

The Lincoln - Purcellville School Case

The question is whether a new high school building shall be erected at Lincoln on the former site or in or near Purcellville on a new site.

During or prior to the year 1909 patrons and other interested persons started a movement to erect a new high school building at Lincoln where for several years a high school had been conducted in a building of about four rooms which as remodeled is now used for an elementary school in that place.

The best available evidence indicates that friends of the school offered to furnish the land and contribute \$8,000 for the erection of a school building for high school purposes within 5/8 of a mile of the old Goose Creek Meeting House and it was expressly provided that the same belong to the public school authorities of said district and be a part of such school system.

The district school board of Mt. Gilesd decided to accept the gift and operate a high school at Lincoln. An appeal was taken from the action of the district school board by citizens of Purcellville who asked that the building be located near Purcellville and who offered to contribute as much as was offered at Lincoln. At the hearing before the school trustee electoral board Mr. Edward Nichols was very ardent in support of the Lincoln site and in the presence of those assembled promised to endow the school with \$10,000 and to use his influence among rich friends to secure other

endowments to make the total about \$20,000.

The school trustee electoral board decided that the building should be on the site which was until recently occupied. This board fixed the shape and size of the lot. It also ruled that contributions should amount to \$12,000 as a minimum for the building and that the lot should also be contributed.

Since that time it has developed that the promised endowment has not materialized. Inquiry into the matter also reveals the fact that a number of contributions were accepted with the secret understanding that the contributors would be excused from all tuition that might be levied in the future. It is pertinent to note here that the Purcellville advocates did not reserve tuition charges out of their donations as promised.

On April 1, 1926 the high school building at Lincoln was completely destroyed by fire. There were left standing a shop valued at \$1,000 and a cottage valued at \$3,800. The insurance on the building and contents amounting to \$20,000 was paid promptly.

On April 10, 1926 a special meeting of the county school board was held to consider the location for the new high school Building to be erected. The board heard arguments and decided to rebuild on the old site. On April 26, 1926 an appeal from the decision of the county school board was filed with the division superintendent of schools. The appeal was by him referred to the school trustee electoral board on the same date. That board ruled that it had no jurisdiction because the division superintendent had not approved or dis-approved the site. The division superintendent, there-

upon, formally notified the members of the county school board on April 27 of his dis-approval of the location selected and reported his action to the State Superintendent of Public Instruction on April 28, 1926.

The county school board of Loudoun County of seven members cast a unanimous vote to rebuild at Lincoln. What is the weight of this decision?

The financial plan for our schools makes the financing of a new building and the cost of its operation a matter of district cost alone. It has been the custom for the board to defer in most matters except those of the most general nature to the wishes of judgment of the one member in whose district the question arises. The selection of teachers is even decided for the board by one member. On the county board of supervisors when a bridge or road is located one member usually decides for the board and they confirm his wish.

It is a known fact that the Mt. Gilead member wanted the school at Lincoln and that he made ~~xxx~~ special trips to see several members of the board before the meeting when the question was passed upon.

Let us assume for the purpose of study that the original contributors have an equity other than as taxpayers and citizens in the Lincoln building or insurance. What then is the dollar value of that equity? These contributors gave \$13,847 of which \$2,000 was invested in land. No one expected any interest on the money. No one expected any increase on the amounts donated. The most hopeful expectation that these donors could possibly have had would have been the use of a building for the education of their children and grand children for fifty years. At the end of that time the building would be obsolete and not of any appreciable value. The land normally could be expected to be still worth \$2,000. The donors had the use of the building for one-third of fifty years. Their maximum equity therefore would be 2/3 of \$11,847 or \$7898. ~~From this must be deducted~~ ^{OK} ~~tuition rebates amounting to approximately \$1400, and because these rebates were not granted alike to all donors who had children interest is properly added. This would at least bring the tuition rebates up to \$2,000.~~ Our difference is \$6498 as the final equity and total claim, moral or otherwise of the original donors in the Lincoln public school property.

The ideas refuting these statements and claiming ~~x~~ about all the insurance derived have been heard. Do you say that if a man invests in business and the business results in money gain, the investor is entitled to the profits? Grant that he is. On the other hand when a man gives money does he expect it back? An Indian giver, I am told, does. Assume for a moment that no insurance had been carried on the

Lincoln building. What would be the equity of contributors now? The school officials carried the insurance on the property as public not private ~~xxxxxx~~ property. The public owned it and certainly the public is entitled to the profits if any. If a person loans money without interest and there is loss in the business he expects the full amount of the loan back, if there is gain he expects, asks, and receives no more than loaned.

The question very naturally arises here whether, if the original contributions made to the Lincoln school are the main reason for re-building on the old site, the equity is not now a liability to the taxpayers rather than an asset.

Let us examine and see.

If the new building were erected on a site near Dr. Davis' corner on the Hamilton -Lincoln road the same trip and vehicle which now hauls the Hamilton children to Lincoln could make the same two round trips daily and haul both the Hamilton and Lincoln children to school. With the site donated the building could be built as cheaply at either place.

The transportation from Purcellville could be eliminated. This cost an average of \$520 for the three years prior to the present. A pupil drives the bus making only one round trip daily. The bus has not sufficient capacity now. The number of children in the grades 4, 5, 6, and 7 in the Purcellville school is 25% (on basis of average daily attendance) more this year than four years ago. This indicates a very marked increase for the future, 25% in four years in the number of children to be conveyed to Lincoln. It means two trips instead of one. Also a proper respect for safety demands that a man drive the bus.

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This would mean four round trips daily as compared with one at present, and would cost at least \$900 or a net \$850 annually to the district, the ~~state~~ contributing about \$50.00.

Which is the greater asset, \$5898 cash in hand as now is or a debt of \$5898 borrowed at an average rate of 5% with an annual income or saving of \$850. The annual payment of \$850 would eliminate the debt of \$5898 in 10 years. After that the \$850 annual saving would be net. The gifts are revealed to be liabilities if the building be restored where it was.

Furthermore, it can confidently be expected that not all donors would accept the return to them of this gift, if offered.

I admit a moral obligation to the original donors to this school. This moral obligation does not require the board to return the money donated and it does not require the board to do anything contrary to public interest in direct conflict with a moral obligation to future high school students, their parents, and tax payers. It only requires that high school facilities be still afforded the Lincoln community and there is no proposition not to do so, on the contrary the pupils coming from the area represented by the donors can reach the new location about as readily as Lincoln.

Attention is called to a map which analyzes these donations.

Please note the table of summaries.

25 non-residents in 1909 - gave	\$3172
11 county residents out of school area - gave	1175
4 have moved out of county who gave	488
18 residents of school area are dead and without prospect of children or grandchildren to be educated - these gave	

2331

51 contributors now live in the school area or have children or grandchildren doing so - these gave \$6681

Please note that a group to the south are about equally convenient to either place, roads considered. These 10 gave \$1439. The Lincoln group of 14 gave \$2489 and the Purcellville group of 27 gave \$2753.

When the Lincoln high school was built the district school board accepted the gifts in good faith and erected a school building. The acceptance of the gifts did not bind the public school officials to conduct a high school at Lincoln forever. But, then, for how long? Just so long as public interest, that is, the convenience of those served and the economy of administration of the school unit would warrant. For some years it has been apparent that it would be more convenient to those served and more economical for operation to have the building located elsewhere than at Lincoln. This has been offset and a change of location completely checked by the fact that a new building would cost, say \$30,000 and the old one sold or wrecked would bring nearly nothing. The fire changes the economic aspect.

The same building is needed wherever it goes up and it would cost about the same. The donation of a new site which is promised would offset all loss in selling the remaining property at Lincoln and rebuilding it elsewhere. Our saving is the Purcellville transportation.

The proponents of the Lincoln site have been advocates of the necessity for a district increase of 10 cents for a building at Lincoln to cost \$30,000 and have variously reported and broadcast the necessity for a tax increase of

25 to 30 cents to build at Purcellville.

I submit herewith a budget for 1926-27 and for 1927-28 wherein provision is made for a new building at Purcellville to cost \$30,000 and a new elementary building at Lincoln to cost \$12,000. All figures except those necessitated by the new loans on the elementary school, estimated losses of \$1500 on the cottages and shop at Lincoln, the transportation saving, and sale of old elementary property are indicated for 1926-27 as already in the official budget adopted by our board.

The income for 1927-28 on the basis of the 10-cent increase exceeds the expenses by \$1163 with the new loans under the Literary Fund plans cared for. The new elementary school would, of course, be in lieu of any return of money to contributors. The present elementary building is obsolete and a new home for the three teachers ~~sxxx~~ and seventy to eighty children is needed wherever the high school goes and will have to be provided in a few years in any event.

Some objection is offered to the closeness to the Round Hill school if moved to Purcellville. All who know the facts admit that not a pupil is likely to leave Round Hill or to come to Purcellville instead of Round Hill because Round Hill High School has drawn pupils only a short distance from the Purcellville side at any time and would continue so. On the other hand Round Hill has a small high school department, much less than the standard of fifty average daily attendance and if the high school department must some day be abandoned the Round Hill and Bluemont residents will be favored by the Purcellville rather than Lincoln location.

There has been quite a lot said about the morality involved in this case. There are ^a good many kinds of morality questions. The gentlemen who promised to endow Lincoln school with \$10,000 was convinced that the local people who carried subscription papers were guilty of treachery ~~x~~ to him in that they promised secretly or without his knowledge to exempt certain donators with children from a small tuition fee while he and others without children gave unstintingly and without rebate or expected refunds.

It is claimed that the environment at Lincoln is better than at Purcellville. Purcellville is reported to be a morally bad place. Why should the pot keep right on calling the kettle black? Lincoln is a Quaker settlement composed of good thrifty people. But other communities have been very tolerant. The record of these settlements of Quakers during the Revolutionary, Civil and World Wars has been subject to sharp censure as unloyal and lacking in patriotism. Now patriotism is a cardinal virtue more necessary in war than in peace and God himself in his holy record has ~~xxxxxxx~~ revealed that he commanded his people to wage certain righteous wars.

Mr. Eugene Debs while confined to the Federal prison at Atlanta as an enemy to his country and constitution was a candidate for the high office of Chief Executive of the United States and he received several votes in Lincoln. Likewise, Senator LaFollette whose patriotism was sharply attacked within the Senate received 10 votes for the United States Presidency in Lincoln in 1924. The loyalty and patriotism of Purcellville citizens has never been brought into question.

It is generally admitted and accepted as fact that credit is properly due Lincoln citizens and the members of the Society of Friends for their ~~xxx~~ interest in education at Lincoln but it is a known fact that in Loudoun County only high school children are needed to make a good high school because the interest is keen everywhere. The neighborhood of Lincoln, Hamilton and Purcellville is thickly settled. The most convenient four-year high school for children from the graded schools in Lincoln, Hamilton, ~~xxx~~ Purcellville, North Fork, Philomont, and Hillsboro has been at Lincoln. These schools now employ to teach children in the seven elementary grades a total of 18 teachers and the next largest system feeding a high school in this county is at Leesburg where eight teachers are employed in the only graded school feeding the high school department. ^{and here we find 4 as many teachers but 6 as many boys school pupils as at Lincoln.} We would naturally expect 18 teachers to grind out a good many high school pupils and the central high school for these elementary schools is bound to be big and being big it is bound to draw a few scattering pupils from outlying territory. The school would have prospered at Purcellville ~~as~~ well ~~xx~~ or better than at Lincoln.

Since 1909 in a period of 17 years there has come a changed condition. The town of Purcellville is much younger than the village of Lincoln. But Purcellville is located on a railroad and State Highway and at a converging point of county roads and in the very heart and at the very ~~h~~ hub of the Loudoun Valley embracing all of the territory from the Potomac to Fauquier County and from the Blue Ridge to Catoctin Mountains, an area of about 300 square miles. It is the principal trade

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center for the greater part of this territory in so far as any trade center is provided within the county.

In 1909 Lincoln graded school had an enrollment of 64 with three teachers and it now enrolls 82 with three teachers. In 1909 Purcellville graded school had an enrollment of 61 with 2 teachers and it now enrolls 182 with 6 teachers. Purcellville grows and helps to inhabit the earth. In 1909 Purcellville had a population of 375 and it now has 758. The population of Lincoln has not increased during that time.

~~Taxxxx~~ In ¹⁹¹⁴~~1909~~ the assessed ~~xxxx~~ valuation of property assessed for school ~~taxes~~ in Purcellville was 17.0/10 of that for Mt. Gilead district. In 1926 it was 20%.

In 1911 out of five graduates two came ~~xxxx~~ from or through Purcellville to reach Lincoln.

In 1926 out of 26 graduates 22 ^{came}~~came~~ through ~~or came~~ ^{or} from Purcellville to reach Lincoln.

In 1909 there were 82 pupils enrolled in the high school at Lincoln. In 1910-11 there were 48 and I have found a list of these. The homes of these pupils or places where they boarded in order to attend school are shown on a map to which attention is invited. There were no improved roads at any place in this territory at this time. This is ⁵⁴⁹ an important factor. Of the 48 pupils 17 passed the corner marked B to reach Lincoln and the other 31 went directly to Lincoln. The site was not illogical.

Since that year there have been changes. Purcellville and its graded school have grown as indicated before. Good roads have been built as indicated by heavy lines on the map to which attention is now invited. The enrollment in the high

school at Lincoln has grown in 17 years from 52 to 126. This map distributes 123 of these, the 3 others not being possible of location. How many of these pass the proposed new site daily and travel on 1.2 miles twice a day to reach and return from the present location? There are 88 who do so. Those who now live in the neighborhoods of Philomont and Silcott Springs come through Purcellville a part of the year to reach Lincoln, a greater distance, over better roads. The establishment of a school at Purcellville would not be a disadvantage to 11 of these pupils. ^{4 live between the two locations.} This leaves a total of 20 at and near Lincoln and North Fork who easily collect at Lincoln and to

meet whom 88 travel 24 miles daily. The sum total of individual extra and unnecessary travel is 24 miles for 68 pupils 180 days each year ^{or a} total of 29,736 miles, At 3¢ cents a mile this amounts to \$1028 annually in addition to the value of the time lost. At 5% this is the annual interest on \$20,560.

But what does the future indicate? Go to Purcellville and you'll find "There is a rustling that seems like a bustling of merry crowds justling at pitching and bustling small feet are pattering, little shoes clattering, little hands clapping and little tongues chattering, And like fowls in a farmyard when barley is scattering out come the children running All the little boys and girls With rosy cheeks and flaxen curls."

At Lincoln all is quiet.

The proponents of the Lincoln site have made a strong play upon the sentiment of people who have fond recollections of their associations at Lincoln, and upon the sentiment connected with the loss by fire. I make a plea not for the

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past, "Let the dead ~~bury~~ past bury its dead". I make a plea for the children of today and for those yet unborn. The obligation of public officials is to locate schools where the children are and to serve the greatest good to the greatest number with proper regard for minority rights.

The money saved for future generations by the location of this school on the new site will purchase character in these future generations as they are trained in this institution to become more noble examples for the emulation of their brothers and our posterity.

