

Brief History of Nicholas County Schools

By Betty Lynn Coaned
The educational system of Nicholas County is closely intertwined with that of the earliest types of schools in the state. But even these limited beginnings yielded a far reaching influence in the lives of these early settlers. Nicholas county's educational system has its roots with the home schools and private tutoring of pioneer days. Later, one-room school houses came into being with all 12 grades being taught in the same room. In the early 1900's there became a greater need for education which brought about consolidation and specialization in the schools.

In the late 1700's and early 1800's it is recognized that school existed even though records cannot be found. Yet, what was true in one community could be applied to that of another. The "Old Field School" prevailed throughout the period of primitive settlements in Lower Blue Licks, Irish Station and Headquarters. During this period initial attempts were made to formally educate the young. An abiding interest was slowly started by pioneers in both region and education, for they built their schoolhouses and churches along with the erection of their humble log homes. Schoolmasters Grosvenor, Ramey, Clayborn, Hopkins and Mrs.

Marston, being the first woman, teaching the first school, insured children of a good education in settlements at Lower Blue Licks, Irish Station, Headquarters, Brady Fork, Elizaville, Hootkins, Mt. Pisgah, Bartterville, Carlisle and Smith. Schools as the "Writing Schools", "Single Schools", and the "Night Schools" became prominent throughout the county. These schools were of short term usually from two to six weeks. Western Military Institute, The Normal School and Carlisle Seminary were a private nature. These schools were the first steps toward public education in Nicholas county.

The school system in the mid 1800's and early 1800's was very slow developing. A General Assembly passage of the law of 1837 was slow in materializing in our county. A clause in the law required each county to survey its school districts. At that time surveying was expensive, so Nicholas, along with many counties, postponed the laying off of districts until 1840. In that year two districts with a census of 111 pupils were reported to the State Department of Education for the first time. As years progressed, the districts grew to 37 schools with a census total of 3600 children. Log schoolhouses were replaced by frame houses.

Teachers in the days of the one-room schoolhouses were very versatile, as they taught every subject to children in grades one to 12. Salary was meager for their services, being \$10 to \$15 per month. A teaching certificate was required, and was obtained by examination of an oral quiz later being changed to a written examination. Once the certificate was obtained, the teacher was assigned to a district.

Students of this period were not at the advantage as they are today. The school was a large, one-room log house with wide slab flooring, and heavy slab seats and legs; there were no backs to these seats; the large boys gathered open fire; the smaller boys carried the water from a neighboring spring to the school. The girls did their sewing in the schoolhouse, and with homemade laces. These laces were used instead of the present flat brown. The enrollment was large, usually 50 to 100 boys and girls. The enrollment was 2844 years of age being supervised by Miss Mary White and Miss Mary Williams; revision of the law in 1861 was not compulsory until 1945 by a consolidation movement forming Headquarters, Elizaville, Moorefield, Parks, Myers and East Union; a desegregation of schools in 1961; consolidation of city and county schools in 1963; and movement of Moorefield, Headquarters and Carlisle schools into an open-concept building in 1971 completing consolidation in the Nicholas County School System.

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The Saltwell Cemetery Atop this hill - - beneath the sod

Perhaps nowhere is the temporary nature of the existence of human beings brought home to us more vividly than in our old country graveyard which lies neglected and forgotten on a rural hillside. Today as many of them are known only to a few of the people, even unknown to many living nearby. In many cases the descendants living seem to have no interest concerning the condition of the almost forgotten family graves. Perhaps many individuals are a physical or financially unable to care for them, which is true, but in many instances this would not serve as a logical excuse.

The Saltwell Cemetery was founded as a family burial ground by Mr. and Mrs. Isaac Allison. To date, no recorded deed has been found regarding this tract of land, however, it was cut off from the Allison farm in a deed given to Taylor Brothers when they purchased the farm from the estate of Kate Allison. Kate had fallen heir to the farm at the death of her parents, Mr. and Mrs. Isaac Allison.

Mr. W. B. Carter, Mrs. Carter was an interest in old burial places. In some of the graveyard tracts and branches he has grown so high that no stone is visible when you eye it is cast toward the hillside. For this reason, the cemetery possibly is the idea that country cemeteries were founded, many Allisons as well as other relatives bought lots in the Carlisle Cemetery. The graveyard is situated on a hillside and ground or fall apart and get broken. The ground is so uneven that the graves and become buried beneath the grass, dead leaves, and broken twigs. Sometimes unseeing humans being have picked up old stones, carried them away and used them as heartstones, doorsteps, foundations for buildings or anything else for which a flat stone may be needed. Sometimes farm animals break through the old fences surrounding the graveyard, rub against the stones, knock them over and trample them into the dirt. Thus has the local farms of some proud families been blotted out by nature's haphazard growth, careless human beings and non-responsible animals. Families once prominent in the community, are now forgotten even though their position and influence has been substantially indicated by the quality of the marble or granite markings on their graves.

In the memory of Isaac Allison who, after having dedicated a portion of his farm as a burial ground for those whom he loved, answered the call of duty by his country, and became a member of the Confederate Army during the Civil War. He is listed among those making the supreme sacrifice when, as a last measure of his devotion to his family and the ideals in which he sincerely believed, he gave his life. As a result, his family was unable to erect a monument at his grave because he is unmarked as an unknown soldier in an unknown grave in an unnamed cemetery—nowhere in these United States near the Mason and Dixon line.

The Saltwell Cemetery is a one-half acre tract of land found atop the hill east of the Saltwell Methodist Church in the northwestern section of Nicholas County. It is one of the few country graveyards, popular at the turn of the century that continues to be a hallowed spot in the hearts of the people who live in Saltwell and neighboring communities.

It is now owned by Charles Ray and Vaughn Mattox whose grandmother was an Allison. The land adjoining on the south side was owned by Mr. and Mrs. W. B. Carter. Mrs. Carter was an interest in old burial places. In some of the graveyard tracts and branches he has grown so high that no stone is visible when you eye it is cast toward the hillside. For this reason, the cemetery possibly is the idea that country cemeteries were founded, many Allisons as well as other relatives bought lots in the Carlisle Cemetery. The graveyard is situated on a hillside and ground or fall apart and get broken. The ground is so uneven that the graves and become buried beneath the grass, dead leaves, and broken twigs. Sometimes unseeing humans being have picked up old stones, carried them away and used them as heartstones, doorsteps, foundations for buildings or anything else for which a flat stone may be needed. Sometimes farm animals break through the old fences surrounding the graveyard, rub against the stones, knock them over and trample them into the dirt. Thus has the local farms of some proud families been blotted out by nature's haphazard growth, careless human beings and non-responsible animals. Families once prominent in the community, are now forgotten even though their position and influence has been substantially indicated by the quality of the marble or granite markings on their graves.

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