

EDUCATION

By Frank E. Burd

Prior to 1700, settlers in what is now Hunterdon were few and far between. Shortly after this, English and German immigrants began to appear in the Amwell valley, and Dutch, followed by Germans, crossed into Northern Hunterdon from Somerset County. Dutch settlers established a church near the Readington border in 1719. The small sanctuary was destroyed by fire about 1738 and was rebuilt near its present site in Readington village. Quakers were also coming in, possibly encouraged by John Reading, who had taken up land in the vicinity of the present day Stockton and Rosemont. The latter were never as numerous as the others, having but one society, the Kingwood Meeting at Quakertown. But other English settlers of various religious persuasions had been coming in from the start.

The German settlers were attached to the Reformed and the Lutheran churches, and the Dutch to the Dutch Reformed Church. These had an educated clergy who were much concerned over the matter of providing some sort of education for the children. It is to these German and Dutch dominies that we must give credit for encouraging the setting up of the first schools. Often they did the teaching, especially among the older pupils who showed particular ability. The Quakers were not so fortunately situated. They maintained no clergy as such. But that they were concerned a bout the matter of educating their children is shown by this excerpt from the minutes of one of their monthly meetings held at Quakertown in 1752:

“We have likewise considered the proposal for settling a school, but being very few of us and so remote from each other and some of us under low circumstances, so that it seems unlikely to us that we shall be able to raise a sufficient salary to support such school, otherwise we should be very free and hearty to join with the proposal, believing it would in some good degree answer the good purpose intended.”

Definite sources of information regarding the very first schools are scare. David Murray, in his “History of Education in new Jersey” and Nelson R. Burr, in his “Education in New Jersey, 1631-1831” give pretty fair ideas of what these first schools were like. It seems reasonable to assume that what applied to the province as a whole to a large degree also held true for Hunterdon. It is clear that at least until 1750 the best schools were those which had a connection with a religious group. The Lutheran and Reformed groups, already mentioned, operated parochial schools using the German or the Dutch language. The best church schools using English were those of the Presbyterians, usually taught by ministers. Nearly as good were those of the Episcopalians. Just before the Revolution, an Episcopal missionary praised the “long and faithful services” of a teacher at Amwell and Kingwood, who was partly paid from England. Baptist and

other congregations often maintained a connection with the local school, generally through a minister.

But it was soon apparent that parochial schools did not reach far enough. The district or "common" school, managed by trustees, gradually evolved, and was soon recognized by the Province. Teachers were supposedly licensed by the Royal Governor, but probably few were. The first teachers, nearly always men, were largely a motley crew, "footloose and fancy free," so to speak. Many of them were fairly well educated, others with only a little more knowledge than their pupils. For some reason not clear, a great many were Irish who had wandered down from the New England colonies. Here today and gone tomorrow, they were willing for a small fee to attempt to keep a school for the winter. Some were redemptioners. Too poor to pay their own passage to the new World, they were forced to sell their time for a few years to discharge their passage costs. Some of the larger settlements were able to pool their scanty resources in order to "buy" a teacher to teach their children. No particular qualifications were necessary to become a school-master except a little smattering of knowledge, the ability to make ink and to whittle out quill pens, and the physical courage and stamina to "keep order". This was the era in which "licking and learning" was supposed to go together.

It must have been a problem to provide a suitable place for the schoolmaster to keep school. Early homes were small and always crowded, especially in the outlying areas. However, some small log schoolhouses were put up by community effort, usually by having a "frolic". Poorly heated, poorly ventilated and with scanty light, they were made to do. Books and materials of instruction as we know them were almost non-existent. Plimpton believes that the New England hornbook may have been used to some extent. This was a printed page fastened to a wooden backing and covered with horn to protect the printing. Such books as were available were handed down from the oldest to the youngest in the family until they were completely worn out. The New Testament appears to have been used a great deal as a reader. Much of the teaching was by rote, using the question and answer plan. The master sometimes had his own manuscript "cyphering book" from which he dictated problems. Writing had to be done with charcoal on some fairly clean flat surface. Old deeds and other papers which have come down to us would lead us to the conclusion that spelling was not one of the strong points, though Dilworth's spelling book was in use. Up until the time of the Revolution, no Geography was taught. Morse's Geography was not to appear until 1791. The hours of school were long, usually beginning around eight in the morning. At noon an hour's recess was given, then the master summoned his pupils again by rapping on the window frame and calling "books- books". School then continued until late in the afternoon, sometimes as long as daylight lasted.

By the beginning of the second half of the eighteenth century we get a clearer picture of the progress of education in early Hunterdon. Frequent

references are now found concerning the building of schools. Churches in the county were becoming more firmly established. The coming of a church into an area usually brought some effort to provide instruction for the young. This was often under the prodding of the clergy. It goes without saying that no church could prosper unless the communicants were able to read the Scriptures, be it ever so haltingly. The Friends had established the Kingwood Meeting around 1730. They are said to have bought land for school purposes in 1746. In their case, it does not seem likely that they were able to start a school until some time later, if at all.

But an Anglican or Episcopalian Church were already in the area, having made plans for what was to be known as St. Thomas's Church as early as 1723. Dr. Henry Race tells of a lease taken for ground on which to build a school at Everitt's Corner, about two miles southwest of Pittstown, in 1756. From an implication in the lease, it is clear that a school was already in existence. From the list of names signing the lease this school would appear to have been a sort of joint project of the Quakers, Episcopalians and Presbyterians in the immediate locality. In other words, a district school had been formed. An account book kept by Dr. James Willson in 1752 made reference to William Rennels as the schoolmaster. Tradition also tells of a school built by the Anglicans at Ringoes as early as 1720. Be that as it may, it soon must have languished because the Church was later removed to what is now Lambertville to become the beginning of St. Andrews parish.

A partial recital will show how rapidly church formation followed settlement. From 1745 to 1748 the Rev. Henry Melchior Muhlenberg visited the early Lutheran Congregations near Whitehouse and Fairmount with the result that Zion Luther Church was established in present Oldwick in 1749, a merger of the Rockaway (Potterstown), Leslysland (Whitehouse) and Fox Hill groups. Spruce Run Lutheran followed in 1774. The Presbyterians had established themselves at Amwell (now Reaville Church) in 1738. Bethlehem Presbyterian Church was founded in the 1730's at what is now Grandin. The Log Church at what is now Mount Pleasant, later to be known as the Alexandria Presbyterian Church, was organized in 1752. Kingwood Presbyterian near Baptistown was built in 1775. The Baptists also claim to have established a church in Kingwood Township as early as 1741. The German Baptists or Dunkards were in Amwell as early as 1730 or even before.

The German settlers had established a church at what is now Larison's Corner as early as 1747. The Dutch had long been in the Readington area, having organized their church near that place in 1719. Methodism was not to gain a foothold until Revolutionary times. Bishop Asbury, himself paid several visits to the area between 1782 and 1811. Kingwood Church proudly boasts of his having preached from Pulpit Rock. The Roman Catholics established their first church in Hunterdon when St. John's was dedicated in Lambertville in 1842. Many of the above congregations had church schools for a longer or shorter

time. The church school movement of the Roman Catholics encouraged the founding of St. John's Parochial School in Lambertville in 1865 with 200 pupils. This school closed in 1870 to be reopened in 1883 on its present site. The convent where the Sisters staffing the school live was formerly the home of John Marshall. John Marshall later became famous as the discoverer of gold in California. The first Jewish Community Center was organized in Flemington in 1923 with Samuel Potter as President. The group had its first building in 1933.

In the national period, there was an increased interest in providing more and better schools. Most of the little log buildings were replaced by small frame or stone buildings. Panes of glass appeared in the windows to replace the oiled paper. Desks were still usually a shelf along the outside wall, and the benches were backless. Pupils still lined up in a row to recite, hence the term "toeing the mark". Books were becoming a little more common, though pencils and paper were still less common than slates. The type of teachers seemed to improve also, as shown by the names which have come down to us. Gone were most of the itinerant pedagogues. While men still predominated, many women were becoming teachers, especially for the "spring term," when the larger boys would be working in the fields. It is noticeable that the names of some of the teachers appear in different school districts through the years, indicating that many were making teaching their life's work. Some of the younger men, however, taught a term or two to get together some money toward paying their way through college. Many ministers still taught on the side to eke out their incomes.

Just how well the average child was educated at that time is difficult to say. This is especially true among children from poorer homes. Those born into more fortunate circumstances could later attend one of the classical schools to round out their education. There is reason to believe that many grew up unable to read or write, due to circumstances or indifference. In general, less attention was paid to the education of girls than to boys.

Yet, the account books of tradesmen and mechanics which have come down to us are evidence that somehow people had learned to keep simple accounts and to do it fairly well. Little scraps of paper given as receipts for monies paid show that most farmers were able to read and write a little. During the change over from the English system of pounds, shillings and pence to our dollar system, it was often necessary to use a formula to translate to an equivalent value. That also was handled in a satisfactory manner.

In the early nineteenth century, each school seems to have been an entity unto itself. State control or regulation was non-existent. When it became necessary to put up a new building, the men of the neighborhood got together and did what was required. Land for a school site wasn't always bought but often leased for a long time, usually ninety-nine years. This practice was to be the cause of much vexatious legal trouble in later years when the time came to turn the property back to the heirs of the original lessor.

The three men in each district known as trustees were to remain in charge for a long time to come. New school buildings were usually located where they would conveniently serve the most pupils. No particular attention was paid to township boundary lines. In later years, this left some schools standing on the very edge of townships, so that part of the pupils were non-residents. This frequently happened where a public highway served as the boundary line between two townships. The schools which were along the "Old Trenton Road" were examples of the haphazard situation.

The century was not very old before a definite pattern in school control began to take shape. In 1817 the Legislature set up the first school fund and a year created a board of trustees to manage the same. In 1820 townships were authorized to raise money for school purposes. In 1824 it was enacted that one tenth of all moneys paid into the State in taxes was to be set aside and added to the school fund. In 1829 the Legislature appropriated \$20,000.00 annually for school aid.

In that year, as the result of this act, the first comprehensive school law in New Jersey, Hunterdon County received for its share \$2,267.92, proportioned among the various townships in proportion to the County Tax each paid:

Amwell	595.87	Readington	200.31
Trenton	176.89	Lebanon	244.15
Lawrence	112.73	Bethlehem	126.26
Hopewell	269.93	Tewksbury	114.41
Kingwood	211.89	Alexandria	215.49

Those pitifully small sums were used to pay the subscriptions of pupils whose parents could not afford to pay. Unfortunately, there was a stigma attached to being a "pauper" student.

In 1845, a State Superintendent of Schools was provided for as were township superintendents in 1846. In 1851, the school fund was increased to \$40,000.00 for distribution among the counties. In 1854, Teachers' Institutes were established, the first of which was held in Flemington for five days starting August 1, 1854. It was not until 1871 that the schools were made entirely free by State law. From that date until this, most of the costs of education have been raised by local taxation.

At first, the people living near a school, and who could afford it, had shared the costs of the school building. But as buildings became larger and more expensive, local taxation became the source of revenue from which buildings were constructed. The salaries of teachers in many areas were raised by subscription right up to 1871. A teacher must see how many parents wished

to send their children to the proposed school, and collect the fee of \$1.50 to \$2.00 per quarter for each pupil. The lucky teacher might well make as much as a laborer.

John Laing of Quakertown in December, 1850, made an agreement with nineteen residents of District No. 2 in Franklin Township to keep a school for one quarter of seventy-two days at \$2.00 per pupil. He agreed to teach the common branches such as reading, writing arithmetic, and spelling. The patrons were to furnish what they termed the necessary articles for a school, plus suitable quarters and fuel. All told he would have received about \$48.00 for the term and was under the necessity of collecting the money himself.

The building in which Laing proposed to start his school was about a mile and a half southwest of Quakertown, along the road from Allen's Corner to Mason's corner. It stood in the woods on land leased from the Willson family. Built in 1836, it continued to be used until 1871, when a new and larger building was put up nearby on land bought from Joseph Myers. The old building was then moved to a new location near the farmhouse of James Willson, where it still stands in a fair state of preservation. Long used as a workshop and tool shed, it now belongs to Mrs. William B. Ewing. It could well be the oldest building still standing in Hunterdon County that was once used as a schoolhouse.

Early in the last century some very unusual looking schoolhouses made their appearance in Hunterdon County. These were the so-called "eight square" schools. They were really not eight-sided but six sided or hexagonal in shape. Built of stone with a chimney sticking up from the apex of the roof, they much resembled an old-fashioned inkbottle. Sometimes they were called inkstand schools. There were at least four of these peculiar shaped schools in the county: Van Dolah's (1822) at Sandy Ridge; Harmony (1851) along the Trenton Road below Croton; Slack's Corner, between Croton and Baptistown; and Mount Lebanon (1833) in Lebanon Township. Van Dolah's and Harmony continued to be used until after the beginning of the present century and are still recalled with fondness by some of the older residents.

In the meantime, a slow but steady improvement was coming about in the materials of instruction. Gone were the quill pens from the master's desk. The new steel pens were coming into use. Lead pencils had made their appearance. Supplies and books had to be furnished by the pupils themselves. The backless benches around the outside of the room were being replaced by double desks and seats. Clumsy at first, they were, however, a big improvement. Hiram Deats at Pittstown manufactured some of these early school desks for a time. The better stores now began to carry textbooks in stock at prices parents could afford to pay. All the pupils in the third reader, for example would now be able to read from the same kind of textbook. McGuffey's and particular Sander's readers were widely used in Hunterdon County schools. Perkin's and Stoddard's Arithmetics were in common use. Grammar was taught from Pineo's or Smith's

Grammar. Geography could also be studied if one secured a copy of Colton's or Fitch's book.

Teachers still continued to be poorly paid. Those from outside their local district were forced to board around, a week at a time, in the various families, a practice which many teachers would gladly have avoided if possible. After 1846 teachers were required to secure a license before attempting to teach. These licenses were to be obtained from a local board of examiners appointed by the township superintendent.

The annual report of the State Superintendent of Public Instruction for 1859 contains some interesting information. It was supposed to be made up from the reports of the township superintendent of schools from all over the State. Apparently, though, not all superintendents took the trouble to file a report. Township superintendents were elected by the people and were generally from the professional classes. Once in a while a farmer would be given the office, as was once the case in Kingwood Township. Hunterdon's showing among the reports was not very good. Only four of her township superintendents took the trouble to make a report. Attendance appears to have been rather poor, buildings were in bad repair, teachers were poorly paid and hard to secure and, above all, money was scarce. Evidently the State was not always prompt in disbursing state aid. Kingwood Township for the previous year had received only \$500.00 from the State. Some teachers were receiving as high as \$600.00 per year, but in many cases women teachers were required to teach a whole year for only \$190.00. The State Superintendent made the observation that in his opinion it would be a good thing to abandon the system of local district control and to place the schools directly under one system of administration on a township-wide basis. This was a change which was to be a quarter-century in coming.

While this painfully slow process was being made in the field of elementary education, there seemed to be an increasing interest in what we know as education on the secondary level. This was the era in which private schools and academics sprung up and flourished, though sometimes but briefly. It would be hard to list all of them, but some of the best remembered were: The Academy of Arts and Sciences at Ringoes under Dr. C.W. Larison and the Young Ladies Seminary at Ringoes under the leadership of his sister-in-law, Mrs. Katherine B. Larison. Stockton had an academy at one time. There were also private schools in Lambertville. New Germantown (now Oldwick) boasted two or three- the best known of which was Barnet Hall. Clarksville had its Mondalia Academy. At Quakertown, a stock company put up a two-story stone building in 1850 designed to be an Academy. The company unfortunately ran into financial trouble and the Odd Fellows Lodge took over the upper story while the public school moved into the downstairs room. Flemington had an academy dating back to 1811. It appears to have lapsed in the 1840's but in 1855 a new academy was started in the old Lyceum building at the foot of Court Street. William Heath was the first principal, followed by John S. Higgins and later Dr.

C.W. Larison. This school was carried on quite successfully until Reading Academy was built on Bonnell Street, when it appears to have been absorbed by the new school, which, after several years, was to evolve into Flemington High School.

As the population of Hunterdon increased, there seems to have been a general increase in cultural interest. Schools fast became the centers of community life. Singing schools used many buildings during the evening hours, and several little towns had debating societies. One of the best known of these was organized at Quakertown in the 1860's. Among its most active members were two bright young fellows from the "Swamp" – Egebert Bush and William Barrick. Another was young "Newt" Best, later to become Dr. George N. Best, famous as a botanist and for many years a practicing physician at Rosemont. Like many another such society the Quakertown Debating Society was undaunted by the most difficult or abstruse of topics. For a short time, a group published a small newspaper called "The Quakertown Slasher". The Hon. George O. Vanderbilt, writing in 1913 of his days as a teacher at Quakertown, observes that it was indeed a "slasher", slashing into anyone and everyone. Perhaps it is understandable that the paper was short-lived.

Sunday schools, which began to flourish in Hunterdon about the middle of the century, often made use of an available schoolroom as a place to meet. Box socials, political meetings, and an occasional traveling show would be held in an available schoolroom during the evening hours. It is understandable that so many school communities were loath to part with their little one-room schools when the consolidated schools began to take over. In their passing, Hunterdon, along with the rest of the country, appears to have lost something that had become part of the American tradition.

In 1867, the office of County Superintendent of Schools was created. The first Superintendent in Hunterdon was John C. Rafferty, followed by Rev. C.S. Conkling, Rulif Swackhammer, Oliver H. Hoffman, Edward M. Heath and Jason S. Hoffman, to mention some of the earlier ones. These were all well-educated, capable men who did much to raise the standard of education in Hunterdon County. Perhaps the best recalled because of his long tenure is Jason S. Hoffman, who held the office for over thirty-five years. Harry W. Moore who was superintendent from 1928 to 1948 will long be remembered for his untiring efforts to bring about the consolidation of the district schools, and creation of regional high school districts. When the office of County Superintendent was created, the old township boards of examiners were abolished, and a single county board, appointed by the county superintendent, was set up. Certificates obtainable by successfully taking an examination were first, second and third grade state certificates.

Roughly, the buildings of schools in Hunterdon County may be divided into five general periods. The first period of makeshift buildings lasted until about the

close of the Revolution. The second period of more substantial buildings lasted until about 1825. The third period, during which academies and private schools came into being, continued through the second and third quarters of the nineteenth century. The period of the one-room district school ended during the 1940's. The fifth, and present, period is that of the consolidated school. It was not unusual, early in the present century, for teachers to receive less than \$50.00 per month, out of which they must pay their board and clothes themselves. Despite the low salaries, there was a group of men teachers in Hunterdon County who remained faithful to the teaching profession until the time of their retirement. They were indeed remarkable and truly dedicated men. Often with a rather limited preparation for teaching, so great was their zeal and enthusiasm for education that they were able to inspire their more promising pupils to press onward toward goals they themselves had been unable to attain. Some of these men were perhaps none too easy to get along with and they were sometimes over-exacting in their demands. These minor shortcomings have long since been forgotten in light of what they so unselfishly were willing to give to those who came under their tutelage.

This was the period in which secondary education became thoroughly established in Hunterdon County. By 1900 there were good four-year High Schools in Flemington, Lambertville, Clinton, High Bridge, Frenchtown, and Hampton. Parents and pupils alike were coming to see that an eighth grade education was not enough to meet the challenge of the 20th century. Transportation of pupils remote from school at public expense was now permissible, and in time became customary. Textbooks and supplies became free to pupils. Local townships now were required to pay the tuition cost of pupils attending high school. A completely new climate seemed to surround education.

This situation was further improved when, in 1912, the State Legislature gave the educational system a complete overhauling. The office of the State Superintendent was supplanted by that of a Commissioner of Education, aided by a corps of Assistant Commissioners, Dr. Calvin N. Kendall was brought to New Jersey to head up the new system. The old county boards of examiners were abolished, and a statewide system of elementary and secondary certification was introduced. State summer schools were inaugurated for the training of would-be teachers. A native son of Hunterdon, Charles A. Philhower, had a prominent role in bring about many of the changes.

At the same time the pressure for the consolidation of schools was stepped up, with the result that before the century was half over, local schools had become something of the past. On the secondary level, high school enrollment increased so rapidly that the facilities of the county high schools became taxed far beyond their limits. The only solution appeared to be the creation of regional high schools. Four of these have been set up in Hunterdon. These take care of pupils on the secondary level in all the districts except High Bridge and Bloomsbury, which preferred to retain their own high school

arrangements. The first regional school district in Hunterdon was formed in 1947 when North Hunterdon regional High School District was created by the Townships of Bethlehem, Clinton, Franklin, Lebanon, Tewksbury and Union, the Town of Clinton and the boros of Califon, Hampton, Glen Gardner and Lebanon. This was the largest number of districts in new Jersey ever to regionalize. In 1954 Delaware, East Amwell, Raritan and Readington Townships and the Boros of Flemington formed the Hunterdon Central High School District. In 1956, Alexandria, Holland and Kingwood Townships and Milford and Frenchtown Boros formed the Delaware Valley Regional High School District. In the same year, South Hunterdon Regional High School District was formed by West Amwell Township, Lambertville and Stockton Boro joining together. Flemington Boro and Raritan Township on July 1, 1961, formed a regional school district to operate an elementary school, after having been previously joined in the consolidated form in July 1948.

From the humble beginning in a log cabin school here and there throughout the county, the local religious leaders for teachers and pupils attending school a few months of their lives, public education of its youth has come to be one of Hunterdon's proudest accomplishments. At the present time there are approximately 14,000 students enrolled in 35 schools being taught by 700 teachers.

EDUCATION 1989

Updated by Stephanie Stevens

In the last 25 years, elementary and secondary schools, like the rest of the county, underwent enormous changes. In 1964, Hunterdon Central High School had 1,418 students in one school building. Likewise, North Hunterdon High School had one school with 1,194 students. High Bridge with 134 students still supported a high school and did not become part of the North Hunterdon District until October 10, 1972. South Hunterdon High School opened in 1959 for grades 7-12. Most of the grammar schools in the county contained kindergarten through eighth grades in one building. Elementary school children did not move from class to class for different subjects, but remained in one classroom where their teacher taught all disciplines. On the lower level, art and music were not separate special subjects, and grammar school bands were unheard of. P.T.A.'s were very active throughout the county and raised funds so that pupils could have cultural assembly programs and books for libraries.

There were few school libraries in those days. In-class libraries were more the thing. Hunterdon County Library was in Flemington on the corner of Spring Street. Flemington Fur occupies the building today. Clinton, Flemington Borough and Lambertville had private library associations and there were several small local "lending" libraries started by civilians willing to share their books. Bi-weekly visits by the bookmobile served the reading public of Hunterdon for branch libraries did not exist. Bookmobiles had regular stops all over the county; in villages, near general stores, any place that could provide parking for several cars. There were two doors in the bookmobile, both on one side. One entered the read door entrance, selected books from shelves on both sides, then exited at the front door where the driver had a table top check-out desk. Bookmobiles were excellent in rural areas- when people couldn't get to the library, the library went to them.

Throughout the sixties Hunterdon was still very rural. School children were more versed in farm activities than anything else and agriculture courses on the high school level drew large numbers of students. It was not unusual to see a lamb or super large pumpkin appear at "Show and Tell" on the elementary level. The first day of deer hunting season traditionally was an "in-service" day for teachers, i.e., the teachers went to school for a workshop while the older students were out in the fields hunting. Such was life in rural districts!

Due to the discovery of Hunterdon by suburban families, the seventies brought vast changes in living styles to this county. Rural lifestyles prevailed but with land being developed in the border townships of Readington, Raritan and Clinton, the death knell tolled for agrarian living. Schools were sensitive to changing lifestyles and tried to meet the needs of the emerging population. Several schools housed K-4. Middle schools serving 5-8 became the norm. Nursery schools blossomed; auxiliary buildings of all kinds were put into use to

house the burgeoning kindergarten population. "Open" classroom type of instruction was introduced and eventually dropped in favor of the traditional class. "Modern math" and new reading methods were taught. The late seventies saw the grammar school curricula regularly include music and art instruction. New school construction and additions routinely included libraries. Branch libraries of the Hunterdon County library system opened, making reference materials more available to students. On the high school level, due to the sale of land, farm-oriented courses drew fewer and fewer students. Because of the crush, Voorhees High School, part of the North Hunterdon District, opened its doors in 1975.

The seventies also brought that scourge of the century- drugs.

With the sociological changes of the seventies and eighties, county schools once again changed gears to meet the needs of the current crop of youngsters. Course offerings contained such things as "Family Living and Child Care," alcohol and drug related information, sex education, affirmative action, women's rights, and AIDS instruction. Today computers take up one or two rooms in schools throughout the county. Since the early seventies, the special child has been educated at his level, while the eighties brought education opportunities for the gifted and talented student. The four Hunterdon high school districts with their five high schools share a vast vocational education organization. North, Central and Voorhees offer specialized courses and vocational students are bused between schools.

Students entering school today will be subject to a statewide and district testing program. Between kindergarten and twelfth grades, school children will be tested in several areas of academic proficiency. These tests are not so much to determine general intelligence as to assess student performance and district strengths and weaknesses. The next step is for the school district to improve its curricula in areas of most need.

Most 1980's mothers are employed. Hunterdon schools, therefore, have taken on the added burden of before and after-school care for the generation known as "latchkey kids." The working mother is a phenomenon of the century-are heretofore unheard-of species. All of this gives rise to the question of school responsibilities versus familial and societal responsibilities for children.

Hunterdon's school budget in 1989 totaled \$124,503,298. The average cost of educating an elementary school child is about \$4,231, a high school student, \$6,161; a far cry from the one-room schoolhouse of yesteryear where parents paid \$1.50 to \$2.00 per student per quarter. While the student of today is more sophisticated than his counterpart of the sixties, some things never change. In the sixties, Hunterdon County, on the high school level, was considered the hotbed of fine wrestling- it still is! Our children attend 43 schools throughout the county, and are well-educated. They enjoy small classes taught

by devoted teachers. Offerings on the high school level can compare with any school in the United States. Academically, today's youngsters are most competitive. Every year, we have several National Merit Scholarship finalists. Hunterdon County can be proud of her finest product- the educational system.