

MOONLIGHT CLASS

Rowan Countians Thank Cora Stewart For Ingenious Method Of Education

By HELEN PRICE STACY
FRANKFORT, Ky. —In talking with some of the older generation the thing they seem to regret most is a lack of formal education. Not every one who wished to attend school could do so, and allowed this lack of schooling to color the remaining years. Some became self-educated; some remained illiterate . . . some, however, determined

to attend grade school, high school and college. Morehead, county seat of Rowan, is the home of Morehead State University, an institution that serves as a guiding light in Eastern Kentucky. But back in 1911, it was the far-sighted eyes of Mrs. Cora Wilson Stewart, then superintendent of Rowan County schools, that looked at the people there and saw the

lack of confidence caused by illiteracy. Mrs. Stewart suspected that 25 per cent of the people in Rowan County could not read and write. She called together a group of interested persons and together planned what would become known as "moonlight schools." The task was too great for one

woman, so Mrs. Stewart asked for volunteers to teach reading and writing to adults on those evenings when there was moonlight. Every teacher in the county responded, and soon teachers and volunteers from nearby counties approached the superintendent with offers to help. In Lewis County where Lena Wells Lykins had volunteered

to help, she was never afraid to go to her door to answer a knock at midnight or even later. She said invariably it would be an adult with "I want to learn how to read and write. Will you teach me?" She later rode horseback with Mrs. Stewart into the mountains near Hyden, to instruct other volunteers in starting "moonlight schools." One woman, nearing 70, asked to attend classes. "Back when I was a youngin' Ma had her babies close together and I allus stayed to help take care of the little ones," she drawled. Another said the only thing that kept her from going to school was Licking River and no bridge across the stream. A man, past 80, explained that he had helped in the coal mines from the time he was eight and there was never time to attend school. Some of the excuses were valid — hardship on the farm, large families and no money for shoes and clothes. Some excuses were false — the person too ashamed to say that he could have gone to school but preferred to stay home.

The reasons for not having learned the simple tasks of writing and reading were not important to Mrs. Stewart. The important thing was that 1,200 persons from age 18 to 86 enrolled the first moonlight night. "They were earnestly and sincerely seeking knowledge," said Mrs. Stewart. "Their interest, zeal and enthusiasm were wonderful to witness." A great many of the pupils were grandparents and toiled over lessons at the same desk in a country school that their grandchildren had occupied during the day. Some of those who wanted to enroll were shy about it, and many pupils had their first lessons in their own home. Beginning in Rowan County in September 1911, the idea spread and Mrs. Stewart found herself and her teachers traveling to 10 Eastern Kentucky counties to set up the schools. Today, on Morehead's Main Street, a plaque placed by the Kentucky Historical Society and the Kentucky Department of Highways honors Cora Wilson Stewart and her "Moonlight Schools."

Sanders Is Namesake Of Aging Foundation

LOUISVILLE, Ky. (AP) — The Harland Sanders Foundation will be established formally next Wednesday in Louisville for a research project on aging. The occasion will be the 80th birthday of the colonel, who founded the Kentucky Fried Chicken Corporation at age 65. The firm will give \$1,000 for each year of his life, a total of \$80,000 to start the non-profit foundation.

the money now spent by the federal government to cure ailments had been devoted to a study of the process of aging, we might already have discovered a way to halt, or at least slow down, the process," he said. The foundation is believed to be one of the first concerned primarily with aging.

Church Takes

