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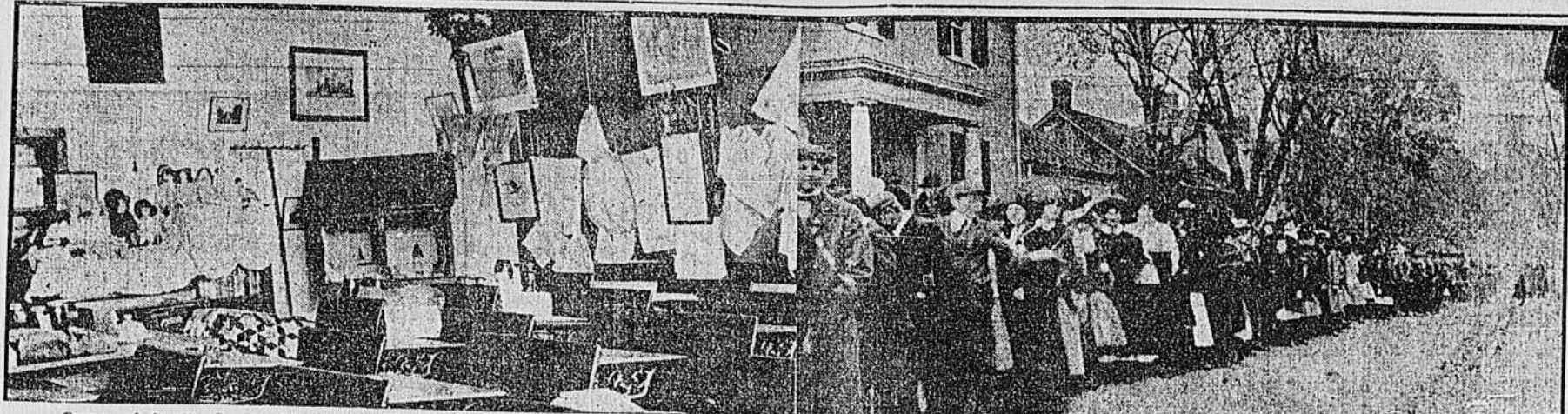
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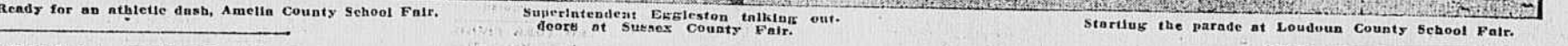
COUNTY SCHOOL FAIRS IN VIRGINIA



Corner of Amelia County School Fair.



Parade of 1,000 school children in Loudoun county.



Ready for an athletic dash, Amelia County School Fair.

Superintendent Eggleston talking to children at Sussex County Fair.

Starting the parade at Loudoun County School Fair.

SCHOOL FAIRS IN OLD VIRGINIA

(Continued from First Page.)

The school children of the primary classes: even the hobble skirt was in evidence. On another table was the flower and nature study exhibit—ferns, chrysanthemums, geraniums, dahlias and collections of wild flowers. Further down the hall was the agricultural exhibit. On this table were piled ears of corn, ears of popcorn, pumpkins, sweet potatoes, Irish potatoes and blackeye peas. In a corner was the manual training exhibit, containing bookcases, writing tables, picture frames, brooms, farm rakes, axe handles, snuck doornats, baskets and rabbit "skins."

Not had the literary work of the school been neglected. A large space was occupied by this department. On a table were a number of carefully prepared compositions. They were not upon such abstract subjects as "Intelligence," "Faith," "Patience," but dealt with concrete, practical themes, such as "Good Roads," "The Value of Scientific Methods of Farming," "How to Make a Country Home Comfortable and Attractive," "The Cause and Prevention of Consumption," "The House Fly a Menace to Health." There were also numerous specimens of writing and drawing, and the walls of one side of the hall were decorated with skillfully drawn maps of the county and of the State.

Oratory, of Course. After viewing the exhibit, the large crowd gathered in the courthouse yard and listened to two short addresses, delivered from the courthouse steps. One of the speakers was a representative of the farm demonstration work in Virginia. He told his large audience that Virginia needed more and better farmers, and explained to them how they could make more money on smaller farms by adopting modern methods of farming.

The other speaker was a representative of the State Department of Public Instruction. He spoke of the need for better schools in Virginia and the necessity of adapting the school curriculum to the lives of the people and the needs of the community. Next an old-fashioned spelling match was held. Each school was represented by its best spellers, and the rivalry was keen.

After lunch hour came the most interesting and imposing feature of the day's program, the school fair parades. All of the school children of the county were formed in line of march, grouped by individual schools and school districts. Each school was led by its teachers. All of the pupils of the



Campbell County School Fair Exhibit.

schools were wearing their school's colors; many were carrying pennants, and floating high above the heads of the pupils of each school was a large banner bearing the name of the individual school. Some of these names were unusual, to say the least. This immense parade of over 1,000 school children, led by a local brass band, waving their banners and pennants, singing school songs and giving school yell, marched through the streets of the usually quiet country town. It was the most inspiring sight that could be witnessed—this happy, buoyant army of the future men and women of a great Commonwealth.

The parade then returned to the courthouse steps, where the prizes were announced and awarded. The parades next marched to the athletic field (the local race track), where the best athletes of each school contested the 100-yard dash, the 220-yard dash, the high jump, the baseball throw and the relay race.

After this the crowd dispersed, and the people went back to their homes, better and happier for having touched elbows with thousands of their fellow country men, and many realized fully for the first time what an enormous thing the public school system of a county is and what an increased power for usefulness it may be.

A Question and Its Answer. Having learned what a county school fair is, the next question our interrogator will ask will be "Where and by whom was this county school fair movement started, and how has it been spread to twenty-five counties?" The idea of holding industrial school

fares in connection with the public schools of a county was first conceived by the Virginia Federation of Women's Clubs during the winter of 1907-8. After mature consideration a definite plan for such fairs was drawn up and adopted by the federation. Following this action, the Van Dyke League of Lynchburg, Va., one of the federated clubs, through W. L. Garbee, division superintendent of schools for Campbell county, its assistance in working up such a fair. Mr. Garbee, believing he saw an opportunity to correlate the work of the school room with the environment of the pupils and other great possibilities for good to his schools in such a fair, accepted their offer. A school fair committee of trustees, teachers and public spirited citizens was then formed. With the co-operation of Miss Anna Jones and other members of the Van Dyke League, a prize list was made up, prizes secured from the merchants of Lynchburg, a school fair catalogue published, and the teachers, pupils and parents of the county were urged to co-operate in this work.

As a result of this well planned organization and its untiring efforts, the first county school fair in Virginia was held at Rustburg, the county seat of Campbell county, October 28, 1908. This first fair was not a large one. Only twenty-four prizes were offered, aggregating in value \$70. One small held the exhibit on corn, potatoes, black-eye peas, bread, and sewing and compositions that were submitted by the school children in competition for these prizes.

The promoters of this first fair felt, nevertheless, that their effort had been successful. Great movements usually start with small beginnings. As soon as the 1908 fair was over they began making plans for a larger fair in 1909. A larger prize-list was made out. The Lynchburg merchants aid; privately increased their financial made liberal contributions of the county County School Board, realizing that this was a worthy educational work, made a substantial appropriation. When the exhibits came in for the 1909 fair the courthouse room would not hold them and they had to be transferred to the largest building then existing in the town.

How the Idea Grew. The 1910 fair was an even greater success. The exhibits showed a decided improvement in class of workmanship and were so numerous that no building could be found to hold them, so a large tent was rented and stretched upon the court green. The fair had now grown to such proportions, and had obtained such a hold upon the interest and pride of Campbell county people that, at the conclusion of the 1910 fair, a movement was started to build a permanent school fair hall. Funds for this purpose were soon raised by generous private contributions, by entertainments given in the schools and by a supplemental appropriation by the county. The school fair hall—a handsome and commodious building—was completed in time to be used for the 1911 school fair. It is a two-story building, 41x81-3 feet. The lower story is an exhibit hall, and the upper story is an auditorium for holding the public exercises for this purpose. The Campbell County School Fair of 1911 was in keeping with its new and commodious quarters, and far sur-

passed all previous fairs. The number of prizes had grown from twenty-four in 1908 to 301 in 1911, and their value from \$70 to \$527. In competition for these prizes, 1,629 pieces of work were exhibited.

In addition to these exhibits, there were 150 entries for the spelling matches and 111 for the athletic events. Four thousand people attended this fair. And yet the people of Campbell county are not content to rest upon their laurels. They are planning to make the 1912 school fair the biggest and best ever held. They have raised \$1,232 with which to finance this fair, and have entered into the work with even greater enthusiasm than ever shown before.

State Comes Up to Help. In the meantime, the school fair work has been spread to many other counties in Virginia. In the early part of 1910 the State Department of Public Instruction, realizing the good the Campbell county school fair was doing in that county, and in full sympathy with the plan of promoting industrial work in the Virginia public schools through such fairs, went actively to inaugurate this movement in other counties. The result was that many very successful fairs were held in the fall of 1910. In 1911 the number had grown to twenty-odd, including Accomack, Albemarle, Amelia, Amherst, Augusta, Buford, Campbell, Cumberland, Charles City, Clarke, Dinwiddie, Gloucester, Halifax, Loudoun, Matthews, Mecklenburg, Middlesex, Nanamoud, New Kent, Orange, Prince George, Rockingham and Sussex, and the department is planning and hoping that at least fifty counties will hold these fairs in 1912. The department stands ready to assist in this work, and to aid any county in organizing such fairs, through its representative, the author of this article, who has special charge of this work.

Eggleston's Ideas. "But what are some of the purposes of holding these fairs?" "What benefits are derived from them?" "Of what educational value are they?" "We will let J. D. Eggleston, State Superintendent of Public Instruction, answer these questions, and answer them in his own words. He says of these fairs: "The county school fair does its work in two directions. First, it sums up the work of the boys' corn clubs and the girls' garden and poultry clubs, and similar organizations; and, second, it promotes these organizations and other valuable features of school work in counties where they have made little headway and encourages their continuance and enlargement in counties where they are doing well. It gathers up results and then gives forth enthusiasm, encouragement, and definite direction for an enlargement of this educational, economic and social work. "The school fair is a composite picture of the work of the children. It presents in concentrated form the results of various lines of educational effort. Here one can see in a few hours the fruition of plans and ideas attempted by the boys and girls during the year. "The school fair offers prizes. This feature stimulates the zeal of the children. It interests their parents in the work attempted, and thus encourages co-operation between the children, the parents, and the teachers. "The school fair brings together large

numbers of the children from different schools. It thus enlarges the outlook of each school community, and causes the children of each school to measure themselves by the side of the children of other school communities.

"The athletic contests, the spelling matches, the recitations, the contests in corn raising, and in the raising of tomatoes and other vegetables; the contests in break making, in making cakes and candies and preserves, and in canning; the woodworking; the contests in apron and dress making and in other lines of needlework—all these things, brought together in well ordered display, are of great educational and social value. They teach definite purpose; they encourage persistent effort; they demand careful thought; they require the ability to follow directions, which demands close attention and concentration; they teach self-control and fair play; they enlarge the social vision; they give a better perspective; they show the value of labor and the shallowness of idleness. "The school fair brings together a large number of parents and other grown-ups, who come to see the handiwork of their children and of the children of other neighborhoods. It is doubtful whether any feature of educational work can arouse more interest and enthusiasm among grown people than the school fair."

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