



***The Glade Community Historical Society, Inc.
Including Glade, Garfield & Pine Log, Arkansas***

**A 501 (c)(3)
Charity**

GCHS Newsletter #1, 2024

The purpose of the society is to preserve the histories of the communities by researching and gathering stories, documents and artifacts.

**Plan to attend our musical presentation on January 28, 2024 at 2 pm at Lost Bridge Community room with Erin Rowe and her band.
Refreshments will be served!**

Reading, Writing, and Arithmetic in Arkansas

During the early 1800's explorers traveled along the Mississippi River. Families proceeded farther into Arkansas by horse and wagon. Most of them came from the southern slave states where church or private schools existed. Each family paid for education and in those days, many were illiterate.

“Historically, speaking, education was considered the daughter of religion and, like religion, was regarded as a matter of personal and domestic concern with which the State had no right to interfere.”
History of Public School Education in Arkansas.

The policy of granting the sixteenth section in each township for the use of public education had its origin in the ordinance of 1787. Not until the Act of 1843 did the first general effort to manage public education occur, soon after Arkansas was admitted to the Union in 1836. Leaders recognized that leasing land funds would not support the schools, but the idea of taxation for school support had not developed, and their objective of supporting education failed.

A board of Education was created but there was not a professional teacher among them. State textbooks were to be purchased but that law was not executed. Books were not free until 1851. Despite official opposition to the public school system, this act provided a township organization with county supervision. The struggle of the private school against the public school continued until the act of 1853 made the school organization more connected and compact.

In 1860, there were 652 common schools in Northwest Arkansas: Benton County had 21; Carroll County had 24; and Washington County had 57. But, the income from land funds had accomplished little because the money donated for schools had been badly managed or corrupted.

Confederate success in Arkansas was short lived and left Arkansas bankrupt and the Reconstruction era was more destructive than the Civil war. The state and counties were overwhelmed with debt. Isaac Murphy became provisional governor of the reconstructed state on January 20, 1864. No public schools were then in existence. Murphy recommended a system of universal education and reported that the antebellum management had mismanaged and squandered much of the donations of 1,000,000 acres of land appropriated for purposes of education from the United States. He urged an office of State superintendent of education and a common school fund, based on ad valorem taxation of all property. The act of March 18, 1867 provided a common school education for all white children, ages 6 to 21.

As slaves were freed, the American Missionary Association provided education to some African Americans. The AMA worked with the Freedmen's Aid Society. Still, southern Black children received no formal education until July 23, 1868. They were admitted to school privileges on equal terms with whites, but separate schools. That infrastructure changed with a new Republican government's creation of a public school system, and it ended the role of the Freedmen's Bureau in Black education in Arkansas. Endangered by failed mill tax, and the attitude of many Democratic politicians from the 1870s, they cut public funding for Black schools, decreasing access.

..."The trend of educational work went on under the guidance of individual experience rather than from any study and generalization of the past experiences of others. Forty years were devoted to gathering experiences, when the same results might have been reached by a careful historic study in a few years." History of Public School Education in Arkansas.

The Constitution of 1874 ended Republican Reconstruction and declared a mandate to educate all the children of the State and a sixteenth-section fund, uniform state taxes and annual poll tax. The legislature was to establish the office of State superintendent, but little was accomplished. Problems persisted: money issues, ignorance of both teachers and patrons, poor teacher training, school land issues, attendance and opposition to education. To improve teacher training, Normal schools developed in 1907 and over 800 teachers attended each year, and the school was supervised by county examiners. High Schools, compulsory attendance, consolidation, transportation and teacher unity developed and grew.

During those years poor districts had one room- schools with short teaching terms. Though there was opposition to taxes, compulsory school attendance became law in 1909, but it was optional until the 1920's. The New Deal stabilized the country after the great depression. World War II increased women faculty in the classroom and voters forced consolidation in 1948. Governor Sid McMath tried to end the diversion of Black school funds to white schools.

Between 1889 and 1968 a false version of United States history textbooks listed state rights, instead of slavery, as the cause of the Civil War and portrayed the white South as the victim when The United Daughters of the Confederacy controlled the south's history books. In some southern states, that incorrect influence persists.

There was white opposition to Brown v. Board of Education of Topeka, Kansas ruling. Six-term Governor Orval Faubus stood against the federal government during the desegregation of Little Rock Central High School in 1957, and President Dwight Eisenhower sent in the federal troops. Then, Governor Faubus closed all Little Rock schools for a year in 1958 to avoid integration and deprived 3,665 Black and white students access to public education. Busing helped hasten the desegregation of schools in the 1970's, but white flight resulted in redistributed school funds. Governor Bill Clinton (1978) created the Education Standards Committee. Governor Mike Huckabee (1996) established a consolidation policy: Districts with fewer than 350 students would consolidate or annex. Governor Mike Beebe (2007), a

former teacher, proposed additional funding for public education. Governor Asa Hutchinson (2014) increased Charter schools that originated in Arkansas in 1995.

During the 2023 session, a legislative bill ended the requirements that districts with fewer than 350 students consolidate. Governor Sarah Sanders, signed the LEARNS Act into law. Under this act, teacher salaries increased and student vouchers provided that students attend the school of their choice regardless of the zip code or family income level. Students can attend private schools or obtain home schooling. LEARNS repealed teacher fair dismissal and school employees' fair hearing rights. It set higher standards for student literacy and banned Critical Race Theory in schools. Parents can use vouchers to buy school uniforms, mandated testing and other required educational expenses.

Arkansas ranks 37th among the fifty states in education in the United States currently. Critics contend the LEARNS law will drain money and resources from public schools. By 2025-2026 all students will be eligible for vouchers and private schools and can follow their normal admissions process to43 admit or exclude students based on their own policies but follow federal law and not discriminate based on race, color or national origin. "Many rich families, who have already benefited significantly from state tax cuts in recent years, can get an additional boost to the after-tax disposable income once the vouchers are fully phased in." Arkansas Times.

According to the *Washington Post* (01/07/24), home schooling is surging and has increased by as much as 51 percent over the past six academic years. Home schooling data is limited, but the influx of funding hasn't been accompanied by a matching increase in oversight. 11 states don't require notification when families choose to educate their children at home. Home-schooled kids tend to come from wealthier backgrounds, and fewer than half of states require any sort of assessment of home-schooled children. Only five states, according to the Coalition for Responsible Home Education, have 'thorough' regimes.

Our history of education in Arkansas unveils the trials and tribulation of educating all its children. In 1907, John Dewey wrote in *The School and Society*, "What the best and wisest parent wants for his own child, that must the community want for all its children. Any other ideal for our school is narrow and unlovely; acted upon, it destroys our democracy."

A sense of community, and its history, is very important as constant change occurs in our daily lives. GCHS offers four public meetings each year and your annual membership keeps the museum operating. Our thanks to all the wonderful volunteers who have supported us since 2011. We appreciate all that you do, and we look forward to interacting with everyone at our four annual meetings in January, April, July and October.

GCHS Board: President; Patricia Heck: Secretary; Judi Walter: Treasurer; Sam Reynolds and board members: Ruth Billingsley, Dorothy Williams and Kein Cross.

Dues are \$25 a year. Please send your check to Sam Reynolds, 20916 Slate Gap Road, Garfield, AR 72732

Our first general meeting of 2024 will be January 28 at 2 p.m. at Lost Bridge Community Room.

Erin Rowe and her band will perform and refreshments will be served. It will be fun!

