

T H E S I S .

Subject, *Local History in the*
Public School

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When we begin to study the history of our own state, county, or town, what a wide and interesting field of history opens to our view! The hills that surround us on every side become monuments, possessing as much interest as a Roman Colosseum; the valleys seem yet to be resounding with the Indians war-whoops. The peaceful waters of our beautiful streams seem to be yet rippling with the Indians canoe, as it glided along on their placid waters.

Amidst these scenes of savage life the early settler built his log hut around

which the wolf and the panther howled at night. He cleared his fields with his gun by his side, that he might be able to defend himself from either beast or savage.

With all this interesting history at our command very few persons are acquainted with it. The children of our country are allowed to grow up in the midst of them and remain ignorant of all. As he runs over the hills there is nothing to indicate to him anything of the past; the large scars on the trunks of trees mean nothing to him; the arrow-head that

he finds by the wayside, means no more to him than the smooth pebbles by the river's side; the little mound in the valley is nothing more to him than a pile of stones and turf.

Should our towns or counties thus exist only in the present, while the past is a blank, as though there had been nothing in the past? No. Let the young and the old know that they are living in a country full of historic incidents that will arouse the interest of all who hear them. Let the pupil read a story of Indian life in the arrow-head and the little mound, and a

story of the bear in the scar
in the trunk of the old tree.
How much interest will be
added to everything by which
we are surrounded!

Not only have we the thrill-
ing incidents of Indian
life: Here the early pioneer,
isolated from civilization, strug-
gled against wild beasts and
savages, to defend his home.
There is hardly a region where the
early pioneer has figured, in
which there is not a hero worthy
of study and imitation.
Through these pioneers, who knew
nothing but perseverance and
hardships, future generations
can be taught the true
road to success.

We also have the ruins of frontier posts, which were constructed as a defense against the Indians and the French.

During the French and Indian War, this section along the Monongahela River and vicinity was visited by the hero of heroes, which adds a living interest to any place where Washington is known to have been. By his having figured in these important events, the Monongahela is made to flow with a brighter sparkle. The road which he made can yet be pointed out in many places and the ruins of the fort in the Great Meadows can be traced by the traveler.

The Old National Pike has not only historic incidents of interest clustering around it, but also facts which are almost indispensable in the understanding of the early history of our country.

Local history can certainly be made a very interesting and important factor in our public schools. One instructive feature of this work would be the making of a local historic collection, which would stand as a representation of the history of the entire community. In this work, not only can the teacher and the pupils work together, but the entire community may be

enlisted in the work, and thus form a bond of sympathy between the school and the patrons.

This collection may consist of Indian relics, pictures of native Indians, pictures of historic sites and buildings, all the historic maps of the community, photographs and other pictures of persons who have been prominent in critical periods, old uniforms and costumes, old dishes, utensils, tools, coins, stamps, and portraits, and everything that will serve as a link between then and now."

The literature collection may consist of letters, diaries,

manuscripts, and other literature that has special reference to the sections of country.

Old people, and soldiers are very often a valuable source of information. In this collection pictures are of special value because they give the pupil an opportunity to compare the places as they are now with what they were sometime in the past, and in this way he can estimate the improvement and growth of the vicinity or town in which he lives.

All these relics serve to take the dullness out of the study

of history, and make it a pleasure instead of a task.

In all the gathering of materials and information, things of minor importance must often be used in order to secure the connection desired, but these are only the parts that help to make up the whole, and cannot be disregarded. The picture would not be complete without them.

In all this work the teacher must be the guide.

Bibliography.

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and History. W. W. Murry.
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Mary Sheldon Barnes.