Club.

He is survived by his wife, Esta [illegible] Reynolds, three brothers, Anthony Reynolds, Straughn, Ind., and Russell and Paul Reynolds, both of Morehead.

Three sisters,Alice Vandeusen, Muncie, and Esther Stamper and Peggy Penix, both of Portage, Ind., and several nieces and nephews.

Services were held Feb. 15 at Parsons Mortuary in Muncie with burial in the Garden of Memory.

Sylvester Knox

OWINGSVILLE — Sylvester Irvin Knox, 71, of White Oak, died Thursday Feb. 28, at Mary Chiles Hospital after a brief illness.

He was a farmer and veteran of World War II.

Services were Monday, March 4, at Keal-Bromagen-Gray Funeral Home.

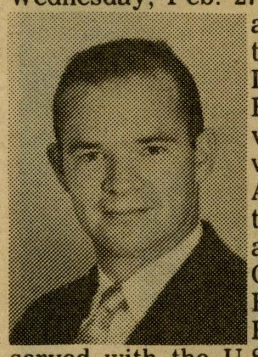
Arnold Richard

WEST LIBERTY — Arnold Richard, 72, of Rt. 1, died Friday, March 1.

Services were Monday, March 4, at Potter Funeral Home.

Clarence Horton Dies At Age 54

MOREHEAD — Clarence E. Horton Jr., 54, of Haldeman, died Wednesday, Feb. 27, at the Veterans Administration Hospital in Lexington.



Born in Lucasville, Ohio, he was the son of Ada Lewis Horton, Haldeman, and the late Clarence E. Horton. Mr. Horton had served with the U.S. Navy for 24 years and held the rank of Chief Petty Officer. He had received the good conduct ribbon with three stars, the National Defense Medal, the European Occupation Medal and the Cuban Expeditionary Medal.

He was the owner of Horton Enterprises, Horton Tax Services and Horton Trailer Sales and Service.

Survivors include a son, Bernard Horton, Morehead; a daughter, Janet Hogge, Morehead; three sisters, Avonell Moore, Xenia Ohio; Betty Spears, Russellville, Ohio, and Sue Kidd, Clearfield, and two grandchildren.

Services were conducted Saturday, March 2, at Northcutt and Son Home for Funerals Memorial Chapel with Chaplain Charlie Jennings officiating.

Burial was in the Mabry Cemetery with full military rites conducted by the Morehead American Legion Post 126 whose members also served as pallbearers.

Bikey Endicott

WEST LIBERTY — Bikey Endicott, 87, of Banner, died Friday, March 1, at his home after an extended illness.

He was a retired farmer.

His nephew, James Osborne, survives.

Services were Monday, March 4, at [illegible] Baptist Fellowship Church of God

Mildred Tucker, Ex-Operator At MSU, Dies At 73

MOREHEAD — Mrs. Mary Mildred Carter Tucker, 73, of Knapp Avenue, died Saturday, March 2, at St. Claire Medical Center after suffering an apparent heart attack.

Mrs. Tucker for many years served as telephone operator at Morehead State University before her retirement.

She was a member of the Methodist Church.

Born in Rowan County, she was the daughter of the late Jack C. and Belle Ellis Carter. Her husband, Francis Burns Tucker, died in 1956.

Survivors include two sons, Ronald Francis Tucker, Morehead, and Danny Tucker, Gross City, Ohio; three daughters, Annabelle Tucker Moore and Mimi Carroll, both of Morehead, and Stephanie Stamper, Mt. Sterling.

Also, a brother, Allie Carter, Morehead; 14 grandchildren and a great-grandchild.

Services were conducted Monday, March 4, at Lane-Stucky Funeral Home with the Rev. Bob Ellenberger officiating.

Burial will be at 1 p.m. today at Anderson Memorial Park in Anderson, Ind.

State To Visit County School

Rowan County Schools will be visited this week by one of the top administrators of the Department of Education.

Kathy Williams, one of Superintendent of Public Instruction Alice McDonald's top 59 administrators, will spend the day, Thursday, March 7, at Clearfield Elementary School.

The visit is part of a state project known as "Teacher Day," designed for administrators to spend a day in a public classroom to gain a better understanding of the challenges faced by classroom teachers and a deeper appreciation of teachers and their work.

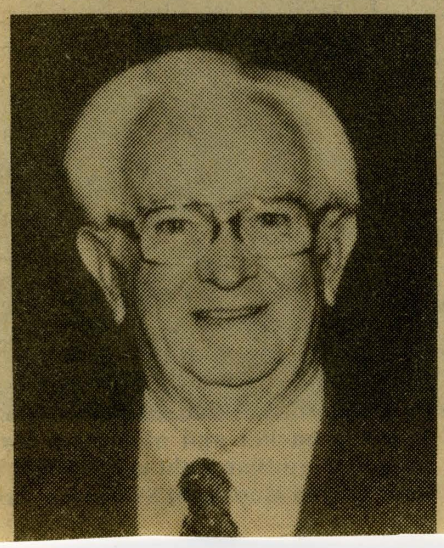
Three Seek Judg

Three candidates have filed for district judge of the 21st Judicial District which serves Menifee, Bath, Montgomery and Rowan counties.

Judge James E. Clay, Morehead, is unopposed in the second division

Dr. Elwood Esham, 80, Former MSU Regent, Dies

VANCEBURG — Dr. Elwood Esham, 80, a retired physician and educator, died Sunday, March 3, at his home at 601 Halbert Avenue, apparently of cancer.



Dr. Esham retired as a general practitioner in 1972.

He had also been principal of and a teacher at Laurel Point High School after graduating from Morehead State University.

Dr. Esham later enrolled at the University of Kentucky and graduated from its pre-med program.

In 1940, he graduated from the University of Louisville Medical School.

Dr. Esham was also a farmer and

Moonlight School In Spotlight

(Continued from page A-1)

dirt roads of the county except on moonlit nights. However, classes were held nightly, and the adults apparently found their way to the schools with or without moonlight to guide them.

The classes were being held in the county's one-room schools, and Mrs. Stewart estimated attendance for the first night would be around 150. Mrs. Stewart and the teachers were greatly surprised when 1,200 adults, ranging from 18 to 86, showed up to learn to read and write or improve their limited education.

During that first evening, many of the students learned to read and write their own names.

"Some were so intoxicated with joy that they wrote their names in frenzied delight on trees, fences, barns, barrel staves and every available scrap of paper," Mrs. Stewart later wrote, in her book, *Moonlight Schools*.

Mrs. Stewart's basic goal was to teach all of Kentucky's illiterates to read and write before 1920, but she intended to do so by making learning meaningful and dignified for her adult pupils.

Although she used some county school primers in the night classes, Mrs. Stewart eventually puplished her own newspaper, *The Moonlighter*, which carried news from other communities as the Moonlight School idea spread to other counties and states.

The Cora Wilson Stewart Moonlight School stands behind Breckinridge Hall on the Morehead State University. The one-room school housed night classes for the adult population of Rowan County, starting in 1911, as Mrs. Stewart, superintendent of the County School System at that time, led an effort to combat adult illiteracy in the country. The school was moved to its present location in 1973, as part of MSU's observance of the beginning of their second 50 years as a state university. Wilma Howard, library technician assistant at the MSU Camden-Carroll Library, shown here entering the school, conducts scheduled tours through the school.

This sign, erected in 1967 by the Kentucky Historical Society, marks the location of the Cora Wilson Moonlight School, behind Breckinridge Hall on the Morehead State campus.

The newspaper also reported accomplishments of the students in Rowan County, encouraging pride in their work and adding dignity to their lessons.

By the end of the third year, Mrs. Stewart claimed she and her teachers had taught every adult in the county, except for 23, to read through the Moonlight Schools.

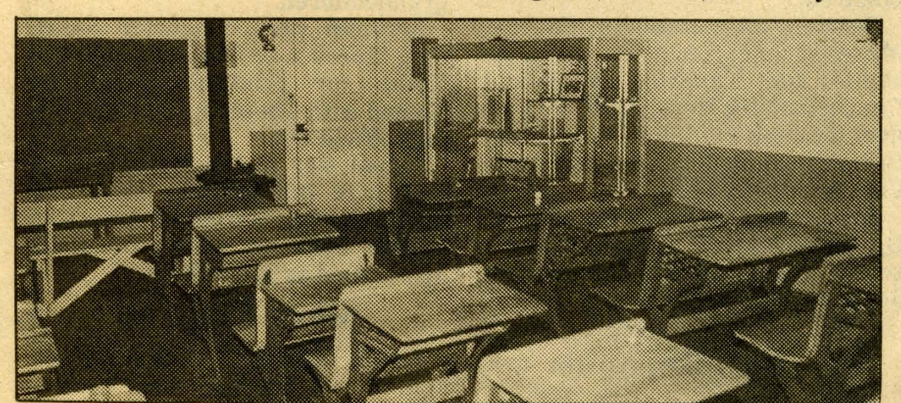
She began writing her own books for instructing the students and in 1913 she contacted Gov. James McCreary about appointing a state commission to combat illiteracy. The governor did so and named her president.

In 1914, Mrs. Stewart went to Washington, D.C., and testified before the House Education Committee on a national illiteracy bill.

The moonlight school idea had by this time spread to a number of other states and then World War I began.

Recognizing a need to educate soldiers, Mrs. Stewart drafted a text specifically for them, *The Soldier's First Book*. As soldiers were sent overseas, so were the books and moonlight schools began in England, France, Germany and

A water bucket and aluminum water cups for each student were always a familiar sight in one-room schools of the early 1900s, and the Cora Wilson Moonlight School was no exception.



School desks, dating from the early 1900s line the inside of the Cora Wilson Moonlight School, located on the MSU campus. A glass display case sits in the right front corner of the one-room school, containing memorabilia about the moonlight schools and their founder, Cora Wilson Stewart.

of awards and honors for her work, including the Pictorial Review award for the greatest humanitarian service rendered by any American woman, the Ella Flagg Young Medal for distinguished service to education, and the Clara Barton medal for humanitarian service. In 1941, she was given an award by the General Federation of Women's Clubs at their Golden Jubilee Convention for pioneer work in combating illiteracy in the nation.

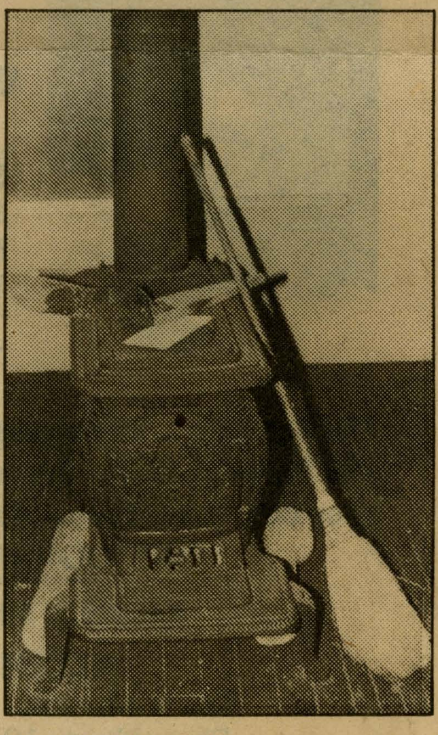
Also, as a monument to Mrs. Stewart's work in Rowan County, one of the Moonlight Schools, donated by William Dailey of Morehead, stands on the MSU campus.

Tours of the school are available through Wilma Howard at MSU's Camden-Carroll Library.

Those touring the school will find rows of desks facing the old pot-bellied stove and teacher's desk. Aluminum water cups and metal lunch pails line the sides of the building. A glass display case has been added to provide memorabilia of the Moonlight School area.

The building was dedicated in September 1973 as part of an observance of the beginning of MSU's second 50 years as a state university.

Exhibits on Mrs. Stewart and other famous women will be displayed by the AAUW throughout this week. Displays have been set up on the second floor of the Camden-Carroll Library and the second floor of the Adron Doran University Center on campus, as well as the Rowan County Public Library.



A pot-bellied wood stove provided heat for the adults meeting at night in the Cora Wilson Moonlight School.

Morehead Memories(People and Places)

"Moonlight Madness" Years (1910-1914)

By Jack Ellis
Rowan Citizens Express Desire to Learn

(Editor's Note: This is the fourth in a series of articles about the history of the Rowan County School System.)

Early in her second term as County Superintendent (she did not serve consecutive terms), Cora Wilson Stewart was made acutely aware of the extent of adult illiteracy in Rowan County.

One man confided in her that he would give 20 years of his life if he could read and write. Also, a young boy came to church one Sunday and sang a beautiful ballad.

When Cora asked him for a copy of the song, he said he could neither read nor write, and that he had sung many other songs, but had forgotten the words before he could get anyone to write them down. Those instances, along with Miss Cora's early childhood experiences of being asked to read letters to families where no one could read, fired her passion to do something to help.

Cora realized her primary responsibility was to the children of Rowan County. Also, the 50 county schools were already over-crowded, and teachers were over-worked. Adults also, would be too embarrassed to come into the same learning environment with children, or take time off from work to attend school.

In addition there were no funds to pay teachers. Neither were there appropriate teaching materials for adults. (The early primary textbooks like "Dick and Jane Down the River Road" just would not be appropriate.) It would seem to the casual observer that with all these negatives, Cora would give up. But this was not the case, and she plunged headlong into the vast dark sea of illiteracy in Rowan County, trusting only that the ship of education would keep her afloat.

Moonlight school began in Rowan County

At the first teachers' meeting on Sept. 4, 1911, Cora called for teachers to volunteer and every teacher in Rowan County agreed to serve without pay. She also gave them copies of a newspaper she published called "The Rowan County Messenger" to be used as a text book. By using a newspaper she hoped to eliminate the humiliation of adults using the children's textbooks.

On Monday, Sept. 5, the teachers surveyed their district in an attempt to determine how many might attend the night classes. The survey indicated interest by 150 adults; and so the Moonlight Schools were born in Rowan County on Sept. 5, 1911 at 7 p.m. central standard time (Rowan County was in the central time zone), when over 1,200 men and women between the ages of 18 and 86 enrolled. They came walking across the green hills as moonlight flooded the countryside. Some carrying babies, lanterns, and yes, even guns. For Rowan County was still considered a dangerous place in the darkness. Everyone was delighted with the response, and it was only the beginning. Because after that first night, the Moonlight School movement to education the uneducated under the silvery moon spread like wildfire.

Schools met on moonlit nights

The name Moonlight Schools was given to that movement because classes were scheduled during the full phase of the moon. Also, it permitted better night vision and security in traveling over hills and hollows to those isolated schools. Aims of the program were to reduce literacy, increase school average daily attendance, and emphasize the need for better health, homes, farms, and roads for a better life. Each Moonlight School session ran from 7 to 9 p.m. four nights each month (when the moon was full) for six months.

Cora Wilson Stewart performed two jobs

The second year of the Moonlight Schools was even more successful with over 1,500 enrolled. Cora Wilson Stewart was really performing two jobs. Her duties as County Superintendent during the day and leader of the Moonlight Schools at night.

Many times she would be at one school at 7 p.m., encouraging and challenging teachers and students. Then riding her horse to another school in time to do the same for that school. Many times she would not get home before 2 a.m., only to get up and go to her office that morning. Her family was worried about her health, and she was pushing herself too far. But her dedication and passion for fulfilling her dream of eliminating illiteracy in Rowan County kept her going.

Teachers performed double duty

The volunteer Moonlight School teachers were also teaching day and night. But morale was high because they believed their cause was just and the results worth the effort. They were called "Rowan's Earnest Teachers," and their motto was "one to everyone." Cora always gave credit to their dedication and unselfishness for the program's success. Since they were not paid, some teachers were rewarded with books, trips, and social events paid for many times out of Miss Cora's pocket. (Students were also rewarded for achievements with gifts.) In 1913, the community raised enough funds to send those "earnest" volunteer teachers on a trip to Niagara Falls.

The Moonlight Schools were not without their critics. Professional educators scoffed at her when she announced in 1913 that the 1,152 illiterate adults listed in Rowan County had been reduced to 23. She silenced her critics by eventually getting the names of those 1,152 illiterate adults from the U.S. Census Bureau and providing proof they were now reading and writing. (Before the decade was over she succeeded in obtaining the names of all 208,000 Kentuckians listed as illiterate in the 1910 U.S. Census.)

Mrs. Stewart refuses to run for re-election

Cora Wilson Stewart did not run for re-election as County Superintendent in 1914. But instead plunged into the dark sea of illiteracy in her small boat named "The Moonlight School." After her last term as Rowan County Superintendent, she was in great demand as a speaker. She was an excellent speaker. Cora was articulate, knowledgeable and persuasive. She spoke to many county, state, national and international groups on the problems of illiteracy. Cora was an eloquent speaker, and wherever she spoke she told of the Rowan County success in overcoming illiteracy. As an advisor to other states she insisted that they call their program "Moonlight Schools" and not "Night Schools." She said that night schools were a product of Northern States and urban areas. Cora believed the Moonlight Schools born in Rowan County was a southern rural effort very different from Night Schools.

Books written for adults to read

Cora Wilson Stewart later wrote textbooks for adult illiterates, such as "The Country Life Reader," published in 1916. It was written in a primary vocabulary but dealt with adult subjects such as farming, finance, personal and civic responsibility. Cora also authored other books such as "Mother's First Book" and "Soldier's First Book." When the U.S. entered WWI, 50,000 copies of "Soldier's First Book" were purchased and sent to U.S. soldiers in France. "The Soldier's First Book," written for the U.S. Army, was designed to teach soldiers basic skills of military life.

In 1917, Cora's public statements that "30,000 Kentuckians who registered for the draft were unable to read and write" brought a storm of criticism from native Kentuckians. She was accused of emphasizing the ignorance of her native state, and, benefiting financially from that condition. She bitterly resented that accusation and repeated her burning desire to overcome illiteracy in Kentucky by 1920. Of course, she did not accomplish that, but she did make a big dent in it. Perhaps she could have done even more had she not been so politically naive. Her continued statements throughout the nation about backward illiterate Kentuckians estranged even those local citizens and politicians who had initially supported her effort.

Moonlight school founder leaves Rowan County

Although Cora Wilson Stewart went on to win many national and international awards, she became embittered against her native state and many of her colleagues. In 1936, she retired to North Carolina and spent her remaining years between Pine Bluff, Ark. and Tyron, N.C. (Cora Wilson Stewart died Dec. 1, 1958 at Tyron, N.C.) She left a large legacy extending up to the present. Her early struggle as a woman in a male-dominated society continues today. Not in rural moonlight schools, but in modern and urban settings. Rowan County, the birthplace of the Moonlight School effort to spread light through learning, should faithfully follow Cora's example.

Rowan County Moonlight School Teachers (a partial list), 1911-1914

J.M. Harris, Dry Creek; J.M. Butcher, Tabor Hill; Steve Caudill, Poplar Grove; John Caudill, Seas Branch; Claude Crosthwaite, Alfrey; Bethel Hall, Upper Lick Fork; Amanda Hunt, Carey; Clella Porter, Elliottville; and Glenna Flannery, DeHart (Rodburn).

Other teachers were: Cleff Tussey, Henry Black, Willie Mabry, John Crisp, Farris Cook, Worley Hall, Herb Bradley, Mollie Skaggs, Claude Crosthwaite, Boone Peyton, Pearl Bailey, Verda Surrott, F.E. Ellington , Audrey Ellington, Bethel McGlosson, Jasper Howard, Taylor Flemming, R.W. Cline, H.C. Black, Herbert Tackett, Flora Messer, H.C. Tackett, Conie Mauk, J.V. Harris and Thomas Hogge.

The teachers were so dedicated and enthusiastic that one of them (in 1913) wrote a stirring song, dedicated to their leader, Cora Wilson Stewart. The "peppy" marching song was to be sung to the tune of "Onward Christian Soldiers," and is as follows:

"Onward Rowan County," by Conie M. Mauk

I

Onward all ye teachers of Rowan
County schools,
Let's march into our school rooms,
With the golden rule
Let us help one "Leader"
Every bit we can.
To make the schools in Rowan
County,
The best in all the land.

CHORUS

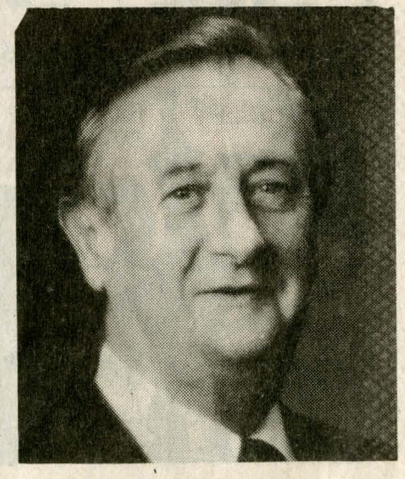
Onward then ye teachers
Let us take the lead,
We must all be faithful
In every act and deed.

II

Like a mighty army
Moves this happy throng.
Other folks are joining us,
In this grand new song.
They help us swell the chorus
Make it loud and sweet,
They come into our county,
Which is learning's seat.

III

Onward then ye people,
Join us in the fight;
You can help the children
Win out for the right.
Glory, laud and honor,
To each little home
When all vice and ignorance
From ROWAN will be gone.



About the author

Dr. Jack D. Ellis is a retired Morehead State University Library director and a retired minister.

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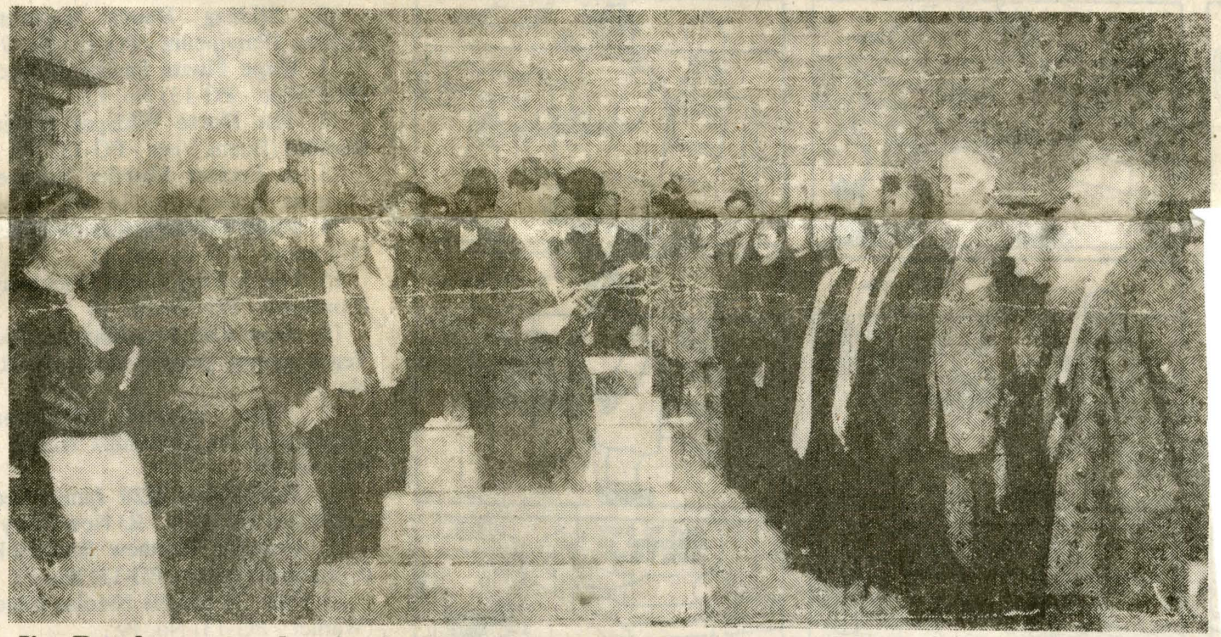
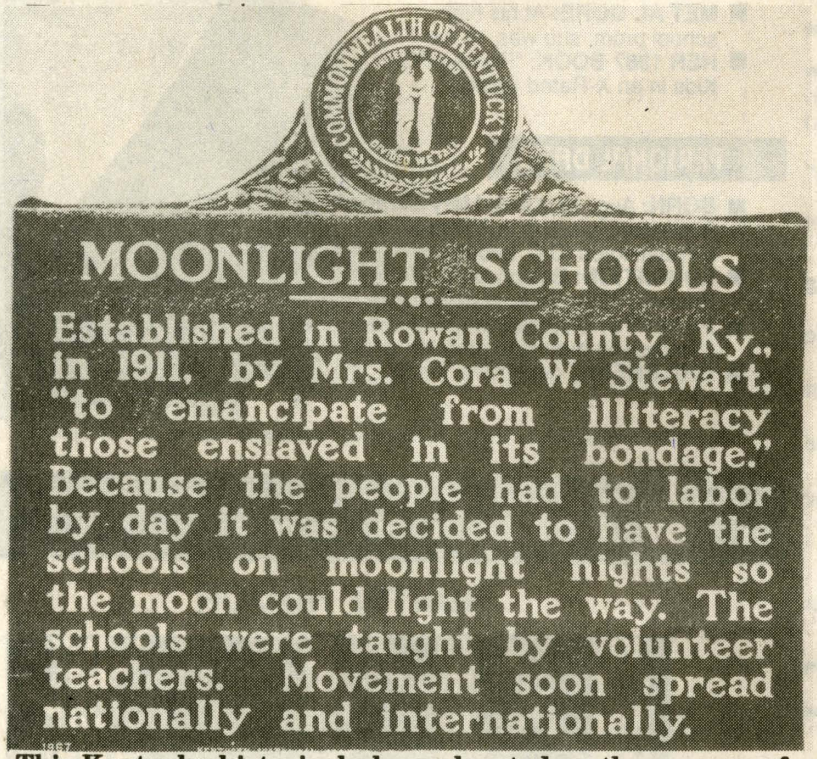
Adults attended Moonlight Schools in Rowan County in 1912. Photo courtesy of Morehead State University archives.



Jim Butcher, a teacher in the Moonlight Schools at Tabor Hill in 1912, conducted a student spelling match. Photo donated by Chilma Butcher Jones.



This Kentucky historical plaque located on the campus of Morehead State University identifies the Cora Wilson Stewart Moonlight School formerly known as the Little Brushy School in Rowan County.

Rowan County teachers who taught in the Moonlight Schools in 1912 on a free trip to Niagara Falls, N.Y. Cora Wilson Stewart is sitting fifth from left. Photo courtesy of Morehead State University archives.

Morehead Memories (People and Places)

Rowan County Schools 'Kindergarten Years'
Cora Wilson Stewart
Superintendent 1902-1906; 1910-1914

By Jack D. Ellis

(Editor's Note: This is the third in a series of articles about the history of the Rowan County School System.)

Cora Wilson Stewart was a teacher in the Rowan Count Schools. She was also Superintendent of Schools for two separate terms (1902-1906 and 1910-1914).

She could be called one of Rowan County's citizens of the century. She was certainly the most famous.

This writer has collected a bibliography of 65 books and materials, both by and about Cora Wilson Stewart (only those written in English).

Much was written about her and published internationally. She received numerous state, national, and international awards. Among the awards she received were: first woman elected President of the Kentucky Educational Association and the first woman to be elected Superintendent of Schools in Kentucky. That was before women could vote.

She was also Chairman of state, national, and international Commissions on Education. She frequently testified on education committees at Frankfort and Washington. She also advised other nations, including Russia, England and France.

Also, national awards included the Pictorial Review Award, Ella Flagg Young Medal, and the Clara Barton Medal. All were presented to her for her pioneering work in education.

Rowan Superintendent Received Many Awards

Cora Wilson Stewart was given the highest award given by the General Federation of Women's Clubs for her "pioneering work in combating illiteracy around the world." She was recognized by governors, presidents, kings, queens and czars for her monumental efforts to eliminate illiteracy world-wide.

At the Democratic National Convention in 1920 at San Francisco, her name was placed in nomination by the Kentucky Delegation for President of the U.S. That was the second time a woman's name had been placed before the delegation.

She read everything she could get her hands on — even her father's medical books. Also, a neighbor, Mr. Sanford, subscribed to a published fiction magazine called "The Old Armchair." He was thought to be the only man in Rowan County who subscribed to a periodical. He would loan it to the Wilsons and Cora would read it regularly.

Cora Wilson began her education at Farmers in a one-room school that was in session only three months a year. It was a one room log cabin with dirt floors and cut-out windows (no glass). Cora decided she wanted to be a teacher at a very early age. She would play school constantly with her friends. She was always the teacher and required her imaginary students to address her as Miss Cora.

Wilson Family Moves to Elliottville

In 1884, Jeremiah moved from Farmers to Elliottville, where Dr. Wilson practiced medicine and ran a general store. It was during this period of time that Cora would sometimes accompany her father in his medical practice throughout the rural area.

On one trip she was asked by an illiterate elderly woman to read a letter she had received several months earlier. It was from a son who was in the army fighting the Indians in the West.

As Cora read the letter, she could see the woman's countenance change from distress to happiness. She was afraid the letter contained bad news and for three months there was no one there to read the letter. Cora determined then to do something about that problem.

Bloodshed Resulting from Rowan Feud Affected Cora

In 1884, while the Wilson family was living in Elliottville, the bloody Rowan County Feud erupted. Although her family was not directly involved in the feud, the violence that resulted had a deep affect upon young Cora. Although ill feelings had existed between the feuding families since the Civil War, it was during the Years of 1884-1887 that the killing began in earnest. There were 20 men

pseudonym "Edward T. Moran," which shows you just how sensitive a topic it was. As Cora witnessed the violence, feuding, illiteracy and human carnage upon the landscape of Rowan County, it made her more determined than ever to plant beauty where there had been blight.

Wilson Family Moves to Morehead

In 1888, following the Rowan County War, Jeremiah Wilson moved his family to Morehead. Morehead was growing. In 1880, the population was 163. But by 1890 with the feuds ended, the town population grew to 491, and the county population was 6,129. The Normal School along with timber, stone and commerce were its greatest assets. Also with the new Normal School, there was a greater opportunity for the Wilson children to get an education and for Dr. Wilson to develop a successful medical practice.

The family settled in a large two story house at what is now the corner of Fifth Street and Wilson Avenue (another landmark named for the Wilson family). Cora attended the Morehead Normal School and began teaching at Little Brushy school at age 16.

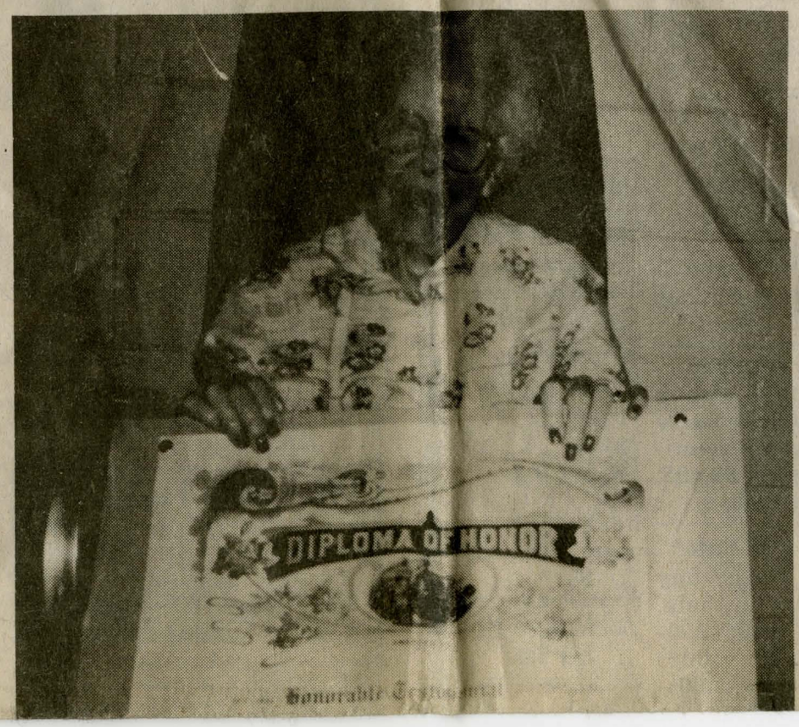
After teaching for three years she continued her education at the National Normal Institute in Lebanon, Ohio. After graduation, she returned to Rowan County and taught at Seas Branch, Elliottville and Carey. It was while at Carey that she met and married Grant Carey, a marriage that lasted less than two years.

Cora Wilson Elected Superintendent of Schools

In 1901, the Rowan County Democratic Party chose her to run for County School Superintendent. Although Rowan was traditionally a Republican county, she began her campaign on the Democrat ticket. Since no women had ever held the position, there was some doubt she could ever win.

Also, her opponent was Emmit Martt, her sister's boyfriend. In spite of the personal and political obstacles, she campaigned vigorously on the slogan "A Children's Friend." On Nov. 5, 1901, Cora Wilson was elected by a substantial majority. On Jan. 1, 1902, she assumed office as the first woman elected to a county office in Rowan County. Since this was before women could vote, it was even more amazing.

Perhaps because she was a woman in what was then a man's world, Cora was even more determined to be successful in her position. She set the standard for future school superintendents by going to work in her office every day in the courthouse. She visited every school every year, and since there were over 50 schools in the county and many could only be reached on horseback, it was a major effort.



Also, it usually meant staying overnight in the home of one of the families in the community. She observed teachers and the physical conditions of the school. Cora encouraged teachers to be better prepared and the trustees to take better care of buildings.

City and County Experienced Growth

By 1900, the county population was 8,277 and Morehead's population had reached 1,100, due in a large part to the growth of the Morehead Normal School. Also, the county was growing with more farm products, lumber, and stone quarries, spurring economic growth.

Cora was perhaps one of the first to recognize the vital connection between education and economic growth. In 1898, the Commercial Club of Morehead only briefly mentioned the Normal School as they extolled the virtues of future economic growth. But Cora knew that the county would not grow without a good school system. She led the fight to awaken the people of Rowan County of the need for good schools.

Rowan Children Priceless Jewels

Cora Wilson, because of her teaching experience and educational training, maintained that subject content and good teacher training were keys to improving education. She was convinced that the children of Rowan County possessed the native intelligence needed to learn.

She often referred to Rowan's children as priceless, rough "Mountain Jewels," needing only to be shaped and polished through education. During her terms as school superintendent, she provided the dynamic leadership to accomplish that.

Superintendent Wilson believed that schools should be vital parts of their community. She encouraged teachers to teach about such things as conservation of land through proper erosion control and crop rotation. Also, an emphasis was made to clean up filthy and unsanitary conditions, promoting better public health. She believed that the Lord made the earth clean and wholesome, and it was up to us to keep it that way. She was far ahead of her time in that respect.

Cora Wilson could by no means be called an environmentalist, but she believed you could balance the need for economic growth with the need to preserve the environment. She realized corporate mining and timber harvesting could, if not properly controlled, result in some damages. But she also realized the terrible plight of the poor people of Eastern Kentucky, and the economic blight upon the region. She encouraged the commercial use of this region's resources.

After Four-year Absence, Cora Runs Again

After refusing to run for re-election for a second consecutive term as County Superintendent, Cora decided to run after a four-year absence. Cora, who was married by this time, and in spite of her husband's objections, ran again for County Superintendent of Schools on the Republican Party.

She ran against the strong Democratic incumbent, Lyda Messer. However, Cora won by a very narrow margin, and in January 1910, began a second term as School Superintendent. That was a task that made her world famous, but also resulted in her divorce from Alexander Stewart.

U.S. That was the second time a woman's name had been placed before the delegation.

Rowan Superintendent Recognized on National TV

In 1957, Ralph Edwards of the old "This Is Your Life" TV program, chose her as the subject of a one-hour program. Although at that time she was just too ill to attend, they did show her delight at being selected at a pre-filmed portion of the program.

Cora Wilson Born in Rural Rowan County

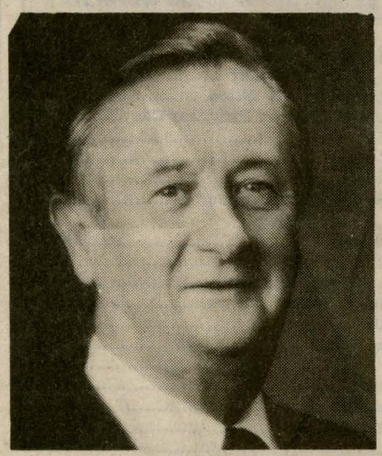
Cora Wilson was born Jan. 17, 1875, on a farm in rural Rowan County, located about five miles up the Licking River from Crossroad (later called Farmers). She was the oldest of seven children born to Jeremiah and Anne Halley Wilson. Both her parents were teachers.

In those days, doctors frequently had to have other employment to supplement their medical practice. Dr. Wilson was a farmer, teacher and storekeeper at some time in his life. That allowed him to practice medicine.

Wilson Family Moves to Farmers

In 1880, Jeremiah Wilson moved from the upper Licking River section of Rowan County to Farmers because he believed that a thriving community offered more opportunity for his children's education and his medical practice.

Young Cora at the age of 5 displayed an inquisitive, intelligent mind. Her parents taught her to read and provided an early home atmosphere conducive to learning. Cora wrote in her autobiographical notes: "We had pictures on our walls and books and stories read to us. The difference between our lives and most of the other children was that our parents were educated."



About the author

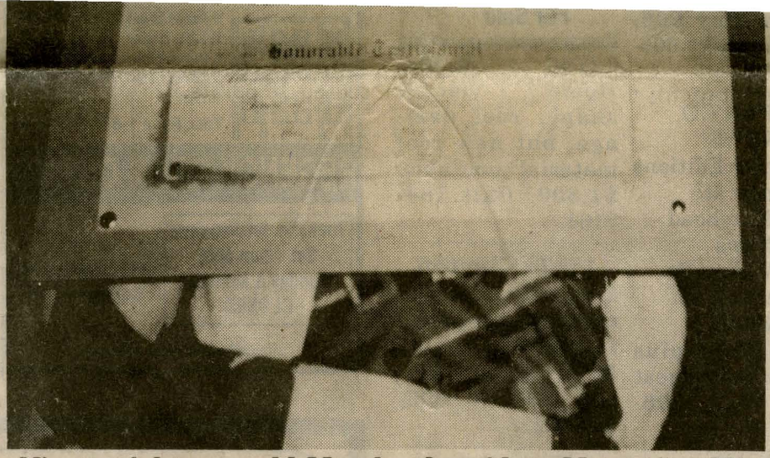
Dr. Jack D. Ellis is a retired Morehead State University Library director and a retired minister.

1887 that the killing began in earnest. There were 20 men killed and 16 wounded.

Many times the wounded men would be brought bleeding and dying to her father for treatment. Cora was greatly affected by the feud and the stories of the war remained with her throughout her lifetime. It was a significant even in the life of all Rowan County citizens of that time and Cora Wilson would remember it the rest of her life.

That the feud affected her can be shown in the first magazine article she ever published. It appeared in 1902 in "The World Wide Magazine" and was entitled "The Rowan County War." She wrote it under the

Cora Wilson Stewart, Rowan County School Superintendent, 1902-1906 and 1910-1914. She also founded the Moonlight Schools in 1911. (Photo Sam McKinney painting & MSU Camden-Carrol Library)



Ninety-eight year-old Morehead resident Mary (Caudill) Mercer proudly displays her diploma of honor. It was signed and presented to her in 1911 by Cora Wilson Stewart for perfect attendance.

Little Brushy School where Cora Wilson Stewart began her teaching in Rowan County. (Photo courtesy of MSU Archives)

The Cora Wilson Stewart Moonlight Schoolhouse

MOONLIGHT SCHOOLS

Established in Rowan County, Ky., in 1911, by Mrs. Cora W. Stewart, "to emancipate from illiteracy those enslaved in its bondage." Because the people had to labor by day it was decided to have the schools on moonlight nights so the moon could light the way. The schools were taught by volunteer teachers. Movement soon spread nationally and internationally.

1967 KENTUCKY HISTORICAL SOCIETY KENTUCKY DEPARTMENT OF HIGHWAYS 1934

FOREWORD

Morehead State University observed the Golden Anniversary of its establishment by the 1922 session of the General Assembly during the 1972-73 academic year. This brochure is part of the program to commemorate the opening in September 1923 of the Morehead State Normal School. Though the State Normal School was created on March 8, 1922, students were not admitted until September 23, 1923. Therefore, the beginning of the 1973 fall semester marks the entrance of the University into the second fifty years of its existence as a state assisted institution.

As part of the observation, the University will pay tribute to the work of Mrs. Cora Wilson Stewart, founder of Rowan County's famed "Moonlight Schools," through the restoration of a one-room school as a "moonlight schoolhouse."

Mrs. Stewart's pioneering fight against adult illiteracy brought national and international recognition to Mrs. Stewart and Rowan County. The University hosted Congressional hearings in 1962 which led to the passage of the Adult Basic Education Act, sponsored by Congressman Carl Perkins. Morehead State University has continued the work of Mrs. Stewart through research, demonstration, and teacher training in adult basic education with the establishment of the Appalachian Adult Education Center and the Department of Adult and Continuing Education. The University's recent efforts in the continuing fight against illiteracy have again brought national and international recognition.

Adron Doran

Adron Doran
President

INTRODUCTION

Mrs. Cora Wilson Stewart was superintendent of Rowan County Schools from 1904 to 1912. During this period, Mrs. Stewart often served as a volunteer secretary to illiterate adults in the county. She concluded that instead of reading and writing letters for the illiterate, they should be taught to read and write.

In September, 1911, Cora Wilson Stewart established the Moonlight Schools. The Moonlight School was designed to eliminate illiteracy among the adult population and to afford an opportunity for those of limited education to increase their store of knowledge. Although the secondary goals changed from year to year, the primary goal was always the elimination of illiteracy in Kentucky.

AIMS FOR THE YEAR.

FIRST AIM:

To teach all of Kentucky's illiterates to read and write before 1920.

SECOND AIM:

To get at least 78% of all the children of the State in daily attendance at school. (Only 48% attended in 1917-18).

THIRD AIM.

To emphasize as a reconstruction measure the duty of working for better health, better homes, better farms, better roads, better schools and richer opportunities for happy and successful living.

THE ORIGIN OF THE NAME

The adults were unable to attend day school, because of overcrowding and their own work responsibilities. To accommodate the adults, the schools were opened in the evenings. The new schools were started on moonlit nights to ensure the adults a safe journey over rough mountain roads. However, the adults were so eager and so earnest that after they started, they would come in the dark of the moon.

CALENDAR OF MOONLIGHT SCHOOLS

Each session continues 6 weeks, twenty-four evenings.

August 4, First Session Opens.
September 1, Second Session Opens.
September 11, First Session Closes.
October 6, Third Session Opens.
October 9, Second Session Closes.
November 13, Third Session Closes.

Only one session is expected to be conducted by any one teacher.

THE FIRST CLASS

The teachers of Rowan County were asked by Mrs. Stewart to volunteer to teach adults at night. Not only did all of the teachers volunteer to teach at night after teaching children all day, they also volunteered to go from door to door to inform people of the purpose of the Moonlight School and to urge them to attend.

On Labor Day, September 4, 1911, the teachers visited every home in the county, inviting both educated and uneducated to attend. On September 5, the Moonlight Schools opened for their first session.

One hundred and fifty adults were expected; twelve hundred enrolled! This was almost one-third of the population of the county. The following year, sixteen hundred adults enrolled in the Moonlight Schools.

KENTUCKY EDUCATORS' PLEDGE OF SUPPORT.

We pledge our hearty co-operation and support to the work of the Kentucky Illiteracy Commission in its final campaign against illiteracy in this school year of 1919-20. We call upon the entire citizenship of Kentucky to enlist in the common task of ridding our beloved State of this deplorable condition. We shall use every possible resource and effort to attain the realization as far as may be possible of the slogan, "No Illiteracy in Kentucky in 1920."

—Resolution passed by the Kentucky Educational Association in its annual meeting at Louisville, June 23-26, 1919.

They came carrying babes in arms.

MOONLIGHT SCHOOL PROGRAM

Devotional,	7:00 P. M.,	15 minutes
Reading,	7:15 P. M.,	25 minutes
Writing,	7:40 P. M.,	25 minutes
Arithmetic,	8:05 P. M.,	25 minutes
Drill,	8:30 P. M.,	15 minutes
Drill,	8:45 P. M.,	15 minutes

COURSE OF STUDY

The course of study for the Moonlight Schools included vocal music, reading, writing, spelling, arithmetic, and four drills.

Vocal Music – Each pupil was taught to sing the patriotic songs and a few hymns from memory and to be able to sing them with the community.

Reading – Beginners were expected to finish *Country Life Reader, First Book,* during the first term of six weeks. Newspapers and bulletins were introduced by the teacher as supplementary reading material.

Spelling – The oral spelling followed the reading lesson and occupied five to ten minutes of the reading period. Most of the spelling was to be written; however, oral spelling was permitted as practice for spelling matches.

The spelling match.

Writing – The beginner's class had to write all of the script copies and letters in *Country Life Reader, First Book*, and to write legible letters in correct form, address envelopes, write checks and write paragraphs from dictation. Special attention was given to making the signature legible.

The work in writing was done with pencil during the first half of the term with pen and ink used during the last half of the term.

Arithmetic – In arithmetic the beginners were first taught to read and write figures to ten. Teachers were then encouraged to use problems drawn from the daily tasks of the students to stimulate interest. Adding the daily wages of the members of the class, or the wages of one member for a specific number of days was not only more interesting than adding abstract figures but showed the relationship of arithmetic to this daily task.

Drills – Only four drills were presented during a term. The drill course was a selective one based on the community's needs. These four drills were selected from the following: agriculture, home economics, horticulture, civics, health and sanitation, geography, English, and good roads.

Arithmetic was a popular study.

MATERIALS

There were no texts in print for adult illiterates in 1911, so a little weekly newspaper, *The Rowan County School Messenger*, was published as a reading text. The weekly paper was edited by Mrs. Stewart and furnished free of charge for the special benefit of the adult students.

The little newspaper dealt largely with local school and community affairs and had a fourfold purpose:

1. To enable adults to learn to read without the humiliation of reading from a child's primer with its lessons on kittens, dolls, and toys.

2. To give them a sense of dignity which comes from being a newspaper reader.

3. To stimulate their curiosity through news of their neighbors' movements and community occurrences.

4. To arouse the adult through news of educational and civic improvement in other districts to make like progress in their own.

Within five years the Kentucky Illiteracy Commission was publishing books for use in the Moonlight Schools by adults.

Moonlight School Motto

The riches of the Commonwealth
Are free, strong minds and hearts of health
And more to her than gold or grain
Are cunning hand and cultured brain.

KENTUCKY ILLITERACY COMMISSION

In December, 1913, Cora W. Stewart wrote a letter to James B. McCreary, Governor of Kentucky, on the establishment of an Illiteracy Commission. Mrs. Stewart requested that the "Commission" be formed by legislative act to study the condition of adult illiterates in our state, to give men and women their freedom from this bondage and to place our State in a better light before the world.

The commission was also viewed by Mrs. Stewart as a means of promoting voluntary effort on the part of teachers engaged in the Moonlight School movement and to provide guidance and inspiration for teachers.

By return mail Governor McCreary endorsed the idea of an Illiteracy Commission. In 1914 both branches of the General Assembly voted unanimously in favor of the bill providing for the Kentucky Illiteracy Commission.

The Commission received its first appropriation of $10,000 in 1916 which was increased to $75,000 in 1918.

Illiteracy Commissions were appointed in each county of the Commonwealth of Kentucky.

KENTUCKY ILLITERACY COMMISSION

Chairman—Mrs. Cora Wilson Stewart, Superintendent
Rowan County Schools

Hon. V. O. Gilbert, State Superintendent
of Public Instruction

H. H. Cherry, President
Western Kentucky State Normal School

Miss Ella Lewis, Superintendent
Grayson County Schools

NATIONAL SPREAD

The moonlight school movement spread rapidly from state to state. In 1913, moonlight schools were organized in the State of Tennessee, South Carolina and Washington. The second state illiteracy commission was established in 1915 in Alabama.

Although the moonlight school movement spread rapidly from Rowan County to other states, not all schools for illiterates used the name of moonlight schools. Some, after successfully launching the movement under this name, adopted names suited to their peculiar conditions, such as "The Lay-By Schools" of South Carolina, "The Adult Schools" of Alabama, "The Community Schools" of North Carolina and the "Schools for Grown-Ups" of Georgia.

SLOGANS AND ACTIONS BY OTHER STATES

Alabama—"Illiteracy in Alabama—Let's Remove it." 1914

North Carolina—Seven thousand teachers volunteered to teach in moonlight schools. 1915

Minnesota – Organized their teachers in 1914 and conducted moonlight schools for illiterates, mainly those of foreign birth.

Oklahoma—Initiated moonlight schools in 1914 through the influence of the Literacy League organized at the State Normal School at Edmond.

New Mexico – "Illiteracy in New Mexico Must Go." 1915

Georgia – Illiteracy Commission created in 1919.

South Carolina – "Let South Carolina Secede from Illiteracy." 1914

Mississippi – Created an Illiteracy Commission in 1916—"Illiteracy in Mississippi – Blot it Out."

Arkansas—Illiteracy Commission created 1917—"Let's Sweep Illiteracy Out of Arkansas."

North Dakota—"No Illiteracy in 1924."

HEARINGS

BEFORE THE

COMMITTEE ON EDUCATION

HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

SIXTY-THIRD CONGRESS

SECOND SESSION

ON

ADULT ILLITERACY IN THE UNITED STATES

STATEMENT OF

MRS. CORA WILSON STEWART

MARCH 3, 1914

(MORNING AND EVENING)

WASHINGTON
GOVERNMENT PRINTING OFFICE
1914

NATIONAL AND INTERNATIONAL RECOGNITION

Cora W. Stewart was soon recognized in the United States as the leader in the fight against illiteracy. In 1914 she was invited to Washington to testify before the Education Committee in the House of Representatives in support of HR 2494, The Illiteracy Bill. At the time of Mrs. Stewart's testimony, the illiteracy bill, which requested an appropriation of $10,000 to study the condition of illiteracy in the U.S., had been "permanently delayed" in the House.

In 1919, Mrs. Stewart was appointed chairman of the Illiteracy Commission of the National Education Association, and she held regional conferences throughout the country. In 1923 she became chairman of the World Illiteracy Commission, and presided over conferences in Edinburgh, Geneva, Toronto, San Francisco, and Denver. In 1926 she was made Director of the National Illiteracy Crusade with headquarters in Washington, D.C. In 1929, President Hoover delegated the Secretary of the Interior to appoint a National Illiteracy Commission with Mrs. Stewart as executive head.

Cora Wilson Stewart was one of the most interesting and dynamic speakers in America. She lectured in every state in the Union and addressed many of the state legislatures as well as committees in Congress. She was the recipient of several national and international prizes and awards in recognition of her great work. In 1925, she received the *Pictorial Review* award for the greatest humanitarian service rendered by an American woman. She received the Ella Flagg Young medal for distinguished service to education, and the Clara Barton medal for humanitarian service. In 1941, she was given an award by the General Federation of Women's Clubs at their Golden Jubilee Convention for pioneer work in combating illiteracy in the nation.

The Cora Wilson Stewart Moonlight School

The "Little Brushy School" building was donated to Morehead State University by Mr. William Dailey, Morehead, Kentucky, and moved to Morehead State University campus and restored with the artifacts of early American education.

Establishment of the Cora Wilson Stewart Moonlight School symbolizes the University's intent to serve the educational needs of the region as the institution begins its second fifty years of existence.

Prepared by:

Harold Rose, Head
Department of Adult and Continuing Education

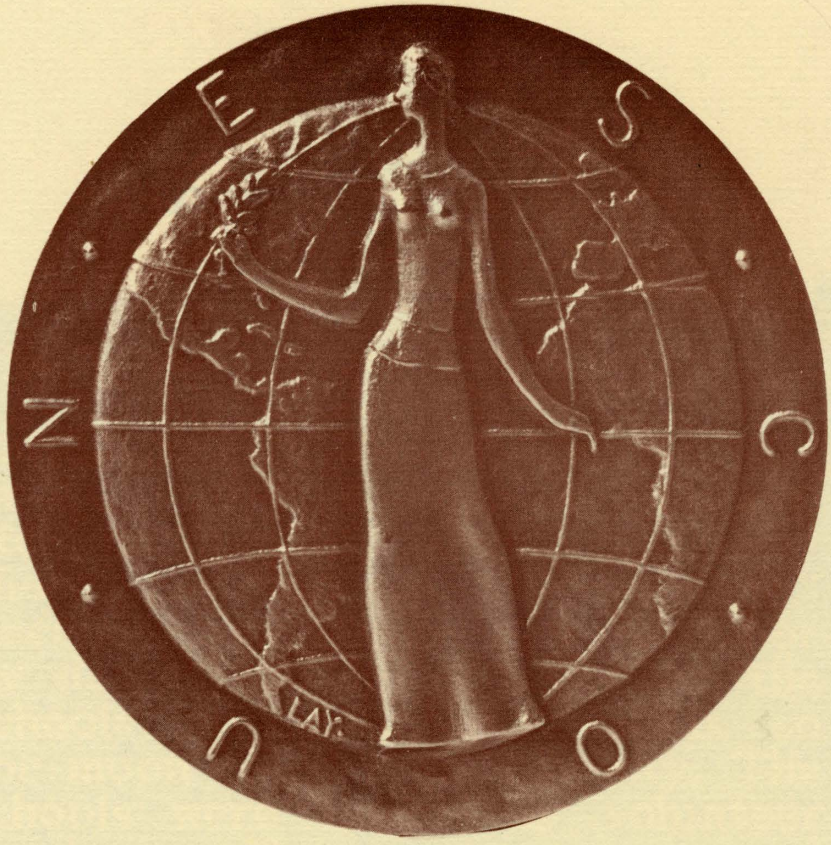
Mike Curtis, Director
Adult Learning Center

Marie Raines, Graduate Assistant

MOREHEAD STATE UNIVERSITY

(The Appalachian Adult Education Center)

Awarded



THE MOHAMMAD REZA PAHLAVI PRIZE

(Honorable Mention)

in

UNESCO International Literacy Competition

From The Collection Of:
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552 W. Sun St.
Morehead, KY 40351
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LITTLE BRUSHY SCHOOL

Rowan County, Kentucky

The Cora Wilson Stewart Moonlight School, formerly known as the Little Brushy School, was originally located on Kentucky Highway 32 eight miles north of Morehead in Rowan County. This building replaced two earlier school buildings on the site, both of which had been destroyed by fire. The original building dated back to the turn of the century.

This building was constructed in 1910 by William Jasper Johnson and Henry Perry. One point of interest is that Mr. Johnson's son was one of the first students to attend school in the new building. The building was erected during the administration of Superintendent Cora Wilson Stewart and used as one of the moonlight schools in Rowan County. Mr. Ferris Cooke, who had served as the teacher in the previous building which had burned in 1909, was the first teacher.

Under the administration of Superintendent Roy Cornett, an additional room was erected in 1936 and the school's first lunch program was introduced in 1941.

During the period of the late 1920's through the early 1940's the enrollment ranged from 40 to 60 students per year. One highlight during each school year was the annual pie supper. The students took great pride in clearing the grounds for the event because the money collected was used to hire a truck to transport them to the Morehead Fair. An annual occurrence was Doctor Evans' visit to the school to immunize the students. When the students would see Dr. Evans' car they would run through the door or jump out the window to "escape." The teacher would then have to go through the community to "collect" the students for their shots.

Because of the consolidation of the schools in that area of the county and construction of the Tildon Hogge School, the school was closed in 1963.

The "Little Brushy School" building was donated to Morehead State University by Mr. William Dailey, Morehead, Kentucky.

MOREHEAD MEMORIES

1st Draft

ROWAN COUNTY SCHOOLS

"KINDERGARTEN YEARS"

CORA WILSON STEWART, SUPERINTENDENT

1902-1906; 1910-1914

by Jack D. Ellis

Cora Wilson Stewart was a teacher in the Rowan County Schools. She was also Superintendent of Schools for two separate terms (1902-1906 and 1910-1914). She could be called one of Rowan County's citizens of the century. She was certainly the most famous. This writer has collected a bibliography of 65 books and materials both by and about Cora Wilson Stewart (only those written in English). Much was written about her and published internationally. She received numerous state, national, and international awards. Among the awards she received were: First woman elected President of the Kentucky Educational Association and the first woman to be elected Superintendent of Schools in Kentucky. That was before women could vote. She was also Chairman of state, national, and international Commissions on Education. She frequently testified on education committees at Frankfort and Washington. She also advised other nations, including Russia, England and France. Also national awards included the Pictorial Review Award, Ella Flagg Young Medal, and the Clara Barton Medal. All were presented to her for her pioneering work in education.

Cora Wilson Stewart was given the highest award given by the

General Federation of Women's Clubs for "her pioneering work in combating illiteracy around the world". She was recognized by governors, presidents, kings, queens and czars for her monumental efforts to eliminate illiteracy world wide. At the Democratic National Convention in 1920 at San Francisco, her name was placed in nomination by the Kentucky Delegation for President of the U.S. Her's was the second time a woman's name had been placed before the delegation.

In 1957, Ralph Edwards of the old "This Is Your Life" TV program, chose her as the subject of a one-hour program. Although at that time she was just too ill to attend, they did show her delight at being selected at a pre-filmed portion of the program.

Cora Wilson was born January 17, 1875, on a farm in rural Rowan County, Kentucky, located about five miles up the Licking River from Crossroad (later called Farmers). She was the oldest of seven children born to Jeremiah and Anne Halley Wilson. Both her parents were teachers. In those days doctors frequently had to have other employment to supplement their medical practice. Dr. Wilson was a farmer, teacher, and storekeeper at some time in his life. That allowed him to practice medicine.

In 1880, Jeremiah Wilson moved from the upper Licking River section of Rowan County to Farmers because he believed that a thriving community offered more opportunity for his children's education and his medical practice. Young Cora at the age of five displayed an inquisitive, intelligent mind. Her parents taught her to read and provided an early home atmosphere conducive to

learning. Cora wrote in her autobiographical notes: "We had pictures on our walls and books and stories read to us. The difference between our lives and most of the other children was that our parents were educated". She read everything she could get her hands on even her father's medical books. Also a neighbor, Mr. Sanford, subscribed to a published fiction magazine called THE OLD ARMCHAIR. He was thought to be the only man in Rowan County that subscribed to a periodical. He would loan it to the Wilsons and Cora would read it regularly.

Cora Wilson began her education at Farmers, Kentucky in a one room school that was in session only three months a year. It was a one room log cabin with dirt floors and cut out windows (no glass). Cora decided she wanted to be a teacher at a very early age. She would play school constantly with her friends. She was always the teacher and required her imaginary "students" to address her a Miss Cora.

In 1884, Jeremiah moved from Farmers to Elliottville, where Dr. Wilson practiced medicine and ran a general store. It was during this period of time that Cora would sometimes accompany her father in his medical practice throughout the rural area. On one trip she was asked by an illiterate elderly woman to read a letter she had received several months earlier. It was from a son who was in the army fighting Indians in the West. As Cora read the letter she could see the woman's countenance change from distress to happiness. She was afraid the letter contained bad news and for three months there was no one there to read the letter. Cora

determined then to do something about that problem.

In 1884 while the Wilson family was living in Elliottille, the bloody Rowan County Feud erupted. Although her family was not directly involved in the feud, the violence that resulted had a deep affect upon young Cora. Although ill feelings had existed between the feuding families since the Civil War, it was during the years of 1884-1887 that the killing began in earnest. There were 20 men killed and 16 wounded.

Many times the wounded men would be brought bleeding and dying to her father for treatment. Cora was greatly affected by the feud and the stories of the war remained with her throughout her lifetime. It was a significant event in the life of all Rowan County citizens of that time and Cora Wilson would remember it the rest of her life.

That the feud affected her can be shown in the first magazine article she ever published. It appeared in 1902 in THE WORLD WIDE MAGAZINE, and was entitled "The Rowan County War". She wrote it under the pseudonym "Edward T. Moran", which shows you just how sensitive a topic it was. As Cora witnessed the violence, feuding, illiteracy and human carnage upon the landscape of Rowan County, ~~she~~ it made her more determined than ever to plant beauty where there had been blight.

In 1880 following the Rowan County War, Jeremiah Wilson moved his family to Morehead. Morehead was growing. In 1880 the population was 163. But by 1890 with the feud ended, the population grew to 491. The Normal School along with timber, ~~and~~ stone, and

commerce were its greatest assets. Also with the new Normal School, there was a greater opportunity for the Wilson children to get an education and for Dr. Wilson to develop a successful medical practice. The family settled in a large two story house at what is now the corner of Fifth Street and Wilson Avenue (Another landmark named for the Wilson family.) Cora attended the Morehead Normal School and began teaching at Little Brushy at age 16. After teaching for three years she continued her education at the National Normal Institute in Lebanon, Ohio. After graduation she returned to Rowan County and taught at Seas Branch, Elliottville, and Carey. It was while at Carey that she met and marred Grant Carey, a marriage that lasted less than two years.

In 1901, the Rowan County Democratic Party chose her to run for County School Superintendent. Although Rowan was traditionally a Republican County, she began her campaign on the Democrat ticket. Since no women had ever held the position there was some doubt she could ever win. Also, her opponent was Emmit Martt, her sister's boyfriend. In spite of the personal and political obstacles, she campaigned vigorously on the slogan, "A Children's Friend". On November 5, 1901, Cora Wilson was elected by a substantial majority. On January 1, 1902, she assumed office as the first woman elected to a county office in Rowan County (Since this was before the women could vote, it was even more amazing.)

Perhaps because she was a woman in what was then a man's world, Cora was even more determined to be successful in her position. She set the standard for future school superintendents

by going to work in her office every day in the Courthouse. She visited every school every year, and since there were over fifty schools in the county and many could only be reached on horseback, it was a major effort. Also, it usually meant staying overnight in the home of one of the families in the community. She observed teachers and the physical conditions of the school. Cora encouraged teachers to be better prepared and the trustees to take better care of buildings.

By 1900, Morehead's population had reached 1,100, due in a large part to the growth of the Morehead Normal school. Also, the county was growing with more farm products, lumber, and stone quarries, spurring economic growth. Cora was perhaps one of the first to recognize the vital connection between education to economic growth. (In 1898, the Commercial Club of Morehead only briefly mentioned the Normal School as they extolled the virtues of future economic growth.) But Cora knew that the county would not grow without a good school system. She lead the fight to awaken the people of Rowan County of the need for good schools.

Cora Wilson, because of her teaching experience, and educational training, maintained that subject content, and good teacher training were keys to improving education. She was convinced that the children of Rowan County possessed the native intelligence needed to learn. She often referred to Rowan's children as priceless rough "Mountain Jewels", needing only to be shaped and polished. During her terms as school superintendent, she provided the dynamic leadership to accomplish that. Superintendent Wilson believed that schools should be vital parts

of their community. She encouraged teachers to teach about such things as conservation of land through proper erosion control, and crop rotation. Also, an emphases was made to clean up filthy and unsanitary conditions, and promoting better public health. She believed that the Lord made the earth clean and wholesome, and it was up to us to keep it that way. She was far ahead of her time in that respect.

Cora Wilson could by no means be called an environmentalist, but she believed you could balance the need for economic growth with the need to preserve the environment. She realized corporate mining and timber harvesting could, if not properly controlled, result in some damages. But she also realized the terrible plight of the poor people of Eastern Kentucky, and the economic blight upon the region. She encouraged the commercial use of this region's resources.

After refusing to run for re-election for a second consecutive term as County Superintendent, Cora decided to run after a four year absence. Cora who was married by this time, and in spite of her husband's objections, ran again for County Superintendent of Schools on the Republican Party. She ran against the strong Democratic incumbent, Lyda Messer. However, Cora won by a very narrow margin, and in January, 1910, began a second term as School Superintendent. That was a task that made her world famous, but also resulted in her divorce from Alexander Stewart.

"MOONLIGHT MADNESS" YEARS

1910-1914

Early in her second term as County Superintendent (she did not serve consecutive terms), Cora Wilson Stewart was made acutely aware of the extent of adult illiteracy in Rowan County. One man confided in her that he would give twenty years of his life if he could read and write. Also, a young boy came to church one Sunday and sang a beautiful ballad. When Cora asked him for a copy of the song, he said he could neither read nor write, and that he had sung many other songs, but had forgotten the words before he could get anyone to write them down. These instances along with Miss Cora's early childhood experiences of being asked to read letters to families where no one could read, fired her passion to do something to help.

Cora realized her primary responsibility was to the children of Rowan County. Also, the fifty county schools were already crowed, and teachers were over worked. Adults also, would be too embarrassed to come into the same learning environment with children, or take time off from work to attend school. In addition there were no funds to pay teachers. Neither were there appropriate teaching materials for adults. (The early primary textbooks like, DICK AND JANE DOWN THE RIVER ROAD, just would not be appropriate. It would seem to the casual observer that with all these negative s Cora would give up. But this was not the case, and she plunged headlong into the vast dark sea of illiteracy in Rowan County, trusting only that the ship of education would keep

her afloat.

At the first teachers' meeting on September 4, 1911, Cora called for teachers to volunteer and every teacher in Rowan County agreed to serve without pay. She also gave them copies of a newspaper she published called THE ROWAN COUNTY MESSENGER to be used as a text book. By using a newspaper she hoped to eliminate the humiliation of adults using the children's textbooks. On Monday, September 5, the teachers surveyed their district in an attempt to determine how many might attend the night classes. The survey indicated interest by 150 adults; and so the Moonlight Schools were born in Rowan County on September 5, 1911 at 7 p.m. central standard time when over 1200 men and women between the ages of 18 and 86 enrolled. They came walking across the green hills as moonlight flooded the countryside. Some carrying babies, lanterns, and yes even guns. For Rowan County was still considered a dangerous [illegible] darkness. Everyone was delighted with the response, and it was only the beginning. Because after that first night, the Moonlight School movement to educate the un-educated under the silvery moon spread like wildfire.

The name Moonlight Schools was given to that movement because classes were scheduled during the full phase of the moon. Also it permitted better night vision and security in traveling over hills and hollows to those isolated schools. Aims of the program were to reduce illiteracy, increase school average daily attendance, and emphasize the need for better health, homes, farms, and roads for a better life. Each Moonlight School session ran from 7:00 to 9:00 p.m. four nights each month (when the moon was full) for six

months.

The second year of the Moonlight Schools was even more successful with over 1500 enrolled. Cora Wilson Stewart was really performing two jobs. Her duties as County Superintendent during the day and leader of the Moonlight Schools at night. Many times she would be at one school at 7:00 p.m. encouraging and challenging teachers and students. Then riding her house to another school in time to do the same for that school. Many times she would not get home before 2:00 a.m. only to get up and go to her office that morning. Her family was worried about her health, and she was pushing herself too far. But her dedication and passion for fulfilling her dream of eliminating illiteracy in Rowan County kept her going.

The volunteer Moonlight School teachers were also teaching day and night. But morale was high because they believed their cause was just and the results worth the effort. They were called Rowan's Ernest Teachers and their motto was "one to everyone". Cora always gave credit to their dedication and un-selfishness for the program's success. Since they were not paid, some teachers were rewarded with books, trips, and social events paid for many times out of Miss Cora's pocket. (Students were also rewarded for achievements with gifts). In 1913 the community raised enough funds to send those "earnest" volunteer teachers on a trip to Niagra Falls.

The Moonlight Schools were not without their critics. Professional educators scoffed at her when she announced in 1913 that the 1152 illiterate adults listed in the U.S. Census had been

reduced to twenty three. She silenced her critics by eventually getting the names of those 1152 illiterate adults from the Census Bureau and providing proof they were now reading and writing. (Before the decade was over she succeeded in getting the names of all 708,000 Kentuckians listed as illiterate in the 1910 U.S. Census.)

Cora Wilson Stewart did not run for re-election as County Superintendent in 1914. But instead plunged into the dark sea of illiteracy in her small boat named "The Moonlight School." After her last term as Rowan County Superintendent, she was in great demand as a speaker. She was an excellent speaker. Cora was articulate, knowledgeable and persuasive. She spoke to many county, state, national, and international groups on the problems of illiteracy. Cora was an eloquent speaker, and wherever she spoke one told of the Rowan County success in overcoming illiteracy. As an advisor to other states she insisted that they call their program "Moonlight Schools, and not Night Schools. She said that night schools were a product of Northern States and urban areas. Cora believed the Moonlight Schools born in Rowan County were a southern rural effort very different from Night Schools.

Cora Wilson Stewart later wrote textbooks for adult illiterates, such as THE COUNTRY LIFE READER, published in 1916. It was written in a primary vocabulary but dealt with adult subjects such as farming, finance, personal and civic responsibility. Cora also authored other books such as MOTHER'S FIRST BOOK, and SOLDIERS FIRST BOOK. When the U.S. entered WWI, 50,000 SOLDIERS FIRST BOOKS were purchased and sent to U.S. soldiers in France. THE SOLDIERS FIRST BOOK, written for the U.S. Army, was designed to teach soldiers basis skills of military life.

In 1917, Cora's public statements that "30,000 Kentuckians who

registered for the draft were unable to read and write", brought a storm of criticism from native Kentuckians. She was accused of emphasizing the ignorance of her native state, and, benefitting financially from that condition. She bitterly resented that accusation and repeating her burning desire to overcome illiteracy in Kentucky by 1920. Of course she did not accomplish that, but she did make a big dent in it. Perhaps she could have done even more had she not been so politically naive. Her continued statements throughout the nation about backward illiterate Kentuckians, estranged even those local citizens and politicians who had initially supported her effort.

Although Cora Wilson Stewart went on to win many national and international awards, she became embittered against her native state and many of her colleagues. In 1936 she retired to North Carolina and spent her remaining years between Pine Bluff, Arkansas, and Tryon, North Carolina. (Cora Wilson Stewart died December 1, 1958 at Tryon, North Carolina.) She left a large legacy extending up to the present. Her early struggle as a woman in a male dominated society continues today. Also, her efforts to overcome illiteracy continues today. Not in rural moonlight schools, but in modern urban and suburban settings. Rowan County, the birth place of the Moonlight School effort to spread light through learning, should faithfully follow Cora's example.

ONWARD ROWAN COUNTY

by

Conie M. Mauk

(Tune, Onward Christian Soldiers)

I

Onward all ye teachers of Rowan
County schools,
Let's march into our school
rooms,
With the golden rule
Let us help one "LEADER:
Every bit we can.
To make the schools in Rowan
County,
The best in all the land.

CHORUS

Onward then ye teachers
Let us take the lead,
We must all be faithful
In every act and deed.

II

Like a mighty array
Moves this happy throng.
Other folks are joining us,
In this grand new song.
They help us swell the chorus
Make it loud and sweet,
they come into our county,
Which is learning's seat.

II

Onward then ye people,
Join us in the fight;
You can help the children

Win out for the right.
Glory, laud and honor,
To each little home
when all vice and ignorance
From ROWAN will be gone.

- - - - - -

This song is dedicated to "Our Leader,"
MRS. CORA WILSON STEWART

ROWAN COUNTY MOONLIGHT SCHOOL TEACHERS (1911-1914)
(A Partial List)

J. M. Harris, (Dry Creek); J.M. Butcher, (Tabor Hill); Steve Caudill, (Popular Grove); John Caudill, (Seas Branch); Claude Crosthwaite, (Alfrey); Bethel Hall, (Upper Lick Fork); Amanda Hunt, (Carey); Clella Porter, (Elliottville); and Glenna Flannery DeHart (Rodburn).

Other teachers who also taught were: Cleff Tussey, Henry Black, Willie Mabry, John Crisp, Farris Cook, Worley Hall, Herb Bradley, Mollie Skaggs, Claude Crosthwaite, and Boone Peyton. Also, other teachers were: Pearl Bailey, Verda Surrott, F.E. Ellington, Audrey Ellington, Bethel McGlosson, Jasper Howard, Taylor Flemming, R.W. Cline, H.C. Black, Herbert Tackett, Flora Messer, H.C. Tackett, Conie Mauk, J.V. Harris, and Thomas Hogge.

The teachers were so dedicated and enthusiastic that one of them (in 1913) wrote a stirring song, dedicated to their leader, Cora Wilson Stewart. The "peppy" marching song was to be sung to the tune of "Onward Christian Soldiers", and is as follows:

MRS. CORA WILSON STEWART, 83, NATION's GREAT P IONEER LEADER IN ADULT EDUCATION, IS CLAIMED.

Mrs. Cora Wilson Stewart, who brought more publicity and favorable recognition to Eastern Kentucky than any Rowan Countian in history, died Tuesday of last week at the St. Luke's Hospital, Tryon, N. C. (Dec 9, 1958)

The founder of the Moonlight Schools, first coordinated effort in the United States in the field of adult education, was 83 years of age. She had been inf failing health a for sometime.

Mrs. Stewart, listed in Who's Who as a retired educator, lecturer and writer, observed from her position as a stenographer in a Morehead law office, that many of Eastern Kentucky's citizens were unable to read and write.

This was the beginning of the Moonlight Schools in 1911.

Friends and advisors told her the undertaking was doomed to failure because elderly folks were too self-conscious and embarrassed to go to night school, particularly since many would have to reveal they could sign their own names only with and "X".

Schools Gain Favor But, the young, and attractive Morehead woman, who had a knack of making people like her and winning them over to her cause, was undaunted.

Within two years the Moonlight Schools were not only flourishing throught Rowan County, but had spread to 25 Kentucky counties and other states.

Such publications as the New York Times and the Chicago Tribune gave considerable illustrated space to the effort and Moonlight Schools developed in many isolated areas of the Ubited States and other countries.

Rowan teachers were awarded an all-expense trip to Canada in recognition of their work.

One remarkable phase of the Moonlight Schools, often cited in national magazines, etc., was the enthusiasm shown by the students, many of them 60 years of age. They accepted the schools as their own, and the progress they achieved was generally rapid. Many were able to read a part of the Bible within a few weeks.

Early in 1914 Kentucky Governor McCreary appointed Mrs. Stewart Chairman of the Illiteracy Commission, first of its kind in the United States.

Mrs. Stewart then moved into policy positions of the United States government and other national groups, promoting adult learning in a nation of mostly one-room schools back in those days.

As Mrs. Stewart transferred her talents and zeal from the Eastern Kentucky level to the national level, she became a speaker and writer in great demand.

AIDED RUSSIA

She was named Chairman of the World Illiteracy Commission in 1923 and presided over conferences in Edinburgh, Geneva, Tronto, San Francisco and Denver.

Russia then started the literacy movement and Mrs. Stewart's policies became the basis for their organization. Her pamphlets and books were translated into Russian, and the progress of elderly people in the Moonlight Schools of Rowan, and other Eastern - Kentucky counties, were cited for the advancement that adults, without prior schooling could make.

Mrs. Stewart was in demand as a speaker and she received several national and international awards for her great humanitarian and educational work. These included: the Pictorial Review Award; the Ella Flagg Young medal; and the Clara Barton medal.

Highlight of the native Morehead woman's career probably came in 1941 when the General Federation of Women's Clubs, at their Golden Jubliee Convention, conferred its highest award to Mrs. Stewart for "pioneer work in combating illiteracy in the United States and the world."

RECOGNIZED BY PRESIDENTS - Two Presidents took recognition of Mrs. Stewart's achievements, In 1926 President Coolidge named her Director of the National Illiteracy Crisade and in 1929 Herbert Hoover delaged the Secretary of the Interior to appoint a national Illiteracy Commission with Mrs. Stewart executive director.

It was 17 years ago, at the age of 66, that Mrs. Stewart retired from policy and executive leadership, mostly turning her great program and resolves over to younger people. However, she did not go into retirement, and her advice was constantly sought at policy levels.

Some of her noteworthy work was with military personnel. She also set up schools to combat illiteracy in most of the prisonsof the nation.

At the endshe saw her vision of almost 50 years ago become a near reality with illiteracy almost wiped out in this nation.

A few months ago she was chosen as the subject of the "This is Your Life" televison program, but illness kept her from attending.

Mrs. Stewart was born at Morehead in 1875, daughter of the late Dr. Jeremiah and Anne E. Wilson. She was a sister of the late Dr. Homer Lee Wilson, a dentist, of Morehead.

7-1-65

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Burial was in Forest Lawn Memorial Gardens under the direction of Stucky Funeral Home.

Pallbearers were Archie Williams, Jack Parker, Roy Caudill, Gilbert Jones, Robert Bishop and Clyde White.

Honorary pallbearers were active and retired employees of the Morehead Post Office.

a fee of $15 is charged to keep more than ten dogs.

In noting the sale of 1965 tags, Butler said the purpose of the law is to eliminate stray dogs and to control rabies. Along with the requirement that dogs be licensed, the State Board of Health requires that all dogs six months old or older be vaccinated for rabies.

(Continued on page 11)

Tuesday's special session.

At the same time, the city's governing body gave approval to a 1965-66 budget totaling $130,699.33. It contains pay increases for the chief of police, other members of the police department and for police radio operators.

The chief will receive 10¢ per hour more, individual patrolmen 10¢ per hour more and radio operators an undetermined amount. The raise for the latter was included as a last minute amendment to the budget.

Everett T. (Buck) Amburgey was formally approved for the new job of building inspector and codes enforcement officer for one-year term at a salary of $3,600 a year. Amburgey will work with planning and zoning officials in administration of the recently adopted "unsafe housing" and plumbing codes.

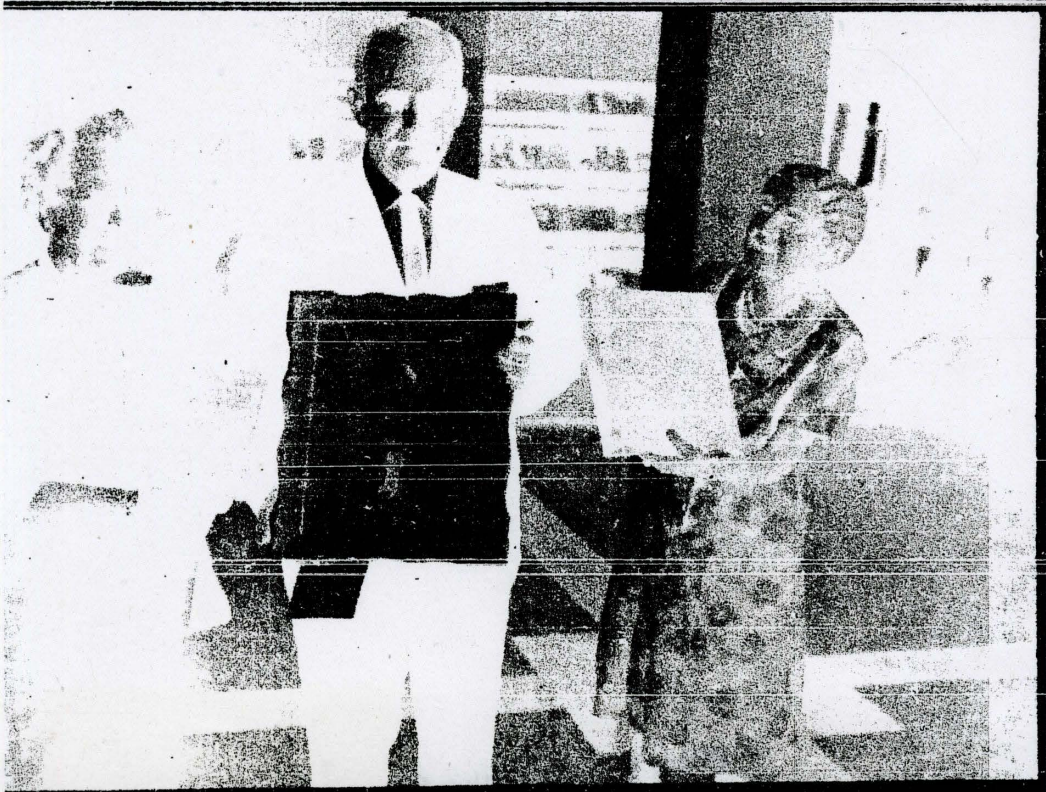
City taxpayers will pay the same 48¢ per $100 ad valorem tax as they have this year, Council decided. The recently ordered 100 percent assessment of property for tax purposes will have no effect on assessments this year, and Council discussed the possibility of using the county's assessment next year, since both city and county at that time will have 100 percent assessments.

The resignation of Robert M. Hall as city tax assessor was accepted and Council named his wife, Mrs. Georgia Hall to replace him for the remainder of the year.

Resignations from two posts were submitted by Michael E. Keller. He told Council in two letters that he was resigning as a member of the Morehead Air Board and as Civil Defense Director for the city.

Council took no action toward filling either vacancy.

The Ashland accounting firm of Kelly and Galloway was named to audit the city's books for the 1964-65 fiscal year.



APHRENALIA PRESENTED - Material relating to the late Cora
n Stewart was given to the Morehead State College Library
y at the annual meeting of the Morehead Normal School Club.
ered by Mrs. Ottie Lawrence Nickell of Ashland, right, the
ction was presented to Librarian Ione Chapman, left, by Marvin
n Jr., editor of The Morehead News, and a nephew of the
er of Kentucky's nationally-famous "Moonlight Schools." When
ional material is received, the college will designate a "Cora
n Stewart" room in the library to house the collection.

Akin Ruled Out Of Cage Play By His Grades

Henry Akin, All-Ohio Valley Conference basketball star for the past two seasons at Morehead State College, has been declared academically ineligible.

The 6-9 center, considered the finest shooting big man in the OVC, failed to meet the minimum requirements for competition in the OVC.

New head coach Bob Wright made the announcement Saturday.

Akin, who would have been

Cora Wilson Stewart
Moonlight Schools and the Crusade Against Illiteracy

By Yvonne Baldwin

History 712
Dr. Hamilton
November 23, 1993

"Things certainly have changed in this district. It used to be that you couldn't hold meeting or Sunday school in this house without the boys shooting through the windows. It used to be moonshine and bullets; but now its lemonade and Bibles."

Few Rowan County, Kentuckians today would fail to recognize the name Cora Wilson Stewart and associate her immediately with the "Moonlight School" movement which began in their home county in 1911, then gained statewide, and ultimately, national renown. Most have visited the "Little Brushy" school, which was moved from its original location to the campus of Morehead State University, restored and furnished with the artifacts of early rural education, and renamed the Coral Wilson Stewart Moonlight School. Morehead State University opened the little school house as part of its fiftieth anniversary celebrations in 1972, in recognition of Stewart's efforts at the local, national and international level, and still considers the continuation of her work central to its mission.[1] Although Cora Wilson Stewart has attained the status of virtual patron saint of education in Rowan County, little has been published regarding her life and work.[2] Although locally short-lived, Cora Wilson Stewart's work was exemplary, and in the long run her name and the cause she championed reached far beyond the mountains of rural Rowan County.

Rowan, like most eastern Kentucky counties in the first decades of the twentieth century existed in an insular time warp, its institutions, society and economy were more familial, its affinity with the past more natural than its association with the present or its aspirations for the future. Rowan's entry into the new century was perhaps delayed by a

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[1] "The Cora Wilson Stewart Moonlight Schoolhouse," Pamphlet published by Morehead State University, 1972.

[2] Published works include James McConkey's, Rowan's Progress (Pantheon Books: New York, 1992), a readable, brief account of her life and work and that of another local heroine, Dr. C. Louise Caudill. Although colorful and interesting, it lacks historical accuracy in some instances; and James M. Gifford's "Cora Wilson Stewart and the 'Moonlight School' Movement," in Wilson Somerville, ed., Appalachia/America: Proceedings of the 1980 Appalachian Studies Conference (Appalachian Consortium Press, 1980) 169-178, a very laudatory account of her accomplishments; Unpublished works include Willie Everette Nelms, Jr.'s master's thesis: "Cora Wilson Stewart: Crusader Against Illiteracy," (University of Kentucky, 1973), probably the fullest account of her life and work in a straightforward biographical format; and an unpublished doctoral dissertation entitled Cora Wilson Stewart and the Moonlight Schools of Kentucky, 1911-1920: A Case Study in the Rhetorical Uses of Literacy, by Florence Estes (University of Kentucky, 1988), which, because of its focus on the rhetoric of education has limited applicability for historians.

violent and debilitating blood feud known as the Rowan County War.[3] Stewart's early life and education in this environment had a clear and direct impact on her later work and the intensity with which she pursued her goals. Her experiences here shaped the image she held of her county and state, and informed her opinion of its residents. This paper will examine Cora Wilson Stewart and her work in Rowan County, in Kentucky, and in the nation, within the confines of local provincialism, but also within the much larger context of southern Progressivism. It will explore her religious and evangelical motivations, and place her in the company of early twentieth century feminist crusaders whose efforts brought women to the forefront of the reform movement.

Cora Wilson was born on January 17, 1875, on a small farm in rural Powell County, Kentucky, the third child of Dr. Jeremiah Wilson and Anne Halley Wilson, a former Powell County school teacher.[4] In 1880, the Wilson family moved to Cross Roads, now known as Farmers, in Rowan County, where the young Cora began her education in a typical one-room country schoolhouse. Cora was an avid reader, loved school, and at an early age declared her intention to be a teacher like her mother. When she played "school" in her backyard, her students always addressed her as "Miss Cora." She was so determined and set in her ways, that her father nicknamed her "the general."[5] Her father continued his medical practice while her mother ran a general store when school was not in session. Twelve children were born to the Wilsons, but only seven survived. Two older siblings had died in early childhood, leaving Cora, the eldest, to help her mother with the care of the younger Wilson children. Cora developed a close and loving relationship with her mother, learning from her the values of piety, self-sacrifice, responsibility, and

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[3]The literature on Appalachia and modernization is extensive. See, for examples, Henry Shapiro, Appalachia on Our Mind: The Southern Mountains and Mountaineers in the American Consciousness, 1870-1920 (Chapel Hill: The University of North Carolina Press, 1978) and Ronald Eller, Miners, Millhands, and Mountaineers: Industrialization of the Appalachian South, 1880-1930 (Knoxville: University of Tennessee Press, 1982) Not a great deal has been written specifically on the Rowan County War. McConkey takes up the subject, but unfortunately cites newspaper articles from the 1950's whose factual base differs considerably from newspaper accounts of the day. Rowan Countians shunned publicity, and for generations, actually refused to talk about it. See Morehead News, Centennial Edition, 1987.

[4]Untitled Biographical Notes, January 17, 1924, Biographical File, Box 1,Cora Wilson Stewart Papers, (Special Collections, Margaret I. King Library, University of Kentucky) Hereafter cited as Stewart Papers.

[5]"Data Furnished by Public Library, Morehead, Kentucky," Biographical File, Box 1, Stewart Papers.

consideration for others that characterized her life and later work.[6] Her piety was deeply ingrained, and she felt a strong sense of mission. Given to quiet walks in the woods, she spent much time in reflection and prayer. During one of these reflective moments, on her forty-ninth birthday, she looked back at her early life:

> "I was a pious child, and at 8 or 9 years of age would go out into a nearby grove to play - what I remember of little Cleveland's death - a seven weeks old babe - was that I called on God to save him - going often to the grove in childish faith to . . . ask that his life be spared - Once I thought I saw some writing in the sky which seemed to convey to me that the Lord had something for me to do in life."[7]

The sense of mission that guided her public life is clearly apparent in her private writings, diaries, and hastily scribbled notes, much more telling perhaps than her public speeches and addresses, which are also liberally sprinkled with evangelistic fervor and rhetoric. One such hand-written note was found among her type-written speeches: "I do not consider that I chose my work. I would never have had the wisdom or the courage to choose so well. It is a case of David and the sling shot, and though the weapon may be weak, the power behind the arm is mighty."[8] After hearing one of her speeches, a newspaper columnist wrote: "One is never allowed to forget for a moment that here is a woman with a mission, and that back of her burning message is the vision and consecration such as only one divinely called to lead a great cause can possess."[9]

Religion was an important part of Wilson family life, and they regularly attended the Christian Church, which Cora joined at age thirteen. The Christian Church, Disciples of Christ, was arguably the most progressive agent of social change in Morehead, evidenced by its influence in the founding of Morehead State University and the role it played in ending the Rowan County War. The war, actually a blood feud, began on an August election day in 1884, in a shooting incident that left one man dead and another severely wounded. It was never positively determined who did the shooting, but relatives of two families, the Martins and the Tollivers, and their supporters, lined up on either side of the issue until virtually the entire county was involved, including reinforcements from

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[6]Cora Wilson Stewart to Homer Wilson, February 12, 1940; "Information Sheet"; and "The Founder of the Illiteracy Movement," All in Biographical File, Box 1,Stewart Papers.

[7]Handwritten note on Hotel Wells stationery, Box 1, Stewart Papers.

[8]Box 52, Stewart Papers.

[9]Biographical file, Box 1, Stewart Papers.

adjoining Elliott, Morgan and Carter counties. During the next three years, twenty murders took place and an additional sixteen persons were wounded, yet not a single conviction for murder, manslaughter or assault was returned. The violence and bloodshed spawned by the feud was pervasive. It kept children home from school, often closed the doors of local churches, and kept rural people indoors, particularly at night. The Kentucky General Assembly revoked Morehead's charter due to the failure of local law enforcement officials to bring peace to the region and the perpetrators to justice . The worst of the feud finally ended on June 22, 1887, when Boone Logan and the "Law and Order League," with warrants and gubernatorial sanction, engaged in a two-hour gun battle, finally killing Craig Tolliver and a number of his family and supporters. Those who survived were jailed.[10]

That same summer, in an article in the Disciples' "Apostolic Guide," evangelist B.F. Clay suggested that the Kentucky Christian Missionary Society, an affiliate of the Disciples, send a missionary to Morehead. Conditions were so bad, he admitted, it was difficult to know whether to send the gospel or the militia to the mountains. He concluded that a mission school was the best way to fight this "feuding sin." Sharing this opinion, former Confederate General William T. Withers selected the State Board of the Christian Church of Kentucky, of which he was a member, as the administering agency. Moral and financial support also came from the Christian Women's Board of Missions. The call went out for someone to lead a mission school in Morehead, someone who could teach as well as spread the gospel to the "uncivilized mountaineers." The call was answered by Frank C. Button and his mother Phoebe. The school they established emphasized religious training and Bible studies, and school catalogues included requirements for daily church service and attendance.[11] Many people credit the combination of Christianity and teaching with ending the mountain feuds.

There is no doubt that the founding of the Morehead Normal School had a positive impact, educationally, socially and economically, on the region, a lesson not lost on the young Cora Wilson, and the feud, although seldom discussed and virtually never written

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[10]"Within This Valley," Souvenir Booklet published by the Morehead Rowan County Centennial, May 1956; Fannie and Alvin Madden Grider, "The Feud That Produced a College," Rural Kentuckian (Dec, 1984) pp. 9-12, 18; "Craig Tolliver Killed", New York Times, 23 June. 1887, all in Rowan County Histories, Box 10, Special Collections, Camden-Carroll Library, Morehead State University.

[11]Alonzo W. Fortune, The Disciples in Kentucky (Kentucky: The Convention of the Christian Churches in Kentucky, 1932) p228, pp. 356-361.

about locally, clearly captured her imagination. In 1902, under the pseudonym Edward T. Moran, she penned a fictional piece for the World Wide Magazine entitled "The Rowan County War," and often referred to the impact the feud had on her life. In a biographical sketch written later in life she credited Boone Logan as her first teacher and remembered that Craig Tolliver "used to hold her on his knee as a tiny girl and sing mountain ballads." Wilson wrote other fiction using the feud motif, including "The Feud of Fire" and "How the Feudist was Captured," both romances in the local color genre.[12]

Although Cora Wilson's early life in a feuding rural county were somewhat unique, in many ways, her experiences were similar to other young southern women of her time. Her family was not wealthy, but both her parents were professionals who encouraged intellectual achievement and cultural awareness. Wilson was always conscious of her upbringing and was quite proud of her heritage, which could be traced to the Lees of Virginia. Teaching was an appropriate career for a woman of her station, and at age fifteen, she began as an assistant primary instructor in the Morehead public schools. At that time many upper-class young women who needed to earn money were entering the "respectable" profession of teaching. Whether they taught in the public schools, opened their own small private schools, or taught in the small seminaries and private academies, many entered the work force with little formal training. This led many of them to seek further education at the normal schools which were beginning to open their doors to women. Small and inadequate as they may have been, these normal schools were extremely important because they offered the first systematic training to prepare women for remunerative work.[13] Cora took advantage of such a facility in Morehead, earning her teaching certificate in two years. She then attended the National Normal University in Lebanon, Ohio, between public school sessions. In 1893, she took a teaching position at Morehead Normal, but left it two years later to return to public school teaching.

Cora enjoyed her work, and earned the respect of her colleagues, but in 1898 she left teaching to attend the Commercial College of Kentucky University in Lexington. Within a year, she was offered a faculty position there, and became that school's first female instructor. At that time, a significant percentage of southern females, especially

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[12]Edward T. Moran, "The Rowan County War," The World Wide Magazine IX, 52 (1902) : 322, Box 52; "Biographical Notes," Box 1; "The Feud of Fire," "How the Feudist Was Captured," Box 53, all in Stewart Papers.

[13]Anne Firor Scott, The Southern Lady: From Pedestal to Politics, 1830-1930 (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1970) 111-115.

single ones, were entering the professions, and many jobs based on the new skills of typing and stenography were open to them. When her mother died, she considered it her responsibility to help her four brothers and two sisters finish their education, and consistent with her role as surrogate mother, left her teaching position for one that paid more money. She accepted secretarial employment in Huntington, West Virginia, where she remained until the spring of 1901.

She was then offered the opportunity to return to the career she loved, and at the same time, make enough money to help her family. Cora came back to Morehead in May to accept the nomination of the Rowan County Democratic Party as a candidate for county school superintendent, a unique opportunity. She was the first female in Rowan county to be selected for that position. Although they could not yet vote in national elections, the number of women being elected to public office was growing. In Kentucky four female county school superintendents were elected in 1889, eight in 1893, and eighteen in 1897.[14]

Wilson conducted a vigorous campaign and won by a large margin.[15] In Kentucky the office of county superintendent remained elective until 1920 when it was made appointive and removed somewhat from control by local politics. Wilson was chosen for her popular appeal, and although by experience and dedication to purpose she was well-qualified, that was not always the case. Many county superintendents were ministers of the gospel, or men of other professions devoting most of their time to their business interests, few were even experienced teachers,[16] and even fewer were female. As superintendent, Miss Wilson established a reputation for diligence, sincerity, and dedication, and her developing oratory skills made her much in demand on the lecture circuit.[17] In a speech entitled "Our Mountain Jewels," delivered at Soldier, Kentucky in 1902, she praised the mountaineers of her region, something she continued to do throughout her career, even as she lamented the endemic problems of isolation and ignorance: "We may search this wide world over, and we will never find men and women who have more good, common sense, or who possess nobler, truer hearts than our mountain men and women." Although her later focus would be adults, at this point in her career, her particular interest was the children, whom she said were like rough diamonds,

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[14]Helen Deiss Irvin, Women In Kentucky (Lexington: The University Press of Kentucky, 1979) 100.

[15]"Cora Wilson Stewart 'The Children's Friend' Candidate for School Superintendent of Rowan County," Box 29, Stewart Papers.

[16]Thomas D. Clark, A History of Kentucky (Lexington: The John Bradford Press, 1960) 366.

[17]Nelms, "Interview with Norman Welles", 14.

only needing the polish of education to make them priceless gems. This faith in education and in people was the foundation upon which she built her work. Inez Faith Humphrey, herself an imposing figure in Morehead educational and church history, wrote of Cora Wilson Stewart: "Her faith in people - the common people - remained an outstanding incentive throughout her constantly expanding program of work . . . In fact, Mrs. Stewart, whose spirit of progress and enthusiasm permeated all the movement, was developing the so-called 'new' method of our day in which we endeavor to make the school reach into the whole life of the community and lift it to noticeably higher levels.[18]

Particles of the "Mountain Jewels" speech, the first complete articulation of her philosophy, are embedded in all of her later work. In it she takes some parents to task: "If the parents have been small and mean and sordid, if the father has been a lazy man, a rogue or a drunkard, if the mother has been a slovenly woman, a grumbler or a gossip, some of the children are nearly sure to possess some of these objectionable qualities, and we call them chips..." These chips, unfortunately, could never shine with true brilliance, but they could be polished. Although the father's influence was important, in Cora's mind, the mother's was the most critical, and in this speech she specifically addressed the role of women: "If all mothers, instead of gossiping or discussing trivial affairs would devote their spare moments to reading the Ladies Home Journal, or the Twentieth Century Home, would take up nature study or ornithology or some other study, how much culture they could take on in a year."[19] Although these words have a slightly patronizing ring to them now, Wilson was a firm believer in education, seeing it as a virtual cure-all for the region's problems and an absolute necessity, if the region was to overcome its backwardness and move into the modern world.[20]

During her first tenure as superintendent, Wilson placed herself squarely in the forefront of community development projects. Her elected office placed her in a unique position as a woman, which she used to distinct advantage, but she also operated in the more traditional female arenas. She became active in church and civic programs. The church, according to Dewey Grantham, provided women in the south with their first real opportunity to become involved in the amelioration of social ills, and virtually all of the organizations used by southern women as an avenue into the broader fields of social reform

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[18]"Delta Kappa Gamma Project: Pioneer Women Teachers," Stewart Collection, Morehead.

[19]"Our Mountain Jewels," Box 46, Stewart Papers.

[20]Estes offers an interesting analysis on this subject. 120-125.

were church affiliated. The effect of this is to impart a kind of moral-religious tone to much of the South's social reform, certainly a characteristic of Wilson and her work. Like many others of her sex, she took part in the Women's Club movement, serving as president of the Morehead chapter. She also served as District Director of the Christian Women's Board of Missions, and a member of the Advisory Board of Morehead Normal School.[21] Membership in voluntary organizations was almost universal among professional women of this time, according to Anne Firor Scott. The framework of support, moral, intellectual and financial, often made reform endeavors possible and contributed to the shaping of a distinctively female professional style which relied on this female network.[22]

Her public life was quite full, her private life apparently less so. She married Alexander T. Stewart, a teacher in the district, in 1904, but the marriage lasted only seven years. Stewart came under frequent criticism in the small town of Morehead for being a "working woman," something somewhat uncommon at the time. While a number of women worked as school teachers, it was not a career in the modern sense, and in many cases, female teachers gave up their jobs when they married, and most certainly did so when they had children. Mrs. Stewart did not . She did choose not to stand for re-election as superintendent in 1905, perhaps in deference to her husband's wishes that she spend more time in domestic pursuits. In spite of this capitulation, Stewart remained active professionally with frequent speaking engagements and teacher-training institutes which she conducted throughout the state. She also served as principal of the Morehead Public School (1906-1907) and the model school at Morehead Normal (1908). A child was born to the Stewarts in August of 1907, but he died at the age of ten months. At that time, private criticism of Mrs. Stewart escalated into public gossip, with many people in the county chastising her for not devoting her full time and attention to her home and child.[23]

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[21]Dewey Grantham, Southern Progressivism: The Reconciliation of Progress and Tradition (Knoxville: The University of Tennessee Press, 1983) 16,17; "Mrs. Cora Wilson Stewart and her Connections in Recent Years," Biographical File, Box 1, Stewart Papers.

[22]Anne Firor Scott, Natural Allies: Women's Associations in American History (Urbana and Chicago: University of Illinois Press, 1991) 155, 156.

[23]Author's interview with Dr. Jack Ellis, November 19, 1993, Morehead, Kentucky; This overt criticism is an important theme of "Miss Cora, The Moonlight Lady, an interpretive performance by Laura Lee Duncan and Michael O'Connell; Nelms treats the marriage and its demise (16-21), but neither nor Estes,

This type of public and private criticism is difficult to document, but it cannot be ignored. Devastated by the loss of her young son, she plunged herself even more deeply into her work.

The dichotomy of home and career was of course not unique to Stewart. Many of her contemporaries faced the same criticisms and barriers to success. "To place a woman outside of a domestic setting, to train a woman to think and feel 'as a man,' to encourage her to succeed at a career, indeed to place a career before marriage, violated virtually every late-Victorian norm," writes Carroll Smith-Rosenberg of women at this transitional time in history.[24] In fact, many of Stewart's contemporaries, college women who made significant contributions to social reform in the Progressive era remained unmarried, and of those who did marry, a significant number remained childless.[25]

Education was clearly the focus of Cora Wilson Stewart's life and it was gaining in importance in her home state. It moved to center stage in Kentucky late in 1908 and remained there throughout much of 1909, due to the efforts of Dr. John G. Crabbe, Superintendent of Public Instruction. His "Whirlwind Campaign" aroused public interest in the need for better education in the state and rallied women's clubs, businessmen, civic leaders and newspapers to the cause. The state legislature, dubbed the "Educational Legislature of 1908," responded to public enthusiasm and passed a county school district law, a compulsory attendance law, and established a state educational commission to make a thorough study of the school system.[26] The excitement generated by the "Whirlwind Campaign" and the urging of her friend and mentor, Dr. Crabbe, compelled Cora Wilson Stewart to seek re-election as county superintendent in the election of November, 1909. She defeated the female incumbent in a vigorous campaign and once again assumed the leadership of the county school system. Returning to office with characteristic vitality, she immediately embarked on a number of important projects, including financial aid, vocational education and agricultural training.

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nor I, have uncovered significant information regarding her first marriage and divorce. Some local sources say she married and divorced around 1904.

[24]Carroll Smith-Rosenberg, Disorderly Conduct: Visions of Gender in Victorian America (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1985) 252.

[25]Eleanor Flexner, "Carrie Clinton Lane Chapmann Catt," and Anne Firor Scott, "Madeline McDowell Breckinridge," in Edward T. James (ed.), Notable American Women, 1607-1950: A Biographical Dictionary (Cambridge: The Belknap Press of Harvard University Press, 1971) 310, 233.

[26]Clark, 366-367.

In June of 1911, Mrs. Stewart was elected president of the Kentucky Educational Association, the first woman to hold that office. The visibility afforded by this position would be invaluable to her later work, lending both credibility and confidence. She had the support of Crabbe and other influential Kentucky educators, including most of the county school superintendents. Interestingly, Stewart's support of woman suffrage proved a decisive factor in her election. Unlike some women of her age, she was able to support women's causes without angering, intimidating or alienating men. A letter from Edgar C. Riley, a colleague in education, illustrates this: "Again let me suggest that you get away from the idea that what you do you shall accomplish for your sex. I believe that you bring that element less into your work than any woman I have ever known and I praise you for it."[27] In fact, Cora Wilson Stewart's brand of non-threatening feminism was quite common in the south. Many women who became influential southern progressives tended to be "quiet reformers." Most of them were religious, respectable and traditionally southern in outlook and demeanor. Although they were probably not revolutionaries, certainly their moderation and circumspection were in some sense tactical. They revolted against the traditional constraints that determined woman's place in southern life, yet they were careful to preserve the image of the southern lady and to reassure the male world that they were not out to undermine southern civilization. They went to great lengths to maintain the forms of southern womanliness, their instincts and judgment preventing the adoption of more aggressive forms of campaigning.[28]

Although Stewart was described by a contemporary in the 1920's as "in a class with Frances E. Willard, Susan B. Anthony and Clara Barton," she was also described by a newspaper columnist in Columbus, Georgia as follows: "Picture to yourself a woman who might have made a splendid impression as an actress or singer, a woman with a clear musical incisive voice, a buoyant, vital physique; abundant glossy hair of raven blackness; eyes of hazel with glints of gold, and a wealth of that indefinable, indispensable quality which we call 'magnetism' - there you have the best picture of Cora Wilson Stewart that can be given in cold type."[29] This image is supported by the photographs of Mrs. Stewart in pale lace, posed dramatically, but demurely, complete with fan and gloves.[30] She earned by grace, composure and eloquence what some women sought by bluff and intimidation on

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[27]Edgar C. Riley to Cora Wilson Stewart, August 13, 1911, Correspondence File, Stewart Papers.
[28]Grantham, 207-208.
[29]Biographical File, Box 1, Stewart Papers.
[30]See Appendix I.

the one hand, feminine wiles and helplessness on the other. On one of the many notepads she carried she wrote the following thoughts:

> "The primary purpose of men and women alike is to create the spiritual life here on earth. Our attitude toward one another must be [thus] . . . I must [focus] all of my actions, all of my thoughts, all of my ideas on our purpose of changing lives . . .Women - there is neither inferiority or rivalry - She is neither divine nor Amazon. The attitude that some women have toward men - physical helplessness- all the great prophets were alone."[31]

Stewart had a number of female role models. The most influential person in her life was her mother, followed by Jane Addams, Ida Tarbell and Carrie Chapman Catt. She also admired Katherine Pettit and Madeline Breckinridge, both Kentucky reformers with whom she had some contact.[32] Cora Wilson Stewart is described by Ms. Norma Powers of Morehead, a retired school teacher who as a young lady of fourteen or fifteen drove her family's automobile to the train station to meet Miss Cora when she visited: "She was a brilliant woman, always friendly and kind. She took a real interest in people, and was very well-liked by those who knew her. She was always well-groomed and dressed, and walked with her shoulders and head held high"[33] Mrs. Stewart no doubt realized that a conservative rural eastern Kentucky county would neither recognize nor applaud the efforts of a radical "new woman," but its residents would most certainly respond to an attractive, intelligent, well-bred southern lady, particularly if her efforts and goals were laced with moral fervor and religious rhetoric. She proceeded accordingly.

Cora Wilson Stewart often acted as secretary to adults who could not read, people who would bring letters from their children or other family members for her to read to them, and then pen their reply. She came to realize that in addition to these there were many in the county who were too proud to admit that they could not read. Rowan County had fifty school houses, but she knew it would not be possible for these illiterate adults to attend the already crowded day schools. She realized also that many would be reluctant to venture out over bad roads at night, and concluded that classes could be held on moonlit nights when students could see their way to school. When asked, all fifty teachers in the county rallied to her call for volunteers to teach in what came to be called the "Moonlight Schools."

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[31]Small notepad, Box 38, Stewart Papers.

[32]Diary entry on a notepad, January 20, 1926, Box 1, Stewart Papers; For an interesting, although somewhat speculative, comparison of Stewart with other female reformers, see Estes, 133-141.

[33]Author's interview with Ms. Norma Powers, November 20, 1993, Morehead, Kentucky.

The date for the opening session for illiterate adults was set for September 5, 1911, and word went out through the county. Teachers knocked on doors, volunteers called on their neighbors, and school children spread the word. Mrs. Stewart created a simple newspaper, The Rowan County Messenger, to serve as a text for the new students, not wanting to embarrass or humiliate them by using the same books the children used. The night the schools opened, the teachers were overwhelmed when over twelve hundred men and women arrived for instruction. Cora Wilson Stewart's crusade had begun.[34]

The philosophy behind the schools was simple and very basic: teach adults to read and write. This was always the goal. Some adults simply wanted to learn to write their name, rather than to continue making a mark. Others had literate children who lived away from home, and wanted to be able to communicate with them. Farmers needed "book learning" so that they could compete in a modernizing agricultural world. And virtually everyone wanted to be able to read at least a few verses of the Bible. This very limited goal was both the beauty and the weakness of the program. The founder of the Moonlight Schools was blinded by the former, and blind to the latter.

Cora Wilson Stewart kept an account of her efforts, which she published in 1922. Moonlight Schools for the Emancipation of Adult Illiterates defines her mission and tells how she accomplished it, while at the same time urging the rest of the nation to follow her lead. Although the book obviously has an inherent bias, her own words are useful in illuminating the personality and goals of the movement's leader, and shed light on her view of herself as reformer as redeemer:

> The crying need of 'the lamp of experience' to guide the teachers who are engaged in the fight on illiteracy impels the author to present the experience of years of strenuous campaigning against illiteracy in book form and likewise to show forth the achievements of adults who have passed from the darkness of illiteracy into light through the portals of the moonlight schools. This book is purposely written in simple language and kept free from technical terms. It is a message to the teachers of every land and would be as easy and accessible to those who have had little preparation for teaching as to those who are experienced and trained. Not for the teacher alone is it

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[34]Cora Wilson Stewart, Moonlight Schools for the Emancipation of Adult Illiterates (New York: E.P. Dutton and Company, 1922) 1-21.

written but even those who are not engaged in teaching will find a message, it is hoped, within its covers.[35]

Stewart's book chronicles the work of the Moonlight schools, the recruitment of students (which included teaching the infirm or recalcitrant in their own homes), the teaching methods, and the impact of the schools on the community. There were no readers in print for adult illiterates so a weekly newspaper was published as a reading text. Its purpose was to enable adults to read without the humiliation of having to use a child's primer, to stimulate interest by using local news and community events as subjects, and to arouse in the students through news of education and civic improvements in other districts a desire to make progress in their own. She encouraged competition among individual students and among districts within the county. Prizes were offered as incentive to learn. A sample reading text follows:

Can we win?
Can we win what?
Can we win the prize?
Yes, we can win.
See us try.
And see us win

Moonlight school instruction included drills in basic history, civics, English, health and sanitation, geography, home economics, agriculture, horticulture and good roads.[36] Students were not required to memorize much, because Mrs. Stewart believed this too difficult for adults.[37] She did however, encourage the memorization of Longfellow's "Psalm of Life," a requirement which speaks volumes about her philosophy and the schools' mission:

In the world's broad field of battle,
In the bivouac of life,
Be not like dumb, driven cattle,
Be a hero in the strife.
Let us then be up and doing,
With a heart for any fate,
Still achieving, still pursuing,

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[35]Stewart, vii, viii.
[36]See Appendix II.
[37]Stewart, 21-26.

Learn to labor and to wait.[38]

Stewart visited the Moonlight schools, riding by horseback or in a small buggy throughout the county, generally alone, to check on their progress and to offer encouragement. She particularly enjoyed "graduation," a gala event accompanied by cookies and lemonade, and used stories of these ceremonies to add emphasis and emotional appeal to her speeches:

> The newly learned gave an exhibition of their recently acquired knowledge. ...they were next presented with Bibles, and as they came up one by one, some young and stalwart, some bent and gray, to receive their Bibles with gracious words of thanks, it was an impressive scene - and when the Jezebel of the community came forward and accepted her Bible and pledged herself to lead a new life forevermore, there was hardly a dry eye in the house.[39]

The success of the Moonlight school program surprised even its founder. When the first school campaign closed, of the 1,152 illiterates in the county, only twenty-three remained illiterate. Six of these were blind or had defective sight, five were "imbeciles and epileptics," two had moved into the county as the session closed and four "could not be induced to learn." [40] The success of the campaign convinced Cora Wilson Stewart that the program should be broadened and she set out to do so. Under the headline "The Moonlight Schools of Rowan County," the Lexington Herald of Sunday, February 18, 1912, carried the following story, written by Mrs. Stewart:

> Among the beginners a desire to write their names and to read the Bible seemed to be their first ambition. Stalwart men stood at the blackboards after a few evenings' training and wrote their names with greater pride than ever filled the heart of a graduate from Harvard upon receiving his degree. ... The effect on the county ... has been wholesome. Some of the night schools resolved themselves into adult Sunday School classes; ... education is more popular; there is an increased respect for law and order; an intensified love for the Bible, the Sabbath school and all religious institutions is manifested; all hearts are happier and the people are firm believers and advocates of 'Moonlight schools' as one of the greatest blessings which has come to uplift them.[41]

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[38]Stewart, 31.

[39]Stewart, 52-53.

[40]Stewart, 55.

[41]Stewart Collection, Morehead.

In 1912, approximately 1600 students enrolled in the Moonlight schools of Rowan County, and ten other Kentucky counties implemented the program as well. Mrs. Stewart carried the message to the Southern Education Association meeting in Houston, Texas, that year. Her campaign began to take on the characteristics of an evangelistic crusade. In her speech before that group, she spoke of the pride and honesty of mountain children, emphasizing their spiritual nature: "Whatever may be said of the mountain child, he is wiser than many learned men in his knowledge of God. Religious fervor and reverence for his Creator are instincts as lasting within him as his immortal soul." Realizing that she would have to compete with other reform programs for both resources and support, she sought to idealize her subject and portray her cause as not only the most needful, but the most worthy: "There are races and classes which have to have education forced upon them. To force education upon the indifferent and the self-satisfied, while the most eager, hungry-minded children of the nation cry for learning is like taking bread from the starving and forcing it upon the satiated. . . . You do well to remember who these children are - not the descendants of the African, the Mongolian, or other inferior races, but the sons of the Clays, the Jacksons, the Lees, the Marshalls, and all the nobility of the South." Although this type of racism may seem unchristian to the modern reader, it was quite common at the time, and did not belie a religious motive. Later in the speech, she forcefully articulated her commitment to the cause of education, relating her experience with the Moonlight schools, and clearly illustrating the sense of mission that she had come to feel: "Education to me has been a religion . . . I have been as fervent in an educational revival as I could have been had I been an evangelist taking part in a religious revival."[42]

Cora Wilson Stewart often spoke of illiteracy as an evil in and of itself, one that had to be eradicated. In an address before the Kentucky Federation of Women's Clubs she said:

> And, shall we not, by our marching and our shouts and with the blowing of horns and bugles . . . so advertise the evil and disgrace that all will flee from it, and if one should by chance be left he will call upon the rocks and hills to hide him, and if one should grow up illiterate, so much will his disease be in disfavor that he will seem a thing unclean and as loathsome as a leper.[43]

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[42]"The Education of the Mountain Child," an address delivered before the Southern Education Association, Box 46, Stewart Papers.

[43]"Kentucky's War on Illiteracy," p. 6, Address before Kentucky Federation of Women's Clubs, Box 45, Stewart Paprs.

Christian progressives generally defined social problems and solutions in moral terms, and they spoke the rhetoric of "Victorian Protestantism," according to historian David Danbom. Many understood their task in terms of spiritual revivalism and began their crusade by acquainting the individual with his or her social sins of commission or omission. The next step was to bring about an alteration in character that was reflected in a higher standard of public behavior.[44] By expounding upon the evils of illiteracy, Stewart fit this mold, and employed many of the tactics used by Christian progressives in her struggle to eliminate it. For her, the second step of the crusade was the creation of an illiteracy commission which would proselytize, but ultimately secularize, her mission.

If the struggle was great, the rewards were many. In Moonlight Schools, and in most of her speeches, she mentioned hers: "Nothing better was ever given to any crusader than the privilege which was mine one Sabbath day, that of hearing a minister recently redeemed from illiteracy read from the Bible for the first time and preach from this text, which I thought strangely appropriate, 'who is this that darkeneth counsel by words without knowledge?'[45]

Through Stewart's efforts, the Moonlight school movement spread throughout Kentucky and to surrounding states. She urged Kentucky Governor James B. McCreary to create an Illiteracy Commission, and in February of 1914, spoke before the Kentucky Legislature meeting as a committee of the whole to consider the formation of such a commission. Her speech was apparently quite convincing. The Senate passed a bill creating the Kentucky Illiteracy Commission less than a week later. Although no funds were appropriated to support its work, the Commission had the authority to receive, hold, and disburse donations toward a state-wide fight against illiteracy, to organize illiteracy commissions in the counties, and to make surveys for the purpose of collecting information for their own use and the use of the next General Assembly.[46] Mrs. Stewart, named president of the commission, and influential members such as Dr. Crabbe and Superintendent of Public Instruction, Barksdale Hamlett, began to rally their forces by calling one thousand volunteer teachers into service. They then secured the support of the Kentucky Educational Association, The Kentucky Federation of Women's Clubs, and the Kentucky Society of Colonial Dames. They enlisted the press to conduct an information campaign and 120 distinguished speakers to carry the message to civic and church

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[44]David B. Danbom, The World Of Hope: Progressives and the Struggle for an Ethical Public Life (Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 1987) 85.

[45]Stewart, 41-42.

[46]Lexington Herald, February 12, 1914, Stewart Collection, Morehead.

groups.[47] Governor McCreary issued a Proclamation urging Kentuckians to join the fight: "The instruction of all the illiterates in the State will not only give to Kentucky higher rank, educationally, among the States, but will give her a new and distinct position as the first Commonwealth which has ever attempted to accomplish such a great and important work.[48]

In spite of Governor's McCreary's proclamation and a great deal of support on the part of individual legislators, the lack of funding did become a problem. Stewart used her contacts and influence in a variety of women's organizations, particularly the Kentucky Federation of Women's Clubs, to assist in the work of the commission. Kentucky's club women were enormously important in this campaign, both in fund-raising and in securing volunteers to teach in the schools. Club women from across the country also adopted illiteracy as a project, and many organizations sent either money, books, magazines or other supplies to assist in the effort. A number of historians have explored the work and contributions of the club women, and Joan Firor Scott indicates that virtually any woman of achievement in any field maintained strong connections with the voluntary associations. Many women who began working as individual crusaders turned to women's clubs when they realized the need for broader support, including Stewart's fellow Kentuckian, Madeline McDowell Breckinridge.[49] Certainly their assistance in the illiteracy crusade was invaluable. Club women relied on each other, a fact illustrated by a letter to Cora Stewart from Mrs. Nellie Elliot, principal of the Grant School in Des Moines, Iowa, and treasurer of the Des Moines Federation of Women's Clubs: "Naturally, being a school woman first, I am anxious to link up the club women with the various educational activities that are receiving special attention at present. Iowa is about to launch an illiteracy campaign through its state association, and as is always the case, no movement of that kind can be carried thru successfully without the aid of the club women."[50] On more than one occasion, Stewart counted on the club women to apply political pressure, something they did very well. In a letter to Sarah Luther, at the State Department of Education in

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[47]William F. DeMoss, "Wiping Out Illiteracy in Kentucky," Illustrated World, undated copy in Dr. Jack Ellis's Cora Wilson Stewart Collection, 828-832

[48]See Appendix III.

[49]Scott, Natural Allies, 157; "War on Illiteracy Planned by Women," Undated newspaper clipping, Undated Newspaper Clipping File, Box 60, Stewart Papers

[50]Nellie Elliot to Cora Wilson Stewart, 1921 Correspondence Folder, Box 3, Stewart Papers. This folder is also full of short notes, telegrams and letters from women's clubs across the country, pledging support, financial and otherwise, for the illiteracy effort.

Montgomery, Alabama, she wrote: "I am pushing the Smith-Towner Bill now through the Women's Clubs of the state. Every club is sending a telegram to the education committee and will send a letter to each member of congress."[51]

Politics got in the way of Cora Wilson Stewart's crusade, and in spite of the support she had from influential educators, civic and church groups, the legislature was reluctant to appropriate any real money toward the campaign, voting only a total of $5,000 per year for 1916 and 1917. However, American involvement in the Great War soon provided an opportunity for her crusade to regain center stage. Mrs. Stewart publicly charged that in Kentucky alone, 30,000 men, the equivalent of fifteen regiments, were illiterate because they had signed their draft registration cards by mark. The arrest of a young illiterate mountaineer, jailed for failure to register for the selective service, focused public attention on the problem. At his trial, he told the court he could not read or write, had never heard of the conscription law, and did not know where or what Germany was.[52] Mrs. Stewart gives a moving portrayal of her work with the illiterate draftees, and later with their mothers and sweethearts in Moonlight Schools.[53] In spite of its romantic appeal, this aspect of her crusade brought harsh criticism from her native state, where many did not relish being the illiteracy capital of the world.[54] Nevertheless, her work with illiterate draftees gained national recognition and the Kentucky Legislature appropriated $75,000 to the Kentucky Illiteracy Commission, but also mandated that the commission would cease to exist on June 1, 1920. When the time came to dismantle the commission, George Colvin, state superintendent of public instruction and an announced candidate for the Republican nomination for governor received most of the blame, as sympathetic newspapers became increasingly critical of the legislature for abandoning Miss Cora's crusade.[55] However, her movement had lost momentum in Kentucky as people tired of the issue and became increasingly convinced that their tax dollars were being wasted.

Just as she was losing ground in Kentucky, Stewart was gaining increasing national attention. The United States Army had taken up her efforts, even using The Soldier's First Book, which she had published as an aid to teaching young draftees,

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[51]Cora Wilson Stewart to Sarah Luther, 5 Jan 1920, January-June Folder, Box 3, Stewart Papers.

[52]Newspaper clippings in Scrapbook, Box 55, Stewart Papers.

[53]Stewart, 81-82; See also Stewart, "Moonlight School an Aid in the War," undated newspaper clipping, Undated Newspaper Clipping File, Box 60, Stewart Papers.

[54]Newspaper clippings in Scrapbook, Box 55, Stewart Papers.

[55]"Colvin Record Bars Claim as Illiteracy Foe: Superintendent was Chiefly Responsible for Discontinuance of Moonlight Schools," Undated newspaper article, Undated Folder, Box 60, Stewart Papers.

establishing camp schools both in the states and in Europe. One of the war's most decorated soldiers, Sergeant W. H. Sandlin, winner of the Congressional Medal of Honor, the French Cross of War and *Medal Militaire*, joined her crusade as a speaker relating his own experience in a far-off land, unable to communicate with his friends and family at home because he could neither read nor write.[56] Mrs. Stewart made a survey for the federal government which indicated that at least 700,000 of America's young men were illiterate because they had registered for the draft by mark. A number of states announced the creation of illiteracy commissions to deal with the problem within their own borders. In March of 1918, she had been offered the title Specialist in Adult Education for the United States, and the opportunity to work at the national level, but she declined in order to continue her campaign in her home state. That same year, the National Education Association created an Illiteracy Commission, and named her chairman.[57] This commission, through the state education associations, carried the word to every state in the union, and within the next few years, most states began to address the problems of illiteracy.

Illiteracy took on a new dimension in post-war America. The Russian Revolution caused many to be concerned about communism, and the "Red Scare" convinced some that America was at risk because of its high population of illiterate of semi-literate adults. The radical Americanization movement, led by Frances Kellor, advocated mandatory education for immigrants, recommending the teaching of not only reading, writing and arithmetic, but right-thinking as well. Lock-stepping to the beat of anti-Communism, they were eager to get Cora Wilson Stewart on their bandwagon. Although the National Education Association involved itself to some degree in immigrant education, Stewart steadfastly maintained her course, carefully avoiding association with their cause, primarily because in her home state there was practically "no foreign born element."[58]

After the legislative defeat of her program in Kentucky, which took place during the administration of a Republican governor, Stewart, a democrat, involved herself increasingly in the political process. It was even rumored that she intended to run for congressman in the Ninth District.[59] At the 1920 Democratic National convention, Stewart

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[56]"Kentucky Moonlight School Plan Carried Beyond the Rhine by American Army," and "Kentucky Hero will Make Plea for Education," undated newspaper clippings, Undated Newspaper Clippings File, Box 60, Stewart Papers.

[57]"The Crusade Against Illiteracy and its Founder, Cora Wilson Stewart," p.3, Biographical File, Box 1, Stewart papers.

[58]Cora Wilson Stewart's testimony before a congressional committee, New York Tribune, July 27, 1919, Stewart Collection, Morehead;Robert A. Carlson, The Americanization Syndrome: A Quest for Conformity (New York: St. Martin's Press, 1987) 92-100.

[59]"Opponents," Undated newspaper clipping, Undated Newspaper Clipping File, Box 60, Stewart Papers.

took up the cause of Ohio Governor James B. Cox, and made the seconding speech to his presidential nomination. Her efforts were rewarded by the Kentucky delegates, who, on the 36th ballot, cast one vote for Cora Wilson Stewart as president.[60]

However symbolic, this nomination was in many ways the high-water mark of Wilson's career. The decade of the 1920s would be hard on her. She had much work left to do, but the infrastructure she had built in Kentucky was collapsing under her feet due to personal criticism of both Wilson and her methods, and a change in the political climate of the state, essentially away from reform. The high tide of progressivism was giving way to "normalcy," evangelistic piety was being called into question by the "lost generation," and the "new woman" was seeking a place in a society in transition. Although women had gained the vote, they were still a long way from the reigns of power. Stewart would soon find herself the victim of power politics, and her crusade suffered as a result. The early years of the decade saw numerous accomplishments on her part: the publication of Moonlight Schools (1922), the creation of the General Federation of Women's Clubs Illiteracy Division, with Mrs. Stewart as chairman (1921), the convening of four regional Illiteracy Conferences, which she chaired (1921-22), the creation of the International Commission on Illiteracy which she also chaired (1923), and the organization of the National Illiteracy Conference (1923).[61]

The National Illiteracy Conference was to be a joint effort of the National Educational Association, the General Federation of Women's Clubs, the United States Bureau of Education and the American Legion. Stewart had proposed the plan and gained the support of all four agencies. She of course, expected to chair the conference. Dr. John J. Tigert, the Commissioner of Education, learned that she supported and planned to have the conference endorse the Towner-Sterling Bill, a congressional proposal that advocated the establishment of a Secretary of Education in the cabinet , which Tigert and the Coolidge administration did not support, and called for federal appropriations to fight illiteracy, which the Coolidge administration did not support. The injection of this political problem created strained relations among the four agencies, all of whom blamed Mrs. Stewart. She was removed as chairman. Although she did follow her instincts and leave the conference, she was angered and dismayed by the treatment she received and as a result. Within the

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[60]"Whos Who in the News," Lexington Herald, July 191, 1920, File Folder Six, Box 1, Stewart Papers.

[61]"The Crusade Against Illiteracy," Biographical File, Box 1, Stewart Papers.

year severed her relations with both the General Federation of Women's Clubs and the National Education Association in spite of their long-standing financial and moral support of her endeavors.[62]

In spite of this setback, Stewart continued her efforts, but they were often sporadic, lacking focus. In 1925 she was called upon to preside over the Illiteracy Section of the World Conference on Education in Edinburgh, Scotland, which she did with her old enthusiasm and zeal, and then traveled about Europe researching illiteracy and sight-seeing.[63] That same year she involved herself in a seventeen-state tour to publicize illiteracy in the nation's prisons. She also attended the Northwest Indian Conference where she introduced a textbook she had prepared for Indian illiterates.[64] Most of her effort in 1925, however, was focused on the creation of a new national organization to fight illiteracy, and the $5,000 cash award she received from The Pictorial Review magazine provided start-up funds. The award was presented annually to the woman who had made the greatest contribution to American life. The selection board was an impressive one, including Dr. John Finley, Associate Editor of the New York Times, Ida Tarbell, Dr. Sophonisba Breckinridge, and Maud Wood Park.[65] The prestige and publicity she received as a result of this award renewed her enthusiasm for the cause.

She spent the next several years organizing the National Illiteracy Crusade, putting together a board, and drumming up financial support, while at the same time maintaining a grueling schedule on the speaking circuit. She was able to put together an impressive Board of Directors that included William Allen White, Jane Addams, Ida Tarbell, Carrie Chapman Catt and Frank C. Button, but was less successful in gaining financial backing. When she met with Ida Tarbell to secure her service on the board, Tarbell said: "Mrs. Stewart - you have the crusade spirit, don't lose it in organization."[66] But that is exactly what happened. Stewart found herself constantly at odds with the "new professionals" in the field of education, the Ph.Ds who clearly regarded her as an old-fashioned school ma'rm from the backwoods of Kentucky. This group was spearheading the Adult Education movement, which Stewart could not bring herself to support. She remained ideologically committed to the cause of illiteracy, and fought all attempts to merge it with

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[62]Nelms details this disastrous conference and her reactions. 76-82; Dozens of letters in the October, November and December 1923 Correspondence Files document this episode.

[63]Diary entry, December 31, 1925 - January 1, 1926, Notepad, Box 1, Stewart Papers.

[64]"The Crusade Against Illiteracy," Biographical File, Box 1, Stewart Papers.

[65]"Recommendation Blank," File Folder 11, Box 1, Stewart Papers.

[66]Diary entry, January 20, 1926, Notepad, Box 1, Stewart Papers.

other movements. The conflict extended itself when she accepted the chairmanship of the Executive Committee of the National Advisory Committee on Illiteracy. The new educationists wanted to institutionalize the crusade, to create a bureaucracy to define the problem, study it, propose solutions and then implement the solutions. Of course, their major goal was to integrate it into the larger movement of Adult Education and to place responsibility in the hands of the public school systems. She was accustomed to the "whirlwind" campaign, the crusade, the mobilization of church and civic volunteers, the active method. She had no patience for bureaucracy. Besides, her definition of illiterate was not the same as theirs. By 1932, her crusade collapsed. Her efforts had been nullified by bureaucratic infighting and by the financial problems created by the Great Depression.

It could be said that Cora Wilson Stewart's entire life was defined by the times in which she lived. As a young woman she witnessed the brutality of a nineteenth century blood feud and saw first-hand the crippling effect illiteracy and ignorance had on that rural mountain environment. She sought modernization through education, but as the education movement itself modernized, she found that she had been left behind. In spite of her rural mountain background, she attempted to become a modern woman, a progressive, in some ways a feminist , but found that she could ultimately not escape the constraints of time and place. Ironically, the "new woman" of the 1920s gave way to the new men of the New Deal, who turned her crusade into just another social agency.

Lecture By Originator of the "Moonlight School"

MRS. CORA WILSON STEWART.

Mrs. Stewart, who has won national distinction in the educational world through her work of establishing "Moonlight Schools" for adults in Rowan county, Kentucky, during the past three years, will lecture at the Woman's Club on Wednesday evening, March 11, at 8 o'clock.

This address will be the first of a series to be given in the State under the auspices of the Kentucky Federation of Women's Clubs.

Moonlight Schools

Keep This

1917

Begin July 23rd

SESSION 24 EVENINGS--Monday, Tuesday, Wednesday and Thursday of each week for six weeks.

PURPOSE--First: To eradicate illiteracy from each district and from the state. Every teacher is *responsible* for the redemption of each *illiterate of his district.*

Second: To raise the standard of education in those who possess a limited education. The moonlight school is for the community. Everybody should go to school.

Third: *Special Aim for Session of 1917*--To teach young men between the ages of 21 and 30 who cannot read or write. This must be done before they are called to the colors. Otherwise they would be unable to read their own letters or to write back home. Every one of these should be offered the opportunities of the moonlight school. If there are any such who cannot come, let these be taught by the teacher; or by some one under his direction at home.

MOONLIGHT SCHOOL PROGRAM---

Devotional, 7.00 p. m., 15 minutes.
Reading, 7.15 p. m., 25 minutes.
Writing, 7.40 p. m., 25 minutes.
Arithmetic, 8.05 p. m., 25 minutes.
Drill, 8.30 p. m., 15 minutes.
Drill, 8.45 p. m., 15 minutes.

INSTRUCTIONS--

Assemble promptly.
Have plenty of light.
Do not permit day school pupils to attend.
For devotional exercises use patriotic as well as religious songs.
Teach them to sing the "Star Spangled Banner," "America," "My Old Kentucky Home," "Columbia, the Gem of the Ocean," "Tenting Tonight," "Battle Hymn of the Republic," Let students give Bible quotations, memorize 23rd Psalm, etc.
For prayer use the Lord's Prayer. Invite local ministers sometimes to conduct devotional.

READING--Country Life Readers. (Beginners' books furnished free to those who cannot afford to buy.) Lessons are based on good roads, spraying fruit trees, building silos, rotating crops, keeping out flies, taking daily bath, cooking lessons, civic improvements, etc.

WRITING--Use moonlight school tablet. (Provided free for beginners.) Use the first sheet, (blotting paper) to trace the student's name. Instructions given on first page of tablet. The colored impression sheets, used in this tablet, make it easy for students to learn. The copies from Country Life Reader are easy and catchy.

ARITHMETIC--Teach addition. subtraction, multiplication and division. Let students bring problems from the activities of the day---any purchase, sale or other transactions they have made.

DRILL--Questions and answers furnished on history, geography, language, home economics, agriculture, civics, etc.

This year the courses are short, and deal with patriotism, history of our country, geography of the warring countries, food production and food conservation. Language course, designed to correct careless pronunciation and in correct usage of languages.

Write to

KENTUCKY ILLITERACY COMMISSION

Mrs. Cora Wilson Stewart, President

Frankfort, Ky.

For Supplies, Books, Tablets, Pencils and Drills.
These will only be furnished for the moonlight school.

Proclamation by the Governor

At the last meeting of the General Assembly of Kentucky I recommended that a Kentucky Illiteracy Commission be appointed and authorized to inquire into and alleviate the condition of the adult illiterates in the State, and Mrs. Cora Wilson Stewart, chairman; Miss Ella Lewis, Doctor J. G. Crabbe and Doctor H. H. Cherry were appointed as members of the Commission. This Commission has inaugurated a State campaign, Mrs. Stewart being the active leader in the efforts to stamp out illiteracy through moonlight schools and other methods.

Upon their call for volunteers about one thousand teachers offered their services and are teaching or making arrangements to teach at night, and others are daily offering their services.

The chairman and leader in this great work has informed me that the Kentucky Educational Association, the Kentucky Press Association, the Kentucky Federation of Women's Clubs, and the Kentucky Society of Colonial Dames are taking much interest and are performing much valuable service, and that many other organizations in the State seem interested.

The aim of the Kentucky Illiteracy Commission is noble and exalted and of the greatest benefit, and there is no subject of more importance or of more far-reaching influence than the elimination of illiteracy from our State. We should educate all of our people, those under twenty-one years of age, and those upward of twenty-one years of age. The perpetuity of our free institutions depends upon the intelligence and virtue of the people.

There are 208,084 men and women in our State who can not read and write, and of whose intelligent efforts along the lines of education, religion and general development and advancement the State is deprived, and this constitutes a deplorable situation and presents a great and urgent need which should be promptly met and relieved.

Instruction should be offered to the mothers for their own sake and for the sake of their children and the benefit of the State; it should be offered to the fathers for their own sake and for the sake of increasing their earning capacity and promoting home comforts, and for the sake of a more intelligent exercise of the right of suffrage so as to help maintain good government for the State. Instruction should be offered to the young men and young women who have missed opportunities earlier in life, but may yet take hold of instruction and make achievements.

The instruction of all the illiterates in the State will not only give to Kentucky higher rank, educationally, among the States, but will give her a new and distinct position as the first Commonwealth which has ever attempted to accomplish such a great and important work.

I call upon all to help in the cause of education of those under twenty-one years of age and those upward of twenty-one years of age, and I appeal to every public and private teacher, every professor in our high schools, colleges and universities, all public officers, every representative of the press, every professional man, every farmer, mechanic and business man, and every woman who loves the blessings of education, and all who desire to promote religion, science, literature or art, or advance progress or improvement in any line, all who desire to lessen crime, to help in the great work of teaching adult illiterates, both male and female, to read and to write and spell and encourage them to seek knowledge and add to their acquirements by moonlight schools and by illuminated school houses where education is as free as the air we breathe, and where all may come to edify themselves and drink of the fountain of the water of life freely.

In testimony whereof, I have caused these letters to be made patent and the seal of the Commonwealth to be hereunto affixed. Done at Frankfort the 21st day of September, in the year of our Lord one thousand nine hundred and fourteen, and in the one hundred and twenty-third year of the Commonwealth.

JAMES B. McCREARY,
Governor.

(Seal)

C. F. CRECELIUS,
Secretary of State.

CECIL H. VANSANT,
Assistant Secretary of State.

Cora Wilson Stewart and the Moonlight School

Cora Wilson, later Cora Wilson Stewart, was born in 1875 and reared near Morehead in Rowan County, Kentucky. She trained for a career in education at Morehead Normal School and, later, at the National Normal University in Lebanon, Ohio, and began a teaching career at the age of 20 in a one-room school in Rowan County.

Her great abilities and tremendous dedication brought rapid professional advancement. In 1901 she was elected county school superintendent. She was re-elected in 1909, and two years later became the first woman president of the Kentucky Educational Association.

That same year she launched an experimental adult education program to combat illiteracy in her home county. The "Moonlight School" was a night school program because the majority of illiterates were employed during the day. Armed with both the unanimous support of faculty who performed this great community service without pay and with special reading books that Mrs. Stewart developed for adult learners, the program enjoyed spectacular success. The first year, with the teachers expecting 150 students, 1,200 arrived. The second year 1,600 enrolled. At the end of the third year, by Mrs. Stewart's count, illiteracy in Rowan County had dwindled from 1,152 to 23.

The "Moonlight School" became a model for adult education throughout the world, and Cora Wilson Stewart achieved national and international prominence. In 1923 she was elected to the executive committee of the National Education Association, and six years later President Herbert Hoover chose her to chair the Executive Committee of the National Advisory Committee on Illiteracy. She also presided over the illiteracy section of the World Conference on Education.

Success and recognition brought prizes and honors. In 1924, for example, she received Pictorial Review's $5,000 achievement prize for her "contribution . . . to advance human welfare," and in 1930 she accepted the Ella Flagg Young medal for distinguished service in the field of education.

Cora Stewart retired from public life in 1936—justifiably proud of the contributions that she made to her Appalachian homeland and her nation as a result of her crusade against illiteracy. She died in relative obscurity in 1958. Her accomplishments, like those of many Appalachian people, deserve greater scholarly attention and public recognition.

To commemorate her efforts in the state, national, and international crusade against illiteracy, in 1973 Morehead State University acquired and restored the "Little Brushy School" where Cora Wilson Stewart began her teaching career. Renamed the Cora Wilson Stewart Moonlight School, it 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 service in the mountain regions of Kentucky.

For tours or more information, contact the Special Collections Department, Camden-Carroll Library, Morehead State University, Morehead, Kentucky 40351-1689, phone (606) 783-2829.

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MOREHEAD-ROWAN CO KY

Eradicating Illit

A Century Ahead Of Her Time, Cora Wilson Stewart And Her Moonlight School Sparked The Battle Against Illiteracy Among Adults

At the beginning of the twentieth century a visionary named Cora Wilson Stewart marched into the benighted world of thousands of untaught, illiterate adults. A strong-willed woman seemingly born 100 years too early, she launched the first ever adult education program in Rowan County which became a model for literacy programs worldwide.

"Morehead and Rowan County have always been very mindful of her influence and legacy. Even today, Morehead State University offers the only Adult Education degree in the state of Kentucky, and that all started right here," says Keith Kappes, Vice President of University Relations at Morehead State University.

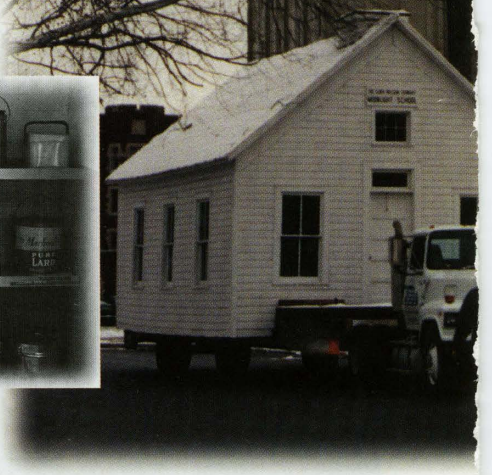
Born in 1875 to the educated family of physician, Jeremiah Wilson, and teacher, Anne Halley Wilson of Montgomery County, Cora was an early, avid reader. When the Wilsons moved to Rowan County in 1890 to set up Jeremiah's medical practice, Cora jumped at the chance to take classes at The Morehead Normal School (now Morehead State University) which had opened just three years earlier. Encouraged by her father to continue her education, Stewart soon earned a teaching certificate and began her teaching career in a one-room schoolhouse in the community of Little Brushy.

Educating and helping others to realize their potential came naturally to Wilson, who thrived in the classroom.

In 1900, Stewart ran for superintendent of Rowan County schools and won. Two marriages and nine years later, she ran again.

The citizens of Rowan County supported her commitment to education and recognized her Herculean efforts in the advancement of education in their region by electing her to a second term as Superintendent.

That same year, Stewart later claimed that three separate incidents propelled her to open the now-famous "Moonlight Schools." She met an aged mother who had learned to read and write to communicate with a daughter who had moved to Chicago, persuading Wilson that people could learn no matter what their age. She met a middle-aged man who with tears in his eyes offered twenty years of his life for the



▲ *The original Moonlight School was r now sits across the street from the Rov*

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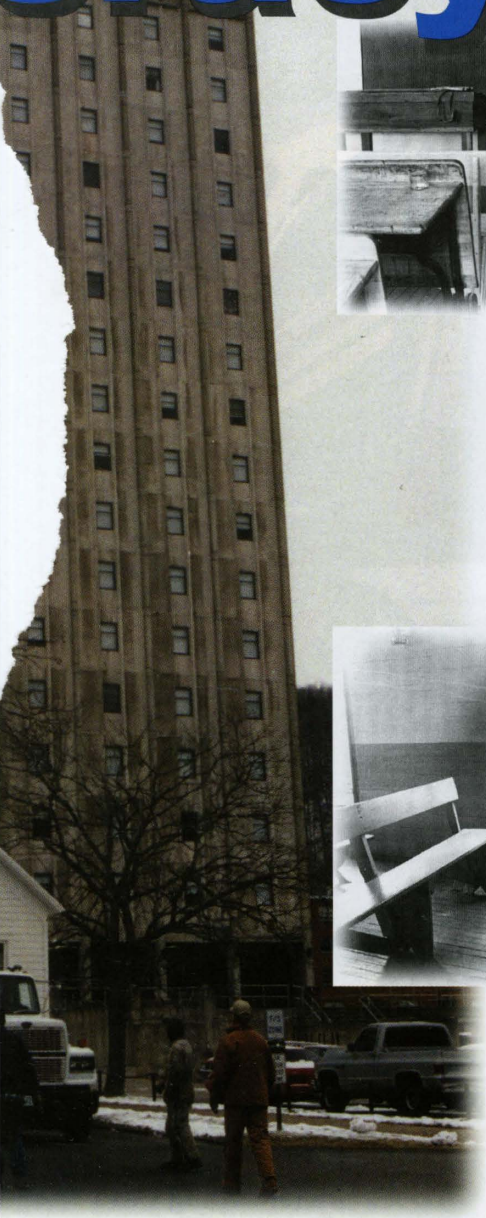

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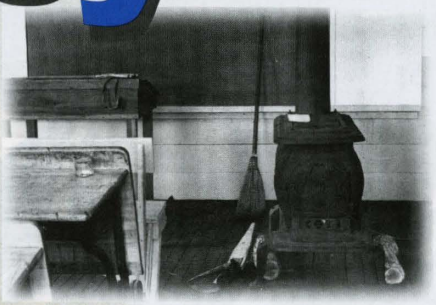

ability to read and write, convincing her that if the right motivation was at hand, the knowledge would follow. And lastly, she met a young man who composed tender ballads but could not pen them.

These encounters plus the stigma and embarrassment of illiteracy she had witnessed in her home county convinced Stewart that adult illiteracy must be eradicated in the mountains of eastern Kentucky.

"Students wouldn't learn if their parents didn't encourage them. She realized that if the parents didn't read or write, the kids wouldn't give much thought to it either," says Kappes.

Because most of the adult population of Rowan County worked in industry or agriculture during the day, Stewart decided to open the schools at night and use volunteer teachers as instructors. Citizens could come to these schools for free and learn basic literacy skills.

Stewart started with 50 schools in Rowan County, stating that if only three pupils enrolled in each school, the effort would have been a success. Willie Nelms, in *Cora Wilson Stewart: Crusader Against Illiteracy,* quotes Stewart that on "the brightest moonlight night, it seemed to me, that the world had ever known," more than 1,200 men and women enrolled in the first Moonlight Schools in Rowan County.

Students ranging in age from 18 to 86 sat side by side, learning to write their names, leaving the customary X that marked their identity far behind. She created a newspaper as a textbook entitled the *Rowan County Messenger* and gave away small Bibles as rewards for learning the alphabet. Classes were held for eight weeks from 6-8 p.m. Monday through Thursday evenings. Stewart also wrote adult textbooks such as a series called *Country Life Readers*, and *The Prisoner's First Book* to aid in the literacy effort.

Her success as a writer and orator for the cause of education soon lead her to consider a state-level leadership role. In 1911, she became the first woman president of the Kentucky Education Association. As president, Stewart gave an address concerning the mountain moonlight schools to the Southern Education Association in Houston, Texas, in December of 1911. Touched by her moving oratory about the mountain people's desire for knowledge and the inherent geographical difficulties, the SEA endorsed Moonlight Schools as a weapon against illiteracy in the South. Word spread and the counties who opened Moonlight Schools throughout the United States saw an increase in support and attendance of day time school as well as an improvement in adult literacy.

For the next two decades, Stewart devoted her life to adult education. She was responsible for the establishment of the Kentucky Illiteracy Commission, the National Illiteracy Crusade and sat on the Executive Board of National Education Association.

"She was clearly a woman ahead of her time, a true visionary," says Kappes. To honor her labor in the field of education, Morehead State University acquired the "Little Brushy School" during their Golden Anniversary Celebration in 1972 as a figt from William Dailey of Morehead. In a joint effort between community and university, the little white schoolhouse now stands in downtown Morehead as a museum and monument to the legacy of Cora Wilson Stewart and her fight to eradicate illiteracy in the mountains that she called home for 61 years. ■

STEWART, CORA WILSON

Born: January 17, 1875

Died: December 9, 1958

Cora Wilson Stewart, educator was born at Farmers, Rowan County, Kentucky, January 17, 1875. Cora Wilson Stewart was the daughter of Dr. Jeremiah and Annie Eliza (Holly) Wilson. Cora was educated at Morehead Normal School, also attended State University of Kentucky, Commercial College of Kentucky University and the National Normal University of Lebanon, Ohio.

Miss Cora, was Rowan County's first woman Superintendent of Schools.
Principal of Public Schools, Morehead, Kentucky 1901-5;
County Supt. of Schools, Rowan Co., Ky., 1901-5, 1909-13.
She became president of the Kentucky Illiteracy Commission May 1, 1913.
Cora was the founder of "moonlight" schools which was established in Rowan County Kentucky in 1911. The goal of the moonlight school was "to emancipate from illiteracy those enslaved in the bondage." Because the people had to labor by day it was decided to have schools on moonlight nights so the moon could light the way. The schools were taught by volunteer teachers. Moonlight schools (evening schools) in rural districts for education of illiterate adults. Movement soon spread nationally and internationally.

Cora Wilson Stewart was author of a bill creating the first illiteracy commission

Cora Wilson Stewart was awarded medals for educational service by Kentucky's Educational Association and by Trustees of Clara Barton Medal Fund.

Miss Cora was President of the Kentucky Educational Association from 1911-1912. She was a member of the Kentucky Federation of Women"s Club, She was a member of the National Arts Club (New York). Member of the Morehead Woman's Club, also a honoree member of Frankfort Woman's Club, member of the Christian Church, Morehead, Kentucky. Miss Cora was a sunday school teacher at the Christian Church.
Her Books: Author of Country Life Reader (Series for illiterate adult)
Soldiers First Book (for illiterate sodiers)
The Moonlight School
Contributions to magazines
Speeches

Home: Morehead, Kentucky

Miss Cora was a lecturer before educational and civic bodies, was a Trustee of Morehead Normal School.

Miss Cora was adwarded the first medal ever presented by Ky. Ednl. Assn. - 1913.

She became President of Ky. Ednl. Assn. 1911-1912.

Teachers that taught the Moonlight Schools - here in Rowan County

1. Jim Harris	Dry Creek	1912
2. Steve Caudill	Poplar Grove	1912
3. Claude Crosthwaite	Alfrey School	
4. Bethel Hall	Upper Lick Fork	
5. Farmer Ellington	Bangor	
6. Amanda Hunt	Carey	
7. Clella Porter		

Jess Link was a student of Bethel Hall. Bethel Hall is the only teacher who has a student still living.

Freeing America Is Her Huge Job

Beginning With Her "Moonlight Schools" in Rowan County, Kentucky, a Lone Woman Has Made Her Fight Against Illiteracy a National Crusade, Backed by the Government and the President—The Genesis of a Mighty Struggle and the Human Side of a Tremendous Project.

By DAVID RANKIN BARBEE.

"WITH an idea, my dear Mrs. Stewart, you can create a new civilization in ten years," said the late William J. Bryan, in a chance conversation on a Pullman car with a young school teacher from a feud county in her native Kentucky.

Mrs. Stewart had an idea. With it she has put the philosophy of the great Commoner to the test. It worked just as he said it would. She carried her idea to Geneva where the League of Nations meets. There she amplified it to educators assembled from all over the world. It thrilled the World Conference on Education just as it thrilled Mr. Bryan, and it filled that body of cultured people with a great enthusiasm.

"If nations are to avoid misunderstanding each other in the future, they must be educated. We must rid the world of illiteracy. Go back to your America, my dear Mrs. Stewart, and tell your great President that your country and his country should take the lead in this matter."

Thus the formal world recognition of the idea, born in a woman's brain in a wild feud county in Kentucky.

With fluttering heart and flashing eye back to America came Mrs. Stewart, bent upon carrying out the wishes of the World Conference on Education. If she could but enlist the sympathy of President Hoover, and through him place the Nation behind her idea, would it not be another step forward in the weary march toward universal peace?

Ramsay MacDonald was in Washington when she returned from Geneva, and while waiting for that apostle of world peace to end his visit, Mrs. Stewart, under the chaperonage of Senator Henry Allen, of [illegible] unfolded her idea and its [illegible] secretary of the In[illegible] he is not unable to be [illegible] practicing [illegible] The man continued to [illegible] stairs of [illegible]ing, and soon two theories [illegible], wonderful university kins the Leland Stanford. Among its alumni are Will and Wallace Irwin, the Wilbur twins and Herbert Hoover himself.

Secretary Wilbur has all the gifts of a rare conversationalist. He listens well, even when a woman does the talking. Mrs. Stewart never had a more responsive audience. It inspired her to talk her best. And when a woman has given birth to an idea, and has seen it grow from a tiny thing until a world conference adopts it as part of a program for world peace, she is apt to talk with understanding and with eloquence about her child. That is only human. And women, after all, despite the nasty thing of one Rudyard Kipling, are human beings.

Was he interested? Did he think the President would give her an audience? Would it be possible for the Government to put its influence behind the idea?

A womanly touch in these questions, to be sure. Have patience, my dear Mrs. Stewart, and we will see how President Hoover reacts to your idea.

When Mrs. Stewart went to get an audience with President Hoover, the next day, perhaps it was, she found that at Secretary Wilbur, the master salesman of ideas, had already "sold" them on the idea, and he had indorsed it in a letter to Mr. Wilbur.

President Hoover appointed a commission, or ratified a commission that [illegible] gave Secretary Wilbur authority [illegible] name, to carry out the wishes of the World Conference on Education. [illegible] that act, he placed the Government squarely behind the slogan: "No Illiteracy in the United States by 1930."

In April the census will be taken. It is the hope of President Hoover's National Advisory Committee on Illiteracy that no person in the United States will have to make his mark on the single census return when the census taker comes around. As there are more than 5,000,000 illiterates in this country now, what a job that seems to be.

In some communities illiterates have learned in two weeks to sign their names legibly, even to write letters that were fairly well expressed and fairly well written. Of course, Mr. Spencer might not have taken these letters as examples and placed them in his famous copy books, but most of them are marvels when one considers who wrote them and under what difficulties.

The campaign against illiteracy is not just now beginning. It did not originate with the appointment of Mr. Hoover's commission. A number of States have had such a campaign going for years; even now a dozen or more—well, one might say, every one of the 48—is conducting such a campaign, with a view to wiping out this blot on American civilization and keeping it sponged out.

Fairy tales usually begin: "Once upon a time there was a man." This is not a fairy tale, and as every tale must have a beginning, and this is the time and place for beginning this one, it starts: "Once upon a time there was a woman."

In 1911 Mrs. Cora Wilson Stewart was county superintendent of education in Rowan County, Ky. It was unusual even so recently as that for a woman, even in a backward mountain county, to hold such a position. But her father was, or had been, a Confederate soldier and her mother's family had fought in the Union armies, which was characteristic of so many Southern families, even in the States of the deep South, the cotton planting States. And this genealogy, together with her capability for holding the position, gave her the right to seek it, and no mountaineer could resist such a woman or deny her any reasonable thing she wanted.

There were fifty 1-room schools in Rowan County, taught by young women. Some of them were log cabins; some slabside buildings, and some neat little frame houses. In the early days these schools were called "Bark Log Colleges." Many a great man, many a great woman was an alumnus of such a college. So it is not to be wondered at that a great idea should have come out of such environment.

One day an old mountain woman entered the office of the county superintendent at Morehead, the county seat of Rowan County, and handing Mrs. Stewart an unopened letter, said:

"I reckon this'll be from my gal in the city. Won't you read hit to me."

Week after week this kept up. The old mountain woman had a large family of children, only one of whom, this daughter, had learned to read and write, and she faithfully practiced the art upon her old mother, who was too proud to let any one but the county superintendent know she could not read her daughter's letters.

After two or three months went by the old woman came in with her letter unsealed. This caused Mrs. Stewart to ask: "Don't you want me to read your letters; or have you some one else to do that for you?"

"No'm. I done larnt to read myself. I didn't like not knowin' how to read my gal's letters, so I bought me a speller and done larnt myself to read."

And so she had.

That day an aging man came into Mrs. Stewart's office to see her on a matter of business. He was well dressed for a mountaineer—had on his Sunday-go-to-meetin' clothes, in fact. Busy at the moment, she handed him two books lying on her desk and asked him to entertain himself until she has dispatched the matter then in hand.

The man turned the pages idly as a child would have done and soon had looked through both books.

"Perhaps you would like another book," the county superintendent suggested.

"No'm; I can't read."

It was said with a faint flush of [illegible] the bronzed cheek.

An entertainment at one of the county schools far in the hills from Morehead drew the county superintendent as one of the large audience. It was a typical mountain fanfare, with songs and dances and recitations, and much applause by the audience as favorite after favorite did his or her turn. A young troubadour from the hills came on the stage and in a sweet, untrained tenor voice, sang a ballad that arrested the attention of the cultured head of the county schools.

"Give me a copy of that ballad, won't you? I want to print it in the county paper," said she to the young troubadour.

"I can't write, 'Miss' Stewart," was the reply. All women are thus addressed in the everlasting hills of the famed Alleghanies.

"I've made up a lot more that's better and purtier than this one," he went on, "but no one was around who could write 'em down, so I've lost eve'y one on 'em."

That was a thoughtful ride the county superintendent took back to her home in Morehead that night. She couldn't even make conversation with the driver of the buggy in which they rode; nor did she hear him as with true Kentucky gallantry he tried to keep the embers of loquacity from going out.

"An old woman, a middle-aged man, this talented, untaught young poet. No one of them can read and write. This is not according to the law of justice. If they were blind and I could open their eyes by an operation, my duty would be plain. Are they not mentally blind? Can I not open their minds? Have I not the instruments right at hand?"

And then a prayer was lifted up just as the big round moon peeped through a rift in the white clouds o'erhead. A round white moon smiled at her, and she did not fail to notice its smile.

"It is more blessed to give than to receive."

Where had she heard that? And still the big round white moon smiled on, as she pursued her journey homeward, busy with the turbulent thoughts whirling through her brain.

When she was set down at home that night her companion, instead of being dismissed with the customary, "Thank you, it was very kind of you to bring me home," heard her say, more to herself than to him: "It is more blessed to give than to receive. It shall be given."

At the next meeting of the county superintendent with her 50 young lady teachers the county superintendent laid before them her plans, which she had carefully thought out. The idea had been born, like a child, in much travail.

She wanted to teach every illiterate in Rowan County how to read and write. Volunteers were called for. Expecting 10 per cent or maybe 20, she got a 100 per cent response. Every teacher came forward and agreed to teach as many illiterates as would come to the school house at night from her own district.

As Rowan County was a feud community, the people did not go out at night unless the moon was shining. So it was agreed to hold the schools only on moonlight nights.

Getting word to the illiterates was the next thing. It would not do to embarrass them by writing them letters. They would resent getting such an invitation through their own children or through a neighbor's children who were then going to school. There was but one way, and that the best way—personal visitation.

At an appointed day 50 young women started out early in the morning and visited the cabin home of every illiterate in their school districts; and at every home they met with obstacles which had to be broken down and overborne. The chief objection was age. "I am too old to larn."

On the night appointed for the schools to open, with another big round moon smiling down from the bluest of heavens, the illiterates started to school. Truly that was a picture that would inspire an immortal painting. What a mural to go into the monument America one day will erect to education.

Mrs. Stewart and her teachers expected an average of just three pupils at the opening of these moonlight schools—a total of 150. That first night the attendance was 1,152! Nothing like it in the history of education.

Poor hungry souls! Who knows what thoughts they had been thinking all the years of their mental blindness?

One old woman, 85, a great grandmother and one old man, 87, were enrolled. Grandfathers with their children and their grandchildren sat in those benches made for little children and were taught, first, how to write their names, then how to read them, and then how to read and write. Seven preachers among them!

Of course, the moonlight schools of Rowan County became world famous. Such a light could not be hid under a bushel. Soon the newspapers and then the magazines and then the educators and then [illegible] and [illegible] cusin[illegible] alone appr[illegible] that everybody but a [illegible] the adult illiterate mind was closed hard and fast to all knowledge and could not be opened.

Necessity, which gave birth to this idea, as she has done to many others that have forwarded civilization, spurred the mother of it to go forth to battle; first, with illiteracy in her own State; then with illiteracy in her own beloved South; and now with illiteracy in her own great country.

Success and fame have not turned her head; obstacles have not discouraged her. The former she did not court or covet, and means so little to her that she has not even taken the necessary precautions to preserve in the right place the historic memorials of her great work. Against the latter she has battled all her life, so they simply inspire her to overcome them and move on to the next position in front.

When she went to the Legislature to get a State illiteracy commission appointed the legislators told her, with a firm shake of the head: "There is no illiteracy in my county." How could she prove it? By consulting the census. That didn't lie. If men made their mark, the census returns would show it.

This indomitable woman came to Washington and went to the Census Bureau and asked permission to copy the returns from Rowan County. It was denied her.

Nothing daunted, she appealed to Senator Ollie James, big-hearted Ollie of the Pennyroyal. And Senator James, took a crowbar in the shape of a note from Woodrow Wilson or William Howard Taft and got the returns from Rowan County for Mrs. Stewart. She copied them and the Census Bureau was so obliging it copied those of every county in Kentucky, and, as they were wanted, of every State in the Union.

Now, Mr. Legislator, shake your head and deny that your county has any illiteracy.

When one in the Kentucky Legislature did, on her second appeal for her commission, Mrs. Stewart handed out the certified copy from the Census Bureau showing the number of illiterates and who were illiterate in that legislator's county.

Continued on Page 15, Column 1.

A "Moonlight School" in Rowan County, Kentucky. Note the presence of all ages from childhood to the white haired patriarchs of the community.

Freeing America Is Her Huge Job

Continued from Page 3.

It took three years to get the Illiteracy Commission in Kentucky, and to Gov. James B. McCreary goes the honor of appointing it. With his support, the idea born in Rowan County became a State policy; and soon Kentucky was cleaning up her illiteracy, even going into the two State prisons and teaching the illiterates there.

Alabama was the second State to fall in line, and then South Carolina and then Arkansas, and after her North Carolina. Louisiana was the last of the Southern States to fall in, the movement being resisted by the State department of education up until a year ago even though in that State, in Terrebone Parish, some years ago, one of the most remarkable exploits in removing illiteracy was undertaken and brought to a successful ending. Now Louisiana, with a gift of $50,000 from the Rosenwald Foundation, is cleaning up her illiteracy and weeping, no doubt, because she delayed it so long.

In 1913, Prof. P. P. Claxton, then United States Commissioner of Education, issued noted bulletin No. 20, the first recognition the Government had taken of the illiteracy campaign. Only one copy of that bulletin survives. Five commissioners have since indorsed it, but it was not until 1917, when a check-up of the draft showed that 700,000 illiterates had been drawn for duty in the Army, that the country at large woke up to the national shame and national scandal that existed.

Right after that the National Educational Association, in 1918, through the urging of Mrs. Stewart, appointed a committee on illiteracy, with the mother of the idea as chairman; followed in 1922 by similar action by the General Federation of Women's Clubs, which also had the good sense to name Mrs. Stewart as chairman of its committee; and in 1924 the National Council of Parents and Teachers Associations took like action, and on a third great committee Mrs. Stewart was made chairman. This led the American Legion to enter the campaign, and the last unit to be formed in this movement was the National Illiteracy Crusade, of which Dr. John H. Finley is president; Dr. Glenn Frank and Jane Addams vice presidents, and Mrs. Stewart director, with a long list of prominent men and women as directors.

It was in 1926 that this crusade was organized, in Washington, on February 22, with President Coolidge blessing it with his indorsement and the American Red Cross and various private endowments and individual donators financing it and giving it a domicile.

Right now two national organizations are functioning together in this movement; one from the Department of Interior, with Secretary Wilbur at its head, and Mrs. Stewart as chairman of its executive committee; and the other in the Washington Building, which is now the home of the National Illiteracy Crusade, where Mrs. Stewart is directing the work of that organization.

On January 10, at the invitation of Secretary Wilbur, a committee on technique, composed of eminent educators and others, met here for five days and composed a manual to be used in the national campaign. This committee is made up Dr. Charles R. Mann, of the American Council of Education, chairman; Dr. M. S. Robertson, of the Louisiana State Department of Education; Mrs. Stewart, Dr. L. R. Alderman, director of the service division of the United States Bureau of Education; Dr. C. R. Judd, director of the college of education of the University of Chicago; Dr. William S. Gray, dean of the college of education of the University of Chicago, and L. M. Legendre, of Louisiana.

The manual adopted is based upon the one that has been used in Louisiana, where 100,000 adult illiterates have been taught to read and write within the past year.

It is from Louisiana that some of the most beautiful stories have come as the result of this movement. That State stands at the bottom of the poll in illiteracy.

At one of the schools held for the Negroes one old woman, seventy or more years of age, came forward to get her diploma from the State superintendent, Mr. T. H. Harris. When it was placed in her trembling, gnarled old hands she turned to the audience for one brief wistful second and then her eyes, filled with tears, sought those of Mr. Harris.

"I thanks you, sir, for this. For a long time Ise been bothered about what I would do when I got to heaven. How was I gwine to sign de golden book ef I couldn't write my name. Now, thank God, I can write my name, and I'm ready to go. Nothin' bothers me any mo', bless de Holy Name of de Lord."

Such incidents could be multiplied, from the "darkest" South.

Why should this famous idea have originated in the South where historians tell us that slavery and the large Negro population have kept down all creative impulse? Of course, that didn't happen in Greece or Rome or with the Hebrew people. But they were different.

It is most unusual, indeed, that this "benighted" South should have organized the first woman's college in America that gave academic degrees. This is the Wesleyan Female College at Macon, Ga. And the first public high school in America, which is the old Barton Academy at Mobile, Ala. And the first State university and astronomical observatory in America, which is at Chapel Hill, N. C. And that the modern method of instruction in the ancient classics, popularly attributed to Curtius, of Germany, Prof. Gessner Harrison, of the University of Virginia, born at Harrisonburg, in the Valley of Virginia, was teaching his classes at the University ten full years before Curtius made his system known to the world.

Prof. John Dewey, of Columbia, some time ago said that the only modern idea in education in the world in half a century was the Johnson outdoor or academic grove school at Fairhope, Ala., and he had his youngsters educated there. This rather noted experiment in education was born just like the moonlight schools were born, from necessity; because the climate on Mobile Bay was so mild school could be taught while walking through the pine forests and the groves of bearded oaks; and because Mrs. Martha Johnson had no money with which to build a schoolhouse.

Of course, Mrs. Johnson, a cultured woman, got her inspiration from reading Plato and Aristotle, and probably from reading the Bible, for Socrates and Jesus of Nazareth both taught in the groves and in the fields, on the seashore and by the side of the well at Sychar. There is nothing new in the world.

What a strange world these 5,000,000 illiterates will be looking out upon six months hence. How proud they will be when the census taker comes around and hands them the questionnaire to sign! And what a load will be lifted off of many minds who now for the first time can read the Bible. They can pick out for themselves the story of the man born blind whose eyes the Saviour anointed with clay and spittle and who on being healed went forth shouting praises of Him who did the healing.

If this improves the quality of preaching, let us all be thankful.

Herbert Hoover recently in a striking phrase referred to illiteracy as "a dungeon." How, then, shall we call the lone woman through whose mighty efforts this dungeon has been opened and chains and shackles that bound so many minds have been broken and cast aside?

indicated on a topographic map to insure the location coordinates are the same as those on the permit issued to the person or firm drilling the well.

Notes

1. Commonwealth of Pennsylvania, Department of Commerce, Pennsylvania, *Industrial Census Series Release Number M-5-77,* 1978 editions. See individual booklets for each Pennsylvania County: Page 5 for Cameron, Clearfield, Elk, Jefferson, McKean, and Potter Counties.
2. U.S. Department of Commerce, Bureau of the Census, *Population Estimates and Projections,* November 1979, pp. 15,17,18,21,25,30, and 34.
3. U.S. Department of Commerce, Bureau of the Census, *Population Estimates and Projections,* November 1979, pp. 15,17,21,25,30, and 34.
4. North Central Pennsylvania Regional Planning and Development Commission, *1978 Areawide Action Program Document,* p. 49. (Material taken from the *1979 Pennsylvania Statistical Abstract.)*
5. North Central Pennsylvania Regional Planning and Development Commission, *1987 Areawide Action Program Document,* p. 49. (Material taken from the *1978 Pennsylvania Statistical Abstract.)*
6. *Bradford Vocational-Technical Drilling-Oil Production Course,* project application submitted to the Appalachian Regional Commission, May, 1978. See Attachment A. p. 1.
7. *Bradford Vocational-Technical Drilling-Oil Production Course,* project application submitted to the Appalachian Regional Commission, May, 1978, pp. 7-8 .
8. Myron A. Crumrine to Robert A. Rusiewski, January 24, 1980.
9. Pennsylvania Geological Survey, *Oil and Gas Development in Pennsylvania in 1977, Progress Report 191,* 1978, Figure 2.
10. Myron A. Crumrine to Robert A. Rusiewski, January 24, 1980.
11. *Powdered Metal Technology Program, Seneca Highlands Area Vocational Technical School,* project application submitted to Appalachian Regional Commission, April, 1979, pp. 3-4.
12. Commonwealth of Pennsylvania, Department of Environmental Resources, *1977 Annual Report on Mining, Oil and Gas, and Land Reclamation and Conservation Activities,* p. 116.

Coral Wilson Stewart and the "Moonlight School" Movement

James M. Gifford

Abstract

This paper traces the remarkable educational career of Cora Wilson Stewart who pioneered the "Moonlight School", a night school program for illiterate adults in her home county in eastern Kentucky. The success of her program was felt far and wide: many states adopted versions of it, the reader she devised was published for use as an aid to illiterate American soldiers in World War I, and she later served on national and international commissions on illiteracy. All told, her most satisfying accomplishment was the progress she brought to her own people of eastern Kentucky.

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." Her memorabilia are 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 antitrust stance or the unfolding split in the Republican party, eastern Kentuckians "made do".[1] 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.[2] 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.[3]

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 wartime opponents from the mountain counties through political and economic retaliations.[4] 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 lift the people of Appalachian Kentucky from their "cultural depravity".[5] 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 America and eventually the world.[6]

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."[5]

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 150 were expected; 1,200 arrived. Twelve 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."[6]

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.[7]

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."[8]

The second year of the moonlight school was more successful than the first. Sixteen 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

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 o Rowan County. She attended Morehead Normal School and the Nationa Normal University in Lebanon, Ohio, and then began a teaching career in he home county in 1895. She quickly earned a reputation as an outstanding educator, and in 1901 Rowan Countians elected her to serve as county schoo superintendent.[1]

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 Norman 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."[2] Her other regional presentations were equally well received.[3] 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."[4]

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.[5] 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."[6]

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.[7]

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 particulary 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.[8]

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

established, and teachers like Gladys Thompson taught in the homes of individuals who were too old or ill to attend night classes."

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 lemondade 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, 6 were blind or had sight problems; 5 were bedridden invalids; 6 were defined as "imbeciles and epileptics;" 2 had only recently moved to this county and 4 "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." 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 exofficio member."

To promote the state effort against illiteracy and, at the same time, to reward her original Moonlight School teachers, Mrs. Stewart took her Rowan teachers on a vacation of the northern United States and Canada. A trip to Niagara Falls highlighted the tour. Financial and moral support from private organizations, like the Colonial Dames, and from many church groups and civic-minded individuals soon followed." 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 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.
I am glad the 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 twenty-one and thirty-one were registering for military service. The 700,000 illiterate national registrants included 30,000 Kentuckians."

Cora Wilson Stewart and the Kentucky Illiteracy Commission responded immediately. Realizing that the regularly scheduled fall session of the moonlight school 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." 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."

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, tent, bulletin boards, parade grounds, and the "rule of kings."

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."

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 Joh 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."

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 school were adapting Cora Stewart's program to European needs." 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."

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 seventy-five 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."

Many other states launched adult education programs that were carefully patterned after Cora Wilson Stewarts Moonlight School and the Kentucky Illiteracy Commission. As the movement grew, it received support and encouragement from the National Educational Association and other national organizations. 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 Twenties 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."

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 Metal for distinguished service to education in 1930."

Throughout the thirties and forties, 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."

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.

Notes

1. George 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.

2. There 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). See also Also Archie Green, *Only a Miner: Studies In Recorded Coal-Mining Songs* (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1972), chap. 7.

3. For 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, sixteen-hundred-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* 8 (Winter 1980: pp. 34-37

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 Appomattox. 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), pp. 12-14, 24; Virgil Carrington-Jones, *The Hatfields and the McCoys* (Chapel Hill, North Carolina: The University of North Carolina Press, 1948), p. 18; Mrs. A.J. Davidson, *Josie M. Davidson: Her Life and Work* (Prestonburg, 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,* Vol. 1 (Frankfort: The State of Kentucky, 1915), pp. 338-42.

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,* ed. 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* 6 (1978): 1-8. See also F. Scott Rogers, "The Missionaries' Effect on the Appalachian Self-Image," *Appalachian Notes,* 1 (Fourth Quarter, 1973): 1-8, esp. p. 2; and Jim Wayne Miller, "Where Do You Come From, Where Do You Go? Appalacahians as Immigrants in Their Own Land," *Mountain Review* 2 (July 1976): 40-41; and Bill Best, "A Case for Appalachian Scholarship," *Mountain Life and Work* 46 (November 1970): 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). The gracefully written study focuses "on her career as an educational reformer...and her contributions to adult education..." (hereinafter cited as Nelms, Crusader Agains Illiteracy"). A more specialized, synoptic, published version of this study is Willie E. Nelms, Jr., "Cora Wilson Stewart and The Crusade Agains Illiteracy In Kentucky," *The Register of The Kentucky Historical Society* 74 (January 1976): 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. McDougle addressed "To Whom It May Concern," July 30, 1908, CWS Papers, Box 2, UK.

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

11. O.F. Gray, superintendent of Elliot County Schools, to Cora Wilson Stewart, August 12, 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. 119-20.

13. Everett L. Dicks to Cora Wilson Stewart, June 30, 1911, and J.G. Crabbe, President of Kentucky Normal School, To Cora Wilson Stewart, July 6, 1911. CWS Papers, Box 2, UK. See Also J.S. Dickey, president, Bowling Green Business University, to Cora Wilson Stewart, July 30, 1911, E.C. McDougle to Cora Wilson Stewart, June 30, 1911, and W.C. Kozes, superintendent of Carter County Schools, to Cora Wilson Stewart, July 1, 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,* Chap. 3; Sherman Porter, Managing editor of the Lexington *Herald,* to Cora Wilson Stewart, July 29, 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, February 9, 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, December 16, 1913, and McCreary to Stewart, February 19, 1914, quoted in Stewart, *Moonlight Schools,* pp. 56-61; 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, pp. 101-3.

33. Ibid, pp. 103-5.

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* 79 (Autumn 1979): 291.

35. Stewart, *Moonlight Schools*, pp. 112,117, and 112; Nelms, "Crusader Against Illiteracy," Chap. 3.

36. Stewart, *Moonlight Schools*, chap. 12, passim. The Cora Wilson Stewart Papers, housed in 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," chap. 4.

38. CWS Papers UK; Nelms, "Crusader Against Illiteracy," chap. 5.

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 show case 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.

UNTYING SOME KNOTS IN KNOTT COUNTY: TWO EDUCATIONAL EXPERIMENTS IN EASTERN KENTUCKY

William Terrell Cornett

Abstract

In 1902 the first rural "settlement" institution in America opened its doors at Hindman, Knott County, Kentucky. Twenty-one years later, Alice Lloyd began her junior college on nearby Caney Creek, an extension of the settlement school idea into higher education. Together these two educational facilities have long experiemented with solutions that would untie some of the persistently knotty cultural, social, educational, financial, and governmental problems which have plagued this and other eastern Kentucky counties.

Begun as a charity mission, yet with high vocational and academic standards, these Appalachian schools, having adapted to changing times and new demands, still serve as educational models.

As counties go, Knott County in eastern Kentucky was typical of much of rural Appalachia at the turn of the century: small in area and in population, rather isolated, conservative, and economically deficient. Not the kind of place suited for true innovation, most onlookers would have guessed. Yet by the time the first quarter of the new century drew to a close, the societal, occupational, and mental complexion of Knott and surrounding counties had begun to change — overtly due to the coming of large scale coal-mining operations, but just as importantly (however less noticeably) because of the success of two educational experiments in Knott County.

Conducted within eight miles of one another, established under similar circumstances and for somewhat similar reasons, these two experiments in mountain education constitute a remarkable page in Appalachian and in American history. Both were carried out by dynamic, headstrong Victorian women who faced nearly impossible odds, and whose intelligence, compassion, and single-mindedness brought the success they so desperately hoped for. These two experiments were called the Women's Christian Temperance Union (WCTU) School and the Caney Creek Community Center School. But they were more than what either name implied; they were nothing less than new ways of life for the mountains.

Today the names are changed but their sense of mission remains. The WCTU School became Hindman Settlement School (at Hindman, Kentucky), while the Caney Creek Community Center School (at Pippa Passes, Kentucky) is now better known as Alice Lloyd College.

In this study we will look at similarities and differences between these two schools, and at some of the ways (many times radically innovative, but occasionally reactionary) that each approached the common goal of untying some of the knotty social, vocational, and educational problems of Knott County and its surroundings.

Knott County, Kentucky, was created in 1884, the 119th (or next to last) county to be formed in Kentucky, and was named for the incumbent governor, James Proctor Knott. For the first decade and a half of the county's

WHO IS MRS. CORA WILSON STEWART?

Mrs. Cora Wilson Stewart of Frankfort, Kentucky was a superintendent of schools in the little mountain county of Rowan. Today she is the president of the Kentucky Literacy Commission and a woman of national reputation and importance.

Kentucky has a record in the census of 1910 of 208,000 adult illiterates, largely native-born whites. She stands No. 37 in the illiteracy column. Mrs. Stewart was the one person in Kentucky with the initiative to change these figures. She called the teachers of her county together in conference. They talked about the conditions of the mountain men and women whom Kentucky had neglected from childhood to old age. They planned a campaign of education—EVERY TEACHER VOLUNTEERED TO TEACH EVENING SCHOOL.

On Labor Day, 1911, these teachers, on foot and on horseback, reached every house in Rowan County announcing the opening of evening schools in all the school houses of the county and urging the attendance of everybody who wished to learn to read and write.

The next night 1200 men and women, aged from 18 to 85 years, assembled in the different school houses. Teachers went to homes and gave the first lessons to those too shy to venture forth. The second term 1600 men and women went to school. In 1912 a Moonlight School Teachers' Teachers' Institute was held and Moonlight Schools spread to fifteen other counties.

The evening schools were called Moonlight Schools because they were always begun on moonlight nights when it was safer to travel over the mountain paths and to cross the unbridged streams.

The adult students overturned all time-honored pedagogical theories. The people between 50 and 60 years of age learned as children have never learned, frequently writing and reading letters after two weeks' schooling.

One of the earliest civic results was a new interest in country roads. One of Mrs. Stewart's moonlight slogans was "A road drag for every school and a quarter of a mile of road dragged before every school."

Communities made learning the business of the hour and by 1914 there were just 14 illiterates left in Rowan County; 4 of these were stubborn people who could not be persuaded to try, 7 were incapacitated and 2 were newcomers.

This work was accomplished by the efforts of school teachers, mountain boys and girls who received little more than $50 per month for six months in the year; in spite of no roads and bad roads, unbridged streams and hard winters.

What Rowan has done all Kentucky will do, is doing. The Governor of that state has appointed a Literacy Commission, of school teachers, with Mrs. Stewart as its president. He has issued a proclamation to his people urging every man and woman to help in liberating the state from illiteracy.

The Kentucky Federation of Women's Clubs has paid the expenses of Mrs. Stewart to speak to every club in Kentucky. The Colonial Dames have constituted themselves a finance committee. The Press Association has thrown itself into publicity necessities. Every envelope used by these societies bears in large letters, "NO ILLITERACY IN KENTUCKY IN 1920."

Sunday, October 25, 1914, was Illiteracy Sunday for every church in Kentucky.

The Illiteracy Commission is now in active campaign; 120 speakers are keeping up the enthusiasm and securing supplies; 1000 teachers at a time are in the field, volunteering for a period of six weeks.

Kentucky is enlisted to win. Kentucky challenges the nation for the lead in literacy in 1920.

THE MAKING OF AMERICANS

That the foreign born with their children comprise over one-third of the population of the United States is a startling fact.

They have been led to leave the land of their birth by a vision of freedom. With some it is abstract—a vision of ideals. With many it is very concrete—a vision of enough to eat. Always it is a vision of freedom which makes for a fuller life. They have turned for the realization of that vision to the country which symbolizes its spirit in the Statue of Liberty.

They have much to give to us from their racial past and we have much to give them. But before we can give or accept there must be a mutual interpretation, there must be a common language. Logically then, the first step in the Americanization of the foreigner is to teach him English.

This is necessary that he may protect himself and that he may not endanger others. In many states there are laws prohibiting the employment, in any hazardous undertaking, of men who cannot speak and read English.

It is necessary that in the rapid Americanization of his children, the alien may still be the head of his household. Otherwise the result will be certain disintegration of the family life.

In short it is necessary, that he may improve his economic status and avail himself of political privileges.

In a pure democracy there is a menace in having a large population who have no voice in the government. It is a disrupting influence, a fertile soil for the seeds of anarchy.

The Immigrant Welfare Commission of Cincinnati frankly state their purpose "to help the immigrant to become good American citizens for the sake of our country primarily and of the immigrant secondarily."

The danger comes perhaps not so much from the immigrants as from the leadership we give them and the ideals we hold up before them.

This work is being done in a few cities under municipal control, and in most cities by numerous private agencies, but as yet no state has worked out a plan.

The Commission of Immigration and Housing of California, in conjunction with the State Board of Education has borrowed from the Federal Department an expert, who is working out a system of text books for the teaching of English and citizenship. These books, by January, 1916, will be issued free to each adult person registered in the night schools.

California has blazed the trail for many remedial and educational successes and has become known as progressive. Now if she shall provide the first State plan for the teaching of English to the adult immigrant, we shall be justified in feeling a sense of pride.

And then if the California Federation of Women's Clubs shall put the plan into successful execution, we shall be thrilled with the satisfaction which comes from accomplishment.

As more than two-thirds of the illiteracy in the state is among the foreign born, we shall be solving that problem as well.

There are those who are doubtful about the value of federation, who say, "Are we getting enough from the Federation or are we giving enough to it, to warrant our continued membership."

Now is our great opportunity to demonstrate that co-operation is worth while—that forty thousand women concentrating upon a definite work, stupendous though it be, will make of it a success. And we shall have helped in the effort to weld the people in this country into an American race—a race that will stand together, for America, in peace or in war—one in ideals, rights and privileges.

EDNA WEH STERRETT,
State Chairman of Education.
C. F. W. A.

Pages Reprinted from October Clubwoman.

Uncle Sam's New Poster

Uncle Sam has just issued a new poster in his own colors, carrying his own portrait greeting a foreigner, It bears, also, these words in seven languages:

America First

Learn English. Attend Night School.

Become a Citizen

It means a better opportunity.
It means a better home in America.
It means a better job.
It means a better chance for your children
It means a better America.

Ask the nearest public school about classes.

National Americanization Committee

U. S. Bureau of Education

Why Did Uncle Sam Make This Poster?

BECAUSE America has 13,000,000 foreign-born residents.

BECAUSE these with their American-born children number 34,000,000 or more than one-third of the total population of our country.

What is the Matter With California?

California stands down No. 17 in the literacy column.

California has nearly 75,000 illiterates, two-thirds of whom are foreign born.

California has a great number of literates who cannot speak our language.

California cannot afford to go to sleep on her job.

KENTUCKY STATE HISTORICAL MARKER

MOONLIGHT SCHOOLS

Established in Rowan County, Kentucky, in 1911, by Mrs. Cora Wilson Stewart, "to emancipate from illiteracy those enslaved in the bondage." Because the people had to labor by day it was decided to have the schools on moonlight nights so the moon could light the way. The schools were taught by volunteer teachers. Movement soon spread nationally and internationally.

KEITH KAPPES
Director of Public Affairs

Telephone: 606-783-4672

MOREHEAD STATE UNIVERSITY

MEMO

_____Please complete necessary action
_____Please advise
_____Please note and return
_____For your information
_____For your files
Other:

Date: 7-13-81

To: Dr. Ellis

I hope to clarify some of these points with Dr. Norfleet when I return next week. Meanwhile, stay tuned!

Keith

July 3, 1981

M E M O R A N D U M

TO: President Norfleet

FROM: Keith Kappes KK

RE: Cora Wilson Stewart Moonlight School (or Schoolhouse?)

Pursuant to our conversation of Thursday morning, I discussed the school and visited it again with Dr. Jack Ellis. I shared our idea and he was eager to participate. However, he feels strongly that the school will never reach its potential as a public relations vehicle for MSU unless we move it to a more visible and accessible location, such as the area of the I-64 interchange.

Dr. Ellis is supportive of the proposal to seek volunteer and financial support of the membership of the Eastern Kentucky Education Association (EKEA) and the state and regional organizations of retired teachers.

Carole Morella thinks we might qualify for a grant from the Kresge Foundation if we can come up with a matching amount locally.

In order to expedite the project as you directed, I seek your approval to proceed with the following:

yes 1. Discussions with Frances Miller of EKEA to determine the feasibility of that group's support.

2. Discussions with Grace Crosthwwaite, Dr. Ted Crosthwait and others to determine the feasibility of support from retired teachers.

not to schoolhouse 3. Discussions with Waverly Jones and other landowners and/or businessmen in the area of I-64 who might be interested in providing a site for the school, including parking and relatively easy access to Ky. 32 at a nominal (as in free) fee.

no! 4. Discussions with Glen Boodry and Dr. Ellis on specific structural and other changes to be made in the school, ~~including relocation to a new site~~, for its use as a combination museum of the one-room school era and as a visitors center for MSU and the Morehead area.

Yes! 5. Discussions with Carole Morella on submission of proposals to potential funding sources, public and private.

By the way, EKU did a better job than we did of hiding their school. It has been reconstructed on the fourth floor of their library.

CHAPTER VII

LAST DAYS AS A CRUSADER AGAINST ILLITERACY

Mrs. Stewart had been in the offices of the N. A. C. I. less than a month before she realized that she would have to fight to keep the new organization from being an instrument of the adult educators. Determined to stand her ground, she objected to almost every idea offered by the agency's professionally trained members. It was not mere recalcitrance that brought her to this position but a deep-seated belief in the work against illiteracy.[1]

One of the main differences between Mrs. Stewart and the adult educators was over the conduct of the work in the states. Although the Executive Committee of the N. A. C. I. had agreed at its initial meeting that all states and counties should form advisory committees, Mrs. Stewart disagreed with her colleagues over the composition of the grassroots organizations. The professionally trained educators believed that the work should be conducted exclusively by the educational forces of the states. But Mrs. Stewart, having carried on her work for almost twenty years with the help of local civic and church groups, believed that lay teachers were essential to the success of the campaigns against illiteracy. She argued that the movement was still in the pioneer stages and that the educational forces of the states could not eradicate illiteracy without additional support.[2]

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[1]Cora Wilson Stewart to Herbert Houston, January 24, February 20, 1930, Stewart Papers.

[2]R. A. Nestos to Cora Wilson Stewart, February 22, March 1, 1930, Stewart Papers.

The deliberateness with which the committee acted also worried Mrs. Stewart. She often lost patience with members who wanted to define the problem of illiteracy, devise a policy, and then implement it. To her, this was a waste of time, for she believed that immediate action was needed and that time studying illiteracy could be used more effectively in arousing local communities to teach adult illiterates to read and write. In addition, Mrs. Stewart, having acted independently most of her life, disliked the "red-tape" procedures of the national agency; she could not adjust to the chain of command which demanded that before acting she clear her plans with Secretary Wilbur or some other superior.[3]

Part of Mrs. Stewart's conflict with her colleagues was caused by the changing nature of the work with uneducated adults. The professionally-trained educators wanted to abandon the crusading stages of the movement and to institutionalize it. Mrs. Stewart, on the other hand, never saw the need for change. To her, the "Whirlwind Campaign" methods of her work in Kentucky were the best means of attacking illiteracy. She did not believe that the organization of the movement could be perfected until the public was fully aroused. Thus, she was out of step with the times. Ironically, much of her problem was caused by her own success. By the 1920's the public was awake to the problem of adult illiteracy, and the day of the administrator and manager was arriving.

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[3]Cora Wilson Stewart to R. A. Nestos, March 11, 12, 1930, Stewart Papers. For an eloquent description of Mrs. Stewart's viewpoint, see Cora Wilson Stewart, "Report of the Illiteracy Committee of the National Council of Education" in National Education Association, Proceedings of the Sixty Sixth Annual Meeting, 66 (Washington, D. C., 1928), p. 246-251.

If Mrs. Stewart was the most vigorous critic of the adult educators on the N. A. C. I., she was by no means the only one. It would have been difficult for her to assert much influence on the agency if she had not had several sympathetic friends on its Executive Committee. These supporters included Ruth Bryan Owen, daughter of William Jennings Bryan, former North Dakota Governor R. A. Nestos, Senator Henry J. Allen, and Herbert Houston. Whenever the Executive Committee met, Mrs. Stewart made certain that these members were present to counterbalance the influence of the adult educators.[4]

Mrs. Stewart's conflict with her colleagues and the extent to which she was willing to go to influence the N. A. C. I. are graphically illustrated by her relations with Dr. M. S. Robertson, who became Director of the government agency in May 1930. Robertson, a former leader in the Louisiana work to teach adults to read and write, was at first warmly welcomed by Mrs. Stewart, because she thought he would support her plans for the Committee. Although Secretary Wilbur had warned her not to force her advice about the educational aspects of the work upon the new Director, Mrs. Stewart began counseling with him soon after he reached Washington. She soon learned, however, that Robertson would not subjugate himself to her will.[5]

Robertson, at first puzzled by Mrs. Stewart's domineering attitude, soon learned that the longer he stayed in the national capital the more control she intended to assert. He wrote to his friend T. H. Harris: "Mrs. Stewart feels that I should do whatever she suggests

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[4]Cora Wilson Stewart to R. A. Nestos, April 4, 21, May 8, 1930, Stewart Papers.

[5]Cora Wilson Stewart to Herbert Houston, May 23, 1930; Cora Wilson Stewart to R. A. Nestos, May 8, 1930, both in Stewart Papers.

regardless of what I think of its effects on the National Advisory Committee." Although he was never comfortable as Director of the Committee, Robertson was not to be bullied. He refused to submit to Mrs. Stewart's influence, and he carried on his work with the hope that she would eventually cooperate with him.[6]

If the new Director was confused by Mrs. Stewart's attitude, she was equally perplexed by his behavior. She had hoped that Robertson would help her to control the Committee; but she saw that he was coming increasingly under the influence of the adult educators. She wrote to Harris in August:

> It grieves me to say that instead of bringing to us the constructive plans and enthusiasm of the Louisiana campaign, Dr. Robertson has concerned himself with raising absurd issues . . . . I have given Dr. Robertson freely of my time and thought since he has been here and have made every effort to ensure his success. I am puzzled over his attitude and his lack of real cooperation.[7]

Whatever confidence Mrs. Stewart retained in Robertson was lost at the September meeting of the Technique Committee of the N. A. C. I. At this gathering Robertson totally committed himself to the side of the adult educators. Determined to be rid of the Director, Mrs. Stewart asked T. H. Harris to lure him from Washington with a position in Louisiana. When Harris replied that he was unable to hire Robertson, she offered personally to pay the salary if the Louisiana Superintendent of Public Instruction would create a job. Harris consented, and immediately moved to offer Robertson a position. The Director, unaware of the machinations of Mrs. Stewart and Harris, accepted the proposal and left

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[6]Cora Wilson Stewart to T. H. Harris, August 20, 1930; F. M. Kelly to Cora Wilson Stewart, July 31, 1930, all in Stewart Papers.

[7]Cora Wilson Stewart to T. H. Harris, August 20, 1930, Stewart Papers.

the National Advisory Committee in the fall. Thus, Mrs. Stewart was rid of what she considered a major obstacle to her control of the Committee. Although it was a high price for her to pay to dispose of Robertson, she was willing to provide the funds in order to maintain her influence in the agency.[8]

After Robertson's departure, an increasing amount of the N. A. C. I.'s work fell to Mrs. Stewart. She gladly accepted the responsibility, and diligently strove to increase the Committee's work against illiteracy. She directed field workers, she provided information on illiteracy to interested groups, and she gave numerous speeches. In fact, during 1931 she probably reached more people through her addresses than ever before. During the period March 7-27 she attended a conference on illiteracy at the Blackfeet Indian Reservation in North Dakota; she spoke to the National Congress of Parents and Teachers in April; in July she spoke before the Fourth Biennial Conference of the World Federation of Educational Associations in Denver, Colorado; and during the year she gave five national broadcasts on illiteracy over CBS radio.[9]

Although Mrs. Stewart kept her faith in the work against illiteracy, she could not ignore the influence of the depression on it. At first the effects were barely noticeable; but by late 1930 and throughout 1931 community efforts against illiteracy ground to a halt as sources of funds

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[8]Cora Wilson Stewart to Herbert Houston, September 16, 1930; T. H. Harris to Cora Wilson Stewart, October 3, 1930; Cora Wilson Stewart to T. H. Harris, September 30, October 4, 1930; Blanche Nagel to Cora Wilson Stewart, September 29, 1930; Cora Wilson Stewart to Blanche Nagel, September 29, 1930, all in Stewart Papers.

[9]Cora Wilson Stewart to Herbert Houston, October 16, 23, 1930, January 30, February 2, April 9, 1931; Cora Wilson Stewart to Clutie Bloodworth, September 19, 1931, all in Stewart Papers.

evaporated. Some workers carried on as best they could, but interest in teaching uneducated adults soon lost priority to the basic need for economic survival.[10] Mrs. Stewart became acutely aware of the economic crisis in late 1931 when it began affecting the office activities of the N. A. C. I. After cutting her staff, she set out to try to raise money for the agency's new budget. The Julius Rosenwald Fund promised to match with an equal sum every donation that the Committee received, but Mrs. Stewart found it difficult to find any contributions. She and several of her friends searched frantically during the last two months of the year and finally received $5,000 from the John D. Rockefeller Foundation. This money, combined with an equal sum from the Rosenwald Fund, allowed the work to continue for another year.[11]

Having momentarily solved the financial problem, Mrs. Stewart vigorously pursued her work in 1932. During the first half of the year she hired Dr. J. K. Hoke of William and Mary College to travel to various state prisons urging that classes be opened for illiterates. Unable to pay field workers, Mrs. Stewart personally toured the southern and midwestern states, soliciting people to start schools for uneducated adults. During these travels she was able to see first-hand the stifling effects of the depression. Realizing that public attention was focused on the economic situation, Mrs. Stewart returned to the national capital and decided to confine the Committee's activities during the last quarter

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[10] Clutie Bloodworth to Cora Wilson Stewart, April 29, 1931, Stewart Papers.

[11] Ibid.; Cora Wilson Stewart to Herbert Houston, October 12, 29, 1931, January 1, 1932; Cora Wilson Stewart to Dr. John Finley, October 31, 1931; Cora Wilson Stewart to R. A. Nestos, November 14, 17, 1931, all in Stewart Papers.

of the year to the prison work. Even this was difficult to finance, however, and by late 1932 the agency's work was at a standstill.[12]

Because the defeat of Herbert Hoover in the presidential election of 1932 marked the end of the N. A. C. I., Mrs. Stewart spent the last two months of the year arranging for the dissolution of the agency. She hated to see the organization disbanded, for she believed that it had been useful. Despite her conflict with the adult educators, she told Secretary Wilbur that she was sure that the Committee had fulfilled its purpose of making the public "illiteracy conscious" and of creating a sense of responsibility in local communities for the education of adult illiterates.[13]

If Mrs. Stewart was disappointed at the Committee's dissolution, she was not yet prepared to give up her work against illiteracy. She turned her attention, instead, to the N. I. C., which she had largely neglected during her work with the federal government. She hoped that the organization could be revived, but she had little success raising funds for it during the first three months of 1933. Mrs. Stewart's inability to obtain money for the Crusade caused her to turn her attention to the affairs of the national government. Like most Americans, she watched with interest as the New Deal took shape. She was impressed with the dynamic nature of the new President, Franklin D. Roosevelt, and, while she was not sure that he would help revive the

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[12]Cora Wilson Stewart to R. A. Nestos, February 29, March 21, 1932; Cora Wilson Stewart to Clutie Bloodworth, May 11, June 4, 1932; Cora Wilson Stewart to Ray Lyman Wilbur, September 27, 1932, all in Stewart Papers.

[13]Cora Wilson Stewart to Ray Lyman Wilbur, December 12, 1932, Stewart Papers (Box 29).

work against illiteracy, she supported most of his proposals in the first "one hundred days."[14]

Mrs. Stewart's wish that the federal government take an active role in the education of adults was answered during the early months of the New Deal. The first efforts came in Summer 1933, when Federal Emergency Relief Administration (F.E.R.A.) Director Harry Hopkins learned that 40,000 teachers were on relief. On August 19 he authorized a part of the agency's funds to be used to hire these teachers to instruct illiterates.[15] As director of the work, Hopkins appointed Dr. Lewis Raymond Alderman, an expert in adult education in the U. S. Office of Education. Alderman, a big, outspoken former State Superintendent of Public Instruction in Oregon, had been one of Mrs. Stewart's most vigorous opponents while she was on the National Advisory Committee. Disturbed by the selection of the new Director, she began losing her enthusiasm for the New Deal work. If the choice of Alderman disappointed Mrs. Stewart, she was incensed when he announced that anyone with less than a sixth grade education could enroll in F. E. R. A. literacy classes.[16]

Relaxing in Christiansburg, Virginia, when the Alderman appointment was announced, Mrs. Stewart soon made known her opposition to the government efforts. On December 10, 1933, she appeared on a NBC radio

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[14]Cora Wilson Stewart to Sally Lucas Jean, March 3, 1933; Cora Wilson Stewart to F. C. Button, March 6, 15, August 3, 1933, all in Stewart Papers.

[15]Arthur E. Bestor, "The A. B. C. of Federal Emergency Education," Journal of Adult Education, 6 (April 1934), p. 150-151; Clinton H. Grattan, In Quest of Knowledge, p. 229.

[16]"40,000 v. 2,000,000," Time, 24 (August 27, 1934), p. 49; "Adults at Study," Time, 24 (September 17, 1934), p. 60-62; Cora Wilson Stewart to Miss Hale, December 19, 1933, Stewart Papers.

broadcast, attacking Alderman's use of the sixth grade standard of literacy, and urging that the F. E. R. A. organize separate classes for complete illiterates. According to Mrs. Stewart, when people with no education were taught in classes with students who had some training, attention was usually diverted to the latter group. In addition, she resented the new standard of literacy set by Alderman because it seemed to imply that anyone with less than a sixth-grade education was illiterate. To her, this was an absurd measurement, for it meant that most of the adults trained during her years of work would be considered illiterate. Her radio address brought many letters from people who shared her ideas, and it caught the attention of the Roosevelt Administration. Unfortunately for her, however, the F. E. R. A. did not change its program, and Alderman and the professionally-trained educators remained in command.[17]

Because of her radio talk and the response that ensued, Mrs. Stewart decided that she must again try to resurrect the N. I. C. Throughout the winter of 1933-1934 she solicited funds for the organization, but her efforts were futile. The depression had evaporated sources of private money, and the Crusade was destitute. Ironically, just as the agency was experiencing its worst days, the New Deal work among illiterates began to go into action.

Numerous government agencies, including the Civil Works Administration, the Tennessee Valley Authority, the Civilian Conservation Corps, and later the Works Progress Administration, joined the F. E. R. A. in

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[17]Cora Wilson Stewart, "What Are We Doing to Remove Illiteracy," December 10, 1933; Cora Wilson Stewart to Dr. J. Herbert Killey, December 14, 1933; Cora Wilson Stewart to Ida B. Nance, December 16, 1933; Cora Wilson Stewart to Miss Hale, December 19, 1933, all in Stewart Papers.

spending unprecedented sums to hire teachers to instruct illiterates.[18] Because Mrs. Stewart was one of the best known workers against illiteracy in the United States, many of the educators hired by the government sought information from her. Although she tried to answer as many of the requests as possible, she was unable for lack of funds to reply to them all.[19]

As the ineffectiveness of the Crusade became apparent, Mrs. Stewart's hopes of reviving her work faded. Under these circumstances, it was natural that she would turn to other interests. Thus, during the first half of 1934 she became involved in the Oxford Group, a religious organization which would eventually carry her completely away from the work against illiteracy. Founded in 1921 by the evangelist Frank Buchman, the Oxford Group sought to arouse in each individual the self-assurance and power that purportedly came from following God's guidance. Members of the organization believed that a person should have all of his acts directed by Divine instruction. This guidance was supposed to be received during a "Quiet Time," when the individual communicated directly with God. The Group relied on a lay clergy, and often held "Houseparties," where members gathered to give testimonials and to discuss their faith. The organization was convinced that all the

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[18] Catherine Turner to Cora Wilson Stewart, January 19, March 23, 1934; Cora Wilson Stewart Papers; Bestor, "The A. B. C. of Federal Emergency Education," p. 151-153; Lindsey E. Allen, "The History of W. P. A. Educational Programs in Kentucky" (unpublished M. A. thesis, University of Kentucky, 1941), p. 21.

[19] Lida C. Grumman to Cora Wilson Stewart, July 18, 1934; Earl M. Mackintosh to Cora Wilson Stewart, January 22, 1934; Cora Wilson Stewart to Miss Heloise Brainard June 2, 1934; H. J. Betts to Cora Wilson Stewart, June 6, 1934, all in Stewart Papers.

against illiteracy and to enter the Oxford movement full-time. Obviously she did not make this decision easily, for she had given much of her life to teaching uneducated adults; she decided to leave the crusade because God willed it.[21]

Mrs. Stewart's involvement with the Oxford Group did not keep her from making speaking tours. During January 1935 she was asked by the Federal Housing Administration (F.H.A.) to tell the nation's women to support the New Deal efforts to end employment in the housing industry.[22] For the next three months she traveled throughout the states of the Northeast, speaking before women's clubs on the problems of the F. H. A. Although Mrs. Stewart was now sixty years old and the constant travel taxed her health, she greatly enjoyed the tour. Her audiences were inevitably enthusiastic, and on several occasions the women insisted that she recount the story of the origins of the "Moonlight Schools."[23]

Even while Mrs. Stewart was on her tour, however, she continued to correspond with members of the Oxford Group, and she attended their gatherings whenever possible. As her affiliation with the Oxford movement grew, her interest in reviving the work against illiteracy declined. Although she continued to give some talks on the need to

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[21]Untitled religious writings of Cora Wilson Stewart, May 3, 17, 1934, Stewart Papers (Box 38).

[22]Cora Wilson Stewart to Merle Howerton, February 3, 1935, Mary Elliott Flannery Papers; Louis J. Alben to Cora Wilson Stewart, January 8, 1935, Stewart Papers.

[23]Cora Wilson Stewart to Ruth Bryan Owen, April 24, 1935; Cincinnati Star, April 26, 1935; Memphis Press Scimitar (n.d.), all in Stewart Papers.

teach adults, and even spoke about the N. I. C. on national radio, by 1936 she had given up nearly all hope of resurrecting the organization.[24]

Although Mrs. Stewart was no longer involved in the work against illiteracy, she watched with interest the New Deal efforts to teach adults. She never accepted the sixth-grade standard set by Dr. Alderman and this greatly influenced her judgment of the effectiveness of the government work. In addition, she never truly understood that the primary purpose of the federal programs was to give jobs to unemployed teachers and that educational aims were secondary. To her, the main goal of any movement to teach adults should be the eradication of illiteracy, and she did not think that the New Deal measures were achieving this objective.[25]

Mrs. Stewart's view of the federal programs was largely shaped by her belief in the righteousness of her own ideas. Thus she would not acknowledge that many adults did receive training through the various New Deal agencies. In fact, in 1936 Harry Hopkins estimated that 580,000 men and women had learned to read and write in the government programs. It is impossible to check the accuracy of this figure, however, because the 1940 census did not list the number of illiterates in the nation. Ironically, one of the greatest achievements of the New Deal programs, according to its adult educators, was the publicizing of the problem of illiteracy. Many of these pedagogues doubtless forgot that when

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[24]Fred to Cora Wilson Stewart, January 25, 1935; Mrs. John Bland to Cora Wilson Stewart, November 22, 1935; Henry C. Klein to Cora Wilson Stewart, July 23, 1937; Cora Wilson Stewart, "It Can Be Done," October 5, 1937, all in Stewart Papers.

[25]Bestor, "The A. B. C. of Federal Emergency Education," p. 150; John S. Perkins, "Extent and Nature of the Federal W. P. A. Educational Programs," School and Society, 45 (January 23, 1937), p. 135-136; Cora Wilson Stewart to Luther H. Hodges, August 28, 1934, Stewart Papers.

Mrs. Stewart had earlier pursued this same goal they had accused her of being a 'propagandist."[26]

If Mrs. Stewart's evaluation of the New Deal work with illiterates was harsh, many others shared her opinions. Like her, these critics noted deficiencies in the planning and execution of the federal efforts. They observed that the programs were hampered because teachers were often given more consideration than pupils. In addition, instructors were primarily interested in receiving their money, they had little desire to work, and many of them were cull-outs from the regular schools. A lack of planning also made the programs awkward, and numerous educators resented federal intervention in state schools. One Superintendent of Public Instruction was so disgusted by the W. P. A.'s activities that he noted:

> In the beginning we learned that education and relief would not mix; next we learned that education and politics made a diabolical combination; and finally we learned that adult education, plus relief, plus politics, equals no education at all, but only, as one of our Administrators expresses it, 'a devil of a mess.'[27]

In the years since her retirement from the work against illiteracy, little attention has been paid to Mrs. Stewart's contributions to adult education. Many of her teaching techniques are today viewed as being

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[26] Ibid.; Lyle K. Henry, "The Civilian Conservation Camps as an Educational Institution," School and Society, 43 (January 11, 1936), p. 62; Bestor, "The A. B. C. of Federal Emergency Education," p. 152-154; Allen, "History of W. P. A. Education," p. 48; Grattan, In Quest of Knowledge, p. 229.

[27] C. O. Anderson, "The W. P. A. and Adult Education," The School Executive, 55 (August 1936), p. 430; Bestor, "The A. B. C. of Federal Emergency Education," p. 153; Roy Otis Chumbler, "A Study of Adult Education in Nineteen Kentucky Counties" (unpublished M. A. thesis, University of Kentucky, 1938), p. 58-59; Frank Ernest Hill, The School in the Camps: The Educational Program of the Civilian Conservation Corps (New York, 1935), p. 60-61.

problems of the world could be solved if individuals would follow God's direction, and it vigorously sought converts.[20]

Mrs. Stewart's acceptance of Buchmanism might appear to be a break with the religious orthodoxy of her youth. In reality, however, her conversion was a natural extension of her earlier beliefs. For much of her life she had believed that she was called by God to work with illiterate adults. Thus it is understandable that she would accept the belief that a person could communicate with and receive guidance from God. Unlike some who joined the Oxford Group because it was a sociable organization, Mrs. Stewart genuinely adopted the tenets of Buchmanism. Her voluminous religious writings indicate that she spent much time in meditation and that she honestly believed that her actions were directed by God. In addition, the non-professionalism of the Buchmanites offered her the chance to serve as a minister. Such an organization, with its lay clergy and its emphasis on direct contact with God, held a great attraction for Mrs. Stewart, especially at a time when her work against illiteracy seemed to be ending. It is uncertain precisely when she became involved with the Group, but by May 1934 she was actively taking part in its services. Her religious writings and correspondence with other members of the organization indicate that during this period she was preparing to give up the work

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[20] Walter H. Clark, The Oxford Group: Its History and Significance (New York, 1951), p. 25-34; Allan W. Eister, Drawing-Room Conversion: A Sociological Account of the Oxford Group Movement (Durham, 1950), p. 10-11, 28-33. For a contemporary view of the Group and its founder see Henry P. Van Deusen, "Apostle of the Twentieth Century; Frank N. D. Buchman," Atlantic Monthly, 154 (July 1934), p. 1-24 and Henry P. Van Deusen, "The Oxford Group Movement," Atlantic Monthly, 154 (August, 1934), p. 240-252.

crude and overly simplistic. For instance, her method of teaching adults to write by tracing the letters of the alphabet on a grooved pad and then imitating the marks on paper has been rejected by subsequent educators.[28] Recent research has also shown the inadequacies of the level of training championed by Mrs. Stewart. She never understood that the complexities of life in the twentieth century required far more than rudimentary literacy. Her contemporary opponents in the adult education work saw this weakness of her programs, and they sought to develop a system of continuing schooling for adults.

Although many of Mrs. Stewart's methods have been subsequently rejected, she did presage the idea of functional literacy. This concept measures the ability of a person to perform normally in his environment, it emphasizes practical application of skills, and it relates schooling to real-life circumstances. This is similar to Mrs. Stewart's belief that reading material should pertain to the culture of the students. Thus she wrote books that were relevant to the life of each group with which she worked.[29]

If Mrs. Stewart's teaching techniques have largely been discarded, the organizational plans she had for her work have also changed. Subsequent educators have realized that more than public enthusiasm

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[28]William Scott Gray, The Teaching of Reading and Writing (Paris, 1969), p. 188-190. See Robert Dottrens, L'enseignment de l'écriture (Paris, 1931), for a criticism of the writing methods advocated by Mrs. Stewart.

[29]U.N.E.S.C.O. Functional Literacy: Why and How (Paris, 1970), p. 9-10; Scott, Teaching Reading and Writing, p. 9, 19-22; Cora Wilson Stewart, Report of the Illiteracy Committee of the National Council of Education (1928), p. 250. For a recent example of the application of the functional literacy concept, see Theodore James Pinnock, Results of an Exploratory Study of Functional Illiterates in Macon County, Alabama (Tuskeegee, Alabama, 1965?).

is necessary for the teaching of illiterates, and, like her contemporary critics, they reject her policy of having laymen teach adults.[30] Yet recent research has also shown the inadequacies of the programs of Mrs. Stewart's critics. Some educators today accept her view that the work against illiteracy is still in the pioneering stages and that it needs public attention. They do not, however, advocate the same type of "Whirlwind Campaigns" that Mrs. Stewart championed.[31]

Although many of Mrs. Stewart's ideas are no longer accepted, her contributions to the cause of eradicating illiteracy should not be forgotten. Her most noticeable achievements were made as a publicist. Through her public addresses, she made Americans aware as never before of the need to teach uneducated adults; and she inspired educators in many states to have legislation enacted to eradicate illiteracy. In addition, as five times head of the Illiteracy Section of the World Conference on Education, she articulated the need for a worldwide effort against illiteracy. She also attacked the myth that uneducated adults could not learn many years before it was rejected by most academicians; and she alerted the nation to the problem of illiteracy in the armed forces over a year before the Surgeon General of the United States stated that almost twenty-five percent of the World War I draftees

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[30]For recent ideas on the conduct of campaigns against illiteracy, see Esther Fox, "Considerations in Constructing a Basic Reading Program for Functionally Illiterate Adults," Adult Leadership (May 1964), p. 7-8, and Richard W. Burnett, "Basic Literacy Projects for Adults: A Reading Specialist's Comments," in Frank W. Lanning and Wesley A. Many, eds., Basic Education for the Disadvantaged Adult: Theory and Practice (Boston, 1966), p. 236-252.

[31]Paul Conrad Berg, "Illiteracy at the Crossroads," Adult Leadership (June 1960), p. 47-48, and Paul A. Witty, "Campaign Against Illiteracy--A War We Must Win," National Parent Teacher, 53 (November 1958), p. 20-23, both emphasize the need for publicizing the problem of illiteracy and stress that adult education is still in the pioneering stages.

could neither read nor write. Furthermore she helped establish schools for illiterates in army camps throughout the country and set a precedent that was later followed in World War II.[32]

Perhaps her greatest contribution was her view of the uneducated adult himself. Although she quoted statistics on the distribution of illiteracy, she never forgot that illiterates were individuals who deserved respect. Her desire to maintain the "human element" in her work was part of the reason for her opposition to the professionally-trained adult educators. She feared that in their haste to organize the work, the professionals would lose sight of the illiterates as people.[33]

Whatever her accomplishments or failures, Mrs. Stewart's attitude toward her movement was due partly to her position as a woman. Like many females of the early twentieth century, she became active in public affairs and supported woman suffrage. In addition, she was able to use her affiliation with women's clubs as an effective source of influence on the county, state, and national levels. This support was a tremendous aid to her, for it gave her many energetic workers.[34] But despite her reliance on female aid, Mrs. Stewart was not an ardent feminist. After the passage of the nineteenth amendment to the U. S. Constitution, she did not push for more female rights. To her the

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[32]Stewart, Moonlight Schools, p. 27-28, 158-159; See Samuel Goldberg, Army Training of Illiterates in World War II (New York, 1951) for a description of the work with illiterates in the Army during World War II.

[33]Cora Wilson Stewart to Luther Hodges, November 25, 1930, Stewart Papers.

[34]For a discussion of the growth and significance of women's clubs in late nineteenth and early twentieth century reform movements, see Anne Firor Scott, The Southern Lady: From Pedestal to Politics (Chicago, 1970), p. 133-163.

eradication of adult illiteracy was more important, and like other "social feminists" of the 1920's she pursued social reforms instead of sexual equality.[35]

If Mrs. Stewart's sex aided her in gaining female support, it was a disadvantage in other ways. Because she was educated in late nineteenth-century America, when schooling was deemed less important for a woman than for a man, chances for her to earn advanced degrees were limited. Thus, during the 1920's and early 1930's, when professional training was becoming increasingly important in educational work, Mrs. Stewart was accused by many critics of being unqualified; it was no coincidence that nearly all of these detractors were men.

Most important, Mrs. Stewart was a product of the progressive era. After becoming a county school superintendent at a time when Kentuckians were awakening to the need for better schools, she soon developed into one of the state's most eloquent spokesmen for public education. She was especially influenced by Dr. J. G. Crabbe's efforts to improve schools, and she adapted his "Whirlwind Campaign" methods to her own work with uneducated adults. As head of the K. I. C. she was a dynamic leader who contributed to Kentucky education by making the people aware of their high rate of illiteracy.[36] In addition, having reached maturity

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[35]See Anne Firor Scott, "After Suffrage: Southern Women in the Twenties," The Journal of Southern History, 30 (August 1964), p. 298-318, and J. Stanley Lemons, "Social Feminism in the 1920s: Progressive Women and Industrial Legislation," Labor History, 14 (Winter 1973), p. 83-91, for discussions of female reform movements in the 1920's. For an analysis of the difference between "Feminism" and "Social Feminism," see William L. O'Neill's, "Feminism as a Radical Ideology," in Dissent: Explorations in the History of American Radicalism, ed. by Alfred R. Young (Dekalb, Illinois 1968), p. 275-300.

[36]McVey, The Gates Open Slowly, p. 206-213; Dabney, Universal Education in the South, Vol. 2, p. 348-349, 357-358.

at a time when women marched, sang, and carried on feverish efforts to arouse support for their reforms, Mrs. Stewart believed that a great campaign was required to arouse people to the need for change, and she was confident that once informed, the public would support a worthy cause. Equating her movement against illiteracy with such reforms as prohibition and woman suffrage, she pursued her work throughout the 1920's and the early 1930's. But she failed to realize that the "Whirlwind Campaign" techniques used by reformers of the early twentieth century were no longer popular. Convinced of the righteousness of her cause, she was unable to change with the educational trends of the time; she remained a crusader after the day of the crusader had passed.

EPILOGUE

Mrs. Stewart was no longer to take any active part in the movement against illiteracy in the United States. Having abandoned the work to the professionally trained educators, she retired in December 1936 to Tryon, North Carolina, where she resided during the next five years when she was not visiting relatives or attending Oxford Group functions. After her many years of activity in the crusade against illiteracy, Mrs. Stewart greatly enjoyed the leisurely pace of life in Tryon. She spent many hours in meditation, took lengthy walks, and corresponded with old friends.[1] Because Tryon was a resort town where many prominent people "summered," Mrs. Stewart also cultivated numerous friendships, and she was close to several young members of the community. She often counseled with the youngsters about their occupational plans, and she even provided financial aid for the schooling of one of them.[2]

Soon after the United States entered World War II, Mrs. Stewart moved to Pine Bluff, Arkansas, to be near her two sisters, Folora and Stella, and their families. Taking a small apartment in the town, she spent every fall, winter and spring there for the rest of her life. During the summers, she would return to Tryon, where she continued to maintain a residence. In Pine Bluff she lived a simple life as she had done in North Carolina. She read, took occasional walks, and socialized with relatives.

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[1]Sally Lucas Jean to Cora Wilson Stewart, April 22, 1936; Erwin A. Holt to Cora Wilson Stewart, November 9, 13, 1936; Lorena Callahan to Cora Wilson Stewart, March 16, 1940, all in Stewart Papers.

[2]Barry [no last name] to Cora Wilson Stewart, March 27, 1939; Arpha Burrell to Cora Wilson Stewart, February 7, May 26, June 1, 1937, all in Stewart Papers.

Although Mrs. Stewart's religious faith remained very strong until her death, by the mid-1940's she had apparently lost her enthusiasm for the Oxford Group. As her zeal for the religious organization cooled, her attention again focused on the work against illiteracy. By this time the infirmities of old age began taking their toll, and she was physically unable to resume her life as a crusader. Instead, she turned to the remembrances of her past efforts, and she often spoke of writing a book about them.[3]

By the late 1940's Mrs. Stewart lived almost entirely in the past. Time made her forget the disappointments she had known in leading her movement, and left her with only recollections of her triumphs. She was satisfied as long as she had her memories, and, according to one relative they gave her the strength to bear her many physical afflictions.[4]

By 1950 Mrs. Stewart had developed glaucoma. Despite consultations with leading eye specialists, within three years she was totally blind. Later complications also occurred, so that in 1956 she was forced to have her right eye removed. But if the aches of growing old taxed her body, they could not break her spirit; she retained her strong and courageous character to the end. In May 1958 she suffered a severe heart attack. On December 2, 1958, at age 83, she died.[5]

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[3]Author's interview with Noi Doyle, March 8, 1973, Lexington, Kentucky.

[4]Ibid.

[5]Ibid.; Louisville Courier Journal, December 12, 1958; Cora Wilson Stewart to Mrs. Hammond Dugan, July 24, 1956, May 7, 1958, Biographical File, Stewart Papers.

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CHAPTER VI

THE N. I. C. AND THE N. A. C. I.

Although Mrs. Stewart was estranged from the two organizations which had long supported her work, she began the year 1925 with her usual optimism and determination. Requests for her to give addresses flowed in, and she strove to answer as many as possible. In late January she spoke before the World Association of Daily Bible Schools in Washington, D. C.. Soon after this engagement, educators active in the fight against illiteracy in Texas called her to speak before their state legislature in support of a bill they had introduced.[1] A brief illness delayed Mrs. Stewart from responding to the request, but she hurried to Austin as soon as she was able to travel. She spoke before the legislature on Lincoln's birthday, and, as a result of her appeal, the state Senate passed the desired bill.[2]

After Mrs. Stewart's Texas triumph, she returned to Kentucky to fill several speaking engagements. While stopping in Lexington, her close friend and advisor, Dr. A. E. Winship, visited her. At that time she presented to him a plan for a national organization to fight illiteracy which she had been thinking about for several months. Winship listened attentively, then offered his complete cooperation. Together,

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[1]Diary of Cora Wilson Stewart, December 31, 1925, January 1, 1926, Biographical File; L. T. Joseph to Cora Wilson Stewart, January 30, 1925, both in Stewart Papers.

[2]Cora Wilson Stewart to Mrs. Lee Joseph, February 1, 1925; Cora Wilson Stewart to Dr. K. C. Davis, March 14, 1925; diary of Cora Wilson Stewart, December 31, 1925, January 1, 1926, all in Stewart Papers.

they made a list of influential men and women whose endorsements would be useful in implementing her plan.[3]

Mrs. Stewart set out at once to secure the support of the people on her list, and during the rest of the year she devoted much of her time to this effort. One of the first individuals she visited was Jane Addams, who promised her support. Mrs. Stewart also met William Allen White at the National Arts Club in New York. She found the "Sage of Emporia" very willing to help her, and he suggested several other people whom she might visit. By the end of the year she had received endorsements from more than twenty-five prestigious individuals, including Henry J. Allen, United States Senator from Kansas, Dr. John Finley of the New York Times, and Carrie Chapman Catt.[4]

Although much of Mrs. Stewart's interest in 1925 was devoted to securing support for what was to become the National Illiteracy Crusade (N.I.C.), she did not shirk her other duties. During the first five months of the year she spoke before educational and civic organizations from Maine to Michigan and from Georgia to New York. In late June she attended the N. E. A. convention at Indianapolis, Indiana, where she met with the organization's Illiteracy Commission. After the convention she hurried to Edinburgh, Scotland, where the World Conference on Education was meeting. As chairman of the Illiteracy Section of the gathering, she conducted the proceedings with the same distinction that

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[3]Cora Wilson Stewart, "My Experiences in Forming the National Illiteracy Association," Biographical File, Stewart Papers.

[4]Ibid.; Cora Wilson Stewart to William Allen White, June 19, 1925, Stewart Papers.

she had exhibited two years earlier.[5] She believed that the Conference was productive, and she appreciated the opportunity to talk with crusaders against illiteracy from other countries. Following the meeting Mrs. Stewart spent two months touring Europe. Wherever she traveled, Paris, Geneva, Milan, or Monte Carlo, she spent much of her time researching local illiteracy. She was grateful for the opportunity to tour the continent, and she doubtless learned much about the plight of uneducated adults in Europe.[6]

When, in early September, Mrs. Stewart returned to Morehead, she learned that she had been recognized by The Pictorial Review magazine as the woman who had made the greatest contribution to American life for the year 1924. The award, presented annually, carried a cash prize of $5,000. She was delighted by the honor, but, more important, she knew that the money could be used to finance her national organization.[7]

Mrs. Stewart took little time to celebrate her new award, but hurried away to continue her work. One issue which occupied an increasing amount of her time during late 1925 was illiteracy among prisoners. Although always aware of the lack of educational opportunities for inmates, her attention was focused most intensely on them after a visit to the Georgia state penitentiary early in the year. There she found that 1,100 of the 3,300 prisoners were illiterate, and that no

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[5]Cora Wilson Stewart to Mrs. Bruce Carr Jones, June 17, 1925; Cora Wilson Stewart to Mary C. Bradford, June 15, 1925, both in Stewart Papers.

[6]Diary of Cora Wilson Stewart, December 31, 1925, January 1, 1926, Biographical File; Cora Wilson Stewart to William Allen White, September 23, 1925; Cora Wilson Stewart to Bunyan S. Wilson, July 29, 1925, all in Stewart Papers.

[7]Diary of Cora Wilson Stewart, January 1, 1926; "The Crusade Against Illiteracy and Its Founder Cora Wilson Stewart," p. 5, both in Biographical File, Stewart Papers.

efforts were being made to instruct them. Appalled at this condition, she went to the Head of the State Prison Board and persuaded him to open reading and writing classes for the inmates. She then visited the federal prison in Atlanta, where she found that only a few people were receiving instruction and that they were using children's readers.[8] Following these incidents she wrote to other prison officials, seeking information on the number of illiterates incarcerated. Amazed at the number of uneducated inmates reported, she urged all officials to hold classes, she inserted into her speeches strong arguments about the need to teach prisoners, and she made plans to compose a reader for them.[9]

As important to Mrs. Stewart as illiteracy among prisoners was the large number of uneducated Indians in the country. She had always believed that Indians were one of the most unfortunate of illiterate groups. The states would not train them, and she thought that the federal government was not adequately involved in their education. Feeling thus, she attended the Northwest Indian Conference in November 1925, and persuaded the leaders of the meeting to make illiteracy one of their primary concerns during the coming year. In addition, she prepared a textbook for Indian illiterates which she introduced at the Conference.[10]

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[8] Ibid.

[9] Cora Wilson Stewart to H. E. Goldsworthy, November 8, 1925; Cora Wilson Stewart to Sally Lucas Jean, November 6, 1925; Greensboro, North Carolina, Daily News, July 20, 1925, all in Stewart Papers.

[10] Cora Wilson Stewart to Sally Lucas Jean, November 6, 1925; Cora Wilson Stewart to Erwin A. Holt, November 6, 1925, both in Stewart Papers.

Upon completion of her work in the Northwest, Mrs. Stewart returned to Washington, D. C., to continue work on the formal organization of the N. I. C. She planned to open headquarters of the new agency on December 1, but speaking engagements and a desire to spread the news of the organization drew her away for the next two months.[11] When she returned to the national capital in late January 1926, she decided to hold the first meeting of the Board of Directors of the N. I. C. during the last week in February. While preparing for the meeting, she met with the Head of the American Red Cross, John Barton Payne, who persuaded her to establish the offices of her organization in the Red Cross building in Washington.

With headquarters thus provided, Mrs. Stewart held the first meeting of the Board of Directors on February 11 in the Willard Hotel. After she explained her plans for the national organization, the directors unanimously pledged to help her eradicate illiteracy from the United States by 1930. Mrs. Stewart was named Director of the N. I. C., and William Allen White, who was absent from the meeting, was selected President.[12] White had offered Mrs. Stewart much encouragement and advice when she was soliciting sponsors for the organization; but when notified of his appointment he was reluctant to accept the position. A sharp reminder from Mrs. Stewart that he had promised his support changed his mind. "All right sorry you chose me and because I can't wiggle out I have got to serve and do my best. I

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[11]Cora Wilson Stewart to William Allen White, February 27, 1926, Stewart Papers.

[12]Cora Wilson Stewart to William Allen White, February 27, 1926, Stewart Papers; Cora Wilson Stewart to William Allen White, February 22, 25, 1926, William Allen White Papers (Library of Congress, Washington, D. C.).

will do everything but go around and make speeches or stay at home and write articles. Don't ask that. Otherwise I am yours," he replied.[13]

Soon after the meeting of the Board, Mrs. Stewart began the important but difficult task of soliciting financial support for the N. I. C. For the next three months she talked to financiers throughout the country, but she met with little success. She was not discouraged by her inability to get money, for she was accustomed to working without adequate funds. She was determined, however, that this time her work would not falter because of a lack of money. Convinced that expert advice was needed, she hired Mr. Burr Price, a publicity specialist who had raised funds for other organizations, to take over the problem.[14]

Contented to leave the thorny issue of financing to someone else, Mrs. Stewart went back to the life of campaigning that she knew and loved. Working through the Chautauqua circuits, she made numerous engagements for the summer months, and left Washington on June 17 to cover the South, North, and Northwest.[15] One of her most interesting stops was made in Spokane, Washington, where she attended an Indian conference and learned that many Indian leaders believed that illiteracy was the greatest obstacle to the progress of their people. After leaving the conference, she made a survey of illiteracy among the Blackfeet Indians,

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[13]William Allen White to Cora Wilson Stewart, February 24, 1926, Stewart Papers.

[14]Cora Wilson Stewart to Erwin A. Holt, March 6, 1926; Cora Wilson Stewart to William Allen White, April 13, 29, May 1, June 26, 1926, all in Stewart Papers.

[15]Cora Wilson Stewart to Ernest C. Eyer, February 27, 1926; Cora Wilson Stewart to Mary Elliott Flannery, August 11, 1926, Flannery Papers.

and persuaded them to begin classes for their uneducated adults. She also spoke before the Wisconsin State Branch of the American University Women's Association on her trip back to Washington. After hearing her, the group immediately passed a resolution calling for the eradication of illiteracy in the United States.[16]

When Mrs. Stewart arrived in the national capital, she learned that Mr. Price had been unable to raise any funds for the N. I. C. and that the task had again fallen to her. But even this news did not discourage her; she continued to believe that some philanthropic agency would soon offer to support her work. Determined to try harder than ever to get funds for the N. I. C. she spent much of the next two months soliciting contributions from various financiers.[17] She did this in conjunction with her speaking engagements. During December she addressed the Illinois State Teachers Association, and held conferences with prison officials in Virginia and Florida. After the Virginia meeting a full-time educational director was appointed for the state penitentiary, and the state required that all prisoners be offered a chance to learn to read and write.[18]

Despite its lack of funds, Mrs. Stewart was hopeful about the future of the N. I. C. at the end of 1926. Her only apprehension was caused by the growth of another educational organization which she

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[16]Cora Wilson Stewart to William Allen White, August 30, October 20, 1926, White Papers.

[17]Cora Wilson Stewart to William Allen White, October 20, 1926, William Allen White Papers; Cora Wilson Stewart to William Allen White, December 2, 1926, Stewart Papers.

[18]Cora Wilson Stewart to William Allen White, December 20, 1926, William Allen White Papers; Cora Wilson Stewart to Josephine C. Preston, December 1, 1926, Stewart Papers.

believed might challenge her leadership of the crusade against illiteracy. This new movement, adult education, began in 1924 as an attempt by some educators to centralize the various efforts to teach adults. It spread during the next two years, so that by 1926 an American Association of Adult Education was formed.[19]

Mrs. Stewart viewed the formation of the Association with suspicion. From its beginning she refused to cooperate with the adult educators, despite their appeals for her support. She saw that the philosophy of the new movement ran counter to her view of adult training. Since her earliest days in the "Moonlight Schools" of Rowan County, she had believed that training should be first offered to men and women who had been unable to receive an education in their youth. In her judgment, these people must be taught before any thought could be given to providing advanced schooling for better-educated adults. The advocates of adult education, on the other hand, believed that training should be "pointed less toward righting an educational wrong, less toward securing for the underprivileged that which has been withheld, and more toward providing an ideal of continuing education throughout life for all types of adult individuals."[20]

Mrs. Stewart viewed this idea with alarm because she thought that it would divert attention from the illiterates who needed immediate attention. She wrote of her fears to Dr. Winship:

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[19]Morse A. Cartwright, Ten Years of Adult Education: A Report on a Decade of Progress in the American Movement (New York, 1935), p. 10-14; Mary L. Ely, ed., Handbook of Adult Education in the United States (New York, 1948), p. 3-4; C. Hartley Grattan, In Quest of Knowledge: A Historical Perspective on Adult Education (New York, 1955), p. 278.

[20]Cora Wilson Stewart to Robert Deming, December 14, 1925, January 23, 1926, Stewart Papers; Cartwright, Adult Education, p. 38-39.

> You see the need of making it clear about illiteracy and adult education. Some folks are about to confuse the issues and are involving our illiteracy leaders in places in a more extensive program than they have funds or energy to carry on, which means that illiterates will be neglected just as they were before the illiteracy crusade began.[21]

On a more basic level, Mrs. Stewart feared adult educators for personal reasons. Most of them were trained in the universities of the Northeast, and many had Ph.d. or Ed.D. degrees. In the past, these same people had been some of her most persistent detractors. In the early days of her Rowan County work some of them had laughed at her idea of teaching adult illiterates; others had criticized her as unprofessional and had accused her of being a propagandist instead of an educator. They also opposed her revivalistic methods of getting public attention for her movement. In addition, Mrs. Stewart feared that the adult educators would stifle the crusading spirit which she felt was so necessary to the work against illiteracy by organizing study and research groups instead of schools for adults.[22]

These cleavages between the adult educators and Mrs. Stewart would continue to deepen in the years ahead; but as the new year of 1927 dawned Mrs. Stewart was too busy with the problem of raising funds for the N. I. C. to give them the attention they deserved. Despite her best efforts, she was still unable to tap new sources of funds.[23] Yet,

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[21]Cora Wilson Stewart to Dr. A. E. Winship, December 14, 1925, Stewart Papers.

[22]Cora Wilson Stewart to Julia F. Harris, December 1, 1926, Julia Floride Harris Papers; Cora Wilson Stewart to William Allen White, June 19, 1926, Stewart Papers.

[23]Cora Wilson Stewart to Thomas Appleget, February 7, March 5, 1927; Thomas Appleget to Cora Wilson Stewart, February 23, 1927, all in Stewart Papers.

even without adequate financing, the Crusade accomplished much under Mrs. Stewart's direction. The U. S. Census Bureau cooperated with her more than ever by promptly providing lists of illiterates to local organizations who requested them. The Parent Teachers Association (P.T.A.) also united behind the N. I. C. by holding special drives with local chapters opening schools for illiterates. The General Federation of Women's Clubs, despite Mrs. Stewart's withdrawal as leader of its Illiteracy Section, continued to help. During 1927 it made plans to take an illiteracy census of one county in each state and to teach all illiterates in that area. Prison officials also continued to offer new programs for illiterate inmates. In Alabama, Governor Bibb Graves declared that illiteracy must be eradicated from the state prisons, and he appointed a special director to head the work.[24]

A major aspect of Mrs. Stewart's work during 1927 continued to be her speeches on illiteracy. Touring under the auspices of various Chautauqua circuits and billed as the "Moonlight Lady," she spent much of her time in the South. A particular interest of hers was the large number of illiterate Negroes, and she gave many speeches urging that training be provided for uneducated blacks.[25]

Mrs. Stewart's travels placed a great physical strain on her. The throbbing nerve condition, for which she had been hospitalized nine years earlier, began to recur, and the great oratorical effort she put into each speech often left her with laryngitis. But Mrs. Stewart

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[24]Cora Wilson Stewart to William Allen White, April 15, 1927, Stewart Papers.

[25]Cora Wilson Stewart to Sally Lucas Jean, June 16, 1927; W. T. Turner to Cora Wilson Stewart, November 8, 1927; Cora Wilson Stewart to Dr. Henry G. Leach, September 8, 1927; Cora Wilson Stewart to Roscoe Edlund, November 27, 1927; Cora Wilson Stewart to Mrs. Thomas Sidwell, November 27, 1927, all in Stewart Papers.

was willing to suffer these pains in order to tell the public about the need to teach illiterates. As had been true throughout her life, much of this crusading zeal was a result of her strong religious faith. Before every address she would kneel and pray for guidance; she began every day by reading the Bible; and her optimism about her movement was based increasingly on the belief that she was in harmony with God. As she noted, "I believe that our Heavenly Father has called me to a mission. To speak and write and work in behalf of all illiterate men and women whose eyes are blind to his word and whose lives are limited and darkened by ignorance."[26]

During early August Mrs. Stewart briefly left her speaking engagements to attend the biennial meeting of the World Conference on Education in Toronto, Canada. There, for the third consecutive time, she presided over the Illiteracy Section of the gathering. She evidently conducted her part of the meeting successfully, because the delegates made her chairman of the illiteracy division for the 1929 conference.[27]

Mrs. Stewart after the Toronto meeting spent most of her time during the next sixteen months answering requests for talks and soliciting money for the N. I. C.. Her speeches were given primarily in the South, where she addressed numerous state and local teachers associations. One of her most important talks was given before a conference on illiteracy in the South held in Umatilla, Florida. After her speech the gathering endorsed a plan for a regional conference on

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[26]Diary of Cora Wilson Stewart, January 17, 1928, Biographical File, Stewart Papers.

[27]Cora Wilson Stewart to Mrs. Anna Dallinger, August 28, 1927, Stewart Papers.

illiteracy to be composed of governors, school officials, and church leaders. The proposed conference would make plans for wiping out or reducing illiteracy to a minimum by 1930.[28]

If Mrs. Stewart continued to arouse general interest in the crusade against illiteracy, she had little success in soliciting financial support for it. At the end of 1928 the pecuniary situation of the N. I. C. was little better than it had been at the organization's inception. Mrs. Stewart, however, had not allowed this to deter her work. As she wrote William Allen White: "We have utilized other organizations to do much of what we would have done had the means been provided, thus farming out our problem." Although this approach was far from satisfactory to Mrs. Stewart, she realized that it was the only course open to her, and she was grateful for the cooperation of such organizations as the P. T. A. and the N. E. A.[29]

During the first four months of 1929 much of Mrs. Stewart's time was consumed in working in Louisiana, where a valiant crusade against illiteracy was being conducted. Begun under the administration of Governor Huey Long, and aided by the Julius Rosenwald Fund, the Louisiana effort became a showcase for Mrs. Stewart. "Moonlight Schools" were opened throughout the state, and illiterates flocked to them. Called to Louisiana by Superintendent of Public Instruction T. H. Harris, Mrs. Stewart observed the work and gave several speeches to arouse the

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[28]Cora Wilson Stewart to Josephine C. Preston, February 17, 1928; Cora Wilson Stewart to Dr. K. E. Ritcher, February 6, 1928; Cora Wilson Stewart to Herbert Houston, May 31, 1928; Cora Wilson Stewart to William Allen White, October 3, 1928, all in Stewart Papers.

[29]Cora Wilson Stewart to William Allen White, December 1, 1928, Stewart Papers.

public. She later described the drive as "one of the most dramatic efforts to wipe illiteracy out that the world has ever seen."[30] According to the 1930 census, illiteracy among whites in Louisiana fell from ten percent in 1920 to seven percent, while illiteracy among blacks dropped from thirty-eight to twenty-three percent. To Mrs. Stewart, this decline was evidence of what could be accomplished when politicians and educators worked together.[31]

Most scholars have credited Huey Long with conceiving the idea for the drive against illiteracy in the "Pelican State," and have ignored the contribution made by Mrs. Stewart. Long's most reliable biographer has noted:

> This /adult illiteracy/ was a problem that the state would have to attack by a new method of instruction, he /Long/ decided. Working with /Superintendent of Public Instruction/ Harris, he devised a plan to set up throughout the state a number of night schools that would offer illiterates the rudiments of education.[32]

Although Long was truly the catalyst that set in motion the Louisiana work, he did not originate the idea or the methods for teaching Louisiana's uneducated adults. As Superintendent Harris noted:

> Mrs. Stewart is largely responsible for the movement. She has been hammering at me for years to induce me to head a movement of this kind in Louisiana, but until recently I have steadfastly held out against her overtures taking the position that effort and money should be concentrated on the children and let death take care of the adults.[33]

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[30]Cora Wilson Stewart to Roscoe Edlund, April 29, 1929, Stewart Papers.

[31]Williams, Huey Long (New York, 1969), p. 523; T. H. Harris to Josephine C. Preston, May 13, 1929, Stewart Papers.

[32]T. Harry Williams, Huey Long, p. 523.

[33]T. H. Harris to Josephine C. Preston, May 13, 1929, Stewart Papers.

Despite the success of the Louisiana work, Mrs. Stewart realized that more funds must be found to help the national crusade against illiteracy. This must have been in her mind on July 3, 1929, when she left for Geneva, Switzerland, to preside again over the Illiteracy Section of the World Conference on Education. At the meeting she discussed her financial problems with delegates from other countries. They urged her to have the U. S. government take a part in the work. After the Conference Mrs. Stewart stayed in Europe for over two months, during which time she gave much thought to the suggestions of the other delegates. When she finally returned to America in September, she had decided to ask the Hoover Administration for support.[34]

Mrs. Stewart greatly respected the new President. She had often dealt with him when he was Secretary of Commerce, and she was confident that he would help her. Before approaching Hoover, however, she decided first to broach her idea to her friends Herbert H. Houston, President of the Cosmos Broadcasting Syndicate, and Kansas Senator Henry J. Allen. Both men expressed confidence in Mrs. Stewart's plan, but Allen suggested that she should first win the support of the President's advisor on educational matters, Secretary of the Interior Ray Lyman Wilbur.

During mid-October Mrs. Stewart met four times with Secretary Wilbur, and expressed her desire for the federal government to establish a national commission to help in the work against illiteracy. She found Wilbur receptive, but she also had her fears about the type of organization he favored. She articulated this concern to Senator Allen:

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[34] Washington Post, January 26, 1930; Cora Wilson Stewart to O. B. Stephens, June 19. 1929; Secretary to Cora Wilson Stewart to Mrs. Belmont Parley, July 18, 1929, all in Stewart Papers.

> The one difficulty that I foresee is that the Secretary /Wilbur/ may lean toward the view of studying illiteracy. It is well to study, but such an announced purpose would start the Commission off as a research body, which would not appeal to the imagination of the country at all. We do not want to slow down present enthusiastic efforts which are going on in so many places at this time.[35]

By the end of the month, because of the urgings of Mrs. Stewart and Senator Allen, President Hoover instructed Secretary Wilbur to appoint a National Advisory Committee on Illiteracy (N.A.C.I.). Mrs. Stewart was made Chairman of the Executive Committee of the organization. She was generally pleased with this position; but she still retained fears about the direction the new body would take. She wrote to Houston: "I hope we can have it /the Committee/ take some active steps that will be helpful just now rather than to go entirely into the class of a study or research group as certain persons seem to favor." Mrs. Stewart was especially suspicious of several members of the Committee who were active in the adult education movement. Despite her reservations, she prepared to support the new organization, and she agreed that the N. I. C. would cooperate in every possible way with the government agency.[36]

The new organization was given a good start when the Julius Rosenwald Fund, impressed with her work among illiterates in Louisiana and other southern states, offered to help. It gave the Committee $15,000, agreed to provide $10,000 to each southern state that would give an equal sum, and presented money to the N. I. C. Mrs. Stewart was

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[35]Cora Wilson Stewart to Henry J. Allen, October 17, 1929; Cora Wilson Stewart to Herbert H. Houston, October 4, 10, 15, 1929, all in Stewart Papers.

[36]Cora Wilson Stewart to Herbert H. Houston, October 28, November 13, 1929; Cora Wilson Stewart to T. H. Harris, December 2, 1929, all in Stewart Papers.

grateful for the contribution, but she had hoped for a larger contribution. She also could not forget her fears that the N. A. C. I. might become a research group instead of an active crusading agency. Thus, she entered the new decade with a feeling of uncertainty. She was hopeful that the government agency would be useful; but she feared that it would not respond to her desires.[37]

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[37]Cora Wilson Stewart to T. H. Harris, December 28, 1929; Cora Wilson Stewart to Senator Henry J. Allen, December 31, 1929; Cora Wilson Stewart to Colonel Andrew J. Gray, November 29, 1929, all in Stewart Papers. For an account of the work of the National Advisory Committee on Illiteracy, see Edgar E. Robinson and Paul Carroll Edwards, eds., The Memoirs of Ray Lyman Wilbur, 1875, 1949 (Stanford, California, 1960), p. 511-518.

CHAPTER IV

CULMINATION OF THE KENTUCKY DRIVE, 1916-1920

Mrs. Stewart was convinced that once her fellow Kentuckians became aware of the need to teach uneducated adults, they would flock to the cause of eradicating illiteracy. She was overly optimistic; but the great public response to her appeals during 1916 makes her confidence understandable. As never before, day school teachers volunteered, and members of civic organizations, especially the State Federation of Women's Clubs, continued to express interest in the K. I. C. work. Even bankers and traveling salesmen took part in the activities by telling illiterate clients about the "Moonlight Schools." As usual, the press was extremely helpful, and nearly all state newspapers supported Mrs. Stewart. Rallies and fairs continued to be held, with prizes awarded to the best students and teachers.[1] Most important, large numbers of illiterates responded to Mrs. Stewart's appeals by enrolling in night classes. Reaction among the black population, which contained a larger percentage of illiterates than the white, was especially noteworthy. The schools offered many Negroes an opportunity to make up for the education denied them in their youth. One black teacher in Winchester, Kentucky, described to Mrs. Stewart the enthusiasm of her students:

> They came in great numbers through a blinding rain storm which continued until nine o'clock. We enrolled forty

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[1] Lexington Herald, February 18, September 5, 1916; Elizabethtown News, August 29, 1916; Kentucky Illiteracy Commission, Report, 1916-1920, p. 10-11; Louisville Herald, April 14, 1916; Frankfort State Journal, September 8, 1916.

persons and we expect to have more than two hundred this week. We had 210 in our school last year and we are expecting to double it this year.[2]

As usual, Mrs. Stewart did not confine her activities to her home state. Because the second volume of her Country Life Reader was released during 1916, she decided to conduct fewer county teacher institutes and to promote the book in other states. By the end of the year educators in Missouri, Georgia, Tennessee, New York, Mississippi, Pennsylvania, Michigan, California, and Washington, D. C., had heard her tell the story of the "Moonlight Schools."[3]

Much of Mrs. Stewart's success as a speaker during this period was owing to her ability to relate her message without being repetitious. In all of her speeches she made the same basic points about the needs of the illiterates; but she rearranged her topics and added new anecdotes and statistics to make each talk unique. In addition, she conveyed enthusiasm for her topic by her eloquent and forceful delivery. To her listeners, her faith in the future of redeemed illiterates seemed boundless. In one speech she concluded that once educated, these unfortunate adults would prove to be "a new and powerful force promoting schools, building roads, increasing Sunday School attendance, building up trade, and swelling the avenues of religious, civic, and commercial enterprise."[4]

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[2]J. H. Carvin to Cora Wilson Stewart, January 11, 1916, Stewart Papers (Box 30).

[3]Cora Wilson Stewart to J. D. Crump, May 18, 1916; St. Louis Star, November 17, 1916, both in Cora Wilson Stewart Papers; diary of Cora Wilson Stewart, December 31, 1916, Stewart Papers (Box 29).

[4]Charlotte, North Carolina Observer, July 10, 1917, Stewart Papers.

By early 1917 Mrs. Stewart was widely recognized as the nation's leading authority on illiteracy. Doubtless she enjoyed the acclaim given her, but she was disappointed that more states had not taken an active role in funding adult education. Even in Kentucky, the Legislature had not responded adequately to her appeals, and she must have wondered what it would take to focus national attention on the problem of illiteracy. The galvanizing force for which Mrs. Stewart longed was provided when the United States entered World War I, and thousands of young men were required to register for the draft. Mrs. Stewart soon made clear the extent of illiteracy among the draftees by publishing a statement that 30,000 Kentuckians, the equivalent of fifteen regiments, had signed their registration cards by mark. Her charges were graphically illustrated by a newspaper report of a young mountaineer who was arrested for failing to sign up for the selective service. When brought to trial, he confessed ignorance of the conscription law, admitted that he was illiterate, and said that he had no idea where or even what Germany was.[5]

Within three weeks after the date of registration, Mrs. Stewart had the names and addresses of all Kentuckians who registered by mark. Although "Moonlight School" classes were not scheduled to begin until late August, she called a special session for draftees.[6] She then solicited a committee of eleven prominent state leaders, including Governor James D. Black, to raise $30,000 for the K. I. C. The committee requested that each community provide $200 to the effort.

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[5]Calhoun Star, July 20, 1917; Nashville Southern Agriculturist, July 1, 1917, both in Scrapbook, Stewart Papers (Box 55).

[6]Stewart, Moonlight Schools, p. 81-82.

By appealing to the patriotism of the public, the "Thirty Thousand Committee" raised $10,951.19 before September 1917.[7]

Mrs. Stewart's action in pointing out the state's large number of illiterate draftees brought protests from many people. Numerous individuals resented what they considered the advertising of the state's ignorance, and they said that the K. I. C. was soliciting money under false pretense. A letter to the editor of the Hazard Herald noted that Mrs. Stewart's statement "is not one-eighth true and the publishers of this lie ought to be publicly rebuked."[8] In response to her critics, Mrs. Stewart stated that, for the sake of Kentucky, she only wished that her figures were incorrect, but she cited census statistics on the large number of illiterates in the Commonwealth, and said that the truth could not be denied. Despite Mrs. Stewart's forceful reply, however, scattered criticism of her movement continued, and many people became skeptical of her propaganda tactics.[9]

Mrs. Stewart was too busy to pay much attention to the criticisms of fellow Kentuckians. She correctly saw the war as an opportunity to spread her movement, and she intended to use aroused public opinion to the fullest. In August 1917 she wrote President Woodrow Wilson offering to direct the teaching of illiterates in the sixteen army cantonments of the United States. Her desires were later reasserted in a letter to Kentucky Senator J. C. W. Beckham:

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[7]Glasgow Times, August 13, 1917; Cadiz Reporter, August 16, 1917, both in Scrapbook, Stewart Papers (Box 55); Stewart, Moonlight Schools, p. 81-82; Kentucky Illiteracy Commission, Report, 1916-1920, p. 7.

[8]Hazard Herald, October 13, 1917, Scrapbook, Stewart Papers (Box 55).

[9]Louisville Courier Journal, August 24, 1917.

> There are two things that I am very anxious to bring about: one is that the Secretary of the War Department shall issue an order to have all illiterates in the army taught to read and write, and the next, that I shall be placed in charge of the work of organizing the classes in the various cantonments.[10]

It was not a burning personal ambition that caused Mrs. Stewart to ask that she be put at the head of the army illiteracy work. As the pioneer of the "Moonlight Schools," she honestly believed that she was the person best qualified for the position. One might call this egotism or vanity; but Mrs. Stewart would not acknowledge either of these charges. To her, the illiterates were what was important, and, for their sake, she believed that she must lead the work. Soon after her suggestion to Beckham, her expertise was recognized by the National War Work Council of the Y. M. C. A., which consulted with her and employed her methods in various army camps.[11]

Despite the acclaim given to her movement after the beginning of World War I, Mrs. Stewart also endured many hardships. Her father had died early in 1917, and she had discovered that she had anemia. In addition, her income was still inadequate; her total earnings for the year were only $490. Yet, despite these adversities, she worked frantically to have illiterate draftees taught to read and write before they were called to arms, and she even found time to write a small textbook, The Soldier's First Book, to be used in the cantonments.[12]

Throughout Kentucky she traveled, telling people of the needs to teach draftees. A martial tone entered her speeches as she reminded

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[10]Cora Wilson Stewart to Woodrow Wilson, August 23, 1917, Stewart Papers (Box 28); Stewart to J. C. W. Beckham, August 25, 1917, Cora Wilson-Stewart Papers (Box 29).

[11]Frankfort State Journal, October 11, 1917.

[12]Diary of Cora Wilson Stewart (n.d.), Biographical File, Stewart Papers.

the people that they must mobilize to fight illiteracy in the same way that the army was organizing to fight the Germans. The response to her appeals was encouraging. Teachers volunteered faster than they could be assigned, and when draftees could not be reached in their home areas Mrs. Stewart, with the aid of the Y. M. C. A., organized schools at Camp Zachary Taylor in Louisville.[13]

Because the war aroused public patriotism, Mrs. Stewart knew that chances were excellent for getting more funds from the state legislature for her work. She got introduced into the 1918 session of the General Assembly a bill providing the K. I. C. with $25,000 per year for 1918, 1919 and 1920. Realizing that this money could be used to push the illiteracy campaign as never before, she, along with her fellow illiteracy workers, lobbied vigorously for the bill. At the time Mrs. Stewart was most involved in the legislative battle, the U. S. Commissioner of Education, P. P. Claxton, proposed to appoint her Specialist in Adult Education in the U. S. Bureau of Education. This attractive position would open new opportunities for her and would allow her to coordinate the illiteracy crusade on the national level. She was tempted to accept the offer, but her first allegiance was to her home state, and she wrote to Claxton:

> It seems to be the opinion of all with whom I have conferred about the matter that it would put a damper on the enthusiasm of all concerned and prove a great hindrance to the work in Kentucky and elsewhere were I to accept a position which would take me out of the State at this time. It has also been presented to me that it would appear ungrateful if I left after getting the $75,000.[14]

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[13] Stewart, Moonlight Schools, p. 86; Louisville Courier Journal, October 22, 1917; Frankfort State Journal, September 13, 1917.

[14] Lela Mae Stiles to Cora Wilson Stewart, March 5, 1918; Cora Wilson Stewart to P. P. Claxton, March 20, 1918, both in Stewart Papers.

Soon after Mrs. Stewart decided to remain in Frankfort the appropriation bill passed easily. It provided $75,000, and stipulated that the K. I. C. would cease to exist on June 1, 1920. Members of the Commission still received no salary;[15] but this did not worry Mrs. Stewart. She doubtless would have received a salary from the state if she had requested it, but she thought that the good she was doing was adequate compensation, and she never thought of asking for monetary remuneration.

After the passage of the appropriation bill most of Mrs. Stewart's time was spent coordinating the work among illiterate draftees. She gave numerous speeches on illiteracy, and she even began publishing a small newspaper, The Moonlighter, to tell of the Kentucky crusade. The paper was filled largely with testimonials to the success of the "Moonlight Schools," but it also noted the difficulties that some teachers were having in reaching the adults. It also mirrored Mrs. Stewart's view of the illiteracy crusade, and carried the same martial tone that pervaded her speeches. Once, during a contest between the eastern and western sections of the state to see which half could teach the most illiterates, Mrs. Stewart noted in The Moonlighter: "How the battle rages! Whose blood doesn't tingle? Who can keep out of the fight?"[16]

Although the Kentucky work demanded much of Mrs. Stewart's attention, she still found time during 1918 to travel to other states. She delivered addresses on illiteracy to numerous state education

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[15] Acts of the Kentucky General Assembly, March 28, 1918, p. 154-156; Louisville Courier Journal, May 31, 1918.

[16] Louisville Post, January 9, 1918; The Moonlighter, both in Stewart Papers.

associations and to the annual conventions of the General Federation of Women's Clubs and the National Education Association (N.E.A.).[17] The N. E. A. was so impressed with her story of the "Moonlight Schools" that it made a statement calling for national support of her work, and a year later it created an illiteracy commission of its own, under Mrs. Stewart's leadership. The drive against illiteracy was also given further recognition in August 1918 when the Y. M. C. A. purchased 50,000 Country Life Readers to ship to American soldiers in France.[18]

The primary reason that so many new supporters flocked to Mrs. Stewart's movement on the national level was because of the emergency caused by the war. Numerous adherents to her crusade, however, did not share Mrs. Stewart's educational interest in the illiterate adults. Many of them were superpatriots, or "one-hundred-percenters," as they were often called. While Mrs. Stewart believed that once illiterates were taught to read and write they would see the righteousness of the U. S. war cause, the superpatriots sought to stampede the uneducated into mass acceptance of American institutions.[19] In addition, "the one-hundred-percenters" were primarily interested in the large number of foreign-born citizens of the northeast. Mrs. Stewart, on the other hand, came from a region with few immigrants, and she could not understand the superpatriots' concern. She worked mostly with

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[17]Cora Wilson Stewart to Erwin Holt, March 3, 1918; A. E. Winship to Cora Wilson Stewart, July 11, 1918; Helen Louise Johnson, June 18, 1918, all in Stewart Papers.

[18]National Education Association, Proceedings of the Annual Convention of the National Education Association (June 1918), p. 118; National Education Association, Bulletin of the National Education Association (June 1919), p. 34; B. F. Johnson to Cora Wilson Stewart, August 24, 1918, Stewart Papers.

[19]John Higham, Strangers in the Land: Patterns of American Nativism, 1860-1925 (New Brunswick, N. J., 1955), p. 245-247.

native-born adults, and she resented any effort to "Americanize" people whose ancestors had lived in the United States for generations. Since their aims were so contrary to the goals Mrs. Stewart set for the movement against illiteracy, she was wary of the "one-hundred-percenters," and she strove to keep her work free of their influence. She recognized that most of them had no interest in education, but were merely carried away with the hysteria of the war.[20]

Mrs. Stewart's efforts in 1918 to keep her movement from being captured by the superpatriots, her work in Kentucky, and her travels to other states placed a tremendous mental and physical strain on her. In addition, although she received money from giving speeches, from conducting teachers' institutes, and from royalties on her books, her income was inadequate because she used much of her funds to finance the work against illiteracy. She became irritable, and found it almost impossible to work with people who disagreed with her. One of her associates noted in April 1918:

> I have your letter of the 18th and after reading same carefully, have come to the conclusion that due to the strain you have undergone in the past year in handling and consummating so far successfully the gigantic matter of illiteracy, that you have lost sight of some of the smaller details that have been a vital part of this work.[21]

Perhaps even more startling to Mrs. Stewart, she became bored with telling the story of the origins of the "Moonlight Schools." Afraid of losing the crusading zeal which had carried her through life, she sought

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[20]Untitled and undated magazine article, Stewart Papers (Box 52).

[21]Warren C. Callahan to Cora Wilson Stewart, April 20, 1918; J. Duncan Spaeth to Cora Wilson Stewart, June 28, 1918; Cora Wilson Stewart to Marie Reynolds Ford, September 5, 1918; W. O. Easton to Cora Wilson Stewart, August 28, 1918; Ernest H. Williams, October 21, 1918, all in Stewart Papers.

suggestions from two old friends, Dr. J. C. Crabbe, who left Kentucky in 1915 to become President of Colorado State Teachers College, and Dr. A. E. Winship, editor of the Boston Journal of Education. Both men offered helpful advice which Mrs. Stewart apparently incorporated in her talks.[22]

Mrs. Stewart's loss of interest was largely the result of her physical condition. Throughout the year she was plagued by a dull, throbbing ache in her back and neck. At first the pain was attributed to fatigue, but it was later diagnosed as an illness of the nervous system. Mrs. Stewart was finally forced to go to the Mayo Brothers' Hospital in Rochester, Minnesota, where she had an operation. Although she remained in the hospital until February 1919, she kept in close contact with her fellow workers in Kentucky, and she made plans for the final drive to wipe illiteracy from the state before the 1920 deadline. The operation relieved her pain, and the rest which followed it allowed her to regain her strength and rejuvenate her spirits.[23]

When Mrs. Stewart returned to Kentucky, she called together the educational leaders of the state, and explained her plans for the 1919 drive. As before, the program included a speakers' campaign, rallies, and "Moonlight Schools." In addition, the $75,000 state appropriation would be used to send K. I. C. agents into each county of the state to arouse the public and to oversee the work. The educational leaders

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[22] J. G. Crabbe to Cora Wilson Stewart, July 13, 1918; A. E. Winship to Cora Wilson Stewart, July 11, 1918, both in Stewart Papers.

[23] J. D. Crump to Cora Wilson Stewart, February 1, 1919; Cora Wilson Stewart to Roscoe Gilmore Stott, October 30, 1918; J. C. McBriar to Cora Wilson Stewart, December 19, 1918; Cora Wilson Stewart to Judge Robert W. Bingham, December 30, 1918; Cora Wilson Stewart to J. C. Crump, February 5, 1919; Cora Wilson Stewart to A. J. Gray, Jr., February 5, 1919, all in Stewart Papers.

endorsed Mrs. Stewart's plan and agreed to cooperate with the Commission.[24]

Mrs. Stewart's ability to organize and manage the drive was remarkable, considering that she was still recovering from an operation. One of her friends later remarked: "I wondered at her /Mrs. Stewart's/ executive ability. She had Kentuckians well informed to our disgraceful adult illiteracy and on every tongue were her words 'no illiteracy in Kentucky in 1920.'" The drive was begun with the speaking campaign in July. Speakers traveled throughout the Commonwealth stressing three points: 1) wiping out illiteracy; 2) increasing day school attendance; and 3) raising teachers' salaries.[25]

Meanwhile, in late June the first of two groups of fifty K. I. C. agents came to Louisville to receive instructions from Mrs. Stewart. A second group was trained in September and took their places in the field. The K. I. C. representatives were mostly diligent individuals who worked hard to arouse public sentiment. They often met with public apathy, but, thanks to their efforts, word of the "Moonlight Schools" spread to many new areas of the state. Mrs. Stewart printed stories of the experiences of the agents in The Moonlighter, and she encouraged teachers and field agents alike with her leadership.[26]

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[24] Louisville Times, April 19, 1919, Stewart Papers.

[25] Linda Neville, July 15, 1941, note appended to Cora Wilson Stewart to Linda Neville, September 26, 1911, Linda Neville Papers (Special Collections, Margaret I. King Library, University of Kentucky); Kentucky Illiteracy Commission, Special Bulletin, K. I. C. Statewide Educational Campaign: Data for Speakers, 1919, in Stewart Papers.

[26] Elizabeth Baker, Day by Day, August 2, 1919; Mary A. Norris, Day by Day, August 18, 1919; Sallie Ford, Day by Day, August 17, 1919 all in Stewart Papers (Box 64); The Moonlighter, October 6, 1919, Stewart Papers; Lexington Leader, June 24, 1919; Louisville Courier Journal, May 19, 1919.

While Mrs. Stewart was involved in the Kentucky work, international events were causing the public to notice her efforts. Because the Russian Revolution had occurred in a country populated largely by illiterates, many people feared that American illiterates might be susceptible to Communist propaganda. Newspaper editors, government officials, educators, ministers, and other civic-minded citizens pointed to American illiterates, especially to the immigrants of the northeast, as potential Communists. As the effects of the Bolshevik Revolution became clearer, hysteria spread and "Americanization" became the order of the day. Many patriotic groups, including the American Legion and the Daughters of the American Revolution, joined in the movement.[27]

Since Mrs. Stewart worked to educate illiterate adults, the "Americanization" workers naturally praised her. At first Mrs. Stewart welcomed her new supporters and graciously accepted the plaudits awarded her. She soon realized, however, that, like the superpatriots during the war, the "Americanization" advocates were more interested in homogenizing the population than in teaching illiterates to read and write. She feared that these people would infiltrate the "Moonlight School" work and turn it from the simple purpose for which she had intended it. One cannot deny that Mrs. Stewart herself tried to teach moral and civic lessons in the "Moonlight Schools." She was a civic-minded Christian who would have found it impossible to do otherwise. Yet, she knew that the assimilation of immigrants advocated by many groups on the national

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[27]Burlington, Vermont Free Press, April 26, 1919; Philadelphia Inquirer, March 2, 1919; New York Evening Telegram December 4, 1919; Boston Christian Science Monitor, February 15, 1919; Lexington Herald, November 24, 1919, all in Stewart Papers; Higham, Strangers in the Land, p. 255-259; see Robert K. Murray, Red Scare: A Study in National Hysteria, 1919-1920 (Minneapolis, 1955), for a thorough view of the postwar Red Scare.

level could not be accomplished overnight, and she believed that even if it could be it would not justify the means being advocated. Although she was outwardly cordial to the "Americanization" workers, she really feared the effect that they might have on the illiteracy crusade, and she fought hard to keep the "Moonlight Schools" free of their influence. In testimony given in July 1919 before a Congressional Committee, she made clear the relationship between the "Americanization" efforts and her own work:

> This work [the illiteracy crusade] must not be confused with Americanization. We work entirely with native born Americans. This comes about because there is practically no foreign-born element in the South compared with the great urban population of the East. Moonlight Schools correspond to the evening schools of the cities, but are conducted for illiterates solely.[28]

The struggle to keep the movement free of "Americanization" influence was important to Mrs. Stewart and would occupy much of her time in the future; but her primary interest during late 1919 was the Kentucky work. By September she realized that the $75,000 appropriation could not provide books, pencils, and writing pads needed by the state's illiterates. She decided to travel to New York to seek aid from General Coleman Dupont and the Red Cross. Unfortunately, the trip did more harm than good, because it was reported that Mrs. Stewart had gone to New York to buy a fleet of airplanes to use in the Kentucky crusade. She supposedly remarked to a newspaper reporter that the poor mountain roads in her home state made it impossible to reach all illiterates by automobile, and she hoped to use the planes to carry teachers into remote areas. Mrs. Stewart later denied this story, and no one can be sure whether she actually intended to buy a fleet of planes. However, she did attempt

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[28] New York Tribune, July 27, 1919, Stewart Papers.

to purchase or rent at least one airplane, and she even asked Eddie Rickenbacher, an American flying ace of World War I, to be her pilot.[29]

When the story of Mrs. Stewart's alleged plans reached the public, it shocked many Kentuckians who had favored her work, and it further raised the suspicions of some newspaper editors and educators who were already critical of the K. I. C. Some supporters of the work wondered whether the state appropriation was going to the "Moonlight Schools" or was being used to finance Mrs. Stewart's frequent trips to other states. One newspaper editor observed: "The Commission is deliberately traducing the mountain people and advertising them as being on the same level of civilization with the South Sea Islanders and the Hottentot savages. The Moonlight School idea is fatuous and its application a joke."[30]

Thus, by the end of 1919 a definite reaction against Mrs. Stewart and the illiteracy crusade was covering the state; but Mrs. Stewart was oblivious of the strength of her opposition. She began making plans for the period after June 1, 1920, when the K. I. C.'s term expired. She decided to advocate the establishment of a State Department of Adult Education which would standardize the night school work and would be independent of the State Department of Education. In early 1920, she got such a bill introduced in the House of Representatives. While the bill

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[29]Nashville Tennessean, October 5, 1919; Boston Christian Science Monitor, September 30, 1919; Everette Dix to Cora Wilson Stewart, October 2, 1919; S. E. Knaress to Cora Wilson Stewart, September 30, 1919; Curtiss Airplane Corporation, September 30, 1919, all in Stewart Papers; Lexington Herald, March 13, 19, 1920.

[30]West Liberty Courier, October 17, 1919; Jackson Times, October 17, 1919, both in Scrapbook, Stewart Papers (Box 55).

was passing through the legislative process, the public began assessing the effectiveness of the illiteracy crusade. Mrs. Stewart claimed that at least 130,000 of Kentucky's 208,084 illiterates had been taught to read and write.[31] Her figures were based on reports that she received from county school superintendents, teachers, and former illiterates.[32]

Because the future of the illiteracy work in Kentucky depended on the action of the Legislature, Mrs. Stewart spent the first two months of 1920 working vigorously for the passage of her bill. Even at the end of February, however, the fate of the program was uncertain.[33] In early March Mrs. Stewart realized that she had underestimated the strength of the K. I. C. opposition when Governor Edwin P. Morrow, the first Republican to hold the office during her crusade, called on the Legislature to make no new appropriations. Like Stanley four years earlier, Morrow was pledged to efficiency and holding down government expenses.[34]

Mrs. Stewart was not surprised at Morrow's attitude, for she had little faith in Republican officials. Yet she was hopeful that

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[31]Kentucky Illiteracy Commission, Report, 1916-1920, p. 7. The 1920 U. S. Census indicated that illiteracy had decreased by only 53,070 since 1910; but illiteracy was defined differently by the K. I. C. and U. S. Census Bureau. The K. I. C. generally considered a person literate when he could write a letter of thanks to Mrs. Stewart. The Census takers merely asked the individual if he could write in any language, regardless of ability to read. U. S. Census Bureau, Fourteenth Census of the United States (1920) Vol. 3, p. 10, 366.

[32]Stewart, Moonlight Schools, p. 121; County Superintendents Reports to Cora Wilson Stewart, Stewart Papers (Box 27); Kentucky Illiteracy Commission, Report, 1916-1920, p. 14-64.

[33]Cora Wilson Stewart to Sallie Ford, February 26, 1920; Cora Wilson Stewart to Horace Towner, February 26, 1920, both in Stewart Papers.

[34]Lexington Herald, March 2, 1920.

public attention would be awakened to the need for the illiteracy bill. To arouse the citizenry, she planned to have the Kentucky Federation of Women's Clubs march on Frankfort on March 10, the day the bill was expected to come before the House of Representatives. She was shocked, however, when the House Rules Committee suddenly called the night school bill up for consideration two days after Morrow's statement. It was evident from the beginning of the session that the bill would not pass, and it was tabled by a vote of over two to one.[35]

Despite Morrow's opposition and the action of the House of Representatives, Mrs. Stewart was not prepared to give up the fight. One of her lieutenants threatened to marshal 10,000 women to march on the capitol, and Mrs. Stewart hoped that this would persuade the Senate to pass the bill.[36] The future of the crusade in Kentucky was further jeopardized on March 8, however, when the State Superintendent of Public Instruction, George Colvin, circulated among the Senators adverse reports on the "Moonlight Schools" from county school superintendents. The superintendents' statements differed sharply from their responses to an earlier K. I. C. questionnaire in which they had praised the "Moonlight Schools"; they were now very critical of the night classes. Mrs. Stewart later charged that Colvin had induced his answers by shrewdly designing the questions to imply that the night school bill would endanger a proposed increase in teachers' salaries.[37]

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[35] Lexington Herald, March 5, 7, 10, 1920; Lexington Leader, March 5, 11, 1920.

[36] Lexington Leader, March 11, 1920.

[37] Boston Christian Science Monitor, April 14, 1920, Stewart Papers; Lexington Herald, March 13, 1920; George Colvin to various superintendents, March 2, 1920, Stewart Papers (Box 30).

The effect of Colvin's circular on the Kentucky Legislature was great. It confused many supporters of Mrs. Stewart's work, and allowed her opposition in the Legislature to move with confidence to quash the illiteracy bill. On March 9, a day before the proposed women's march, her opponents called the bill out of the Senate Rules Committee. Led by Senator Pleasant Hogue, a first-term Republican from Governor Morrow's home district, they argued that the crusade against illiteracy was a waste of the state's money and that the uneducated adults should have sought training when they were young. When the final vote was tallied, the bill was defeated 19 to 17. Voting was along party lines: 15 Democrats, 2 Republicans for; 17 Republicans, 2 Democrats opposed.[38]

Mrs. Stewart was furious at what she saw as a Republican conspiracy. In an address before the Legislature several weeks later, she lambasted the party for thwarting the educational advancement of the state.[39] Mrs. Stewart was a charitable woman, capable of great acts of goodness, but she seldom forgot a wrong done to her. She never forgave Kentucky Republicans, and especially George Colvin. She later accused the Superintendent of having played politics with education. In reality, however, like many other Kentuckians, he had genuine reservations about the "Moonlight Schools." It is doubtless true that Colvin feared the proposed Department of Adult Education as a challenge to his authority, but his convictions went much deeper. As he noted in his letter to the superintendents, "I have been insisting that our chief duty is to remove the cause of illiteracy by making our public schools more efficient.

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[38] Lexington Herald, March 10, 1920; Lexington Leader, March 19, 1920.

[39] Unsigned letter to Cora Wilson Stewart, May 3, 1920; James H. Thompson to Cora Wilson Stewart, March 31, 1920, both in Stewart Papers.

In my judgment, the time to eradicate illiteracy is in childhood."[40]

It was not simply the opposition of the Republicans and Superintendent Colvin that defeated Mrs. Stewart. Widespread adverse publicity about her alleged plans to buy a fleet of airplanes disillusioned many people. Ironically, the people whom Mrs. Stewart most wanted to help, the mountaineers of eastern Kentucky, also resented the publication of their illiteracy problems, and many of them were her most vehement opponents. Most important, the times were changing, and Kentuckians were tiring of the reforming zeal that Mrs. Stewart represented. They had seen the growth of the state and national level of government agencies which were supposed to alleviate problems but which seemed most intent on fastening themselves to the public purse. Many citizens viewed the K. I. C. as such an agency, and while they admired Mrs. Stewart, they were unwilling to finance her work.[41]

After the defeat of the night school bill, Mrs. Stewart retired to Rowan County, where she remained for several months. During this time she formed a statewide Literacy League to encourage local work and to supply, free of charge, books to teachers and illiterates.[42] Many of Mrs. Stewart's friends who were involved in illiteracy work in

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[40]Cora Wilson Stewart to Thomas R. Underwood, May 29, 1923, Thomas Rust Underwood Papers (Special Collections, Margaret I. King Library, University of Kentucky). George Colvin to various superintendents, March 2, 1920, Stewart Papers (Box 30).

[41]Lexington Leader, March 11, 12, 1920.

[42]Cora Wilson Stewart to Jessie L. Goodrich and others, July 28, 1920; Charles W. Logan to Cora Wilson Stewart, June 16, 28, 1920, both in Stewart Papers.

other states viewed this period of apparent inactivity as a sign that she had lost the crusading zeal. But Mrs. Stewart was not easily discouraged. If World War I and the reaction that followed it disheartened many people about the possibility of progress and sapped the missionary fervor of reformers, as some scholars believe, it only convinced Mrs. Stewart that she must work harder. She flourished on adversity and enjoyed nothing better than attempting the impossible; she had committed herself to the illiteracy crusade, and she refused to see her efforts die. When a fellow worker asked why she had not been vocally leading the fight, Mrs. Stewart characteristically replied, "You must not get the impression that I have given up [the illiteracy work]. I am only enlarging it. My aim of ten years service to my State, ten to my nation, and ten to the world is now entering the second chapter."[43]

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[43]Cora Wilson Stewart to Lida Hafford, August 30, 1920, Stewart Papers.

CHAPTER V

EFFORTS TO FORM A NATIONAL MOVEMENT, 1920 - 1925

After losing the legislative battle in Kentucky, Mrs. Stewart had time to contemplate the future of her work. Although uncertain exactly how to proceed, she became determined to form a national movement to teach illiterates. She eventually saw that because it was an election year the best means of furthering her work was through politics. As she wrote to one of her friends:

> I am convinced that the time has come when if our work is to have its fullest extension, we must work through the political channels as the Prohibition and other causes have found that to be the case.[1]

Fortunately for Mrs. Stewart, her leadership in the illiteracy crusade, her avowed support of Woodrow Wilson, and her antipathy toward the Republican party made her a recognized figure among Kentucky Democrats. Determined to use what power she had to the fullest, Mrs. Stewart became a delegate to the National Democratic Convention and set off for its meeting at San Francisco in June 1920.[2] At the convention Mrs. Stewart made the most of her political leverage. She had an interview with Governor James B. Cox, and, after making sure that he supported prohibition and the eradication of illiteracy, she agreed to give the seconding speech to his nomination.[3] In addition, her work was given a fitting recognition by the delegates of her home state when, on the 36th ballot, one vote was cast for her for president.[4]

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[1] Cora Wilson Stewart to Sallie Ford, July 28, 1920, Stewart Papers.

[2] B. F. Johnson Co. to Cora Wilson Stewart, May 26, 1920, Stewart Papers.

[3] General W. H. Sears to Mrs. Jean A. Heathington, July 12, 1920, Stewart Papers.

[4] Lexington Herald, July 19, 1920, Biographical file, Stewart Papers.

Convinced that the Democrats had chosen the right man in Cox, Mrs. Stewart left San Francisco and hurried east to Salt Lake City, Utah, where the N. E. A. was assembled. Although she missed most of the meeting, she arrived in time to persuade the educators to establish two committees to interview the presidential candidates of the two major parties to determine how each stood on education and the problem of adult illiteracy. She also got the convention to appropriate $1,000 per year from the N. E. A.'s Illiteracy Commission.[5]

Pleased with the actions of both conventions, Mrs. Stewart returned to Morehead in mid-July to resume writing a book on the "Moonlight Schools" which she had begun shortly after the loss of the Kentucky legislative fight. Her work was interrupted in mid-September, however, when both the state and national committees of the Democratic Party called on her to speak in the November campaign. Both groups were anxious to have her appear, for many places were asking specifically for her.[6] She had originally promised her time to the national committee; but she could not ignore the requests of her home state. H. V. McChesney, head of the Kentucky Democratic Speaking Committee, pleaded: "I am writing to beg that you save the larger part of your time for Kentucky." She finally decided to give all but eight days of the campaign to her home state.[7]

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[5]General W. H. Sears to Mrs. Jean A. Heathington, July 12, 1920; J. W. Crabtree to Cora Wilson Stewart, July 17, 1920, both in Stewart Papers.

[6]Cora Wilson Stewart to Charl O. Williams, September 14, 1920; Pat Harrison to Cora Wilson Stewart, August 30, 1920, both in Stewart Papers.

[7]H. V. McChesney to Cora Wilson Stewart, August 21, 1920; Cora Wilson Stewart to Robert G. Higdon, November 15, 1920, both in Stewart Papers.

Mrs. Stewart was as active in the political campaign of 1920 as she ever was in the illiteracy work. From October 1 until election day she gave fifty-three speeches, thirty-four of them in Kentucky. Her addresses were usually aimed at getting the female voters to support Cox, and she traveled over the entire state urging women to exercise their newly acquired franchise. Her audiences were always receptive, and she invariably gave them a spirited talk.[8]

By the end of the campaign Mrs. Stewart was physically and financially exhausted. Her last four speeches took an almost superhuman effort on her part, and she gladly returned to Morehead after the election. Although Cox lost in a landslide, Mrs. Stewart was not discouraged. Soon after she learned of the defeat, she noted: "The fact that we did not win in the nation has not diminished my pride or enthusiasm. We were right, and it is more noble to be right and be in the minority than ever to be right and with the majority."[9]

Thus, what the victorious Republican candidate, Warren G. Harding, called a return to "normalcy" did not affect Mrs. Stewart. Although she detected a change in the political climate, she refused to believe that it marked the end of progressivism. Instead of becoming a cynic, as many pre-war reformers had done, she retained her crusading zeal, continued to work on her volume on the "Moonlight Schools," and planned

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[8]John L. Crayot to Cora Wilson Stewart, October 31, 1920; Lela Mae Stiles to Cora Wilson Stewart, September 20, 1920; J. A. Murry to Cora Wilson Stewart, July 28, 1920; Cora Wilson Stewart to Robert G. Higdon, November 15, 1920, all in Stewart Papers.

[9]Cora Wilson Stewart to Robert G. Higdon, November 15, 1920, Stewart Papers.

for the national illiteracy movement.[10] Her feelings about the book, her strategy for the crusade, and her thoughts about progressivism were explained in a letter to a fellow illiteracy worker, Miss Sarah E. Luther:

> I have much to write that I had no time to put in form before--and much that will be helpful, I hope. That's why I am here in the quiet of my hills. I was afraid that the action of our Legislature would cripple the work of some others--like yourself--who are engaged in a violent fight, so I've kept it just as quiet as I could. Though I regret the delay, I am not discouraged. The illiterates will have their chance. Progress never goes in a straight line but zig-zag, I'm told.[11]

By January 1921, Mrs. Stewart had finished her volume on the "Moonlight Schools," and she had decided on her policy for the national illiteracy movement. Realizing the usefulness of her widespread reputation as a speaker, she decided that she could best help her movement by giving talks throughout the United States on the need to teach illiterates. Using the $1,000 granted to the Illiteracy Commission of the N. E. A. at the organization's annual convention in 1920, she hired as her secretary Miss Lela Mae Stiles, a young woman who had assisted her during the Kentucky crusade. After establishing headquarters in Frankfort, Mrs. Stewart set off on a speaking tour. Throughout the year, while she traveled across the country giving talks on the need to reach and teach illiterates, Miss Stiles scheduled future engagements for her and compiled statistics

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[10] Wesley M. Bagby, The Road to Normalcy: The Presidential Campaign and Election of 1920 (Baltimore, 1962), pp. 163-165; Cora Wilson Stewart to Sallie Lucas Jean, March 1, 1921, Mary Elliott Flannery Papers (Special Collections, Margaret I. King Library, University of Kentucky).

[11] Cora Wilson Stewart to Sarah E. Luther, January 5, 1921, Cora Wilson Stewart Papers. For an account of other progressive reformers who carried their work into the 1920's, see Clarke A. Chambers, Seedtime of Reform: American Social Service and Social Action, 1918-1933 (Minneapolis, 1963).

on illiteracy in cities and counties in every state. These figures were mailed to local civic organizations, which usually published them in their home-town newspapers. Many communities asked for statistics, and Miss Stiles worked diligently to answer all requests.[12]

This was an especially difficult period for Mrs. Stewart. She always felt compensated for her speaking efforts, but she was invariably tired from her travels. Whenever the touring became too exhausting and she became discouraged, however, she usually turned with her problems to Miss Stiles, who continually gave encouragement. During 1921 Mrs. Stewart spoke in nearly every western and midwestern state. She addressed a variety of groups, including Women's Clubs, state teachers' associations, and Rotary Clubs.[13] She always got an enthusiastic reception, and she received promises of support from schoolmen, local civic leaders, and state governors. Because of the public response to her speeches, the General Federation of Women's Clubs and the National Council of Education formed illiteracy committees, with Mrs. Stewart as the head of each.[14]

Although Mrs. Stewart's speaking engagements consumed most of her energy during 1921, she still found time to plan four regional conferences on illiteracy. The first meeting, for the eastern states, was held November 25-26, in New York City. It was attended by many

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[12]Cora Wilson Stewart to Lela Mae Stiles, December 12, 1921, Stewart Papers.

[13]C. A. Filmer to Cora Wilson Stewart, May 5, 1921, Stewart Papers; Cora Wilson Stewart to Mary E. Flannery, November 24, 1921, Mary Elliott Flannery Papers.

[14]"The Crusade Against Illiteracy and Its Founder Cora Wilson Stewart," p. 4, Biographical File; C. A. Filmer to Cora Wilson Stewart, May 5, 1921; Governor N. E. Kendall to Cora Wilson Stewart, November 9, 1921, all in Stewart Papers.

prominent figures, including Mrs. Carrie Chapman Catt, President of the National American Woman Suffrage Association and activist in the peace movement in America. Mrs. Catt praised the illiteracy work as being second in importance only to the movement to prevent future wars. The conferences for the western and northern states were held during 1922, and the meeting for the South was conducted in April of the same year. Mrs. Stewart was especially pleased with the northern conference, which was held in Chicago.[15] After the gathering, Jane Addams invited Mrs. Stewart and several other delegates to Hull House where they talked about the movement against illiteracy and other reform efforts.[16]

Although all of the conferences were arranged on short notice and were poorly financed, Mrs. Stewart was pleased with the public interest they received. She noted: "I had no idea they [the conferences] would prove so popular, and, naturally, am gratified." The meetings were so successful that when Mrs. Stewart announced that others would be held, some cities offered free accommodations for the delegates.[17]

Despite the popularity of the movement against illiteracy during this period, there were also complications for Mrs. Stewart. Because she was such an energetic person, it was inevitable that she would come into conflict with the bureaucracy of the N. E. A.. She found

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[15] Cora Wilson Stewart to Josephine C. Preston, December 1, 1921; Cora Wilson Stewart to Dr. A. E. Winship, December 5, 1921; Cora Wilson Stewart to Joy Elmer Morgan, February 7, 1922; Cora Wilson Stewart to J. W. Crabtree, February 17, 1922; Cora Wilson Stewart to Dr. Thomas E. Finegan, March 9, 1922, all in Stewart Papers.

[16] Diary of Cora Wilson Stewart, December 31, 1922, Stewart Papers (Box 51).

[17] Cora Wilson Stewart to Dr. W. B. Owens, July 15, 1922; Cora Wilson Stewart to Miss Willie Lawson, May 29, 1922, both in Stewart Papers.

that the money allotted to her as chairman of the Association's Illiteracy Commission was constantly being delayed by red tape. The organization was also reluctant to finance her conferences, and only her own personal income and her superb managerial ability made them possible. As early as November 1921 she wrote to Miss Stiles: "Sometimes I think I was foolish to open headquarters with N. E. A., so slow and cumbersome."[18] To Mrs. Stewart, the rigidity of the organization was stifling progress in the eradication of illiteracy; but she realized that only through its auspices could she continue her work, so she attempted to make the best of the situation.

Mrs. Stewart's dissatisfaction with the N. E. A. did not keep her from seeking aid from another national organization. In June 1922 she persuaded the General Federation of Women's Clubs at its annual convention in Chautauqua, New York, to focus its attention on illiteracy and to provide her with an appropriation for the organization's Illiteracy Division. As with the N. E. A., Mrs. Stewart was glad to get the cooperation of the Federation, but she was also impatient with what she considered to be its bureaucratic inefficiency.[19]

Mrs. Stewart's dependence on the two national organizations was greatly complicated during 1922 by her hectic speaking schedule. Because of her travels, she was always behind in her correspondence. One week she would be touring the South, giving as many as two speeches a day; then she would catch a train and rush to Iowa, Washington state,

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[18] Cora Wilson Stewart to Lela Mae Stiles, November 15, December 26, 1922; Dr. Augustus Thomas to Cora Wilson Stewart, December 21, 1922, all in Stewart Papers.

[19] Cora Wilson Stewart to Mrs. John D. Sherman, September 15, 1922; Los Angeles Examiner, November 26, 1922, both in Stewart Papers.

or California to give addresses. Her talks on illiteracy were much in demand, and she strove to answer all requests.[20] During the year she spoke before almost every type of audience imaginable, from women's clubs to Indian tribes.[21]

Mrs. Stewart's schedule demanded that she spend much of her time on trains, and, in her usual fashion, she made the most of the situation. In order to answer letters forwarded to her by Miss Stiles, she persuaded the railroad officials to allow her to establish offices in the dining and pullman cars of her train. In this way, she could carry on the paper work of the illiteracy movement while in transit between addresses. She was so impressed with the cooperation of the railroad men that she wrote jokingly to her secretary: "If I ever should consider matrimony, I think I shall wed a Pullman conductor. They are so kind and gracious."[22]

Despite these conveniences, however, coordinating the illiteracy work while traveling around the country was, at best, a difficult matter. Mrs. Stewart's schedule was uncertain, and her mail was constantly being forwarded to the wrong addresses. Her strenuous speaking campaigns also took a heavy physical toll, and she was often plagued with fatigue and laryngitis; yet Mrs. Stewart retained her optimism, her belief in the righteousness of her work, and her sense of humor. Once, during an especially exhausting tour, she wrote to

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[20]Cora Wilson Stewart to Lela Mae Stiles, January 10, October 27, 1922; Stewart Papers; Cora Wilson Stewart to Julia F. Harris, May 1, 1922, Julia Floride Harris Papers (The Sophia Smith Collection, Smith College Library).

[21]Cora Wilson Stewart to Lela Mae Stiles, July 27, 1922; Cora Wilson Stewart to J. W. Crabtree, February 17, 1922; H. J. Hoke to Cora Wilson Stewart, March 21, 1922, all in Stewart Papers.

[22]Cora Wilson Stewart to Lela Mae Stiles, July 16, November 23, 1922, both in Stewart Papers.

Miss Stiles: "If Iowa will fight illiteracy in the same strenuous way she is rushing me thru [sic] this state, they can have it wiped out in six months time."[23]

On the rare occasions when Mrs. Stewart took a rest from her speaking engagements, she usually went to Pine Bluff, Arkansas, to visit her two sisters, Stella and Folora, and their families. Both sisters could see that the travels were taxing Mrs. Stewart's strength, and they constantly urged her to cease her torrid pace. She listened to their entreaties, and sometimes she even agreed that she worked too hard, but she knew that she could not stop her crusade as long as there were illiterates to be taught.[24]

One of the events that lightened Mrs. Stewart's work during the fall of 1922 was the publication by E. P. Dutton Co. of her book, Moonlight Schools. The volume told of the origins of the Rowan County night schools, the progress of the illiteracy movement in other states, and the methods employed to teach illiterates. It received a very favorable response from the public, and Mrs. Stewart was extremely pleased.

Encouraged by the reaction to Moonlight Schools and tired from her travels, Mrs. Stewart, in late November 1922, decided to take a rest from her speaking schedule and to begin writing another volume on the instruction of adult illiterates. Wanting a warm climate during the winter months, she chose Tucson, Arizona, where she stayed until

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[23]Cora Wilson Stewart to Lela Mae Stiles, October 10, 27, 1922; Cora Wilson Stewart to Mrs. Charles A. Duncan, March 14, 1922; Lela Mae Stiles to Cora Wilson Stewart, January 17, 1922, all in Stewart Papers.

[24]Lela Mae Stiles to Cora Wilson Stewart, January 5, 1922; Cora Wilson Stewart to Lela Mae Stiles, July 29, 1922, both in Stewart Papers.

the end of December. She immediately fell in love with the city, and greatly enjoyed her stay there. The rest rejuvenated her and put her in high spirits to face the new year. She wrote to Miss Stiles: "We are further on our way this year than we were last, and facing the best year we have ever had."[25]

After leaving Tucson, Mrs. Stewart spent a brief time with her relatives in Pine Bluff, then she charged back into her work. During the first five months of the year, when she was not giving speeches, Mrs. Stewart spent most of her energy planning and conducting two conferences on illiteracy. One meeting, for the southern and western states, was held in April in Little Rock, Arkansas. The other, in May, for the northern and eastern states, was held in Detroit. Although Mrs. Stewart was pleased with the Little Rock gathering, she was somewhat disturbed with the Detroit meeting, because she thought that many of the delegates were advocates of "Americanization" rather than of the illiteracy movement.[26]

In addition to the two regional conferences, Mrs. Stewart, early in 1923, also conceived the idea of holding a national meeting on illiteracy in Washington, D. C. She decided to seek the support of the General Federation of Women's Clubs, the American Legion, the N. E. A., and the U. S. Bureau of Education. When she approached the leaders of these organizations she was delighted to find them enthusiastic about her plans. Thus encouraged, she decided to hold the gathering on

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[25]Cora Wilson Stewart to Lela Mae Stiles, December 9, 18, 1922, Stewart Papers.

[26]Cora Wilson Stewart to Lela Mae Stiles, May 15, 1923; Cora Wilson Stewart to Dr. Charles McKenny, May 29, 1923; Cora Wilson Stewart to S. M. N. Marrs, February 20, 1923; Cora Wilson Stewart to John W. Abercrombie, January 23, 1923, all in Stewart Papers.

January 11, 12, 1924. She was hopeful that the cooperation of these four groups would make the Washington conference the most important meeting on illiteracy ever held in the United States.[27]

Because Mrs. Stewart's time during early 1923 was devoted to speaking engagements and making plans for conferences, she had little time to set down in writing her ideas about the crusade against illiteracy. By this time in her career, however, she had a definite philosophy about her work and about what techniques should be employed in a successful drive against illiteracy. She believed that the first and most important element in a local effort was making the public aware of the need to teach uneducated adults. She suggested that this be done by holding a meeting of all leading community organizations. These leaders should then appoint a committee to locate all illiterates. She believed that this could best be done by dividing the community into sections with each member of the committee investigating an area. Although she thought that day school teachers should be solicited for this work, she also believed that any educated, concerned citizen could conduct the classes. She suggested that students meet in public school buildings for two hours each evening, four nights a week.[28] These were essentially the same methods that Mrs. Stewart had successfully used in Rowan County. She thought that the techniques used in the earliest days of the movement were applicable to every community of the country, and throughout her career she never changed this belief.

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[27]Cora Wilson Stewart to Mrs. John D. Sherman, June 1, 1923; Alvin Owsley to Cora Wilson Stewart, June 3, 1923, both in Stewart Papers.

[28]Cora Wilson Stewart to Mrs. Pearl B. Heckel, August 25, 1922, Stewart Papers.

Another part of Mrs. Stewart's philosophy was her sincere interest in illiterates, regardless of their race, creed, or color. She had little patience with those who made excuses for the large number of uneducated adults in their states. She once noted:

> Some [states] say that it is the Indians, some the Negroes, some the foreign-born and some have others on whom they lay their illiteracy--but, after all, they are all human beings and deserve their chance. When other countries see that we have five million illiterates they do not stop to see what color they are . . . .[29]

Equally as uncompromising was Mrs. Stewart's attitude toward the problem of "Americanization," which persisted in the illiteracy movement and assumed a new and more virulent form. She had founded the "Moonlight Schools" for the single purpose of teaching uneducated adults to read and write, and she was determined that, as long as she led the work against illiteracy, no other cause would subvert them. During the years since the postwar "Red Scare," she had seen "Americanization" workers attempt to infiltrate her work, and she was still adamant about maintaining the distinction between the two movements. As she wrote to her friend, Governor R. A. Nestos of North Dakota:

> The Americanization movement deals solely with the foreign-born who can not read, write or speak English. Our crusade has a definite objective and time limit, while the Americanization work must continue long after we have taught the adult illiterates to read and write. Ours is a campaign; the Americanization work is a program of centuries.[30]

Another aspect of the Americanization movement that greatly offended Mrs. Stewart was its emphasis on stopping the entry into the

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[29]Cora Wilson Stewart to Mrs. Claude L. Jones, January 24, 1923, Stewart Papers.

[30]Cora Wilson Stewart to Governor Robert A. Nestos, May 28, 1923; Cora Wilson Stewart to Robert C. Deming, June 13, 1923, both in Stewart Papers.

United States of illiterate immigrants. Although she longed to eradicate illiteracy from the United States, she could not advocate excluding uneducated adults from what she called the "land of opportunity." Instead, she believed it to be more consistent with American democratic ideals to provide schools for illiterates at each point of entry.[31]

If Mrs. Stewart never set down in writing her philosophy of the movement against illiteracy, she was given one of the greatest opportunities of her life to explain her views during late June and early July 1923, when the World Conference on Education convened in San Francisco. Growing out of the Hague Peace Conference and other peace overtures of the time, the meeting was carried out under the direction of the Executive Committee of the N. E. A. It was attended by delegates from over fifty nations.[32] Through Mrs. Stewart's urgings, an Illiteracy Section had been added to the conference, and she was chosen to preside over it. Mrs. Stewart carried out her duties so thoroughly that when the gathering established an International Committee on Illiteracy she was elected chairman.[33] She also persuaded the gathering to make its first resolution a call for the removal of illiteracy from all nations. Mrs. Stewart made many friends at the Conference, and learned of illiteracy programs in other countries; many foreign representatives also heard of America's work against illiteracy and doubtless carried home stories about the energetic

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[31]Cora Wilson Stewart to Martin Stevens, March 20, 1922, Stewart Papers.

[32]National Education Association, The World Conference on Education (Washington, D. C., 1923), p. 2-3.

[33]"The Crusade Against Illiteracy and its Founder Cora Wilson Stewart," p. 4; Biographical File; Cora Wilson Stewart to Lela Mae Stiles, July 7, 19, 1923, all in Stewart Papers.

founder of the "Moonlight Schools." Although Mrs. Stewart was exhausted from the furious pace at which she worked during the meeting, she was delighted at the results, and she declared to her secretary: "The World Conference was the most wonderful thing in history."[34]

Mrs. Stewart left the San Francisco gathering with high hopes for the future of her movement. She had achieved much at the Conference, and she was certain that the National Conference in Washington, D. C., the following January would be equally productive. As soon as she reached Frankfort she began preparing at once for the National Conference. She first sent letters to the governors of every state, asking them to select delegates to the January gathering. She then prepared maps and charts to be displayed at the meeting, showing the distribution of illiteracy in the United States. She also met with the leaders of the General Federation of Women's Clubs, the N. E. A., the American Legion, and the U. S. Bureau of Education to complete plans for the conference.[35]

Although Mrs. Stewart was deeply involved in organizing the National Illiteracy Conference, she still found time for the uneducated adults in her home state. She admitted it to few people, but she had always planned to revive the crusade in Kentucky once Governor Morrow was replaced by a more cooperative chief executive.[36] Her opportunity came

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[34]Cora Wilson Stewart to Lela Mae Stiles, July 9, 1923, Stewart Papers.

[35]Cora Wilson Stewart to Mrs. Thomas G. Winter, September 23, 27, 1923; Cora Wilson Stewart to Garland Powell, September 26, 1923; Cora Wilson Stewart to John J. Tigert, September 28, 1923; Cora Wilson Stewart to Governor Robert A. Nestos and other governors, October 9, 1923, all in Stewart Papers.

[36]Cora Wilson Stewart to Lela Mae Stiles, December 1, 1922; Cora Wilson Stewart to Mrs. C. J. Hubbard, February 5, 1923, both in Stewart Papers.

in 1923 when William J. Fields, United States Congressman from her home district and a close friend of hers, became the Democratic candidate for Governor. Confident that Fields would support the revival of her work, Mrs. Stewart agreed to postpone preparations for the Washington conference long enough to campaign in his behalf. From October 26 to November 5, she traveled over the Commonwealth, urging people to vote for the Democratic candidate. She was delighted when Fields was announced the winner, and even happier when he asked her to draft an educational program for his administration.[37]

Convinced that the Kentucky movement would be renewed, Mrs. Stewart set off at once for Washington to complete plans for the National Illiteracy Conference. She arrived in the national capital in high spirits. But her jubilation was short-lived, for she soon found that she had greatly underestimated the task of coordinating the conference. A major problem immediately arose over who was to sponsor the gathering. Although Mrs. Stewart had said that the meeting would be held jointly among the organizations, the leaders of these groups all feared that one of the others might dominate the proceedings.[38] In addition, the U. S. Bureau of Education was reluctant to take an equal part in the program because it could not exercise enough control. This fear was heightened when Dr. John J. Tigert, the Commissioner of Education, found that Mrs. Stewart planned to have the conference endorse the Towner-Sterling bill, a Congressional proposal that advocated the establishment

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[37]Cora Wilson Stewart to Joseph Morris, September 22, 1923; Lela Mae Stiles to Cora Wilson Stewart, October 20, 1923; Cora Wilson Stewart to William J. Fields, December 6, 1923, all in Stewart Papers.

[38]Cora Wilson Stewart to Mrs. Thomas C. Winter, November 9, 1923, Stewart Papers.

of a Secretary of Education in the cabinet, and called for federal appropriations to eradicate illiteracy. The Coolidge administration opposed the bill, and Tigert knew that it would be embarrassing to the President if the conference endorsed it.[39]

Because of these complications, relations among the four cooperating organizations were strained, and the leaders of the groups blamed Mrs. Stewart for the situation. Unable to understand how they could quibble over what she considered petty issues, Mrs. Stewart tried to promote a compromise, but she failed. The leaders voted to remove her from the chairmanship of the conference, and finally left it to the leadership of Dr. Tigert. This pleased the Commissioner, and it insured that no mention would be made of the Towner-Sterling bill.[40]

Bewildered at these machinations, Mrs. Stewart thought of giving up the conference entirely, but Miss Stiles persuaded her to stay in Washington. Although she busied herself with minor details, Mrs. Stewart was miserable during the last two weeks of November. She was forced to watch while others took over the meeting for which she had so meticulously planned. As she wrote to Miss Stiles: "I can do nothing but sit with folded hands." Unable to understand what she had done to lose control of the conference, she said: "All this is so foreign to our plans and hopes. I only ask them to remember the illiterates, and act for their welfare."[41]

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[39] Ibid.; Cora Wilson Stewart to Lela Mae Stiles, undated, Stewart Papers (Box 7).

[40] Cora Wilson Stewart to Lela Mae Stiles, November 5, 13, 14, 1923, all in Stewart Papers.

[41] Lela Mae Stiles to Cora Wilson Stewart, November 15, 1923; Cora Wilson Stewart to Lela Mae Stiles, November 19, 21, 23, 1923, all in Stewart Papers.

If Mrs. Stewart was disturbed by the political maneuvering in Washington, she was equally as discouraged with affairs in Frankfort. When she returned to the Kentucky capital in early December to present her educational proposals to Governor Fields, she was amazed to find that the new chief executive would not consider reviving her movement. Thoroughly bewildered, she wrote to him: "How you could ever assume that I would draft one [an educational program] and leave the illiterate out is more than I can understand." Her disillusionment with Fields was explained to Miss Stiles: "My ideal was a Governor who would hold up the banner and say 'This is right. I stood for it in my public utterences, and I stand for it in my official capacity.'" Unfortunately for Mrs. Stewart, Fields was a politician, not a crusader against illiteracy. He had other legislation that he considered more important, and he was unwilling to jeopardize it by championing her cause.[42]

After her meeting with the Govenor, Mrs. Stewart returned to Washington to do what she could for the National Conference. She was upset because she would not be able to lead the meeting; but she reasoned that she must go through with the program for the sake of the adult illiterates. Resigning herself to a secondary role, she worked valiantly to make the conference a success.

The gathering was applauded by educators throughout the country, and it drew much coverage from the national press. Every state was represented, except Idaho and Nevada. Mrs. Stewart was generally pleased with the public response, and her contributions were acclaimed

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[42]Mrs. J. C. Layne to Cora Wilson Stewart, November 23, 1923; Cora Wilson Stewart to William J. Fields, December 6, 1923; Cora Wilson Stewart to Lela Mae Stiles, December 2, 1923, all in Stewart Papers.

by many people. One close friend observed: "You were the star of the occasion and in the minds of all who were present the presiding genius of the conference."[43]

Despite the plaudits awarded her, Mrs. Stewart could not forgive the leaders of the four organizations for seizing control of the conference from her. She became determined to sever relations with the groups, and she began by asking the President of the General Federation of Women's Clubs, Mrs. John D. Sherman, to find a new chairman for the organization's Illiteracy Division. This request, made before the Washington Conference ended, startled Mrs. Sherman, and she asked Mrs. Stewart to remain as the leader of the department until a new leader could be found. Mrs. Stewart reluctantly consented, and continued to head the Illiteracy Division until early 1925.[44]

Soon after her letter to Mrs. Sherman, she also began preparing to leave the N. E. A.'s Illiteracy Commission. She was reluctant to tender her resignation, for she knew that the Association had helped her in many ways. However, recent changes in the committee structure of the organization persuaded her to act. The Department of Immigrant Education of the N. E. A. was changed to the Department of Adult Education, and Mrs. Stewart feared that this new division might usurp some of her powers if she stayed with the organization's Illiteracy

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[43]Cora Wilson Stewart to Mrs. Thomas G. Winter, December 6, 14, 1923; Cora Wilson Stewart to Dr. Charles H. McKenny, February 1, 1924; Augustus O. Thomas to Cora Wilson Stewart, January 19, 1924, March 24, 1924; Cora Wilson Stewart to A. H. Chamberlain, January 25, 1924; Cora Wilson Stewart to Lela Mae Stiles, January 13, 1924, all in Stewart Papers.

[44]Cora Wilson Stewart to Mrs. John D. Sherman, March 19, 21, 1925; Cora Wilson Stewart to J. W. Crabtree, March 19, 1925, all in Stewart Papers.

Commission. By the end of the year she had decided to terminate her leadership of the Commission, and she waited only for a propitious moment to resign.[45]

Thus, by January 1925 Mrs. Stewart was moving away from the two groups that had sponsored her movement for the preceding five years. She felt hampered by their bureaucratic structures, and she resented being dependent on them; most important though, she felt threatened by the actions taken to replace her at the National Illiteracy Conference. She was convinced that the illiteracy movement could succeed only through her guidance, and she was jealous of any attempt to challenge her leadership. Although her work lacked adequate sponsorship at the beginning of the new year, she was willing to pay this price in order to retain control of the crusade.

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[45] Cora Wilson Stewart to Charl O. Williams, February 28, 1925; Cora Wilson Stewart to Mrs. Bruce Carr Jones, September 9, 1924; Charles M. Herlihy to Cora Wilson Stewart, December 12, 1924, all in Stewart Papers.

CHAPTER III

INCEPTION AND GROWTH OF THE "MOONLIGHT SCHOOLS" 1911 - 1916

Mrs. Stewart's life in the Kentucky hills convinced her that the mountaineers' lack of education was caused by a lack of opportunity, not by mental deficiency or laziness. She believed that this was especially true of the large number of adult illiterates in Rowan County. While serving as superintendent of schools, she often acted as a secretary to these uneducated men and women, and she was impressed by their native intelligence. In 1911 three of these illiterate citizens expressed to Mrs. Stewart a strong desire to learn to read and write.[1] Inspired by these individuals, she went through the county interviewing other illiterates, and found that many of them wanted to go to school. Knowing that it was impossible for the adults to attend the already crowded day schools, she thought of holding classes at night; but she knew that the roads were bad and that people were reluctant to venture out at night because of the fear of violence. Not to be deterred, Mrs. Stewart decided to hold classes on moonlit nights when the students could see their way to school.[2]

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[1]Detroit Journal, September 23, 1915, Stewart Papers; Cora Wilson Stewart, Moonlight Schools (New York, 1922), p. 9-13. See Southern Education Board, Educational Conditions in the Southern Appalachians (Knoxville, 1902), for further details on illiteracy in the Kentucky Mountains. There were 1,152 illiterates over ten years old in Rowan County in 1910. U. S. Census Bureau, Thirteenth Census of the United States (1910) Population, Vol. 2, p. 749.

[2]Stewart, Moonlight Schools, p. 14; U. S. Bureau of Education, Illiteracy in the United States and an Experiment for its Elimination (Washington, 1913), p. 28; Williamsport, Pennsylvania, Grit, February 2, 1913, Stewart Papers.

After deciding on this course of action, Mrs. Stewart called the county teachers together and asked for volunteers. All of them agreed to serve without remuneration. On Labor Day, September 4, 1911, while the teachers traveled through their districts telling the people that school would begin the next evening, Mrs. Stewart printed a small newspaper to use as a text. It contained simple sentences about county affairs and was entitled The Rowan County Messenger. By using a newspaper, Mrs. Stewart hoped to avoid the humiliation that adults might feel from reading a primer.[3]

Mrs. Stewart expected a maximum attendence of 150 students (three adults for each of the county's fifty school buildings) the first night of classes. To her amazement, however, over 1,200 men and women, ranging in age from 18 to 86 years, were enrolled the initial evening. They came from all parts of the county, and they all seemed eager to learn. Mrs. Stewart was delighted; the first night of "Moonlight Schools" had confirmed her faith in the Rowan mountaineers.[4]

The first session of school lasted for eight weeks. Classes were held from six to eight each Monday through Thursday evening, and were attended by both illiterates and semi-literates. Although elementary lessons were taught in numerous subjects including history, civics, and health, the primary goal of the schools was to teach adult illiterates to read and write, and students did not receive a complete primary education. In fact, one contemporary recalls that many students, especially older men

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[3]Williamsport, Pennsylvania, Grit, February 2, 1913, Stewart Papers; Lexington Herald, February 18, 1912; Louisville Courier Journal, February 18, 1912; Stewart, Moonlight Schools, p. 14-15.

[4]Stewart, Moonlight Schools, p. 16-18; U. S. Bureau of Education, Illiteracy, p. 28.

and women, cared about nothing more than learning to sign their names; but another observer says that most adults did learn the rudiments of reading and writing in the schools.[5]

To stimulate interest in the night classes, Mrs. Stewart presented small Bibles to former illiterates who wrote a letter of thanks to her. She also tried to promote a sense of competition among the schools by dividing the county into four districts and publishing the educational achievements of each area in The Rowan County Messenger. Mrs. Stewart's personal leadership was probably the greatest factor in the success of the schools. According to one source:

> She would appear at one school at the opening to encourage the teachers and spur the students on. Then she would mount her horse and ride over the mountains to reach another school in time to say goodnight and tell the people how splendid they were and how certain they were to win their battle for knowledge.[6]

Her activities were so intense that she was often exhausted and her family worried that she would permanently impair her health. One concerned kinsman noted: "My sister is killing herself. She performs duties during the day then rides until two o'clock at night keeping the teachers and pupils in the 'Moonlight Schools' in good spirits and leading the fight on illiteracy."[7]

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[5]Stewart, Moonlight Schools, p. 26; James R. Reynolds, "Moonlight Schools in Rowan County" (unpublished seminar paper, Morehead State University, 1956), p. 8; Welles interview, September 2, 1972; Louisville Courier Journal, December 29, 1912.

[6]Louisville Courier Journal, December 29, 1912; Reynolds, "Moonlight Schools in Rowan County," p. 5; Williamsport, Pennsylvania, Grit, February 2, 1913, Stewart Papers; "Information Sheet" (n.d.), Biographical File, in ibid.

[7]"Information Sheet" (n.d.), Biographical File, Stewart Papers.

But Mrs. Stewart was quite willing to risk her health for the "Moonlight Schools," The illiterates were learning, and news of her work was spreading across the state. George W. Chapman, Superintendent of Paris public schools, noted: "What a great thing for Kentucky it would be if every county in the State would do as you have done and you have demonstrated that it can be done!" E. C. McDougle of the State Normal School at Richmond wrote: "I'm indeed proud of you. That Rowan County idea will surely spread."[8] Most Kentuckians correctly believed that Mrs. Stewart's work was novel and innovative because it focused on adult illiterates; but many others wrongly assumed that the schools were the first night classes organized in the United States. In reality, evening courses for educated adults had been an established feature in most northeastern states since before 1900.[9] Although Mrs. Stewart did not copy the procedures of the northern night schools, she was doubtless aware of their existence.

In early December 1911 Mrs. Stewart addressed the Southern Educational Association in Houston, Texas. Although her assigned topic was "The Education of the Mountain Child," she also discussed the illiteracy work. The group was so impressed by her speech that it endorsed the "Moonlight Schools" as "the most practical plan for abolishing illiteracy in the South." Representatives from other states

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[8]George W. Chapman to Cora Wilson Stewart, October 30, 1911; E. C. McDougle to Cora Wilson Stewart, October 31, 1911, both in Stewart Papers.

[9]Malcolm Knowles, The Adult Education Movement in the United States (New York, 1962), p. 52-54.

were interested in her story, and many of them asked her to speak before their state educational associations.[10]

During the first half of 1912 Mrs. Stewart answered many of these requests and carried the story of the "Moonlight Schools" to Alabama, Virginia, West Virginia, and Arkansas. Couching her arguments in eloquent prose and armed with illiteracy statistics taken from the 1910 census, she convinced many teachers of the plight of Southern illiterates. One Alabama educator observed: "I feel sure that the things you have done, which were so beautifully told to us, will prove an inspiration to many an Alabama teacher. Your visit will be long remembered by us."[11]

In early April 1912 Mrs. Stewart again received regional attention when she spoke to the National Conference of Education in the South in Nashville, Tennessee. As before, the audience was captivated by her story of the work against illiteracy. R. H. Wilson, Superintendent of Public Instruction in Oklahoma, expressed the feelings of many other delegates: "I appreciate your address very much and I feel that it had a wonderful effect on the audience and that the good you have done in your county is an example of what others may do and will do, and by this act of yours you have placed your name in history."[12]

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[10]Undated and untitled newspaper clipping; M. A. Cassidy to Cora Wilson Stewart, August 17, 1911; J. B. Hobdy to Cora Wilson Stewart, December 10, 1911; Mary H. White to Cora Wilson Stewart, January 17, 1912; A. C. Monahan to Cora Wilson Stewart, April 22, 1912 all in Stewart Papers; Louisville Courier Journal, February 18, 1912.

[11]J. B. Hobdy to Cora Wilson Stewart, April 13, 1912; J. P. Womack to Cora Wilson Stewart, April 26, 1912; Charles G. Mapin to Cora Wilson Stewart, July 10, 1912, all in Stewart Papers.

[12]R. H. Wilson to Cora Wilson Stewart, April 16, 1912; Wallace Lund to Cora Wilson Stewart, March 20, 1912; Paducah News Democrat, March 30, 1912, all in Stewart Papers.

As the beginning of the second year of the Rowan night schools approached, Mrs. Stewart organized a "Moonlight School" institute at Morehead. Methods of seeking out and teaching illiterates were discussed, and many teachers from surrounding counties attended. After the institute, Mrs. Stewart spoke before several county teachers' meetings and urged the educators to open "Moonlight Schools." Because of her efforts, schools were begun in eight or ten Kentucky counties, including Johnson, Mercer, Garrard, Boyle, Martin, and Carter. Although they were not as well coordinated as the Rowan schools, good results were achieved. For instance, Jay O'Daniel, Superintendent of Lawrence County schools, wrote: "I am very pleased with the manner in which my schools are progressing so far and I think you were of immense benefit to us. Several night schools are already under headway and are doing splendid work."[13] In Rowan the 1912 enrollment surpassed that of the previous year. Over 1,600 students attended classes, including 300 who were totally illiterate, 300 from the previous session, and the rest meagerly educated.[14]

During 1912 and early 1913, Mrs. Stewart continued her duties as Superintendent of Rowan County schools and President of the K. E. A. She also gave speeches for civic organizations, contributed to school journals, and remained active in the church. Yet her strenuous schedule caused her much physical strain, and she was forced to sacrifice some activities for the "Moonlight Schools." She did this reluctantly; but

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[13] Jay O"Daniel to Cora Wilson Stewart, August 4, 1912, Stewart Papers; Stewart, Moonlight Schools, p. 32-37; Louisville Courier Journal, December 29, 1912.

[14] Louisville Courier Journal, December 29, 1912; U. S. Bureau of Education, Illiteracy, p. 29; Stewart, Moonlight Schools, p. 38.

by early 1913, she had become totally committed to the work against illiteracy and refused to let anything take priority.[15]

Many educators had scoffed at the "Moonlight Schools" in their early days, but by the beginning of the 1913 session of the Rowan night schools, the critics were being silenced. Thanks to Mrs. Stewart's leadership, the movement had passed the experimental stage and schools were opened in the states of Tennessee, Arkansas, South Carolina, and Washington. In Kentucky twenty-five counties had adopted the idea. One state newspaper reported:

> In the Sandy Valley hundreds have enrolled, 400 in Lawrence County alone. In one district in Boyd County the people responded to the number of 60. In Madison a school was conducted among the tenant class, and was thronged with eager students. At the close of a two weeks' session all these tenants could read and write.[16]

At the end of the 1913 session Mrs. Stewart claimed that all but twenty-three of Rowan County's 1,152 illiterates had been taught to read and write. Although this was an exaggeration, the schools did achieve definite results.[17]

After seeing the spread of the "Moonlight Schools" to other counties and states, Mrs. Stewart concluded that the state of Kentucky should take an active part in educating adults. On December 16, 1913, she suggested to Governor James B. McCreary that a state illiteracy

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[15]Nat Sewell to Cora Wilson Stewart, May 6, 1912, May 10, 1912; Nellie McCabe to Cora Wilson Stewart, March 3, 1912; Sue B. Scott to Cora Wilson Stewart, February 3, 1912; J. B. Ferran to Cora Wilson Stewart, August 15, 1912, all in Stewart Papers.

[16]Williamsport, Pennsylvania, Grit, February 2, 1913; Flemingsburg Times Democrat, October 15, 1913, both in Stewart Papers; Stewart, Moonlight Schools, p. 124.

[17]Stewart, Moonlight Schools, p. 55; "Census of Persons over Twenty years of Age who cannot Read and Write (1918)," Stewart Papers (Box 64).

commission be established to study and encourage the eradication of illiteracy. McCreary responded favorably and subsequently asked the state legislature to form an illiteracy commission. Both Mrs. Stewart and McCreary agreed that the commissioners should receive no salary but should serve voluntarily.[18]

On February 11, 1914, Mrs. Stewart reached one of the high points of her career when she spoke before the Kentucky Legislature meeting as a committee of the whole to consider the establishment of a state commission on illiteracy. Primed with figures and offering personal experiences as illustrations, "she completely swept the Legislature off its feet with her eloquence." After the speech, in an action that one source said was "unprecedented in Kentucky's history," the House of Representatives lifted the illiteracy bill from deep down in the calendar and rushed it through with a unanimous vote. Less than a week later the Senate passed the bill, and the Kentucky Illiteracy Commission (K.I.C.) was established.[19] Although the eloquence of Mrs. Stewart's appeal was important in the passage of the bill, her decision to request no state funds for the Commission was probably the biggest reason for the legislative success. From listening to Mrs. Stewart's speech, many legislators doubtless believed that illiteracy could be wiped out at no cost to the state; they were quite willing to support such a good cause, as long as it did not increase governmental expenditures.

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[18] Journal of the Regular Session of the Kentucky Senate (1914), Vol. 1, p. 42-43; Stewart, Moonlight Schools, p. 57-60. See Roscoe C. Cross, "Public Life of James Bennett McCreary" (unpublished M.A. thesis, University of Kentucky, 1925), p. 78-79, for McCreary's view of the illiteracy work.

[19] Lexington Herald, February 12, 1914; Frankfort State Journal, February 14, 1914; Journal of the Regular Session of the Kentucky Senate (1914), Vol. 1. p. 575-580.

During the weeks following her speech before the Legislature, Mrs. Stewart received congratulations for the establishment of the K. I. C. from citizens throughout the state.[20] Governor McCreary was especially impressed with her dynamic leadership, and he proposed making her Assistant Superintendent of the State Reform School. But Mrs. Stewart already had a mission to fulfill. She wrote the governor:

> I thank you sincerely for your consideration of me in connection with the Reform School as Superintendent and feel that it is a work next in importance to the one to which I have concentrated myself--wiping out Kentucky's illiteracy. I am sorry that my obligation to this self-appointed task prevents my acceptance of the offer.[21]

Although McCreary would have preferred having Mrs. Stewart in the Reform School position, he respected her interest in the K. I. C., and less than two months after the passage of the illiteracy bill he named her to the Commission. Dr. J. G. Crabbe, H. H. Cherry, and Ella Lewis were also named members of the K. I. C., and Superintendent of Public Instruction Barksdale Hamlett was made a member ex-officio. At its first meeting on May 1, 1914, the other members of the Commission paid tribute to Mrs. Stewart's leadership of the Kentucky illiteracy work by selecting her as their president. At the same meeting, Dr. Crabbe and Mrs. Stewart were chosen as a finance committee to solicit funds, and the Commission decided to set as a goal the complete eradication of illiteracy from the Commonwealth by 1920.[22]

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[20]John F. Smith to Cora Wilson Stewart, February 12, 1914; T. J. Coates to Cora Wilson Stewart, February 23, 1914, both in Stewart Papers.

[21]Cora Wilson Stewart to James B. McCreary, February 18, 1914, Stewart Papers.

[22]Kentucky Illiteracy Commission, First Biennial Report, 1914-1915 (Louisville, 1916), p. 8.

Soon after the initial meeting, Mrs. Stewart proved herself worthy of the faith expressed in her by the other members of the Commission. During May she devoted most of her time to soliciting funds from the leading organizations of the state. She spoke before the K. E. A., the State Federation of Women's Clubs, the Kentucky Society of Colonial Dames, and the Kentucky Press Association. All four groups endorsed the Commission and pledged their support.[23]

Between her speaking engagements, Mrs. Stewart began the tiresome but extremely important process of distributing to local newspaper editors statistics on the number of illiterates in each county. Many schoolmen challenged the validity of her figures and resented the publishing of statistics on their communities.[24] Indignant at the questioning of her veracity, Mrs. Stewart decided to silence these critics by securing the names of every one of Kentucky's 208,084 illiterates recorded by the 1910 census. Such an effort had never before been made; but, with the aid of General W. H. Sears, a former assistant to Clara Barton, Mrs. Stewart persuaded the U. S. Census Bureau to allow a few names to be copied. Having gained a foothold, she got Congressman W. J. Fields and United States Senator Ollie M. James to push the matter until the names of all of Kentucky's illiterates were in the K. I. C.'s possession. This not only silenced the skeptics;

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[23] Otis C. Wilson to Cora Wilson Stewart, February 10, 1914, Stewart Papers; Frankfort State Journal, July 12, 1914.

[24] Jackson Times, April 24, 1914; Corbin Times, July 17, 1914, both in Cora Wilson Stewart Papers; Lexington Herald, April 26, 1914; Frank L. McVey, The Gates Open Slowly, p. 212; Kentucky Illiteracy Commission, Report, 1916-1920, (Louisville, 1920), p. 6-7.

it also provided the Commission with complete information on the number of illiterates in the state.[25]

Having secured the names of all of Kentucky's illiterates during May, Mrs. Stewart eagerly looked forward to beginning the statewide crusade. Although a brief illness delayed her from opening K. I. C. headquarters in Frankfort until June 30, 1914, she began developing comprehensive plans for a coordinated illiteracy campaign soon after the offices opened.[26] She borrowed a lesson from Dr. Crabbe's "Whirlwind Campaigns," and made a list of 120 speakers to canvass the state during 1915 in behalf of the K. I. C.. She also continued to speak at teachers institutes, soliciting many volunteers for "Moonlight School" duty. In early September she asked Governor McCreary to issue a proclamation requesting all citizens to help in the fight against illiteracy. McCreary obliged and delivered his statement on September 21, 1914.[27] When not actively engaged in planning the Kentucky work, Mrs. Stewart traveled across the country giving speeches about the "Moonlight Schools." By the end of 1914 she had spoken in Iowa, Minnesota, Michigan, and West Virginia. The national press carried stories of her work, and the public wanted to learn more about the originator of the "Moonlight Schools." Although often fatigued and

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[25]Kentucky Illiteracy Commission, Report, 1910-1920, p. 6-7; Kentucky Illiteracy Commission, First Biennial Report, p. 18.

[26]Kentucky Illiteracy Commission, First Biennial Report, p. 9; Otis C. Wilson to Cora Wilson Stewart, February 10, 1914, Stewart Papers; Frankfort State Journal, July 12, 1914.

[27]Mrs. Lee M. Campbell, February 8, 1914; James B. McCreary to Cora Wilson Stewart, September 9, 1914, both in Stewart Papers; Stanford Interior Journal, July 14, 1914; Lexington Herald, September 24, 1914.

sometimes ill, Mrs. Stewart gladly pushed herself to tell people of the need to educate illiterate adults.[28]

After carefully laying the groundwork for the Kentucky drive against illiteracy during the last half of 1914, Mrs. Stewart began the new year by vigorously working on her program. Through contacts in the State Federation of Women's Clubs, she organized the Woman's Forward Kentucky Movement, which raised $8,000 for the K. I. C. in a five-week campaign. She made sure that county illiteracy commissions were established to coordinate local efforts and that the state press supported the work with editorials and feature stories.[29] As in the earlier "Whirlwind Campaigns," she used rallies and fairs to arouse the public. A Kentucky newspaper noted that at one of the fairs in Hyden "Hundreds of Moonlight School pupils, old and young, were in attendance and from an educational standpoint it is certain that a long step forward has been made in Leslie County." A remarkable feature of the 1915 effort was the interest demonstrated by many businessmen and politicians. Local merchants often awarded prizes at "Moonlight School" fairs, and Mrs. Stewart persuaded the state's leading political figures to offer rewards for the best teachers and pupils.[30]

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[28]James B. McCreary to Cora Wilson Stewart, October 15, 1914; Cora Wilson Stewart to M. E. Taylor, October 12, 1914, both in Stewart Papers.

[29]Franklin Favorite, June 28, 1915; London Sentinel, June 28, 1915; Whiteley Republican, June 30, 1915, all in Stewart Papers; Kentucky Illiteracy Commission, First Biennial Report, p. 11, 18.

[30]Somerset Weekly News, November 30, 1915; Ashland Independent, November 19, 1915, both in Stewart Papers; Kentucky Illiteracy Commission, First Biennial Report, p. 17-18; Lexington Herald, December 3, 1915; Louisville Courier Journal, August 29, 1915.

One might assume that because Mrs. Stewart could not offer financial remuneration, few people volunteered for "Moonlight School" duty during 1915. On the contrary, many day school teachers, members of women's clubs, and local businessmen assisted in the classes. Letters of thanks poured into Mrs. Stewart's office from teachers and former illiterates. Many teachers took literally her advice that classes should be taught wherever illiterates were found. They opened schools in local jails, in the state penitentiary, and the state reformatory. When adults were unwilling or unable to attend classes, teachers often went into their homes to tutor them.[31]

One of the most important duties performed by Mrs. Stewart during the 1915 drive was coordinating the statewide speakers' campaign. Every prominent leader in the Commonwealth, from the Governor and United States Senators to local ministers and schoolmen, took part. Mrs. Stewart not only directed the participants, she also took a leading role in the canvass. From Ashland to Paducah she traveled, citing local illiteracy statistics and challenging people to reach and teach uneducated adults.[32]

One of Mrs. Stewart's most vital contributions to the work against illiteracy was made during mid-1915 when she began writing the first of a three-volume set of readers especially for uneducated adults. Throughout the latter half of the year, when she was not engaged in the Kentucky drive, she worked on the text. This was a very difficult financial period

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[31]Luther Hatton to Olin Green, January 3, 1915; Miss Sarah F. Lee to Cora Wilson Stewart, May 17, 1915; J. V. Harris to Cora Wilson Stewart, January 1, 1915; undated and untitled newspaper clipping, all in Stewart Papers; Louisville Evening Post, October 20, 1915; Kentucky Illiteracy Commission, First Biennial Report, p. 10, 12.

[32]Kentucky Illiteracy Commission, First Biennial Report, p. 13-16; Elizabethtown News, August 13, 1915.

for her, since she was no longer Superintendent of Rowan County Schools, and she received no salary from the K. I. C. The only money she earned was in the form of tuition fees for conducting county teachers' institutes, and this was barely enough to cover expenses. The strain of K. I. C. duties, combined with worries over money, took heavy toll on Mrs. Stewart. She became irritable, often lost her temper, and found work on the reader exasperating. Unable to complete the book in Kentucky, she finally left the state and went to Richmond, Virginia, where, after a brief rest, she finished the work.[33]

Mrs. Stewart entitled the volume The Country Life Reader. It contained simple sentences, which not only taught the illiterates to read and write but also inspired personal and civic responsibility. There were lessons encouraging better health, Christian living, improved farming techniques, and thrift. Because it was the first book designed exclusively for uneducated adults, it was greeted enthusiastically by the public.[34]

Because of Mrs. Stewart's development of The Country Life Reader and her leadership of the K. I. C., numerous states, including Mississippi,[35] Oklahoma, and New Mexico by 1916 became involved in the work to eradicate illiteracy.[36] Although Mrs. Stewart was pleased to see the spread of

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[33]James B. McCreary to Cora Wilson Stewart, February 16, 1915; Morehead State Bank to Cora Wilson Stewart, March 2, 1915; Cora Wilson Stewart to B. F. Johnson, February 24, August 28, 1915; Cora Wilson Stewart to J. W. Carrahan, December 24, 1915, all in Stewart Papers.

[34]Cora Wilson Stewart, Country Life Reader: First Book (Atlanta, Richmond, Dallas, 1915); Cora Wilson Stewart to B. F. Johnson, December 24, 1915, Stewart Papers.

[35]Mississippi Illiteracy Commission, Illiteracy in Mississippi: Blot it out! (Jackson, 1916), p. 4-8.

[36]McCreary County News, January 29, 1915; Santa Fe, New Mexican, January 5, 1916, both in Stewart Papers.

the movement, she also insisted that proper credit be given to the "Moonlight Schools" origins. For example, she warned one fellow worker:

> You Alabama folks must call your schools 'Moonlight Schools.' I do resent them being called 'night schools.' That is a Northern institution and a city affair. The 'Moonlight Schools' are of Southern origin and it [sic] is a rural and small town institution, whose primary aim is to instruct illiterates. There is a difference and all loyal Southerners should call them 'Moonlight Schools.'[37]

Despite this particular stipulation, however, Mrs. Stewart was truly happy to see the great public interest in adult education, and as long as illiterates were learning to read and write, she was satisfied.

In her home state, Mrs. Stewart was beginning to realize that an aroused citizenry alone could not insure the success of the illiteracy campaign that she had hoped for. More funds were needed, so she resolved to ask the 1916 General Assembly for an appropriation. Supported by the press and most of the civic organizations in the state, she got a bill introduced into the House of Representatives that would allow the K. I. C. $20,000 per year until 1920.[38]

While Mrs. Stewart was busy lobbying for this bill, an ironic twist of events occurred which brought public opinion firmly behind the Commission and which increased the possibility of the appropriation being granted. Augustus O. Stanley, who succeeded McCreary as governor in 1915, appointed several assistant attorneys general to examine state agencies. Early in January 1916 one of these investigators, J. C. Duffy, charged that the K. I. C. without authorization had drawn $1,458.82 from

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[37]Cora Wilson Stewart to Lois Willis, September 15, 1915, Stewart Papers (Box 27).

[38]William A. Young to Senator Charles D. Arnett, February 5, 1916; James B. McCreary to Cora Wilson Stewart, January 1, 1916, both in Stewart Papers; Kentucky Illiteracy Commission, First Biennial Report, p. 21; Lexington Herald, January 13, 1916.

the state treasury. The money was allegedly used for postage, telephone and telegraphing expenses, and hiring a stenographer.[39] Mrs. Stewart's friends were infuriated by Duffy's charges. They argued that even if the Commission had spent the money, it was a small price to pay for all the good that had been done.[40]

Mrs. Stewart was in Washington when she heard of the Duffy report. Knowing that the appropriation would not be granted by the Legislature unless the K. I. C. was cleared immediately, she wisely wired the State Inspector and Examiner, Nat Sewell, to begin a full investigation of the Commission. Upon arriving in Frankfort the next day, she went directly to Sewell and urged that the investigation begin as soon as possible.[41]

Dissatisfied with the pace of the Sewell probe, Mrs. Stewart made an important public statement on January 13 about the Duffy charges. She admitted that the alleged funds had been spent, but she said that they were disbursed with the full knowledge of then Attorney General James Garnett. Garnett had construed the law providing supplies and services to state departments to include the K. I. C. Mrs. Stewart said that no funds had passed through the Commission and she shrewdly added that she had often spent her own money for the illiteracy work.[42] Her

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[39]Louisville Courier Journal, January 6, 1916; Paducah Evening Sun, January 8, 1916, Stewart Papers.

[40]R. W. Kincaid to H. M. Logan, January 10, 1916; Louisville Herald, January 10, 1916; Somerset Semi-Weekly News, January 10, 1916, all in Stewart Papers.

[41]Somerset, Semi-Weekly News, January 10, 1916; Stewart Papers; Lexington Herald, January 11, 1916.

[42]Owensboro Daily Messenger, January 16, 1916; Elizabethtown News, January 14, 1916, both in Stewart Papers.

masterful statement convinced the public of the honesty of the K. I. C., and brought new support for the movement.[43] While the Commission was pictured as a totally altruistic organization, Stanley's investigators were cast as petty officials who ignored regular government business to attack a selfless woman.[44]

With public opinion clearly in her favor because of the Duffy incident, Mrs. Stewart on February 17, 1916, appeared before the Kentucky Legislature. The galleries were packed, and many ladies, carrying appropriate anti-illiteracy banners, found seats on the floor of the House, which had been opened to the public. According to one source, Mrs. Stewart spent more than an hour giving "a detailed account of the work done by the Kentucky Illiteracy Commission, emphasizing the necessity of funds to carry out the work and meeting in advance the arguments of suspected opponents." Vigorous applause followed the speech, and only a motion to adjourn kept the bill from rushing through.[45]

The motion to adjourn was probably engineered by friends of Governor Stanley, who feared the large appropriation attached to the illiteracy bill. In any case, the day after Mrs. Stewart's address, Stanley declared his opposition to any new state expenditures unless means were devised to raise the money. He admitted that the campaign to eradicate illiteracy was a noble venture, but said other problems

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[43]Elizabethtown News, January 14, 1916, Stewart Papers; Louisville Herald, January 11, 1916; Frankfort State Journal, January 14, 1916; Lexington Herald, January 16, 1916.

[44]Versailles Woodford Sun, January 20, 1916; Wilmore Enterprise, January 20, 1916, both in Scrapbook, Stewart Papers (Box 64).

[45]Lexington Herald, February 18, 1916; Lexington Leader, February 17, 1916; Louisville Courier Journal, February 18, 1916.

book priority. Although he admired Mrs. Stewart, the Governor adamantly opposed spending more money than the state could raise.[46]

Mrs. Stewart knew that Stanley's opposition would doom the appropriation. Disconsolate, she wrote McCreary that she would give up her work and return to Morehead if no funds were granted, but the former governor assured her that some money would be supplied.[47] McCreary was correct in his prediction, for the Legislature appropriated $5,000 per year for 1916 and 1917.[48] Mrs. Stewart knew that this was hardly enough to carry on the campaign she envisioned, but she reconciled herself to the circumstances. Never one to allow adversity to stand in her way, she merely became more determined than ever to wipe illiteracy from Kentucky by 1920.

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[46] Lexington Herald, February 19, 1916; Lexington Leader, February 19, 1916.

[47] James B. McCreary to Cora Wilson Stewart, February 23, 1914, Stewart Papers.

[48] Acts of the Kentucky General Assembly (1916), p. 602-603.

CHAPTER II

PROGRESSIVE SCHOOL SUPERINTENDENT

Miss Wilson knew that her election was uncertain when she decided to run on the Democratic ticket. Rowan was traditionally a Republican county and there were reasons to believe that it would follow its past course. No woman had ever held the position of school superintendent, and Miss Wilson could not be sure that Rowan voters would overrule their prejudice against female officeholders. Personal complications also arose when she learned that her opponent was Emmett Martt, her sister Stella's beau. Although she later laughed at this situation, it doubtless caused her some apprehension at the time. Yet Miss Wilson refused to be discouraged either by personal relations or political prejudice; she eagerly made her bid for office.[1]

Campaigning as the "Children's Friend," she made herself better known in remote areas of the county by vigorous canvassing.[2] Her efforts were noted by several local newspapers who gave her their endorsements. One of them said: "She is a pleasant young woman, bright and quite thoroughly imbued with the interest of the public schools."[3] In giving its support, another newspaper remarked: "Miss Wilson continues her studies, is up on all the new methods and knowing the wants of her people and their abilities will act wisely

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[1]Diary of Cora Wilson Stewart, January 17, 1923, Stewart Papers (Box 51).

[2]"Vote for Miss Cora Wilson, the Children's Friend," Stewart Papers.

[3]Mount Sterling Advocate, August 13, 1901, Stewart Papers (Box 29).

and bring the schools up to a higher standard." Because of these endorsements and her vigorous campaign, she won the election on November 5, 1901, by a substantial majority.[4]

Her election was symbolic of changes which were occurring throughout the nation. No longer content to be solely housewives, many women were realizing that they could make contributions to public life. Women's clubs and similar civic organizations were developing to channel female energies. Women talked of equality with men and pushed for suffrage. It was the day of the "New Woman,"[5] and Cora Wilson was a perfect example of this type. The recognition of women's rights was a part of the progressive movement, which was arising at the turn of the twentieth century. Reforms of various kinds were demanded, but nowhere was the need for educational reform greater than in the South. Southern teachers began acknowledging the poor conditions of the region's schools, and education became a panacea which they hoped would allow the South to match the economic growth of the North.[6] Rowan countians were also awakening to the importance of education. The population of the county was increasing, Morehead had grown to 1,100 inhabitants by 1900,[7] and the time was ripe for

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[4]Undated and untitled newspaper clipping, Stewart Papers (Box 29); diary of Cora Wilson Stewart, January 17, 1923, Stewart Papers (Box 51).

[5]Robert Riegel, American Women, pp. 240-262.

[6]C. Vann Woodward, Origins of the New South, 1877-1913 (Baton Rouge, 1951), pp. 400-406; see Charles Coon, Facts About Southern Educational Progress (Durham, 1905), for further information on Southern schools at the beginning of the twentieth century.

[7]U. S. Bureau of the Census, Twelfth Census of the United States (1900), Vol. 1, Part 1, p. 183.

educational reform. Professor F. C. Button had shown them the way with the Morehead Normal; now they turned to Cora Wilson for leadership in the public schools.

Miss Wilson fulfilled the hopes of her constituents. During her four-year term the school system became more efficient. Unlike her predecessors, she opened the superintendent's office every day to conduct business. She visited the schools often and encouraged extracurricular activities. She persuaded trustees to take a greater interest in the physical condition of the schools. She renovated the superintendent's office, mostly at her own expense; and she published a school magazine, The Rowan County School Journal.[8]

Miss Wilson's vibrant nature was probably the most important reason for her successful term. Her dedication to the schools was complete, and she was the embodiment of reform. A bright young person, she awakened the public to the needs of the schools as no superintendent before had ever done. She was well liked in the community, and everyone knew that "Miss Cora" was the driving force behind the Rowan County schools.[9]

During her superintendency Miss Wilson also became one of the most popular speakers in the county. Whenever a local lodge or women's organization needed an orator, it usually chose her. By now a mature woman, she dressed in the latest fashions and made a striking figure. Because she had an excellent speaking voice and carefully

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[8]Diary of Cora Wilson Stewart, January 17, 1923, Stewart Papers (Box 51); "Cora Wilson Stewart 'The Children's Friend' Candidate for School Superintendent of Rowan County," Stewart Papers (Box 29).

[9]Welles Interview, September 2, 1972.

prepared her talks, she was able to blend fact with elocution into cogent arguments.[10]

One of her most requested topics was "Our Mountain Jewels," in which she argued that Kentucky's mountain children were like rough diamonds who only needed the polish of education to make them priceless gems.[11] On other occasions she pointed to areas needing community improvement or called for better public health to combat contagious diseases. Environmental topics were also a favorite theme. In one address, she observed, "The Lord made this earth clean and wholesome in the beginning. We have made it filthy and unsanitary."[12]

Miss Wilson carried on her campaign for community development in church and civic activities as well as in the lecture forum. One of her favorite mediums was the newspaper. In articles for local publication she called for street lights for Morehead, for fenced-in cemeteries, and for beautifying the city by painting its houses. She became a member of the Women's club and served as president of the Morehead chapter. She was also District Director of the Christian Women's Board of Missions, a member of the Advisory Board of Morehead Normal, and President of the Rowan County Division of the Kentucky Sunday School Association.[13]

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[10] Ibid.

[11] Undated and untitled newspaper clipping, Stewart Papers (Box 29); "Our Mountain Jewels," Stewart Papers (Box 46).

[12] Undated and untitled speech, Stewart Papers (Box 46).

[13] Undated and untitled newspaper clipping, Stewart Papers (Box 29); "Mrs. Cora Wilson Stewart and her Connections in Recent Years," Biographical File, Stewart Papers.

Miss Wilson generally subordinated her personal life to community activities during her term as superintendent. Although numerous suitors called on her, she never seriously considered matrimony until 1904, when she married Alexander T. Stewart, a Rowan County school teacher.[14] Little is known of Stewart's early life, except that he was one of five children whose ancestors had come to America from England in the seventeenth century.[15] It is uncertain why Miss Wilson married him. Their mutual interest in teaching could have been the reason; more probably, however, she feared the ignominy of being labeled an old maid school teacher. She was twenty-nine and he twenty-six when they were married.[16]

Trouble was inevitable in a home where the wife was as civic minded as Mrs. Stewart. From all indications, she performed the usual tasks expected of a housewife; but, she was not the dependent companion that her husband had anticipated, and their relationship was shaky from the beginning.[17]

In 1905 Mrs. Stewart refused to stand for re-election as superintendent of schools. Although she said the reason for her decision was a better job offer in Lexington, she probably was aware of

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[14] Rowan County Marriage Bonds, Book 7, p. 87.

[15] Morehead Rowan County News, May 10, 1956.

[16] Rowan County Marriage Bonds, Book 7, p. 87. This interpretation is given credence not only by Mrs. Stewart's age, but also by her failure to reassume her maiden name after her divorce and her strict insistence, in the years after she left her husband, that everyone refer to her as Mrs. Cora Wilson Stewart.

[17] "Deposition of C. C. Nichols," May 26, 1910, Rowan Circuit Court; "Deposition of Mrs. E. B. McClone," May 26, 1910, Rowan Circuit Court, both in Stewart Papers (Box 29).

the stress that her superintendent's duties placed on her husband.[18] In any case, she remained in Morehead and did not go to Lexington. Although no longer serving in an official capacity, she continued her interest in educational activities. She gave speeches to local organizations and conducted county teacher institutes throughout eastern Kentucky. Her reputation as a speaker had spread to other counties during her superintendency, and her talks were requested by various civic organizations.[19]

Although the relationship between Mrs. Stewart and her husband was not ideal, domestic problems did not deter the couple from planning a family, and on August 20, 1907, a son William Halley Stewart was born. The baby was a delight to the Stewarts and their neighbors, who remarked at his lovable disposition; yet the child was frail and racked with disease. Ten months and nineteen days after being born, he died.[20] The loss of their son placed great pressure on the Stewarts' relationship. To ease her sorrow, Mrs. Stewart intensified her institute work, but her absence from home only made the marriage less stable.

If Mrs. Stewart's renewed activities caused domestic problems, they spread her reputation as an institute instructor. One county school superintendent remarked, "She possesses a rich vocabulary and delivers her addresses in an attractive and easy manner." The

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[18]Undated and untitled newspaper clipping, Cora Wilson Stewart Papers (Box 29); diary of Cora Wilson Stewart, January 17, 1923, Stewart Papers (Box 51).

[19]Ibid.; Marie L. Roberts to Cora Wilson Stewart, June 4, 1907, Stewart Papers (Box 29).

[20]Undated and untitled newspaper clipping, Biographical File, Stewart Papers.

Superintendent of Grant County Schools also noted that at his teachers' meeting, "She held the closest attention of the entire audience for an hour or more."[21]

During 1908 and 1909, while Mrs. Stewart was speaking throughout the state, important events were occurring in Kentucky education. Dr. John G. Crabbe, Superintendent of Public Instruction, began his famous "Whirlwind Campaign" to arouse public interest to the need for better education. During nine days in 1908 and eight days in 1909 speakers canvassed the state in behalf of the public schools. Leaders of women's clubs, prominent businessmen, newspapers, and civic leaders all gave their support. Rallies and all-day picnics were held and thousands heard the gospel of education during this feverish campaign. The canvass caused numerous improvements to be made by the state legislature, including the formulation of a county school district law, a compulsory attendance law, and the establishment of a state educational commission to make a thorough study of the school system.[22]

Mrs. Stewart was not directly involved in the "Whirlwind Campaign," but she was greatly influenced by it. She saw that Crabbe had captured the imagination of the public and made it aware of the need for reform;

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[21]E. C. McDougle to Whom It May Concern, July 30, 1908; C. C. Adams to Whom It May Concern, October 7, 1908; H. R. Dysand to Whom It May Concern, July 29, 1908; Nannie E. Fields to Whom It May Concern, September 25, 1908, all in Stewart Papers.

[22]Thomas D. Clark, A History of Kentucky (revised edition Lexington, 1960), pp. 360-361; Charles William Dabney, Universal Education in the South (Chapel Hill; 1936), II, pp. 348-354; Frank L. McVey, The Gates Open Slowly: A History of Education in Kentucky (Lexington, 1949), pp. 207-209; Kentucky Department of Education, Second Whirlwind Campaign, 1909 (Frankfort, 1909), pp. 3-47.

she would remember and employ many of these same tactics in her future work. In addition, Crabbe became one of her closest friends, and she often turned to him for advice and encouragement.[23]

It was impossible for Mrs. Stewart to stay out of education after Crabbe's "Whirlwind Campaign." Missing the power and sense of involvement which she had known as superintendent of schools, she decided to run for the office in the 1909 election. Her opposition was a very popular woman, Miss Lyda Messer, who had succeeded Mrs. Stewart as superintendent. Friends warned that Miss Messer was too strong for her; but Mrs. Stewart ignored the cautions and plunged into the fray.[24]

It was a difficult campaign, because Miss Messer was a formidable opponent, and domestic problems continued to plague Mrs. Stewart. Once again she waged a vigorous canvass, meeting people, circulating pamphlets, and reminding the voters of the accomplishments of her first term. Miss Messer, on the other hand, tried to win support by playing on the sympathies of the public. She pleaded that her personal finances were so poor that she would be unable to support herself without the position. But Rowan County voters were more interested in improving education than in providing charity; they well remembered Mrs. Stewart's first term, and gave her a majority in the November election.[25]

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[23] Labor Herald, March 23, 1914 (n.p.), Stewart Papers.

[24] Diary of Cora Wilson Stewart, December 30, 1922, Stewart Papers (Box 51).

[25] Ibid.; untitled newspaper clipping, (Morehead) October 30, 1909, Stewart Papers.

Mrs. Stewart's election caused her home life to deteriorate at a rapid pace. She performed the chores of the normal housewife, but her husband was not happy with her conduct. He refused to work, became extremely jealous of his wife, and often stayed out late at night. Seeking escape from reality, he turned to drinking and became a domestic tyrant.[26]

Mrs. Stewart endured these conditions for almost a year. The final break in the marriage came when her drunken husband returned home late one night, kicked open the door, and threatened to kill her. He searched out a pistol, took aim at her, and pulled the trigger. Luckily, the gun misfired, and Mrs. Stewart was able to get out of the house before he tried again. She refused to return home after this incident and was eventually granted a divorce.[27]

No one reason can explain the failure of the Stewarts' marriage. Mr. Stewart certainly did not understand his wife. He could not accept her preoccupation with civic work, and he doubtless felt threatened by her achievements. Perhaps it was to escape a growing sense of emasculation that he turned to alcohol and substituted bravado for self-respect. Yet Mrs. Stewart also was to blame for the divorce. She failed to see her activities as a challenge to her

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[26]Cora Wilson Stewart vs. Alexander Stewart, "Petition in Equity," Rowan County Court, March 23, 1910, Biographical File, Stewart Papers; "Deposition of C. C. Nichols," May 26, 1910; "Deposition of Mrs. E. B. McClone," May 26, 1910, both in Stewart Papers (Box 29).

[27]Cora Wilson Stewart vs. Alexander Stewart, "Petition in Equity," March 23, 1910, Biographical File, Stewart Papers; "Deposition of C. C. Nichols," May 26, 1910; "Deposition of Mrs. E. B. McClone," May 26, 1910, both in Stewart Papers (Box 29).

husband, and she expected him to accept her absence from home as being necessary. By following the altruistic lessons of her mother, she lost sight of his needs. She saw her work as being completely justified because it helped others, and she felt bewildered by her husband's failure to approve.[28]

The divorce had a profound effect on Mrs. Stewart. After being married for almost six years, she felt very lonely when forced to live by herself. She could not believe that the divorce had in any way been her fault; yet a feeling of failure blanketed her. Needing solace during this time of depression, she turned to friends and acquaintances.[29] Miss Mattie Dalton, secretary to the editor of a Lexington school journal and a close friend of Mrs. Stewart, was especially helpful. She bolstered her morale, helped her accept the broken marriage without a sense of failure, and provided perspective on the situation. But even Miss Dalton, normally a cheerful person, lost patience with her friend's protracted melancholy. On one occasion, at the height of exasperation, she wrote, "For God's sake Cora, for the work that you ought to do and can do in this world, stop crucifying your soul . . . ."[30]

During and after the divorce proceedings, Mrs. Stewart sought emotional release as never before in public activities. She became the local newspaper correspondent for the Louisville Courier Journal

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[28]Even thirteen years later, she could not understand the reason for the divorce, and sought an explanation for it. Untitled note, January 4, 1923, Stewart Papers.

[29]Mattie Dalton to Cora Wilson Stewart, October 19, 1910: Lutie M. Palmer to Cora Wilson Stewart, September 7, 1910, both in Stewart Papers.

[30]Mattie Dalton to Cora Wilson Stewart, July 13, 1911, October 12, 1910, October 19, 1910, all in Stewart Papers.

husband, and she expected him to accept her absence from home as being necessary. By following the altruistic lessons of her mother, she lost sight of his needs. She saw her work as being completely justified because it helped others, and she felt bewildered by her husband's failure to approve.[28]

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[30]Mattie Dalton to Cora Wilson Stewart, July 13, 1911, October 12, 1910, October 19, 1910, all in Stewart Papers.

and the Ashland Independent and submitted numerous articles to magazines.[31] In addition to instructing teacher institutes, she continued to be active in Sunday School work. Her activities were so intense that by early 1911 she dropped some of them for fear of impairing her health.[32]

Her greatest opportunity for expression was as school superintendent; and it was in this capacity that she made her greatest contributions to the community. Knowing that Rowan students needed more training than their parents, she sought financial aid for the schools.[33] With the help of local businessmen and professional advisors, she started vocational training classes, where students learned many new skills. They cleared roadways and practiced building roads. Out of lumber cut from the surrounding woods they made bookcases, picture frames, and furniture for the schools.[34]

Mrs. Stewart did not forget the farmers of the community in her effort to utilize the schools. Concerned with the depletion of the natural forests of the county, she brought in Dr. D. C. Smith, horticulturist at the Eastern Kentucky Normal School, to study the region. After making his survey, Smith concluded that Rowan soil was

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[31] G. F. Friel to Cora Wilson Stewart, December 2, 1910; Brainard Platt to Cora Wilson Stewart, November 30, 1910; Mattie Dalton to Cora Wilson Stewart, October 19, 1910; Margaret Hartness to Cora Wilson Stewart, April 9, 1910, all in Stewart Papers.

[32] W. J. Vaughn to Cora Wilson Stewart, January 5, 1911, Stewart Papers.

[33] Edward Reisner to Cora Wilson Stewart, February 25, 1911; C. C. Mayo to Cora Wilson Stewart, May 17, 1910; Mattie Dalton to Cora Wilson Stewart, January 9, 1910, all in Stewart Papers.

[34] Louisville Courier Journal, January 26, 1913.

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[34] Louisville Courier Journal, January 26, 1913.

ideal for growing fruit. Not long afterwards, Mrs. Stewart organized fruit clubs and many trees were planted. Corn clubs were also formed, and rallies and contests were held to see who could raise the largest amount.[35] Never before had Rowan countians taken such an interest in improving the quality of their lives. After one corn rally, George Roberts, Professor of Agronomy at the Kentucky University, wrote Mrs. Stewart:

> I must say that the demonstration I saw in your county last Monday is unique in my experience in traveling over the State. It shows what I have always stated that the mountain people may be counted upon to respond to any good movement when once they have seen that it is really worthwhile and will better their condition.[36]

When Mrs. Stewart was not busy as the superintendent of schools, she added to the educational advancement of the county through personal contributions. During 1910 and 1911 she developed a statewide reputation as a speaker and institute instructor. From Ashland to Louisville she was called to speak before women's clubs and church groups. Although her topics were usually on education, she also spoke on life in the mountains and proved to be an eloquent spokeswoman for her people. When she accepted money for talks, she often used it either to help Rowan County students who wanted to further their education or to improve the physical structure of the schools.[37]

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[35] Ibid.; H. Van Antwerp to Cora Wilson Stewart, March 28, 1911, Stewart Papers; R. S. Eubank to Cora Wilson Stewart, April 9, 1911, Stewart Papers.

[36] George Roberts to Cora Wilson Stewart, April 7, 1911, Stewart Papers.

[37] George W. Chapman to Cora Wilson Stewart, November 15, 1910; Mrs. B. F. Clay to Cora Wilson Stewart, August 10, 1910; Mrs. T. J. Munary to Cora Wilson Stewart, April 11, 1910; A. E. Clore to Cora Wilson Stewart, April 20, 1910; Mrs. M. E. Harlan to Cora Wilson Stewart, January 22, 1910; Mrs. P. A. Theley to Cora Wilson Stewart, January 13, 1910, all in Stewart Papers.

By late 1910, Mrs. Stewart had become a prominent personality in Kentucky educational circles. Rumors were even circulated that she might run for State Superintendent of Public Instruction to fill the position vacated by Dr. J. G. Crabbe. Although these stories were unfounded, her influence was recognized by one of the candidates for the Superintendency who promised her liberal patronage if she would endorse him.[38]

The greatest triumph of Mrs. Stewart's second term as superintendent of Rowan County schools came on June 29, 1911, when she became the first woman to be elected president of the Kentucky Educational Association (K.E.A.). Because she was active in the organization and had given several speeches at its annual meetings, several K. E. A. members urged her to run. She was at first reluctant but finally decided to seek the office.[39] Relieved by her decision, one friend wrote, "I am glad that you have awakened to the fact that there is a crying need for a woman to head the K. E. A. who is equal to the occasion and who can preside."[40]

A decisive factor in Mrs. Stewart's election to the presidency of the K. E. A. was her stand on woman suffrage. Like many professional women of the early twentieth century, she was interested in the role of women in society. She supported female efforts to gain public office and sometimes personally campaigned for women candidates;[41] yet, she

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[38]D. F. Gray to Cora Wilson Stewart, August 12, 1910; M. O. Winfrey to Cora Wilson Stewart, September 4, 1910, both in Stewart Papers.

[39]Kentucky Educational Association, Proceedings of the Fortieth Annual Session (Louisville, 1911), p. 9; Mattie Dalton to Cora Wilson Stewart, May 15, 1911, Stewart Papers.

[40]M. O. Winfrey to Cora Wilson Stewart, May 16, 1911, Stewart Papers.

[41]W. H. Strange to Cora Wilson Stewart, April 10, 1911, Stewart Papers.

was not an outspoken or militant feminist. This moderate position won her the respect of both sexes. Miss Jesse O. Yancey, Superintendent of Maysville County schools wrote, "Your election was a victory for all of us /women/."[42] But men were equally pleased by her election. Edgar C. Riley said, "Again let me suggest that you get away from the idea that what you do you shall accomplish for your sex. I believe that you bring that element less into your work than any woman I have ever known and I praise you for it."[43] In giving his support, Everette Dix, another school superintendent, jokingly remarked, "We are sure you are the 'man for the place' /K. E. A. president/."[44]

Mrs. Stewart's selection as K. E. A. President coincided with the growth of the national progressive movement. She recognized the need for change and supported many of the same civic improvements advocated by early twentieth-century progressives. She favored woman suffrage, wanted honest government, and hoped to take politics out of the educational system of the state.[45] Mrs. Stewart also displayed many of the personal qualities which historians Richard Hofstader and George Mowry have attributed to the progressives. She had a religious background, came from old American stock, and had a good education;[46] yet

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[42]Miss Jessie O. Yancey to Cora Wilson Stewart, July 5, 1911, Stewart Papers.

[43]Edgar C. Riley to Cora Wilson Stewart, August 13, 1911, Stewart Papers.

[44]Everette L. Dix to Cora Wilson Stewart, June 3, 1911, Stewart Papers.

[45]Mattie Dalton to Cora Wilson Stewart, April 14, 1911, Stewart Papers.

[46]George Mowry, The California Progressives (Berkeley, 1951), pp. 86-88; Richard Hofstader, The Age of Reform (New York, 1956), pp. 135-138.

she differed fundamentally from the stereotypes established by these same historians. She was not from an urban environment but had grown up in the Kentucky hills. Having moved to the small town of Morehead while still in her teens, she knew little of the growing corporations and labor unions, which supposedly threatened the security of most urban progressives.[47] She did not protest economic changes in her environment but aided them. Tired of seeing the mountaineers belittled by the rest of the state, Mrs. Stewart welcomed the opening of the hills to commercial use by the railroads and the lumber and coal industries.[48]

Like most other teachers, she believed that better schools would open new economic opportunities for her people.[49] Instead of fighting the tide of growth in her community, she tried to prepare her students for life in their changing environment. Far more important to Mrs. Stewart than any fear of losing her leading position in the community was her need to help other people. At times, she seemed driven by a desire to serve the people of her county. This often created problems in forming close personal relationships, especially with her husband, but it was the main ingredient in her progressive nature.

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[47] Mowry, California Progressives, pp. 88-91; Hofstader, Age of Reform, pp. 135-138.

[48] For evidence of the commercial development of eastern Kentucky, see Morehead Rowan County News, May 10, 1956; Harlan R. Brown, In the Foothills of the Cumberlands: A History of Eastern Kentucky (Ashland, Kentucky, 1959); Mary Lucile Chapman, "The Influence of Coal in the Big Sandy Valley" (Unpublished Ph.d. dissertation, University of Kentucky, 1945).

[49] Woodward, Origins of the New South, pp. 400-406.

CHAPTER I

GROWING UP IN THE KENTUCKY MOUNTAINS

When Cora Wilson was born on January 17, 1875,[1] one might have anticipated that she would be an educator, because both of her parents had been teachers before her birth. Her father, Jeremiah, or Jerry as he was popularly known, was an industrious young man who displayed what Cora later called a "biting" wit. His primary reason for becoming a teacher was to support his study of medicine. Little is known of his pedagogical abilities; but the skill he later displayed as a physician is unquestioned. While teaching in Powell County, Kentucky, he met and fell in love with another young educator, Anne E. Halley. After a brief courtship they were married on December 11, 1870. Jerry was nineteen, his bride twenty-one.[2]

Anne E. Halley was the second of twelve children born to Uriah and Sarah Davis Halley. A sensitive, expressive person who enjoyed writing poetry, she was devoutly religious and followed the principles of Christianity throughout her life. Even during her last twelve years of life, when she was sick with tuberculosis, Anne

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[1]Untitled autobiographical notes, January 17, 1924, Biographical File, Cora Wilson Stewart Papers (Special Collections, Margaret I. King Library, University of Kentucky). Hereafter cited as Stewart Papers.

[2]Diary of Anne E. Halley, January 11, 1871; "Data Furnished by Public Library, Morehead, Kentucky," both in ibid.; Morehead Rowan County News, May 10, 1956; Cora Wilson Stewart to Homer Wilson, February 12, 1940, Stewart Papers.

displayed a cheerful disposition. Her courage, articulateness and unselfishness served as models for the young Cora.[3]

After their wedding the Wilsons settled on a Powell County farm left to Anne at her father's death. From 1870 to 1890 seven children, Everette, Viola, Cora, Burwell Clefford, Bunyan Spratt, Folora, and Stella were born; only the last five lived to maturity.[4]

Interest in education and a desire to lead were the two qualities first displayed by Cora. She was so impressed by her parents' educational experiences that by age four she had declared her intention to be a teacher.[5] At the age of five, according to her mother, Cora was conducting mock classes in the Wilson's backyard and demanding that her students address her as "Miss Cora." Her father was so amused by his daughter's activities that he dubbed her "the General";[6] yet, despite her commanding nature, Cora was no bully. On the contrary, she is remembered as a frail child who made friends easily and who cooperated with others.[7]

In 1880 the Wilsons moved to the small village of Cross Roads in Rowan County, Kentucky.[8] Mrs. Wilson taught school for one session

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[3]Ibid.; diary of Anne E. Halley, pp. 54-80; "In Memory of Anne E. Halley;" "Genealogy of the Halley Family," all in Biographical File, Stewart Papers.

[4]Cora Wilson Stewart to Homer Wilson, February 12, 1940, Stewart Papers.

[5]"Data Furnished by Public Library, Morehead, Kentucky;" untitled autobiographical notes, January 7, 1924, both in Biographical File, Stewart Papers.

[6]"Data Furnished by Public Library, Morehead, Kentucky;" untitled autobiographical notes, January 17, 1924, both in ibid.

[7]Author's interview with Norman Welles, September 2, 1972, Morehead, Kentucky.

[8]The name Cross Roads was later changed to Farmers.

while Dr. Wilson began his medical practice and opened a general store, which his wife helped to operate. Cora began her schooling at Cross Roads in a typical country schoolhouse with one room, a dirt floor, backless benches, and a cutout for a window.[9] The school was in session for only three months in the year and offered only a most rudimentary education.[10]

Few mountaineers who scratched a living from the soil of Rowan County felt the need of training beyond the one-room schoolhouse; but Cora's parents created a home atmosphere that encouraged learning. As she later recalled: "We had pictures on our walls while other children had none. We had stories. We had books. The difference between our lives and most of the other children in the community was that our parents were educated."[11]

The Wilsons also offered other inducements to learning which were absent from most mountain homes. Always a hospitable man, Dr. Wilson often invited to dinner guests from outside of the area. With family and friends gathered around the table, the Wilson dining room provided a perfect forum for discussion of political, religious, and social issues. From these conversations Cora learned much about life beyond the Kentucky mountains.[12]

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[9]Cora Wilson Stewart to Homer Wilson, February 12, 1940, Stewart Papers; "Data Furnished by Public Library, Morehead, Kentucky," Biographical File, Stewart Papers.

[10]Welles interview, September 2, 1972; "The Founder of the Illiteracy Movement," Stewart Papers (Box 52).

[11]Untitled autobiographical notes (n.d.), Biographical File, Stewart Papers.

[12]Untitled autobiographical notes (n.d.), in ibid.

Although it is uncertain when she first learned to read, Cora, by age seven, was an assiduous reader of the Old Arm Chair, a fiction periodical purchased by the neighboring Sanford family. The Sanfords were the only magazine subscribers in the county and the lone family, besides the Wilsons, who had books. After exhausting the libraries of her parents and their neighbor, Cora pulled down one of her father's medical volumes, almost as big as she was, and is said to have announced, "If you don't get me something else to read, I'll have to read the doctor books."[13]

From 1880 to 1889 the Wilsons moved three times between Cross Roads and Elliottsville, Kentucky. While Dr. Wilson continued his medical practice his wife either ran a general store or taught school.[14] Because he was highly respected and his services demanded throughout the rural areas, the doctor was often away from home, thus forcing Mrs. Wilson to be both a father and mother to her children. Needing help in this situation, she turned to her eldest daughter, who readily accepted her new role. Cora assumed responsibility for her brothers and sisters, washed clothes, and often cooked. She learned the importance of self-sacrifice and consideration for others, and she developed a deep respect for her mother by working side by side with her.[15]

Cora was especially influenced by Mrs. Wilson's piety. The mother sprinkled her daily conversation with quotations from the Bible and

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[13]Untitled autobiographical notes, January 17, 1924; "Information Sheet" (n.d.), both in ibid.

[14]Cora Wilson Stewart to Homer Wilson, February 12, 1940, Stewart Papers.

[15]"The Founder of the Illiteracy Movement," Stewart Papers (Box 52).

urged her children to follow the teachings of Christ. By her daily actions, Mrs. Wilson set an example for Cora, who later cited her mother as the greatest influence on her life. Although Cora did not become a communicant of the Christian Church until she was thirteen, her religious commitment began much earlier. At the age of eight she started regular pilgrimages into the woods to pray, and she continued this practice until she reached maturity.[16]

Cora's mountain environment and the changes occurring in it influenced her almost as strongly as her mother's guidance. She loved to gallop on horseback through the hills, and she enjoyed all of the other activities of the typical mountain child. She kept in close contact with nature, waded in brooks, listened to the waterfalls, and felt the quiet of the woods. She developed a deep respect for the forthrightness of her fellow mountaineers and shared their independence and sensitivity to criticism. By growing up in a rough mountain environment, Cora learned to appreciate refinement; yet she retained a robustness which was invaluable in her future work.[17]

Cora's youth was marked by the violence of the "Rowan County War," a feud between the Martin and the Tolliver families. Although ill feelings had existed between the two clans for several years, the conflict did not begin in earnest until 1884, when Craig Tolliver, the leader of one faction, campaigned with a Winchester rifle for the position of police judge of Morehead. The Martins selected their

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[16] Ibid.; Cora Wilson Stewart to Homer Wilson, February 12, 1940, Stewart Papers. Mrs. Wilson was fond of substituting such expressions as "He has never been on Soloman's porch" for "He is not bright."

[17] "The Founder of the Illiteracy Movement," Stewart Papers (Box 52).

candidate as sheriff and violence erupted immediately. From August 1884 to June 1887, while the feud was raging, twenty Rowan Countians were killed and sixteen wounded, but only one person was convicted. Three times the state militia imposed order, but violence broke out again as soon as the troops departed. The situation became so uncontrollable that in 1886 the Kentucky legislature threatened to abolish the county. Even this did not stop the bloodshed; the vendetta continued for two more years. It finally ended when, in the words of the Governor of Kentucky:

> A posse acting under the authority of a warrant from the county judge, attacked the Police judge of Morehead /Craig Tolliver/ and his adherents on the 22nd of June last /1887/, killed several of their number and put the rest to flight and temporarily restored something like tranquility to the community.[18]

Though Cora was never personally engaged in the conflict, it was a significant event in her life. She knew the participants, heard stories of their deeds, and retained memories of the controversy for the rest of her life. She never condoned the violence of the Martin-Tolliver controversy; but it often provided her with a colorful topic for future speeches and was the subject of her first published article.[19]

The year 1887 not only brought the end of the "Rowan County War," it signaled the arrival of a new constructive force in the county--

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[18] Quoted in A. L. Lloyd, "Background of Feuding," History Today, 7 (July 1952), p. 456; New York Times, June 23, 1887; Morehead Rowan County News, May 10, 1956; Horace Kephart, Our Southern Highlanders (New York, 1926), pp. 408-411; Meriel Daniel Harris, "Two Famous Kentucky Feuds" (unpublished M.A. thesis, University of Kentucky, 1940), pp. 25-71.

[19] Edward T. Moran /Cora Wilson Stewart pseudonym/, "The Rowan County War," The World Wide Magazine, 9 (August 1902), pp. 321-330.

The Morehead Normal School. Dr. Frank C. Button and his mother, Phoebe, came to Morehead from Lexington, Kentucky, to provide higher education for eastern Kentuckians. With moral and financial support from the Christian Women's Board of Missions, they opened a school which offered college preparatory training and a teachers' course. The classes were small, books scarce, and work consisted mainly of daily recitation, plus occasional lectures by teachers; but, coming at the end of the bloodiest period in the county's history, the Morehead Normal was an educational and socially positive force which arose at a time of great need.[20]

The advent of F. C. Button and the Morehead Normal was a sign of change in Rowan County. The mountains were opening to commercial development, especially from the timber industry, and the provincialism which promoted feuds was being challenged. The population of the county was growing; Morehead, the county seat, increased from 163 inhabitants in 1880 to 491 in 1890. Rowan was looking to a new era of development and needed new leaders to direct its future.[21]

In 1890 the Wilsons moved to Morehead. Dr. Wilson knew that the largest town in the county was the best location for his medical practice, and he wanted his seven children to attend the Morehead Normal School.[22] After the family moved, Cora, now fifteen, began her

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[20]Morehead Rowan County News, May 10, 1956.

[21]U. S. Bureau of the Census, Tenth Census of the United States (1880), Vol. 1, p. 193; U. S. Bureau of the Census, Twelfth Census of the United States (1900), Vol. I, Part I, p. 183; Lloyd, "Background of Feuding," History Today (July 1952), p. 455.

[22]Cora Wilson Stewart to Homer Wilson, February 12, 1940, Stewart Papers.

teaching career as an assistant primary instructor in the Morehead public schools. Her superior, Rea Powers, offered encouragement and advice. Cora, who greatly appreciated his support, later described Powers as "wise, noble, and the soul of courtesy." During the three happy years she spent in the Morehead school system, Cora earned the respect of her colleagues and the admiration of her students and their parents.[23]

At the time she began teaching, Cora also started attending classes at the Morehead Normal, where she learned new and useful classroom methods. Perhaps more important than the training she received was the number of friendships she developed. During her years at the Normal, she began lasting relationships with the most influential people in Morehead, especially with Dr. Button.[24] These contacts would prove invaluable in her future work.

After receiving her teaching certificate at age seventeen, Cora continued her training at the National Normal University in Lebanon, Ohio. She attended classes during 1892 and 1893, between the sessions of the Morehead public schools. Although she had never before been this far from her parents, she apparently adjusted easily to campus life.[25] When Cora went to Lebanon she was no longer the frail mountain girl of her adolescent years; she was now a well-developed young woman. She was five feet five inches tall and had dark brown hair and eyes. Although not beautiful, Cora is described

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[23]Diary of Cora Wilson Stewart, January 17, 1923, Stewart Papers (Box 51).

[24]Advance Kentuckian (n.p., n.d.), Stewart Papers.

[25]Cora Wilson Stewart, "Autograph Books" I-II, Biographical File, Stewart Papers.

by a contemporary as having been a "handsome" woman. She enhanced her appearance with attractive clothes and careful grooming.[26]

Little is known of Cora's academic record at the National Normal, but her rhetorical prowess was acclaimed by several classmates. Many of these fellow students became her friends and helped her enjoy campus life at the Ohio school. She flirted with romance on several occasions, and doubtless engaged in the recreational pastimes of the typical late nineteenth-century collegian.[27]

When she returned from Lebanon in 1893 Cora was given a job at the Morehead Normal. All indications are that she was as effective here as she had been in the public schools. Through her educational activities and her interest in church and civic work, she gained a reputation as a bright new member of the mountain community.[28]

In 1895 Cora left the Morehead Normal and took a position teaching in the county school system. Two years and two months in the rural schools at Corey Chapel, Seas Branch, and Elliottsville gave her challenging work and some experience in the eight-grade county school.[29] Through working in the rural schools, she drew closer to the Rowan mountaineers. She boarded in their homes, saw their desire for education, and helped them whenever possible. Her respect for their

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[26]Welles interview, September 2, 1972.

[27]Cora Wilson Stewart, "Autograph Books" I-II, Biographical File, Stewart Papers. See Robert Riegel, American Women: A Story of Social Change (Rutherford, Madison, Teaneck, N. J., 1970), pp. 278-279, for a description of female student life before the turn of the twentieth century.

[28]Advance Kentuckian (n.p., n.d.), Stewart Papers; diary of Cora Wilson Stewart, January 17, 1923, Stewart Papers (Box 51).

[29]Ibid.

staunch character and native intelligence developed into a feeling of admiration which she retained for the rest of her life.[30]

Although Cora enjoyed working in the county schools, she also contemplated other careers. In 1898 she decided to expand her knowledge of the business world by enrolling in a stenographic and typewriter course at Wilbur R. Smith's Commercial College of Kentucky University in Lexington, Kentucky. The school authorities were so impressed with her performance that they asked her to remain as a teacher when she finished her studies in 1899. Although interested in a business career, Cora could not reject an opportunity to teach. By accepting the offer, she became the first woman instructor at the college.[31]

Less than a year after taking the position, Cora was called home because her mother had become desperately ill. Mrs. Wilson, having endured tuberculosis for twelve years, was unable to further bear its corrosive influence. Fortunately, her pain did not last long; she died less than a week after her daughter arrived. Almost forty years later, she would write to her brother Homer, "I am so thankful that we had a Christian mother, one who believed in God and, who, in her young womanhood acknowledged and accepted Christ and was baptized."[32]

Despite her grief, Cora, as the eldest child, recognized her responsibility to the rest of the family. She vowed to help her four

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[30] "The Founder of the Illiteracy Movement," Stewart Papers (Box 52).

[31] Morehead The Mountaineer (n.d.), Stewart Papers; The Commercial College of Kentucky University, Diploma, December 12, 1899, Stewart Papers (Box 29).

[32] Cora Wilson Stewart to Homer Wilson, February 12, 1940, Stewart Papers; "In Memory of Anne E. Wilson," Biographical File, Stewart Papers.

brothers and two sisters finish their education. In order to fulfill this promise, she gave up her teaching career and accepted a secretarial position with the Standard Lumber Company of Huntington, West Virginia.[33]

Although the clerical work allowed her to apply the skills she had learned at Smith's Commercial College, it did not have the appeal of teaching, and Cora longed to return to Rowan. Her wish was granted in 1901 when the Rowan County Democratic Party selected her to run for county school superintendent. Party leaders hoped to profit from her county-wide reputation as a civic-minded educator. With the salary of a county superintendent, Cora could remain in Morehead, continue her educational career, and still assist her family. She accepted the nomination in May 1901 and immediately began her campaign.[34]

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[33]Undated and untitled newspaper clipping, Stewart Papers (Box 29).

[34]Undated and untitled newspaper clipping, in ibid.

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EPILOGUE

PREFACE

Cora Wilson Stewart is today remembered primarily as the founder of the "Moonlight Schools" of Kentucky, but the significance of her work transcended the boundaries of her home state. She gained national and international recognition because of her efforts to teach adult illiterates, and during the early twentieth century she was acclaimed the leading authority on illiteracy in the United States. But as the years passed new people with new ideas challenged Mrs. Stewart's dominance, so that by the mid-1930's she appeared to be a relic of a bygone day.

This study relates the story of Mrs. Stewart's dedication to the crusade against illiteracy. Although it covers her entire life, most attention is focused on her career as an educational reformer. Her triumphs and failures are recounted, and her contributions to adult education are assessed.

Had it not been for the kindness and encouragement of many people, this thesis would never have been completed. Special thanks go to Dr. Jacqueline Bull, who suggested the topic to me and who gave me complete access to the Cora Wilson Stewart papers in the M. I. King Library. To Mr. Norman Welles and Mrs. Noi Doyle I owe thanks for sharing their recollections of Mrs. Stewart. Most of the credit for the style in this work goes to Dr. Charles P. Roland, whose helpful comments and patience with an unpolished writer were always appreciated. Thanks also to Dr. James F. Hopkins and

Dr. Richard Lowitt for reading this thesis. Finally, much of the work could not have been done without the moral support of my wife and family. Their confidence in me has always been an inspiration.

From The Collection Of
Dr. Jack D. Ellis
826 W. Sun St.
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606-784-2879

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All these changes widen the usefulness and increase the convenience of the parcel post, and the Postmaster-General says that other improvements are to follow, such, for example, as the use of precancelled stamps. Under such administration the new head of the service hopes not only to please the public but to increase the business enough to make the post office pay.

Admittedly, these new rulings are of a somewhat experimental character, and until they have been thoroughly tried it will not be possible to tell how successful they are. But one thing is certain: they are moves in the right direction, and they show a refreshing flexibility and business-like attitude on the part of the post office.

Incidentally, also, they point very strongly a moral about legislation. The original act which Congress passed creating the parcel post gave the Postmaster-General wide powers and responsibilities. He was given permission, with the consent of the Interstate Commerce Commission, to make changes in the classification, the weight limit, the rates, or the zones specified in the bill. In other words, the act allowed him latitude enough to be efficient. The granting of such powers to administrative officers is as rare as it is wise. In this particular case the changes which the Postmaster-General has made in six months, if made by Congressional amendments, probably would have taken two or three years. That Congress was wise enough to give him the opportunity to make these changes is as much to its credit as the making of the changes is to the credit of the Postmaster General himself.

THE WASTE OF IGNORANCE

IN SPITE of our highly organized industrial system we still are guilty of the most wasteful and foolish practices. For example, all during this last summer the farmers of Georgia, Alabama, Mississippi, and Louisiana have been selling their cattle to other parts of the country to fatten. Southern cattle have gone from a country of long grazing seasons and vast areas of cheap land, an ideal cattle country, to Texas, Kansas, even to Montana, states which have no better natural advantages than those from which they came.

The Western ranchmen pay for the cows, the cost and losses of shipping West, fatten them, and still make a profit. That profit and much more would go to the Southern farmer if he kept his cattle at home. But he is a cotton farmer—a one-crop man. He does not know much about the cattle business, and his ignorance costs him dearly. It also costs the public, for carrying the cattle all over the country is an economic waste.

If the Southern pastures were freed of the cattle tick and the Southern farmer of his indifference to the cattle business, the United States would gain a great cattle country that would much more than offset the breaking up of the Western ranges. The solution of our beef problems can be made much nearer home than Argentine. And at the same time the prosperity of the agricultural South can be greatly enhanced, for it is almost axiomatic that farm profits and cattle are to be found together.

KENTUCKY'S "MOONLIGHT" SCHOOLS

ONE of the most touching stories of educational advance that could well be imagined comes to light in a recent government publication—those publications that are usually so dull and so sterile of human interest. Bulletin No. 530 of the United States Bureau of Education is entitled "Illiteracy in the United States" and, in much smaller type, "An Experiment for its Elimination." The statistics under the larger title are important; but the story of the experiment is interesting. Here is the essence of it:

> To wait for a generation of illiterate men, women, and children to die is a slow and painful process. That there is a shorter way to the reduction and elimination of illiteracy has been proven by some European states, and sporadic efforts in this country indicate that there is a better way here, to wit: To teach these grown-ups, in schools organized especially for them, to read and write, and possibly something more.

One of the most notable recent attempts to

do this is that begun in September, 1911, by Mrs. Cora Wilson Stewart, superintendent of schools in Rowan County, Ky., and her associates.

Having studied carefully the conditions of the county, Mrs. Stewart decided to open night schools for adults on moonlight nights in the public schoolhouses of the county. She outlined her plan to the teachers and called for volunteers. All the teachers of the county responded. On Labor Day, September 4, 1911, these teachers visited the homes of the people throughout the county, explained the plan, and announced that moonlight schools would be opened the next evening. It was expected that the response would be slow, but more than 1,200 men and women from 18 to 86 years old were enrolled the first evening. They came trooping over the hills and out of the hollows, some to add to the meagre education received in the inadequate schools of their childhood, some to receive their first lessons in reading and writing. Among these were not only illiterate farmers and their illiterate wives, sons, and daughters, but also illiterate merchants or "storekeepers," illiterate ministers, and illiterate lumbermen. Mothers, bent with age, came that they might learn to read letters from absent sons and daughters, and that they might learn for the first time to write to them.

Almost one third of the population of the county was enrolled. Says Mrs. Stewart:

"They had all the excuses and all the barriers which any people might offer — high hills, bridgeless streams, rugged roads, weariness from the day's hard toil, the shame of beginning study late in life, and all the others; but they were not seeking excuses — they were sincerely and earnestly seeking knowledge. Their interest, their zeal, and their enthusiasm were wonderful to witness. It was truly an inspiring sight to see these aged pupils bending over the desks which their children and grandchildren had occupied during the day. Their delight in learning and their pride in their achievements exceeded any joy that I have ever witnessed."

In September, 1912, a "moonlight school" teachers' institute was held in Morehead, Ky.; and the superintendent and teachers who had conducted the first moonlight schools instructed others who wished to do work of this kind in Rowan and adjoining counties, and in the fall of 1912 the movement spread to eight or ten other counties, while the enrollment of adults in Rowan County reached nearly 1,600.

The success of the men and women proves that it is not so difficult for illiterate grown-ups to learn to read and write as is generally supposed. They learn in a very short time, if given the opportunity. Reading, writing, and arithmetic are simple subjects when mature minds are concentrated upon them. A child of ordinary mind can be taught to read and write in three or four weeks; and the adult can do at least as well. One man, aged 30, after four lessons in the evening school, wrote the county superintendent a legible letter. Another man, aged 50, wrote a legible letter after seven nights' attendance. A woman, aged 70, wrote a legible letter after eight nights of study. These cases are, of course, exceptional; but experience has shown that a few weeks' attendance at the night schools has been sufficient to enable the adult pupils to pass over the dark line of illiteracy and to get into the class of literates. Several succeeded in securing a Bible, which had been offered as a prize by the superintendent to those who would learn to write a letter during the first two weeks of the moonlight school term.

In some of the districts the enrollment of adults exceeded the enrollment of children. One teacher, 18 years old, had only four adult pupils in her class, but one of these was a preacher who learned to read his Bible and a newspaper after a few weeks of earnest study. After four lessons he signed his name to a paper for the first time; and after seven lessons, to quote the words of the county superintendent, "he wrote an enthusiastic letter, with a period at the close of each sentence as large as a bird's eye."

In another night school, of 65 enrolled, 23 were illiterates, and there were 3 preachers in the class. Several octogenarians were enrolled in these schools; one a woman, 85, another a man, 87. Some of the men and women entered the schoolroom for the first time in their lives when they enrolled as night pupils.

One of the significant facts brought out in this experiment is that adults of limited education have taken advantage of the opportunity to return to school and to increase their knowledge. Of the 1,600 adult pupils attending night school during the second term, 300 were unable to read and write at all, 300 were from those who had learned in September, 1911, and 1,000 were men and women of meagre education.

The change in the attitude of the community toward the school, where the night school has been undertaken, is in itself significant. A school trustee thus describes the change in his community:

"I have lived in this district for 55 years and I never saw any such interest as we have

here now. The school used to just drag along, and nobody seemed interested. We never had a gathering at the school, and nobody thought of visiting the school. We had not had night school but three weeks until we got together right. We papered the house, put in new windows, purchased a new stovepipe, made new steps, and bought the winter's fuel.

"Now we have a live Sunday school, a singing school, prayer meeting once each week, and preaching twice a month. People of all denominations in the district meet and worship together in perfect unity and harmony, aged people come regularly, and even people from the adjoining county are beginning to come."

What could be more heartening than this record of unselfish achievement — for the teachers' work is all voluntary and without pay? It is an inspiring evidence of the latent good will and of the powers for betterment that lie hidden in the deep springs of democracy.

THE ART OF BUYING BONDS CHEAPLY

A DOCTOR practising in a relatively small town in Ohio had thrust upon him, a few months ago, a responsibility that for a long time vied with the emergency calls of his patients in causing him sleepless nights. .

It had fallen to his lot, unexpectedly, to take charge of the estate of a deceased friend. Under the terms of the will, the doctor was left practically free to follow his own method in investing funds, amounting to several thousand dollars, the only source of the widow's current income.

He had had some previous experience with stocks and bonds, but it had been experience of a kind that went no farther than to convince him that there was rather more truth than fiction in the cynical old saying about the average member of his profession being one of the most gullible persons in the world when it comes to the buying of investment securities. It was fortunate, however, that he had learned, even at considerable cost and inconvenience, that investing money is, above all, not a thing to be undertaken at haphazard, and with an eye only to large returns. For otherwise the doctor might, with the very best of intentions, have allowed himself so much freedom of judgment in the solution of his new problem as to endanger the welfare of the lady whose interests were at stake.

He had firmly fixed in his mind at the outset one simple rule that applies invariably in cases like this one, namely: that there is nothing which can compensate for safety. But if the interest return, or income yield, in this particular case was a secondary consideration, it was nevertheless a highly important one; and the doctor's appreciation of that phase of the problem restrained him from following the other more or less natural impulse, which would have carried him blindly to the opposite extreme, and resulted in getting the widow's money invested in securities possessing unnecessary virtues and, on that account, of wholly inadequate yield. He realized that to follow the latter course would amount to a shirking of responsibility no less than to risk unnecessarily the loss of part or all of the principal for the sake of inordinate returns. So the question that gave him the most concern at first was one which always has worried prudent investors, large and small, and doubtless always will: How to determine the maximum rate of income consistent with sound security — how to discover just where true investment ends and speculation begins.

In the hope that he might be able to find his own way out of this dilemma, the doctor began a systematic study of investment principles. He became very much absorbed in it, and when the WORLD'S WORK first heard about his case he had got far enough along to have reached the conclusion that no hard and fast rule about the relationship between safety of the principal and income could be laid down.

Mrs. Cora Wilson Stewart

Mrs. Stewart was born in Rowan County in 1875 the daughter of Dr. Jeremiah Wilson. She was first married to Mr. Grant Carey but was divorced in less than two years. She later married Abe Stewart. One child came to this union who died in infancy and is buried in Lee Cemetery.

As Superintendent of Schools in Rowan County she acted as a voluntary secretary to illiterate adults. She read letters to mothers whose children had all grown up unable to read or write except one girl who had moved away and attended night school. One man came into her office saying he could neither read nor write and would give twenty years of his life if he could. She heard a twenty year old boy sing a beautiful ballad and asked for a copy of the song. The boy replied saying he couldn't write and said that he had thought up several songs better than that one but had forgotten them before he could find some one to write them down for him.

These three incidents plus many more led, directly, to the establishment of the Moonlight Schools in Rowan County in 1911. These schools got their name from the fact that they were held on nights when the moon was shining and lighted the peoples' way to the school. Because of the bad roads and the distance the pupils had to travel it was next to impossible to have schools on any other but moonlit nights.

Textbooks were unavailable so "Miss Cora" published a weekly newspaper which not only served as a reading text but also stimulated curiosity through news of their neighbors' activities, and developed the desire to make similar civic improvements in their own districts. Through this newspaper and the ideas it set forth, clubs were formed and people came in closer contact with their neighbors and learned to work in harmony.

In 1914 Kentucky's Governor James B. McCreary appointed the Kentucky Illiteracy Commission, with Mrs. Stewart as chairman. This spurred the movement to appoint attendance commissioners to make sure illiteracy did not occur in the oncoming generations.

World War I broke out and it was found in the first army draft in the U. S. nearly 25% could neither read ordinary English nor write a letter home. Again "Miss Cora" and the Illiteracy Commission came to the rescue. Teachers volunteered their services to try to teach the men to read and write before they went to camp because it would be essential that the men were able to read instructions posted on bulletin boards and to be able to take tests. "Miss Cora" again prepared a book for the illiterate soldiers. She had previously produced Country Life Readers, and a reader for men in prison. Now she produced the Soldier's First Book and Soldier's Tablet. The following is a sample lesson:

"Why are we at war?
To keep our country free.
To keep other people free.
To make the world safe to live in.
To stop the rule of kings.
To put an end to war."

Also, the men would need an introduction to camp life. Many would not even know what a bulletin board was nor be able to use it unless he learned something like this:

"Let us read this.
What is it?
It is a bulletin board.
What is it about?
It tells when one is on detail.
What is that?
It is one's duty for the day.
Am I on duty for today?
Yes, you are on guard duty.
Are you on?
Yes, I am on kitchen police."

In 1919 Mrs. Stewart was appointed chairman of the Illiteracy Commission of the National Education Association, and she held regional conferences throughout the country. In 1923 she became chairman of the World Illiteracy Commission

and

and presided over conferences in Edinburgh, Geneva, Toronto, San Francisco and Denver. In 1926 she was made Director of the National Illiteracy Crusade with headquarters in Washington, D.C. In 1929 President Hoover delegated the Secretary of the Interior to appoint a National Illiteracy Commission with Mrs. Stewart as executive head.

For her great work in education, Mrs. Stewart was awarded several national and international prizes. In 1925 she received the Pictorial Review award for the greatest humanitarian service rendered by an American woman. She received the Zella Flagg Young medal for distinguished service to education, and the Clara Barton medal for humanitarian service. In 1941 she was given an award by the the General Federation of Women's Clubs, at their Golden Jubilee Convention, for pioneer work in combating illiteracy in the nation.

Mrs. Stewart came to make her home in Pine Bluff, Arkansas, to be near her sisters but after their death she moved, growing blind, to South Carolina where she died and was buried there in 1958.

One of her last trips to Morehead was in 1935 to attend the funeral of a nephew, Madison Wilson, a son of her brother, the late Dr. Homer Wilson. Her half-brother, Mr. Marvin Wilson and step-mother, Mrs. Burns Johnson recently died in Morehead. Mr. Paul and Don Blair are great-nephews and Mrs. Becky Hogge Brand is a great niece who, while a student of Kentucky History in University Breckinridge School, wrote this brief life.

LITTLE BRUSHY SCHOOL

Rowan County, Kentucky

The Cora Wilson Stewart Moonlight School, formerly known as the Little Brushy School, was originally located on Kentucky Highway 32 eight miles north of Morehead in Rowan County. This building replaced two earlier school buildings on the site, both of which had been destroyed by fire. The original building dated back to the turn of the century.

This building was constructed in 1910 by William Jasper Johnson and Henry Perry. One point of interest is that Mr. Johnson's son was one of the first students to attend school in the new building. The building was erected during the administration of Superintendent Cora Wilson Stewart and used as one of the moonlight schools in Rowan County. Mr. Ferris Cooke, who had served as the teacher in the previous building which had burned in 1909, was the first teacher.

Under the administration of Superintendent Roy Cornett, an additional room was erected in 1936 and the school's first lunch program was introduced in 1941.

During the period of the late 1920's through the early 1940's the enrollment ranged from 40 to 60 students per year. One highlight during each school year was the annual pie supper. The students took great pride in clearing the grounds for the event because the money collected was used to hire a truck to transport them to the Morehead Fair. An annual occurrence was Doctor Evans' visit to the school to immunize the students. When the students would see Dr. Evans' car they would run through the door or jump out the window to "escape." The teacher would then have to go through the community to "collect" the students for their shots.

Because of the consolidation of the schools in that area of the county and construction of the Tildon Hogge School, the school was closed in 1963.

The "Little Brushy School" building was donated to Morehead State University by Mr. William Dailey, Morehead, Kentucky.

Moonlight School In Spotlight This Week

Wilma Howard, library technician at MSU's Camden-Carroll Library, displays a baseball bat and slingshot, once enjoyed by students in the Cora Wilson Moonlight School. Mrs. Howard conducts scheduled tours through the one-room school.

This week is National Women's History Week and local emphasis is being placed on "Women's Accomplishments" by the American Association of University Women at Morehead State University.

Cora Wilson Stewart, a former resident of Rowan County, is one woman whose work in combating illiteracy will be recognized by the AAUW through exhibits on campus and in the community.

Although Cora Wilson Stewart died in 1958 at the age of 83, her early work as an educator lives on and the Cora Wilson Stewart Moonlight Schoolhouse, located behind Breckinridge Hall on the MSU campus, is a familiar sight.

Mrs. Stewart was born Jan. 17, 1875, in Powell County. Her parents, Dr. Jeremiah and Annie Eliza Holley Wilson, ran a general store in Cross Roads, now Farmers, in Rowan County. Dr. Wilson also had an active medical practice.

In 1890, the family moved to Morehead so the seven Wilson children could attend the Morehead public schools and Mrs. Stewart could begin her career in education.

She had announced at the age of four that she intended to be a teacher, and at the age of 15, she began her first job as a teacher in the Morehead public schools, while attending Morehead Normal School, the forerunner to MSU.

By age 17, Mrs. Stewart had received her teaching certificate from the National Normal School in Lebanon, Ohio, while teaching at Morehead Normal.

She joined the Rowan County school system in 1895, and attended the Commercial College of Kentucky University in Lexington in 1899. Mrs. Stewart became the first woman instructor at CCKU in 1900.

That first was just a series of firsts for Mrs. Stewart and for women in general.

Although she took a break from her teaching career to return to Morehead and care for her mother and then work as a secretary in a local law office so her brothers and sisters could complete their education following their mother's death, Mrs. Stewart returned to the field of education in 1901, and was selected the first woman superintendent of Rowan County Schools in 1904.

She served in that position until 1912. During that time she married Alexander T. Stewart, a teacher in the county schools, but six years later she sued for and was granted a divorce.

While serving as superintendent, Mrs. Wilson found she was often serving as a secretary to illiterate adults in Rowan County, reading and writing letters for them.

Through this connection with the adults of Rowan County, Mrs. Stewart became alarmed to find out that approximately 25 percent of the county's population (1,152 people according to the 1910 census) was illiterate.

She asked teachers in the rural schools to help her establish night schools for these adults, and in September 1911 the Cora Wilson Stewart Moonlight Schools were organized.

The name of Moonlight School originated when rural school teachers expressed concern over adults not being able to travel the rural

(Continued on page A-4)

Born Jan 17, 1875

Supt 1902 - 1906 - 1910 - 1914

Move in 1894 TO ELLIOTTVILLE

Cora Wilson Stewart and the Moonlight School

Cora Wilson, later Cora Wilson Stewart, was born in 1875 and reared near Morehead in Rowan County, Kentucky. She trained for a career in education at Morehead Normal School and, later, at the National Normal University in Lebanon, Ohio, and began a teaching career at the age of 20 in a one-room school in Rowan County.

Her great abilities and tremendous dedication brought rapid professional advancement. In 1901 she was elected county school superintendent. She was re-elected in 1909, and two years later became the first woman president of the Kentucky Educational Association.

That same year she launched an experimental adult education program to combat illiteracy in her home county. The "Moonlight School" was a night school program because the majority of illiterates were employed during the day. Armed with both the unanimous support of faculty who performed this great community service without pay and with special reading books that Mrs. Stewart developed for adult learners, the program enjoyed spectacular success. The first year, with the teachers expecting 150 students, 1,200 arrived. The second year 1,600 enrolled. At the end of the third year, by Mrs. Stewart's count, illiteracy in Rowan County had dwindled from 1,152 to 23.

The "Moonlight School" became a model for adult education throughout the world, and Cora Wilson Stewart achieved national and international prominence. In 1923, she was elected to the executive committee of the National Education Association, and six years later President Herbert Hoover chose her to chair the Executive Committee of the National Advisory Committee on Illiteracy. She also presided over the illiteracy section of the World Conference on Education.

Success and recognition brought prizes and honors. In 1924, for example, she received Pictorial Review's $5,000 achievement prize for her "contribution...to advance human welfare," and in 1930 she accepted the Ella Flagg Young medal for distinguished service in the field of education.

Cora Stewart retired from public life in 1936—justifiably proud of the contributions that she made to her Appalachian homeland and her nation as a result of her crusade against illiteracy. She died in relative obscurity in 1958. Her accomplishments, like those of many Appalachian people, deserve greater scholarly attention and public recognition.

To commemorate her efforts in the state, national, and international crusade against illiteracy, in 1973 Morehead State University acquired and restored the "Little Brushy School" where Cora Wilson Stewart began her teaching career. Renamed the Cora Wilson Stewart Moonlight School, it 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 service in the mountain regions of Kentucky.

For more information on Cora Wilson Stewart and the Moonlight School Movement write

Dr. James M. Gifford
Assistant Director for Appalachian Studies
Appalachian Development Center
Morehead State University
Morehead, KY 40351
or call 606-783-2077

For a tour of the Cora Wilson Stewart Moonlight School write:

Dr. Jack D. Ellis
Director of Libraries
Morehead State University
Morehead, KY 40351
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Cora Wilson Stewart

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Ky.
920.7
D366W

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