The Mount Joy Soldier's Orphan School

By George L. Heiges

The story of the Mount Joy Soldier's Orphan School cannot be told without including a good bit of history which goes beyond the confines of Lancaster County. All of it is Pennsylvania history, but includes great names of our own county, and because of this, we have here Pennsylvania history with a decided Lancaster County flavor.

This sketch is concerned with the children of those gallant Pennsylvania men who defended the Union in the years of our Civil War; and can therefore properly be considered as Civil War history. Also, as it is the account of the first efforts of the Commonwealth to educate the children of men killed in battle, it fits into the history of education in our state. Moreover, as the Commonwealth provided food, raiment and homes as well as education for these children, this is also part of the history of public beneficence in Pennsylvania.

My narrative has its beginning on the Thanksgiving Day of 1863 which was made a day of national observance by reason of the proclamation of President Abraham Lincoln. Since 1815, when President Madison had set aside by decree a day for national thanksgiving, no succeeding president had issued a similar proclamation. Thus, for nearly half a century, there were no national thanksgiving days, although governors of various states issued Thanksgiving Day Proclamations from time to time. It remained therefore for President Lincoln in 1863 to re-establish by presidential decree, the last Thursday in November as a day of national thanksgiving. Since that year, no President has failed to issue an annual Thanksgiving Proclamation.

The autumn of 1863 was memorable for two classics which came from the mind of Abraham Lincoln. One is the immortal Gettysburg Address, which was delivered at the dedication of the National Cemetery on November 19. The other, written five weeks before the Gettysburg Speech was given to the world is the Thanksgiving Proclamation. When Lincoln spoke at Gettysburg, the Thanksgiving Proclamation had already been published and it was but one week after Lincoln's appearance at Gettysburg that Thanksgiving Day was celebrated; so that we may say that the Gettysburg Address was written and delivered in the atmosphere of the thanksgiving season.

gave their lives that this country might live," Lincoln was constrained to let the text of his remarks reflect his hopes "that these dead shall not have died in vain." However, in his Thanksgiving Proclamation, he directed his thoughts to the widows and orphans of those who gave the last full measure of devotion to the cause of freedom. He recommended to the people of these United States "that while offering up the ascriptions justly due to God for singular deliverance and blessings, they do also, with humble penitence for our national perverseness and disobedience, commend to His tender care all those who have become widows, orphans, mourners or sufferers in the lamentable civil strife in which we are unavoidably engaged, and fervently implore the interposition of the Almighty hand to heal the wounds of the nation."

At Gettysburg, surrounded by the mounded graves "of those who here

Following President Lincoln's proclamation, Governor Andrew Curtin issued a state decree which duly set aside Thursday, November 28, as a day of thanksgiving in Pennsylvania. On the day of observance, Governor Curtin went to Market Square Presbyterian Church in Harrisburg and listened to the eloquent Doctor Robinson¹ deliver a sermon appropriate to the day. But, Governor Curtin heard little of the eloquence of the preacher, for he was burdened in heart and mind. Before going to church on that morning an incident had occurred which was causing him much thought and which would haunt him for many a day. Two children had called at the Executive Mansion on Front Street, where they were greeted by the Governor in person. They were begging for bread and in answer to questions from Governor Curtin, they told him that their father had been killed in battle, their mother had since died and they were now utterly friendless and alone in the world. Small wonder therefore that Governor Curtin was uneasy in church. In his Front Street home after the service, he could no longer contain himself and cried, "Great God! Is it possible that the people of Pennsylvania can feast this day while the children of her soldiers who have fallen in the war beg bread from door to door."

From Governor Curtin's encounter with those begging children on the morning of Thanksgiving Day, 1863, sprang a resolve in his mind to do something about the problem thus presented. The first opening for him to speak his mind on the subject came shortly thereafter at a meeting in the Academy of Music in Philadelphia. He presided at the meeting, and Henry Ward Beecher, lately returned from England where he had been eloquent in the cause of the Union, delivered the principal address. In his introductory remarks, Curtin had his opportunity. He referred to "the uncared for who were left at home by the gallant fellows who have gone forward," and followed with this suggestion, "Let the widow and her dependent off-spring become in fact and in truth the children of the state and let the mighty people of this great commonwealth nurture and maintain them."

Officially, Governor Curtin's ideas were first broached when he included

¹Rev. Thomas H. Robinson, D.D., Pastor of Market Square Presbyterian Church 1854-1884

in his annual message to the Legislature of 1864, a recommendation "that the maintenance and education of soldier's orphans should be provided for by the Commonwealth." Because of the lack of a more appropriate committee, the recommendation was referred to the Committee on Military Affairs: and Governor Curtin's suggestion died right there. This was no surprise to the governor, for the ways of legislative committees were known to him. Therefore, not discouraged in this initial opposition to his ideas for orphan's welfare, his next move was to call to his side for counsel, Lancaster County's eminent educator, James Pyle Wickersham,2 who was then Principal of Millersville Normal School. Curtin most have felt rather definitely that Prof. Wickersham with his broad educational background was the man he needed, for to him he unfolded his vision of a system of schools for the children of deceased soldiers. Further, the governor asked Prof. Wickersham to prepare a bill which would then be presented to the forthcoming session of the legislature. Prof. Wickersham went to work on his assignment and produced a bill which in the judgment of Governor Curtin "did great justice to the head and heart" of the schoolman from Lancaster County.

As submitted to the legislators, the Wickersham plan provided for the appointment of a Superintendent of Schools for Orphans in whom would be vested full power to organize a system of schools. Following presentation to the legislature. Governor Curtin appeared before the assembly and gave to the members of that body, some of his own thoughts on the subject. due course the bill came up for consideration, and great and violent was the ensuing debate. The majority of the legislators were at once opposed to the measure. The ideas embodied in the bill were, it is true, revolutionary: for when before did a people shelter, feed, clothe and educate the children of men who perished in war. It appeared that, for the second time, the orphans were to get no consideration from the Legislature, and yet before adjournment, a bill was passed which demanded no money from the State Treasury, but which nevertheless created a nucleus for the realization of Governor Curtin's vision. In 1862, the Pennsylvania Railroad had offered \$50,000 to Curtin for the purpose of equipping troops. Governor Curtin had no need to use the money for such a purpose, and in 1863 he suggested to President Thomson of the Pennsylvania Railroad that this money might well be used instead for soldier's orphans. President Thomson assented, and it was this sum of money which the Legislature of 1864 authorized Governor Curtin to accept, the money to be used for soldier's orphans in such ways as he would deem best.

Fifty thousand dollars was not very much money for an undertaking which was bound to be stupendous, but Curtin was ready to begin. His first step was to establish a Superintendency of Soldier's Orphan Schools, and for this responsible position, he commissioned Hon. Thomas H. Burrowes of Lan-

² Dr. Wickersham was appointed Colonel of the 47th Regiment, by reason of having organized a company composed of Millersville students during the war.

intimately associated with the common school system of Pennsylvania that he had gained the title "Father of the Pennsylvania Common Schools." It was in 1835, while he was Secretary of the Commonwealth, that he had been called upon to serve concurrently as the first State Superintendent of Schools. Returning to Lancaster after his incumbency as superintendent, he served as President of the City School Board, then as Mayor of Lancaster, became the first editor of the Pennsylvania School Journal, and again in 1864 was appointed by Governor Curtin to serve as State Superintendent of Schools for a second time. It was just after his retirement from the office of State Superintendent that the Governor called on him to take over the education of soldier's orphans. Dr. Burrowes was requested by the Governor to prepare a plan "for carrying into effect the intentions of the Legislature." The plan which Dr. Burrowes soon had ready included several features of Principal Wickersham's rejected bill, and besides details relating to curricula and management, provided that "for orphans under six years of age suitable institutions in any part of the State will be employed and they will be placed there till arrival at the age of six years and for orphans over six years of age. one school will be selected when practicable in each of the twelve normal school districts." Dr. Burrowes felt that, for the time being, the business of his office could be transacted by mail, so he set up in Lancaster the office of

caster. Mr. Burrowes, a native of the town of Strasburg, had been in public life since he had been elected to the State Assembly in 1831 and had been so

Little difficulty was encountered in securing homes for the younger children, and among the institutions to immediately offer their facilities was the Children's Home of Lancaster. The age limit in the institutions to take care of such children was soon raised to ten, and then to find institutions which would take care of the children from ten to fifteen years of age proved to be a more difficult task. With the small sum of money available for the project, a man with less hope and faith than Dr. Burrowes possessed would have said that it couldn't be done. However, Dr. Burrowes was the man who did it. Remember, that he had at his disposal only \$50,000 for the task, which necessarily forced him to rely on existing schools. Institutions which appeared to him to have proper facilities were offered a proposition that they would receive the orphans at one hundred and fifty dollars a year per pupil for instruction, boarding and all necessities except clothing. The schools which accepted the proposition of Dr. Burrowes are here named in the order in

State Superintendent of Soldier's Orphan Schools.

with these schools in readiness to receive the children of fallen soldiers, invitations went out to the hundreds of veteran's widows with eligible children. However, instead of hundreds reacting favorably, comparatively few responded, whereupon an unexpected situation arose. Enemies of the entire orphan school system had circulated false reports in an attempt to scuttle

which arrangements were completed: the Paradise Academy in Lancaster County, the McAlisterville School in Juniata County, the Strasburg Academy in Lancaster County, the Quakertown School in Bucks County, the Orange-

Curtin his first report on Soldier's Orphan Schools, there were still less than one hundred children in the selected schools. The Home for Friendless Children in Lancaster, then located at 47 South Queen Street, which was one of the first institutions to open its doors to soldier's children, received its first assignment of orphans on December 5,

1864. The number was small, but by the close of the following year, forty children were enrolled. One year later, one hundred and fourteen soldier's orphans were being cared for, and by January, 1867, the number had increased to one hundred and thirty. From this time, the number decreased, although the Home for Friendless Children continued to house and educate soldier's orphans until 1878. In 1867 the Home for Friendless Children moved to a

the system before it went any further. Dr. Burrowes was compelled to travel over the state and explain personally to the widowed mothers his plans for the education of their sons and daughters. This personal work helped, of course, but by the close of 1864 when Dr. Burrowes handed to Governor

new building on South Ann Street, where the last public examination of soldier's children in this institution was conducted on June 14, 1877. The annual public examinations which were held at all institutions educating soldier's orphans very early after the establishment of the system became the outstanding day of the year for the children of the schools as well as for their relatives and friends. It was at once, graduation day as well as examination day. Examinations were oral, always conducted by state

and county school officials, and afforded much entertainment and delight to the numerous visitors. The Lancaster Intelligencer of July 18, 1871, tells of one examination day in Lancaster, "Yesterday the examination of the Soldier's Orphans in the Children's Home of this city took place at the home building in Ann Street under the direction of Prof. J. P. Wickersham, assisted

by County Superintendent Evans, Rev. B. C. Suesserolt, Senator Warfel and others. The children were examined in spelling, reading, practical and mental arithmetic, geography, and other branches. The attendance was large." The matron of the home at this time was Mrs. Eleanor Spence, There was another institution in Lancaster City which also housed and

educated soldier's orphans. St. James' Orphan Asylum, established by a legacy from Hon. Charles Smith, was located at 119 North Duke Street and took care of sixteen daughters of soldiers until 1872, when they were placed

in the Episcopal Church Home in Philadelphia. Mrs. H. K. Benjamin was matron of St. James' Asylum.

The school for soldier's children at Paradise in Lancaster County was located in the building which had been the Paradise Academy. In September of 1864. Dr. Burrowes arranged with Seymour Preston, who was then principal of the Academy to convert his institution into a school for soldier's

The school opened in December, 1864, with less than one dozen pupils, but by the following May, the full complement of thirty children had At first, the school was planned for boys only, but the following

year, girls who had brothers in the school were also admitted. Originally,

the institution consisted of two buildings, a boarding house and a school room, and these two buildings half a mile apart. By adding a private home to the group, it was possible to accommodate 160 children, although at one time the accommodations were stretched, and 161 children were in the home—101 boys and 60 girls. The Paradise School continued to function until January, 1868, when 22 of the orphans were transferred to Mount Joy, while the remainder were sent to a similar school at Chester Springs in Chester County. Principal Seymour Preston of the Paradise School was assisted by these teachers: Elias Hollinger, Joseph N. Beistle, Lewis M. Haines, A. D. Eisenhower, Silas A. Will, Rebecca Preston, Mary K. Schreiner, Mary Gorman, Mary S. David.

Dr. George J. Hoover was the attending physician.

One other soldier's orphan school in Lancaster County had a short life. This was the Strasburg School, opened on December 20, 1864, under the principalship of J. R. Carothers, in the building of the old Strasburg Academy. The school was closed in the summer of 1865 because of inadequate accommodations, and the children were transferred to Mount Joy.

The building in Mount Joy to which the orphan children were taken was the building of the Mount Joy Academy, begun in 1850 through the interest of Scotch-Irish Presbyterians and under the principalship of Prof. E. L. Moore and Prof. Simonington. The latter withdrew after several years, which left the school in the hands of Prof. Moore, who conducted the Academy until 1862 or 1863—the first years of the Civil War, which were not auspicious years for a private school catering to boys from the South and the North, as Mount Joy Academy did.

In 1865, the building of the Mount Joy Academy, together with the grounds consisting of ten acres, was purchased from Prof. Moore by Prof. Carothers who was principal of the Strasburg Soldier's Orphan School. The transfer of sixty-four children from Strasburg to Mount Joy took place during the summer of 1865; and the Mount Joy Soldier's Orphan School began its eventful existence of twenty-five years.

Perhaps it should be understood at this point that the Commonwealth did not own any of the orphan school buildings at this time. Except where existing church and private charitable institutions were used, the practice was for the principal or an interested individual to purchase a building and then conduct a school on a contract basis. This accepted practice opened up the way for a small group of men, who became known as "The Syndicate," to operate orphan schools with profit to themselves. However, that will come later in the story.

The system of schools for soldier's orphans was now over its period of beginning, and was generally accepted as an institution that had a function to perform. Governor Curtin in his annual message, dated January 4, 1865, in reference to the school, wrote, "Under the Act of May, 1864, I appointed Honorable Thomas Burrowes to take charge of the arrangements for the

education of the orphans of soldiers. He has discharged his duties with commendable zeal, fidelity and efficiency. I earnestly recommend that a permanent and liberal appropriation be made to support this just and worthy scheme of beneficence."

The Legislature of 1865, to which body this message was addressed, showed some signs of softening toward the system of State Schools as was evidenced by their appropriation of \$75,000 to the cause. Also, by action of the same Legislature, one year was added to the term of the child's schooling, which brought it to the age of sixteen years. From that time, graduates of soldier's orphan schools have been known as "Sixteeners."

It now became evident to Superintendent Burrowes that he needed addi-

tional help in administering the orphan schools. In April, 1866, he appointed as the first inspectors and examiners of the schools, Amos Row and Col. Wm. L. Bear, both of them Lancaster County teachers of wide experience. Colonel Bear was especially well fitted for the work. He was himself a veteran of the late war and had been cited for gallant service in the Battle of the Wilderness. He would, therefore, have the veteran's viewpoint toward his new assignment. Also, for ten years before the war, he had been a teacher in John Beck's Academy for boys at Lititz. He, therefore, had the necessary educational background. Colonel Bear gave promise of being the right man for the position, but after only nine months of service resigned to accept the office of prothonotary of Lancaster County.

At this time there were thirty-five institutions in Pennsylvania, which in part or in whole were taking care of soldier's orphans. To get the viewpoints of the principals of these thirty-five schools respecting their work, Dr. Burrowes held the first council of principals of Orphan Schools at Lancaster on April 27, 1866. Shortly thereafter, profiting by suggestions voiced by the principals, Superintendent Burrowes issued a detailed set of rules for the management of the schools, and then sent one of the inspectors to each school for one week with power to make the rules effective.

In December, 1886, Dr. Burrowes addressed the principals with the information that by January 1, all funds appropriated for the use of the schools would be expended. Legislature met on January 2, 1887, and among the items on the agenda was a request from Dr. Burrowes for an appropriation of \$300,000 for soldier's orphans. Also, from the Superintendent to the legislators went an invitation to visit any of the schools so that they might be enlightened as to what was being done for the children of soldiers of the late war. The invitation was not accepted very generally, which left Dr. Bur-

This is how it was done. On the 16th of March, the Pennsylvania Rail-road gave free transportation to 345 orphans from the schools at McAlister-ville, Mount Joy and Paradise to Harrisburg. With the delegation from each school accompanied by its own fife and drum corps, fifty-three girls and thirty-five boys from Mount Joy and fifty-four girls and fifty-five boys from Paradise made the trip to the capital city. At Harrisburg, the entire group

rowes the alternative of bringing the schools to the legislators.

carefully every phase of his work of directing the education and the physical welfare of the wards of the state. A program of musical and elocutionary numbers by the children themselves followed, after which Governor Curtin addressed the assemblage. He closed with these words, "Before I leave, I pray God that the electric spark may fall upon all; that we may all determine to do justice to the poor orphan children; and that we may thus do ourselves

appeared before a joint assemblage of both houses of the state legislature. Superintendent Burrowes was introduced and gave a lengthy address, detailing

and our great Commonwealth an honor." The simple exhibition of the children together with the eloquent and informative addresses of the Superintendent and the Governor had the desired effect, and the Legislature at last was thoroughly sold on the project of Soldier's Orphan Schools. Never after, was it necessary to use pressure measures to get appropriations for the purpose.

In 1867, Governor Curtin's term as Governor ended, and his successor

was General John W. Geary, first of a line of governors who were veterans of the Civil War³ and who, remembering their fallen comrades of the fields of the war, were to be faithful friends and defenders of the Soldier's Orphan Schools.

With the end of Andrew Curtin's seven years in the gubernatorial office came also the end of Dr. Burrowes' tenure of office as Superintendent of Soldier's Orphan Schools. The Doctor had put more than heart and mind into the work of organizing the orphan schools. His own finances had also helped to keep the system going. John W. Jackson, a friend of Dr. Burrowes, made a statement some years ago that he knew that the doctor was worth \$16,000 when he went into the work of organizing the orphan schools. So interested was he in the success of these institutions that when appropriations were exhausted, or when they were not immediately available, he was in the habit of making himself personally responsible for supplies and of drawing largely upon his private funds. The result was financial distress and disaster from which in his later years, he never recovered.

In substantiation of this, Dr. J. P. McCaskey, who was closely associated with Dr. Burrowes in the work of editing and publishing the *Pennsylvania School Journal*, wrote: "He organized the Soldier's Orphan Schools which would never have been organized but for him. He risked and lost all he had in this work, for which loss he was never reimbursed by the State." We have the words of one other educator on this subject. Henry Hickok, who was the first Superintendent of Common Schools after its establishment as a separate department in 1857, said that "Dr. Burrowes' connection with the Soldier's Orphan Schools which he organized was financially a calamitous failure for himself."

³ Every governor of Pennsylvania, with the exception of Hastings and Pattison, from this year until 1907, were veterans of the Civil War. The soldier governors were Geary, Hartranft, Hoyt, Beaver, Stone and Pennypacker.

As successor to Dr. Burrowes, Governor Geary appointed to be Superintendent of Orphan Schools, Colonel George W. McFarland, who had been a successful educator before the war, and as a soldier received wounds at Gettysburg. He served in the office for four years.

Again in 1871, the work of administering the schools fell on the shoulders of the Lancaster County educator who had been called upon by Curtin seven years before to draft a bill to provide schools for soldier's children. He was James Pyle Wickersham, now State Superintendent of Common Schools and charged with the additional job of managing the orphan schools because the Legislature of 1871 had placed the trust of these schools in the hands of the State Department of Education. Dr. Wickersham continued in charge of the orphan schools until 1881 at which time he retired from the office of State Superintendent. During the ten years that Dr. Wickersham managed the system, he had under his care ten thousand orphans and expended almost

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Let us now turn our attention to the Mount Joy School. Prof. Carothers, the first principal, was much criticized for his management of the institution, and Prof. Jesse Kennedy was prevailed upon to purchase the Mount Joy property and assume the principalship. As head of the McAlisterville Orphan School, Prof. Kennedy had made a record which inspired confidence. He took possession of the Mount Joy School on December 1, 1867, at which

time the school consisted of 129 pupils. For ten years he successfully conducted the school with a continuous annual increase of pupils. Evidence that the school during this period had gained the approbation of the public is seen in a letter from a correspondent in *The Marietta Register*, March, 1872. Wrote the correspondent: "The school is in a more prosperous condition now than it has ever been before. Principal Kennedy, the teachers and all connected with the institution, work harmoniously and have the welfare of the students at heart. The pupils are contented and cheerful and in attainment second to no other class of pupils under the age of sixteen in the state. Some have questioned whether these orphans do not receive more from the state than they can justly claim. I answer negatively. The fathers of these chil-

dren have given their lives for the life of the nation. These orphans have paid for their education with the blood of their sires. Does the Commonwealth remunerate them sufficiently?"

In 1877, Prof. Kennedy entered political life and sold the Mount Joy School to Senator George Wright, of Mercer, and John I. Gordon. Wright was already owner of several State Orphan Schools, and during the remainder of the life of the Mount Joy School, Wright and his associates, who formed the group which became known as "The Syndicate," were the owners of the

institution at Mount Joy. The principalship, however, was in other hands.

The first principal after Prof. Kennedy's ten-year ownership was Joseph M. Martin, who presided over the school from 1877 to 1880, then retired from teaching to enter the employ of the Lancaster mercantile firm of Williamson and Foster. Under his direction, the school continued to function fairly

efficiently. In 1879, he reported: "The school has continued in the front rank, and maintained an enviable reputation. . . . The discipline has been lenient. A home-like feeling had prevailed among the children. . . . large number of members of the Grand Army of the Republic have visited They expressed surprise and delight that the children were allowed so many liberties. . . . withal good order prevailing. . . . Educationally, we have been successful. Thoroughness of instruction has been our aim."

The man who succeeded Mr. Martin as Principal was one who had already gained some repute as an educator. Prof. Milton J. Brecht. son of a country doctor, born and bred near Old Line in Rapho Township, Lancaster County, had taught a graded school in Marietta and was now finishing his third year as principal of the Manheim Schools. It was he who was invited to be principal of the Mount Joy Orphan School, and the reason for his selection has been succinctly told in this paragraph by Hon. A. G. Seyfert: "Mr. Brecht's great success as a teacher was largely due to his tact as a disciplinarian. He went under the assumption that an education without a disciplined mind to control the body was a failure and a farce. This he enforced in the school room at Manheim, and when a man was needed for the Mount Joy School, to create order out of chaos, he was the man of the hour."

The annual official reports of Prof. Brecht during his years as principal at Mount Joy reveal the high character of his aims as an educator. Prof. Brecht's report for 1880 said: "The moral, esthetic, and religious training of the children receives special attention. Familiar talks are given and opportunities embraced to impress the child with the importance and beauty of a good moral character. The attendance of church and Sabbath School was enjoined upon the pupil as a regular Sabbath duty. Quite a number of citizens from the borough assisted as teachers in the Sabbath School work."

outgrowth of the excellent discipline was a strong and well-designed moral feeling. Good example, noble incentive, worthy emulation persuaded even the most obtuse nature to build each minute part of its being with greatest care and to come each day in grateful praise to the throne of its Creator." During the winter of 1882, Prof. Brecht kept a diary and because it

At the close of the term of 1881, we read in Prof. Brecht's report: "An

sheds light upon the work of the orphan school under him, some entries are included here. Mon. Jan 2, 1882 Taught Soldier's Orphan School. Spoke to children twice

upon importance of studying. Literary [Society] in evening-Boys and girls. Thurs. Jan 5 Revs. Rigor and Roads, Methodists, delivered their illustrated

sermon to school. Over 170 professed Christ. Ministers took names of boys and girls. Proposed organizing children's prayer-meeting.

Tues. Jan 10 Teacher's meeting. Children's prayer meeting.

Miss Buohl commenced teaching. Had no school-too cold-Mon. Jan 23 three classes in Third—Children's prayer meeting.

Thurs. Jan 26 Glee Club practice in evening. Sat. Jan 28 Practiced singing in afternoon for Literary which was held

this evening. Wealth of America against England for discussion.

Wed. Jan 25 School-Children's prayer meeting, Clyde Brown in charge-Mrs. Hutter [Inspector] visited school—Received No. 1 in every particular.

Tues. Jan 31 Singing in evening by Glee Club. Wed. Feb 1 Children's prayer meeting.

Sat. Feb 18 Literary [Society] in evening.

Sun, Feb 19 Frank Murphy spoke in Sunday School-[I] spoke to pupils. Teacher's meeting. Tues. March 21

Wed. March 22 Gave each girl in morning class a pen. Pupils noisy-Heat

coming out occasionally-Stormy and cold-Eggs only 16c. a dozen.

Tues. March 28 School-Special meeting of Literary Society.

School-Prayer meeting in evening. Both in Chapel and Wed. March 29 class rooms.

Fri. March 31 Composition and drawing. Drawing excellent. Tues. May 23 Annual examination conducted by Dr. Higbee a success, espe-

cially was the Eighth Grade spoken highly of. Several hundred persons present.

Wed. May 24 Practicing for Danville.

Thurs. May 25 Rehearsal in evening.

Mon. May 29 Started for Danville with School-133 of us. Reached place in afternoon at half past two. Rehearsed in opera house in evening.

Tues. May 30 Went to Catawissa in morning-Paraded-Took dinner with pupils at C. Returned to Danville at 1 P. M. Entered procession with speaker and clergy. Gave entertainment in evening in "Opera House."

Wed. May 31 Com. Foster took me out to Asylum in morning. We started for home at 12:30 P. M. Got home at 5:40 P. M. Had three special

cars going and returning. Grand success.

Sun. June 11 Mr. Raber at school. Lectured at school on temperance.

At the close of the 1883 term which also marked the end of Prof. Brecht's administration of the Mount Joy School, he submitted a full and excellent

official report, detailing the physical condition and welfare of the pupils, the clothing worn by the children, the industrial discipline of the school, the social

discipline, the moral and religious discipline, the intellectual discipline and the military discipline of the boys. He ended his report with these words: "We

closed the year and its lessons with assurance that the silent voice of instruc-

tion will encourage the child to make his life beautiful and useful. We closed our relations with the school with regrets to miss the pleasant word of friend

and child, but fully persuaded that the good work was placed in safe hands, who would receive kind encouragement and well wishes from patron and community." It was in May, 1883, that County School Superintendent B. F. Shaub was

elected as principal of Millersville Normal School and his unexpired term as head of the county schools was filled by the appointment of M. J. Brecht, thus bringing an end to his Mount Joy experience. The Mount Joy Herald had this to say about his leaving: "For three years he has been principal of the Soldier's Orphan School in this place. By his energy, personal character, and other good qualities he has brought the school up to the excellence it now

enjoys." Also about the same time appeared this comment in a Lancaster paper: "Mr. Brecht possesses in a large degree the qualities that make the good executive officer. He is an excellent organizer and manager, as his work at the S. O. School proves; he has fine ability, progressive ideas and large experience and does, by force of character, command the respect and confidence of all with whom he comes in contact." Therefore, having done his task well and made a reputation at Mount Joy as a painstaking executive and a high class educator, Prof. M. J. Brecht moved on to the office of Superintendent of Schools of Lancaster County, which position he admirably filled for a period of twenty-eight years, popularizing himself alike with pupils, teachers, directors and patrons. Many are the men and women of to-day who were boys and girls in the schools of Lancaster County in the years from 1883 to 1911, and who can still vividly recall the annual school visits of Professor Brecht. Somehow, Mr. Brecht never

failed to make an impression on youth and certainly it is no exaggeration to say that for a quarter of a century Milton J. Brecht was Lancaster County's

most popular and beloved personage.

Turning again to the subject of the orphan schools, it is interesting to record the fact that when Dr. Wickersham retired from the office of State Superintendent of Common Schools and Soldier's Orphan Schools, he was succeeded by Dr. Elisha Elnathan Higbee, who had enough Lancaster County connections to be considered as one of our own. As a young man, he had taught mathematics for one year in the old Lancaster High School. As a minister, he had preached his first sermon in the First Reformed Church in Lancaster in 1854. He spent his last eight years in Lancaster in the home of his son-in-law. Prof. George F. Mull. While his burial place is not in

Lancaster, funeral services were held in the First Reformed Church in 1889, and the schools of Lancaster closed during the funeral as a tribute to him. Dr. Highee served as State Superintendent of Common and Soldier's Orphan Schools from 1881 until his death. It was he who appointed M. J. Brecht as County School Superintendent.

At Mount Joy, Prof. Brecht was followed by J. B. Hipple as principal, and it was during his one year at Mount Joy that a series of public investigations began which continued until the final closing of the school. Hipple's work was commended by Professors Brecht and Shaub, and the Mount for the manner in which he is conducting his school. But, Mr. Hipple did not suit Senator Wright, the owner of the school. On March 8, 1886, he wrote to him: "You are keeping up your record for miserable luck and mismanagement at Mount Joy. . . . [You] have turned the best school into a disorganized, diseased, filthy mob in less than three months. . . . I have no idea what will be expected on occasion of Governor's [Gov. Pattison] visit, but would suggest you put out the small-pox flag. You have worked the diptheria matter quite long enough."

Again, on January 30, 1884, Senator Wright showed his ire and dissatis-

Joy Herald editor wrote that Mr. Hipple is winning for himself golden opinions

faction in a letter to Principal Hipple: "You will likely have some visitors from the G. A. R. encampment which meets in Lancaster City next Wednesday, Feb. 6th. You need not be surprised if members drop in on their way to or from the encampment. I need not say any more; only see the cook and all other departments, and have no mistakes made."

It was not long after this last letter that Principal Hipple was succeeded by Harvey B. Houck, son of Hon. Henry Houck who at that time was Deputy

State Superintendent of Schools. Rumors, some justified, many unfounded, were now beginning to circulate about the Mount Joy School. As a matter of

fact, for some years, the buildings and facilities were not adequate for the number of children being housed there. At times, 300 pupils, and occasionally even more, were enrolled at Mount Joy. Such crowded conditions were bound to create difficulty in discipline and living arrangements, and result in public criticism.

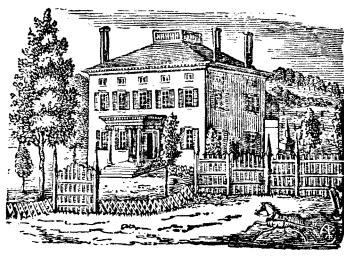
The Intelligencer of Lancaster, at the instance of the editor, W. U. Hensel, new houses interested and conducted as investigation into the efficient of the

The Intelligencer of Lancaster, at the instance of the editor, W. U. Hensel, now became interested and conducted an investigation into the affairs of the school. The results of the investigation were (1) that conditions at Mount Joy improved and (2) that W. U. Hensel became a friend of the school and remained one during the rest of the life of the school.

Criticisms and investigations apparently did not deter Principal Houck from doing his work to the best of his ability, for we read at the end of the school term of 1884 a very encouraging report over his signature: "Our school work in the past year has been very satisfactory. The annual examination was conducted by Dr. Higbee, assisted by Deputy State Superintendent Henry Houck, Professors Shaub and Lyte of Millersville Normal School, Professors Ames and Geist, respectively of Columbia and Marietta, W. U. Hensel, editor of the Lancaster Intelligencer, and Captain Howard Potts, representative of

of the Lancaster Intelligencer, and Captain Howard Potts, representative of the G. A. R. The interest manifested by the people of the town and surrounding country was exceedingly gratifying, the number of visitors being so large that it was impossible to make them as comfortable as we desired." Mr. Hensel addressed the audience and said that he was "agreeably surprised at the showing of the pupils; although he did not consider it perfect and would not speak of it in unqualified praise." He especially urged closer study of local history and geography, and as an incentive to a better knowledge

of this county, he offered to give a gold medal to the pupil in the next year's



The Mount Joy School in 1865.

class of Sixteeners who would pass the most satisfactory examination upon Lancaster County, its interests, geography, history, resources and all that concerns its moral and material greatness. Prof. Shaub followed Mr. Hensel's offer with an offer of his own to give a prize to the Sixteener who would pass the best examination upon William Penn, his life, character and public service.

At the closing exercises in 1885 (May 27), the medal which had been offered by Mr. Hensel was presented by that gentleman in person. The questions on Lancaster County had been submitted previously to the Sixteeners and the answers were judged by W. W. Griest, John L. Landis, J. B. Eshleman, S. M. Sener, and Mr. Hensel. According to these worthy men. the best set of answers was turned in by Phillip E. Radle of Paxtang in Dauphin County, and on him was pinned by Mr. Hensel the gold medal on which were inscribed the words "Mount Joy" and "Lancaster County." Apparently, Mr. Hensel went to Mount Joy on that day prepared to give only the one prize. However, another student showed such a great knowledge of Lancaster County by his examination paper that Mr. Hensel felt that he, too, deserved recognition. This Sixteener's name was Boyd S. Fowler of Riverside, Northumberland County. Mr. Hensel had no prize for the student, but as usual, he was ready for the occasion. Reaching into his vest pocket, he unhooked his Waterbury watch from its chain, and handing it to Fowler in lieu of a medal, remarked: "This watch will keep all kinds of time; and if it gets out of gear, any blacksmith can fix it."

A young lady among the Sixteeners also showed such proficiency in her knowledge of Lancaster County that again Mr. Hensel was compelled to give due recognition, and to the young lady whose name was Pauline Keller (now Mrs. Lewis Siller of Mount Joy), Mr. Hensel presented a volume of poetry which had been purchased that day at Pyle's Drug Store in Mount Joy.

Mr. Hensel then read a number of questions to which no answer had been given, and none then being ventured, he expressed himself well satisfied that none of the pupils knew how much Blaine's plurality had been in the county last year; he hoped that they would never find it out; he would like to forget it himself.

The examination on William Penn was oral, conducted by Prof. Shaub, who had offered prizes to the pupil showing the greatest knowledge on the subject of Penn. Again, the Sixteeners who made the best showing were the three who but a little while before had received prizes from Mr. Hensel. To the two young men, Prof. Shaub gave prize ribbons, and to Pauline Keller he gave a book.

With the examinations out of the way, Supt. Highee spoke briefly, praising the management of the Mount Joy School and calling upon the Grand Army of the Republic to be the guardians of the pupils when they become Sixteeners.

Dr. Wickersham was present and when called upon responded with an earnest speech in which he traced his connection with the orphan schools.

Governor, which had recently conjointly extended the benefits of the system. He said that he knew the schools occasionally turned out an Abe Buzzard but as a body the Sixteeners were a glorious band, and from 95 to 98 per cent of them became good and useful citizens. This remark of Dr. Wickersham prompted Prof. Shaub to rise and say that many a worse than Abe Buzzard had come out of the halls of higher learning.

He praised the big-heartedness of a Republican Legislature and a Democratic

While the examinations and exercises were going on, a representative of the Lancaster Intelligencer "was poking around, examining into things, turning down the bed covers, testing the faucets in the wash rooms, quizzing the little girls in pinafores, and the sullen boy hiding his base ball bat under the board walk." Evidently, the "poking around" which the newspaper man engaged in did not unearth anything scandalous, for editorially, the Intelligencer praised Principal Harvey Houck who "has succeeded in improving many of the defects which before were so noticeable."

In 1886, Professor Houck gave up the profession of teaching and moved to Lebanon to enter the practice of law. He left Mount Joy just in time to escape the torrent of criticism which was levelled at the orphan schools, particularly the ones conducted by The Syndicate. The next principal at Mount Joy was E. C. Kreider.

On the 22nd of February, 1886, the *Philadelphia Record* printed an edi-

torial which began: "The Soldier's Orphan Schools of Pennsylvania were once the pride of our people. Under the inspiration of noble sentiment, the State undertook to care for and to educate those little ones who had been made fatherless by the War of the Rebellion. But, what was once Pennsylvania's glory is now Pennsylvania's shame. Patriotism and generosity have been imposed upon and the grand purposes under which these schools were founded has been prostituted in a manner that shocks our humanity and staggers our belief." The editorial went on with charge after charge of corruption and mismanagement, which demanded action from the Department of Education at Harrisburg.

At once Dr. Higbee went on a tour. He wrote to Governor Robert Pattison on February 27: "I have been on the wing, seeking by peersonal observation what evidence I can of the mismanagement and corruption of the Soldier's Orphan Schools as charged."

At once, too, Manager Wright wrote to Principal Kreider at Mount Joy and ordered him to be "in the best shape possible as to beds and everything," told him that "Whatever is wrong except overcrowding is your wrong." Two hundred eighty-six pupils were now in the school, and soon, Mr. Wright received orders from Dr. Higbee to cut the number to 200.

In March, 1886, an official investigation, known as the Norris Investigation, got under way, and the first school to be visited by the investigators was the Mount Joy School. On March 5, the morning train from Harrisburg brought to Mount Joy, Governor Pattison, Attorney General Lewis C.

days. Some of the sessions of the investigation were held in the Exchange Hotel, and the transcript of the proceedings still preserved and taking up eighty-four pages in the State Senate Record, shows that not a detail was overlooked in the questioning of those called to testify. Comrades of the Grand Army and members of the Ladies' Union League were present at some sessions, as the orphan schools had become close to their hearts. Dr. James L. Ziegler, attending physician of the Mount Joy School during most of its existence, was called to tell about the health of the children, but not quite satisfied, the investigators brought to Mount Joy on the last day of the inquiry Dr. Wm. H. Egle, Harrisburg physician of note, but equally well known as a chronicler of the history of Pennsylvania. Dr. Egle examined each child in the school and gave the school practically a clean bill of health. This seems remarkable, in view of the fact that the investigation showed the facilities to be inadequate for the physical needs of the number of children accommodated, and also that the children had insufficient clothing. One pupil, a boy, was questioned as to the opportunities for bathing.

He told the investigators that for bathing, the entire school had to depend on two bath tubs and three half barrels, which (as he explained) meant molasses barrels sawed in half. Governor Pattison asked another boy "How

Cassidy, and John Norris, accompanied by Col. J. Wesley Aul, and H. C. Demming. The group at once inspected the orphan school, and its surroundings, and then proceeded to the private room of Mr. Wright, who of course was not present. Mr. Kreider, principal, was at once called for questioning as were employees, and pupils. The investigation continued for four full days, with Governor Pattison and his group in attendance every one of those

long have you had your undershirt on?"

A-I don't have any undershirt. Q-Your blue shirt, how long have you had it on?

A-Over two weeks.

Q-How long have you had your stockings on?

A—Three weeks to-day.

Q-Are there any holes in them?

A-Yes. sir.

Principal Kreider, on being questioned about his work, told the investigators that he took care of the accounts and transacted the business of the school, ordered the goods and supplies, arranged for the admission of children and did all the disciplining around the place. For all this, he received

annually \$450, plus \$75 for rent, together with free laundering. That any man would take all this responsibility upon himself for such a small stipend amazed the State Attorney General to such an extent that he exclaimed "I

would rather go out and pave stones on the streets." Surely, Principal Kreider's position was no sinecure. He took the punishment while the owners

of the Mount Joy School and other schools were making money out of a beneficient project, nobly conceived.

In the same year, 1886, that this investigation was carried on, General

The next report on the Mount Joy school to appear was from Dr. Higbee. He asked Dr. Edward Brooks, another Lancaster County educator known to a multitude of people through his text books on arithmetic, to undertake an investigation of the institution at Mount Joy. Dr. Brooks complied, then Dr.

Louis Wagner, of Philadelphia, was appointed Inspector of Orphan Schools. In his first report on the Mount Joy School, he said in part: "As a whole the Mount Joy Institution ranks very low. The system of Administration with eleven employees to 240 children is one of false economy, producing unsatisfactory, or worse, results. . . . The whole establishment should be reorganized, the number of children be reduced and the number of employees increased. Then, with a liberal supply of new furniture and fixtures, and a more generous furnishing of clothing, a better condition of affairs could be secured."

Higbee reported: "This school has 253 children. So much has been said against this school, and so contradictory were the statements in reference to its discipline and management that, as in the case of the school at Chester Springs, I secured the careful inspection of it by Dr. Brooks, and was much gratified at his confirmation of my own judgment in regard to it. He pronounced its educational standing scarcely below that of Chester Springs, which he praised so highly. Its work in the primary department he regarded as extremely good, almost of a model excellence. Some very able men, who took enough interest to visit the school and attend its examinations, gave me strong assurance of the remarkably good work done in the school. serious difficulties, but is fast settling down to a good state of discipline. . . . This school is among the oldest of our Soldier's Orphan Institutions. Additions have been made to the original buildings from time to time, and now the children have good comfortable quarters and are well cared for. This school has had under its care 1482 children."

In the same year, Principal Kreider in his annual report took the opportunity to answer some of the accusations which had been aimed at the institution under his principalship. We read: "The newspapers flaunted broadcast over the country the libelous assertion that the boys and girls at Mount Joy were not taught to pray and received no moral and religious training. We call the ministers of Mount Joy, the Grand Army Post and the citizens of the community to witness to the falsity of these assertions. . . . The pupils are taught by precept and example that life in its truest and noblest sense consists in more than good words, in more than good intentions; in a holy living. Some fifty of the children professed conversion during the year and joined the church of their parents' choice."

Sometime in 1887, a new principal appeared at Mount Joy in the person of J. H. Smith, who filed his first report in 1888. He wrote: "As time obliterates the remembrance of the Norris Investigation with all its demoralizing

influences, the discipline becomes better and easier to maintain. . . . Our public examination was conducted by Dr. Higbee, assisted by Hon. J. M. Greer and Mrs. Alice Attick, School Inspectors, and Professors Heiges and Thomas of the White Hall School (Franklin County) His Excellency Governor James A. Beaver arrived at 7:45 A. M. and remained with us until 12:35. During this time, he thoroughly inspected the entire institution and witnessed the forenoon examinations."

When he turned in his 1889 report to Dr. Higbee, Principal Smith was still troubled by the unjust criticism leveled at the Mount Joy school. "This

institution has lived and prospered through another year, although a few enemies of the system and management have made it their target through the columns of the public press for many years. Thus, the general opinion of the school is founded only upon wild and sensational reports, which are made up by persons who have no higher motive than that of destroying the system or injuring those connected with it and elevating themselves."

The following term, M. L. Thounhurst was Principal and as things turned out, he was the last principal, for this year saw the closing of the Mount Joy school. On May 15, 1890, the Soldier's Orphan School Commission an-

Joy school. On May 15, 1890, the Soldier's Orphan School Commission announced that the school at Mount Joy would be closed on June 30, stating only as reasons that the buildings were poor and not in good condition for the accommodation of the children. At once, the Civil War Veterans in Lancaster County protested, and Posts 84 and 405 passed memorials which were sent to the Commission and to Governor Beaver urging the necessity of continuing the Mount Joy school. As an incentive to its continuance, Senator Mercer was prevailed upon to offer the land to the state free of rent for five or more years, provided the State would purchase the buildings.

Nevertheless the school closed, as previously announced, on June 30. Jennie Marlin, Inspector of Orphan Schools, gives us the last official word in reference to the school. "At Mount Joy, the citizens, as well as the G. A. R. posts and former pupils waited on the Commission requesting that the school be continued; but other arrangements having been made, this could not be done. Mount Joy was the last of the so-called Syndicate Schools, and of its closing, it is but justice to all parties to say, the school was in good condition."

of its closing, it is but justice to all parties to say, the school was in good condition."

Yes, the Mount Joy school was closed, but there was one last effort made to have it re-opened. On July 10, in Harrisburg, the Orphan School Commission accorded a hearing to a representative group of Lancaster Countians who urged the reopening of the Mount Joy school. Hon. W. U. Hensel was

there, and Phillip A. Pyle, druggist from Mount Joy was there, too. The G. A. R. was represented by Captain Dennes and Prof. A. U. Lesher, president of the Mount Joy Sixteeners Association headed a delegation from that body. But to all the urgings of these men, the Commission turned a deaf

⁴ A. U. Lesher was teacher at this time of Chestnut Grove School in Rapho Township and a well-known local poet.

ear, and the Mount Joy Soldier's Orphan School remained closed, never to reopen.

However, in the memories of the hundreds of men and women, the Mount Joy school never ceased to exist. There had been happy times there for those who had known it as a school and a home. The swimming holes of the Little Chiques Creek which meandered through the meadows to the east of the Orphan School were known to all the Mount Joy boys, as Poodle Hole, Little Sandy, Big Sandy, and Snyder's Dam. According to Sixteener Harvey M. Shaar every boy at the school knew how to swim. The Cove, fabled haunt of the Indians, was a favored spot of the Mount Joy pupils fifty-five and more years ago, just as it is to-day. There were great events, in which they participated for them to remember — the day in Philadelphia, when the battle flags of Pennsylvania were transferred to Independence Hall and Gen. Winfield Scott spoke - the day in Harrisburg when General John F. Hartranft was inaugurated Governor and went out of his way to mingle with and speak to them. There were other days and other occasions, and to keep alive all the rich memories and associations of the institution, the Mount Joy Sixteener's Association was organized in 1888, and from 1890 until 1942, annually, the Sixteeners of Mount Joy met in happy reunion. Usually, the occasion meant a revisiting of the old school building on Barbara Street, which to-day in exterior appearance retains the lines of the building as it appeared in 1890, but which is no longer a school but an apartment house.

The project of schools for soldier's children in the very nature of things was bound to decrease. Originally the schools were intended only for those whose fathers lost their lives in the Civil War. Had this intention been carried out, the system would have come to an end in 1880 or even earlier. However, Legislature extended the privileges to children whose fathers died after the war from the result of their wounds, and also the children whose veteran fathers were unable to earn a livelihood. Again, the schools were scheduled to close about 1885, but once more by legislature action were extended to 1890. Up to that year, which was the year that saw the end of the Mount Joy school, the system of orphan schools had cost the State of Pennsylvania \$9,458,384.58.

As was written previously, with the closing of the Mount Joy school, the syndicate schools came to an end, and the state then operated the remaining schools. The system according to the original plan, was almost at an end, but the idea was destined to be continued even to our own day. In 1893, the legislature established "The Pennsylvania Soldier's Orphan School," and in 1895 such a school was built at Scotland in Franklin County. At that time, three of the old schools, which were established when the system was begun, were still in operation and these three schools continued to educate the younger children until 1912, when they too were closed. Since that year, the only soldier's orphan school in Pennsylvania is the Scotland School. It has been many years since any children of Civil War soldiers were educated at any Pennsylvania school. However, the statutes of the state were amended

from time to time to include as eligibles for the schools, orphans of veterans of the Spanish-American War, the Philippine Insurrection and World War I. The last Lancaster County veteran of the Civil War to take any part in the operation of the Soldier's Orphan School was Comrade Washington Ham-

bright. He was appointed to the board of the Scotland School in June, 1916, and elected president of the Board in 1923, and continued to serve in that office until January 1, 1932. Comrade Hambright was followed as president of the Board by General Edward C. Shannon who had first been appointed to the board in 1920. General Shannon is still serving in this capacity and

writes: "In the years that I have been connected with this Board, we have brought the School from more or less of a work-house up to a high type of educational institution."

Thus, we have traced from its inception a beneficent public institution, first visualized by our great Civil War governor, Andrew Curtin, but actually put in operation and carried through its infant years by two extraordinary Lancaster County educators, Doctors Burrowes and Wickersham. To-day, eighty-one years after its beginning, we see its continuation in the Scotland Orphan School, and at the head of the board directing the destinies of that school, we see again that a capable Lancaster Countian, General Edward C. Shannon, is ably serving his comrade's children and the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania.

PARTIAL LIST OF TEACHERS AT THE MOUNT JOY SCHOOL

Thomas Ruth	Miss E. Richardson
John C Mantin	Mica T Dualtingham

John C. Martin Miss T. Buckingham Israel M. Gable Miss M. I. Shields

George Dietrich Miss P. E. Buttles Miss Julia Moore Geo. G. Kunkle

G. N. Alexander Miss E. Hollinger

Clinton O. Hughes Miss M. Tollinger George W. Geiger Miss Sallie E. Culp

Middleton Smith Miss Liberty Stewart

Miss Rachel Hudson Israel L. Witmver

John Hinkle Miss Lou. M. Shields

Joseph R. Irving Miss Mary Martin

Miss Cora Hull

Edward J. Moore

Richard Holl Miss Lillie Moore

Miss M. E. Buckwalter

James R. Ewing Miss M. Snowberger Miss Ella Kline

MOUNT JOY SIXTEENERS LIVING IN LANCASTER COUNTY

November, 1944

Jacob P. Delp......Lancaster

R. McDivitt......Lancaster

Walter Powell......Lancaster Mrs. Lewis Siller......Mount Joy

Names supplied by Harvey M. Shaar.

sher, General Edward C. Shannon, J. G. Allen of the Scotland School, Dr.

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