

free  
publicity

My attention has <sup>1</sup>been directed to a letter ~~appearing~~ <sup>appearing in</sup> your paper last week written by Mrs. Arthur Gartrell of Middleburg in which she censures both the management and managers of the schools. The letter, however, does not properly represent the facts.

Let it be understood by way of explanation, that so far as the physical conditions ~~of~~ of school property are concerned, only the taxes paid by Mercer district can be involved because each district always has and does now pay for its own buildings, fuel, repairs and all other items except salaries of teachers. Since the suggestion is made by Mrs. Gartrell that Middleburg is unfairly discriminated against, we are to conclude that Aldie and Unison-Bloomfield schools, the only other large schools in Mercer district, are receiving more ~~than~~ their share as compared to Middleburg. Unison-Bloomfield has a telephone, the patrons pay for it. Unison-Bloomfield has gas lights, Aldie electric lights - the patrons paid for installation and pay all cost of operation.

When new buildings were erected at each place patrons contributed at Middleburg one-fourth of the cost but at Aldie and Unison-Bloomfield nearly one-half.

Middleburg now has only one year of high school work but where lies the blame for that? During the time I served on the three-member district school board the Middleburg community ~~has been~~ <sup>was</sup> ably represented at different times by Messrs. S. R. Fred, W. R. Keeler, T. U. Dudley, C. M. McCormick, and H. J. Duffey, all worthy men. During the time that four year accredited high schools were being built up at Aldie and Unison-Bloomfield the opportunity was held out to Middleburg but the patrons failed to support the school in sufficient numbers to get it accredited.

On June 8, 1922 the superintendent and district board met a number of patrons in the Middleburg school at their request. The board agreed to employ three high school teachers and try again to have the school accredited if the patrons would consent to pay tuition just as they were paying at Aldie and Unison-Bloomfield at that time. The patrons present proposed to pay \$810.00 as salary of one teacher in lieu of tuition. This was accepted. The other two schools paid the tuition. Middleburg paid not a cent of the amount promised.

Now what is the history of the furnace? The boiler bursted last March so that it could not be repaired. No effort was then made to repair it for two reasons. One was shortness of funds for the fiscal year up to July 1 and the other was the very evident fact that the new installation could not have been completed for use last spring. Stoves were set up. They smoked. The superintendent went over to the school and employed a man to change the pipes in the chimney so as to stop ~~them~~ <sup>the</sup> from smoking. After he left, his instructions to the man <sup>by some one in Middleburg.</sup> were cancelled. The stoves could have served very nicely up to the present time. The contract on the furnace was delayed during the summer because until taxes are collected in

the fall it is difficult to pay our school bills. A contract for the new furnace now completed was let on September 13th. The new boiler was at Middleburg at the time Mrs. ~~xxx~~ Gartrell's letter was written. The ~~xxx~~ plumber was then tied up on another job.

Aldie and Unison-Bloomfield still use the furnaces installed when these buildings were erected. Middleburg now has its third new furnace <sup>already installed,</sup> and from \$300.00 to \$400.00 was spent at one time for repairs to one of these three.

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I am glad to note that Middleburg now has a live community league and I offer the simple suggestion that instead of knocking the school officials who have had reason for being discouraged over the Middleburg school, the officers and members of the league begin work in earnest for the improvement of their school. At our Unison-Bloomfield school our patrons and others have raised \$1500.00 in ~~two~~ <sup>three</sup> years by holding a horse show and <sup>have spent on</sup> will spend every cent of this for the school. At Aldie the community raised a very substantial sum several years by means of a Fair and deserve much credit for their earnest work for their school.