

The Slate

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Fall 2018

Dr. Lawrence Schlack-A Life Well-lived

By Rochelle Balkam

In a world today when it is sometimes hard to find a hero, we know when we have lost one. The passing of Dr. Lawrence Schlack, has



diminished the great names in the arena of educators in Michigan. I have known Larry for 25 years, since the inaugural meeting of the Michigan One-room Schoolhouse Association at EMU. We served on the board of MORSA for over 20

years. He was tireless in his support and encouragement of all who sought to preserve, protect and foster all things related to one-room schools. He chaired annual conferences, spoke eloquently each year and communicated extensively with the education network. At our board meetings, we looked forward to Larry's meticulous treasurer's report, always on beautiful-hued paper.

In reading the many messages of condolence, one theme shines through: Larry was the epitome of a gentleman; always the visionary, firm

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Chairman's Report

DEDICATION

I want to dedicate this issue of The Slate to Larry Schlack, a founding Board member who died in early July. Larry was truly a lodestar for the organization and for me personally. We all miss him!

2018 ANNUAL CONFERENCE REPORT

The 2018 Annual Conference, which was held in May at the Williamston Depot Museum, was in my mind, far more successful than I had hoped. The first speaker was Tim Bennett. He discussed the purchase of the Hicks School, located near Pinckney, how it was readied to be moved, the move itself, (in June 2016, the Hicks school was moved 21 miles to the historic Warner homestead in Brighton, MI) and the progress he is making on its restoration. In the move the school had to go under an overpass which it cleared by only one and a half inches. Tim's presentation was both excellent and informative and enhanced by a display of the results of archeological digs at the school site as well as at his family's longstanding farm. Thanks,

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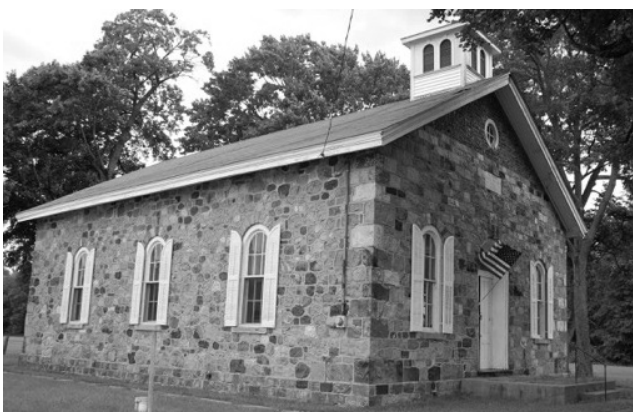
Dr. Lawrence Schlack

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in his belief that every student has worth. He was a tribute to his community and to the wider education community. His worldview encompassed humanity and his belief in each person's unique contribution. His sense of humor set him apart from many in the field of education.

When my brother, Dr. Geoffrey Balkam, superintendent of the Climax-Scotts school district died in a motorcycle accident, Larry was one of the first people to offer condolences. His memorial remarks helped to lighten the burden of Geoffrey's loss.

He had worked with Geof extensively in the Michigan Superintendent's Council, of which Geof was president. His peers always respected his opinions and his wise advice was always sought. Both Larry and Geoffrey were honored by WMU with the Golden Apple Award for their contribution to the field of education. May the flame of his inspiration continue to burn brightly.



"Schoolhouse of the Year Award 2018" was given to the Nottawa Stone School located in St. Joseph County, east of Three Rivers, MI. It was in use from 1870 to 1961 and was restored in 1968—a perfect choice for the award.

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Tim.

Rochelle Balkam then gave an overview of MORSA, its past and present along with a history of the Town Hall School now located on the campus of Eastern Michigan University. It is used by the Education Department as a demonstration school. As always, Rochelle did an excellent job.

I then started on the topic "MORSA's Future." First, we went around the room and had everyone introduce themselves and tell why they were there. It seemed that everyone there was working on a school restoration or had a strong interest in one room schoolhouses. I didn't have to do much talking (unusual) because everyone contributed to the discussion. During this session, we received many positive suggestions for what we should do to strengthen MORSA. Foremost we must repatriate our website, then bring it up to date by inputting the corrections, updates, omissions and photos we have received over the past year. Utilizing social media, such as Facebook, was also mentioned as being important.

Following this very helpful session a professional film entitled "Country School: One Room One Nation – the life, death and rebirth of an America icon" was shown. It appeared to be well received.

During lunch we had a very short membership meeting after which Rochelle presented the "Schoolhouse of the Year Award" to the Nottawa Stone School, located in St. Joseph County, east of Three Rivers, MI. It was in use from 1870 to 1961 and was a perfect choice for the award. After it closed it was saved due to the efforts

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of two men, Dick Cripe and Warren Lawrence and reopened in 1968. It is well worth seeing and is open by request April through October.

Following lunch, we split into two groups. One headed to the Branch School (aka The Little Africa School in the Africa School District) owned by Williamstown Township. The school has been restored to be historically accurate. The other group went to the White Dog School south of Williamston (a school to home conversion) where the owner, Donna Hensey, had them not only tour the home, but had much of the school's historical documents available for perusal. The groups then switched, and the meeting ended.

MORE ABOUT MORSA

Having said the above, I must tell you that MORSA is in trouble. We have a 12-member board and of those only six show up consistently. Of the six, we have lost Larry, Sue Daniel is no longer able to participate, and two others are at present in ill health. That leaves two active members. Several other board members attend when they are able. I believe we attracted three new board members and their first meeting will be held in October. I would welcome any input you may have. Just contact me at (517) 655-1030 or send an email to tjjj@wowway.com.

One side note is that I received a call from Greenmead, the Livonia Historical Park where Sue Daniel worked, saying we needed to retrieve Sue's material as they needed the space where it was being stored. It resulted in one SUV loaded with papers, books and knick-knacks which I brought to one of my barns to store temporarily. Most of the material involved her significant school survey which is on our website as well as the work she was doing on cataloguing school furniture. Several

MORSA receives many inquiries regarding our website – additions and corrections. Unfortunately, at present MORSA's website is not user friendly and does not appear to have some of the capabilities we need. IS THERE ANYONE IN OUR MEMBERSHIP WHO CAN ADVISE US ON HOW TO DEVELOP THE KIND OF WEBSITE WE NEED AND TRANSFER THE INFORMATION IN OUR PRESENT WEBSITE TO THE NEW ONE? It has also been suggested that we should be on social media. Can anyone assist us with that?

If you can help, please contact MORSA Chair Tom M Johnson at (517) 655-1030 or tjjj@wowway.com.

weeks later the delightful director of the archives at Eastern Michigan University, Alexis Braun Marx, came, sorted through all the material and removed 95% of the material. It is where it should be. Once they have archived it, it will be available to the public for research purposes.

Tongue-Twisters

*Amidst the mist and coldest frosts
With barest wrists and stoutest boasts
He thrusts his fists against the posts
And still insists he sees the ghosts.

*The sun shines on shop signs.

*Shy Sally saw six Swiss wrist watches.



L-R Front Row: Linda (Stennett) Wauchek, Joyce (Latchaw) Herweyer, Mary Ann (Adkin) Schlack, Earlene (Osman) Frahm, Jane Ann (Collins) Nally (teacher 1952-1953), Tim Stennett, Barbara (Latchaw) Perrin **Mid-
dle Row:** Scott Evans, Kay (Kuney) Brush, Darla (Adkin) Johnson, Robert Osman, Sherry (Flora) Grigg, Dawn (Osman) Bronson, Larry Osman, Dora Lee (Ransom) Young, Joanne (Dailey) McCauslin, Sally Stevens, Dawn Clark, Renee (Kark) Wilkinson, Christine (Hogle) Hexn, Donald Kark **Back Row:** Jerry Decker, Gary Flora, Barbara (Van De Wiele) Criffield, Nora (Dailey) Drew, LeRoy Hogle, Chuck Stennett, Craig Osman, Clare Adkin, Ron Stevens, Russ Latchaw, David Clark, Jack Decker. Robert Ulmer attended but is not pictured.

Iddles School Reunion

By Clare Adkin

Sunday, July 15, 2018, 1PM. Cars and trucks choke the driveway and line the narrow country road that passes in front of Chuck Stennett's farm. It is a distinctive countryside setting complete with house, barn and silo, out buildings, and various pieces of farm equipment surrounded on two sides by acres of tall green corn. An impression of an earlier place and time comes to mind. But for those of us gathering in Chuck's spacious barn, it possesses a sentimental familiarity.

An eclectic assortment of tables and chairs are arranged in front of a long serving counter where guests are placing their favorite picnic dishes complete with tongs, serving spoons and forks. Of course there is ample potato salad and bacon laced baked beans, but few can pass-up a scoop or two of an appetizing casserole or a second helping of fresh fruit. And for dessert, well the rhubarb pie disappears early. Enough said.

This is the annual Iddles School Reunion. It started way back during the summer of 1928 and has been repeated without fail for 90 years. The school traces its origin from 1859 when Thomas Iddles, a yeoman farmer, built a simple log cabin

in the woods to serve as a school.

As fate would have it, 69 years later Mary Ann (Iddles) Litts, Thomas Iddles' daughter, organized the first reunion which was held in front of the new school house. A potluck picnic lunch was laid out on the bed of her son's truck. From that day forth the annual reunion has always been potluck.

The school was an impressive red brick one-room school house built in 1901 and a symbol of community pride. It surpassed state mandated educational specifications. For over half a century this STANDARD SCHOOL served district children through the eighth grade. Closed to students in 1965 it stands vacant today succumbing to nature's encroachment.

Old schoolmates and new acquaintances compete to tell stories of good times spent at their cherished country school. "Do you remember Dick Bushee pushing his Whizzer motorbike to and from school?" "Don't believe he ever got the damn thing started." "Who jacked-up Miss Hastings rear axle?" Joyce Latchaw repeated, "It's true. I met my first husband at second base." "You mean they allowed girls to play?" "You kidding me? Our teacher Miss Knox was the best player!"

The din rises with the arrival of more alumni. Chuck, the president by acclamation, attempts

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without success to call for quiet so he can offer a blessing before the meal. One creative alum bangs on a piece of sheet metal found leaning against an interior wall. Chuck acknowledges the bizarre introduction and asks for heads to bow. He concludes grace, "And God please make sure that David Clark does not sit next to Allen Brush." A unison amen is seasoned with amused chuckles.

Conversations resume as folks pass along the food counter. "Do you remember the penny suppers that were held to raise money for playground equipment?" "I remember homemade ice cream that made my forehead hurt!" "Who brought these pickled peaches? They're special. Just like Ethel Van Blarcum used to can."

The noise level continues to increase during the meal as alumni and guests compete to share their recollections of bygone school days. Some story tellers tend to stretch creative license, but no one cares. Memories grow with age—a good thing. Smiling faces, laughter and friendly support for fellow reunion goers abounds.

After a comfortable time, Chuck calls his student body to order for a brief program. Once he has our attention he shares a story of running outside the school to cheer a Negro military convoy passing the school during WWII. His unadulterated pride is heartfelt.

Chuck turns to the alumni secretary Sally Stevens for direction as to what to cover next, but inadvertently calls her Alice. Sally immediately corrects him as it is not the first time such a slipup has been made by our hearing impaired president. The crowd laughs hysterically as Chuck sheepishly faces Sally. While his attention is diverted, someone barks, "Raise your hand if you attended Iddles." Over half raise their hands. When Chuck turns back around and sees all the hands held high, in bewilderment he asks, "What are we voting on?"

Before the laughter dies down, someone else yells, "I move that we accept the same slate of officers for next year!" There is a second and before Sally can complete, "All in favor say..." The eyes rattle the barn rafters. "Chuck, may we have next year's reunion here again?" Chuck's smile of agreement says it all.

As a self-described Iddles school historian, I am asked to say a few words. In anticipation of such an opportunity I brought with me a little 1940 souvenir

program that teacher Peggy (Johnson) Rogers had given each of her students at the end of year picnic. There was room on back for a student, in this case first grader Lois Jane (Hess) Loman, to write the names of all their schoolmates. In as loud a voice as I can project I call roll for the 36 names Lois Jane entered. All students present in the barn have a direct relationship with at least one or more students on the class list. In fact two of the 1940 students are present and represent two of the last three 1962 (date of annexation) Iddles school board members, LeRoy Hogle and Chuck Stennett.

As the cheerful reunion continues there is a general wish for children and grandchildren, and great grandchildren to know and appreciate what our country school lives were like. Pleasant reminiscences ramble on until all the tables and chairs are broken down and the last alum departs. The most we can hope for is for today's youth to look back *someday ages and ages hence* and experience the same joy in knowing they had a childhood well spent. The Iddles alumni pictured below are well-fed and wearing shoes. Several remember that was not always the case. We look forward to next year's reunion. All is well.



The happy noise of youth may fade, but remembering such will forever be the melody of life.

***One Room Schools- Country Schools of the Past
As Governed under the School Law of 1864***

*School House Notes by Author/Professor Cheryl Vatcher
Martin, M.A.*

Rule #19 (Section 11- Rules Governing Teachers) Encourage in every suitable way, a spirit of diligence, obedience, perseverance, kindness, forbearance, honesty, truthfulness purity and courteousness.

In Canton Township, there were several schools that educated students under the school law of 1864; including, Bartlett, Canton Center School, (still standing, presently exhibiting inside its museum a replica of the one room school) it has a Michigan historical marker; Cherry Hill School, is a local and state historic site, and is part of the National Register Historic District of Cherry Hill Village. It is used and rented for a variety of events. Originally built in the 1830's as a log cabin; and rebuilt in 1875, as the Italianate style building that showcases the workmanship of the era. Local scholars were also educated through, Hanford, Hough, Truesdell, Walker, Palmer, and Sheldon School, built in 1870, is listed as a Michigan State historic site. In Romulus, where I am an active docent, re-enactor during the Pumpkin Festival, and researcher, there were at least nine one room school houses that educated the young and older scholars in the 1800's. Much of the research I procure is housed inside of District No. 1 School house which has materials from a few of the schools and original ledgers from Mt. Pleasant and Hayti's One Room school, and a hand-written copy of the original school board meetings from 1839 that belong to the first school listed.

Of note, District No. 1 is an active hub for researchers and visitors mainly on Sundays. Corey School, which had three different school rooms; with the last one built is presently used as a pre-school. East Tyler, and Mt. Pleasant had three separate structures and locations. Hale, and Hayti were active country schools as well. Texas School, was located on Goddard towards Inkster Road. All of them have files about their histories in the museum. Lastly, Woodville's One Room School House was located in the middle of Detroit's Metro Airport in Romulus, Mi! Unfortunately, there is no historical designation for that school at the airport. What all of these schools have in common is and was the road map provided by the Rules and Regulations for the government of public schools. According to

sec 57 of the school laws of 1864, it is the duty of the District Board to "establish all needful regulations" for the management of the school.

Section 11- Advisory Suggestions for Teachers (It includes numerous requirements to ascertain that the school teacher was fully in charge of the school room, before, during and after the Scholars lesson plans ended. Of note, there is no mention of the teacher as being a female in the School Law of 1864.

#3. The hours of study, recitation, and recreation, shall be arranged, in a written programme (French) and these hours shall be punctually and strictly observed.

Rules Governing Pupils (Sec.111) in pertinent part, #1- Every scholar on entering the school grounds shall go directly to his school-room, or to such portions of the grounds as are assigned for recreation; and none may loiter on the walks or steps...In section V, the Miscellaneous Rules includes in part, #2 The books used and the studies pursued....shall be such and such only as may be authorized by the Board. Those words from 1864 speak to all educators in 2018! Reading and thinking about these items are refreshing for me as a researcher and an author!

For my book, One Room Schools – Vanishing One Room Schools, Haiku For You: With Some One Room School House History, etc., I can be contacted at Peroinc5@gmail.com.

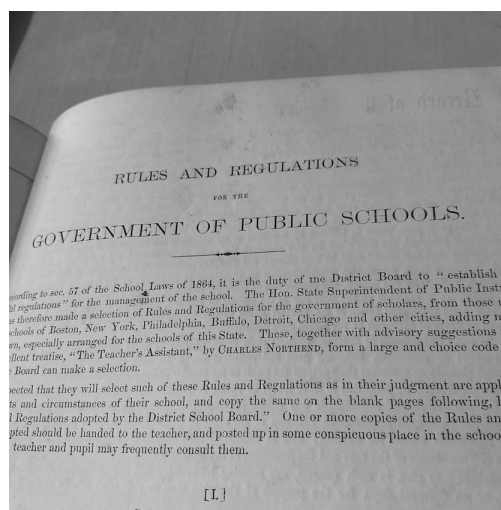


Photo by Author Cheryl Vatcher-Martin, MA, TDL, on 8-26-18.

*Louise Matilda Frederika
Zahn Zeeb—Portrait of a One-room
School Teacher*

By Rochelle Balkam

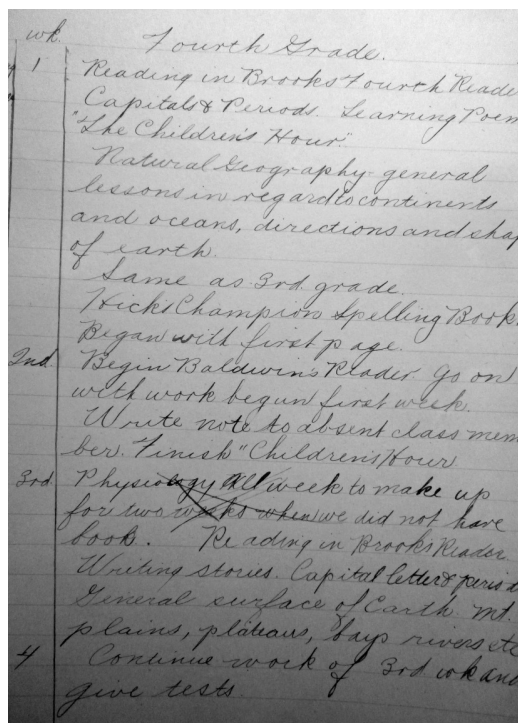
I am honored to have a family connection to this remarkable woman. She was my children's great-aunt. I knew her for years without having heard that she had taught school before marrying her husband, Walter Zeeb. Their family farm in Ann Arbor Township was sold to Tom Monaghan and is now a part of the world headquarters of Domino's Pizza and Domino's Farms. Appropriately, there are buffalo, cattle, and other animals including a petting farm on the property.

I have remained in contact with her granddaughter, Martha Zeeb. Over lunch this summer, I learned so much more about her grandmother. Her family rented a farm on Ford Rd. near Earhart, which is how she met her husband. She attended high school in Ann Arbor while living with an aunt and uncle on Packard St., probably graduating in 1918. She learned that she could go to the Normal College (now EMU) to become a teacher. The first school she taught at was the Wagner School, at Earhart and 5 Mile Rd. A cousin said he remembered seeing her walk past his house on Earhart Rd., through the mud to go home to her folks on Ford Rd. on the weekend. Her parents moved from Ford Rd. to Broadway Hill in Ann Arbor in March of 1919.

She then taught at Popkins School, on the corner of Plymouth Rd. and Old Earhart Rd. She lived in an apartment in Ed Zeeb's house, he was the brother of her future husband. Louise married Walter Zeeb in June of 1921, ending her teaching career.

The family has donated Louise's lesson plans, teaching materials and extensive notes to the one-room school archives at EMU. They are treasured artifacts. Louise made meticulous notes and plans for each class, for each subject each day. Her knowledge of subject matter from British literature, to butterflies and insects, the Greek and Roman History to U.S. History with a large helping of mathematics and grammar thrown in was remarkable. In addition, she encouraged her students to recite, perform in skits and plan holiday parties. It was said that she could compete in many of the games the students played at recess.

Fourth Grade lesson plan by teacher, Louise Zahn, 1918-1919., Popkins School.



"Grandma taught at the Popkins School at Plymouth Road and Earhart the last couple of years. ~Granddaughter Martha Zeeb, Washenaw Co.

***Headline of Vol. 1, No. 1 of The Slate: “
One-room schoolhouse enthusiasts
organize” Spring 1994***

By Rochelle Balkam

May 14, 1993 was a significant day for those interested in Michigan's one-room schools. A conference was held at Mc Kenny Union on the Eastern Michigan campus devoted to the concept that the heritage of one-room school education deserved protection. The event became the founding organization for the Michigan One-room Schoolhouse Association. The conference was sponsored by EMU Historic Preservation program and the Historical Society of Michigan. Featured sessions included many topics: teaching in, attending and interpreting the one-room school. The goal set by the organization was to survey, protect and preserve the hundreds of buildings still standing. Michigan has one of the largest numbers of one-room schools still in existence in the US. Of course, many of the schools now serve other purposes such as museums, homes, commercial buildings and a few still operate as one-room schools.

Guests at the conference toured the Geddes Town-hall School, which had been moved from its original site on Morgan Road in Pittsfield Township

(Washtenaw County) to the EMU campus and restored in 1988. It became the symbol of the original mission of the school when it was founded in 1849, as a program for the training of teachers. Today, the mission has expanded: Education #One.

Today, the organization has carried out the goal of the original attendees. An extensive survey of the one-room schools is on the web, an annual conference is held and the newsletter, The Slate, is published bi-annually. Unfortunately, membership has declined as those who had a direct tie to one-room schools have passed on. Membership in many organizations is experiencing a decline. We have reached our 25 year anniversary and we intend to make sure that this organization continues to serve the people of Michigan.

We have had an offer from one of our members to update and enhance our web page and we have a new member, Tim Bennett, who has just completed the move of the Hicks one-room school to his ancestral family farm site.

~Down the Myrtle Path: The History and Memories of Town Hall School by Hannah Geddes Wright, recounting the story of Town Hall School, is available for a \$10 purchase. Contact hannahcwright47@gmail.com. for information.

Schoolhouse Association

2017/2018

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Membership Dues:

\$10 Senior (62+) or Student

\$15 Individual,

\$25 Organizations

\$100 Life

Website Address:

<<http://www.one-roomschool.org>

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c/o Tom M. Johnson

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