The Marshall Center One-Room School: Rural Community and Education in 1920s Iowa

Interpretive Plan
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# Interpretive Plan

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The Marshall Center One-Room School: 
Rural Community and Education in 1920s Iowa

Abstract

The Marshall Center School, a one-room schoolhouse that operated from 1893 to 1944 in Pocahontas County, Iowa, offers visitors a glimpse into the world of rural education and its importance to rural communities. During the 1920s, the height of the schoolhouse’s operation, the Marshall Center School fostered the lives of a core group of families who lived in the neighborhood and the children who attended the school. It also reflected the changing landscape of teacher training and rural educational practices. Rural education at the Marshall Center School shaped and was shaped by the cultural and educational values held by community members and education officials. Community leaders and education officials directed and influenced curriculum intended to educate students in what they believed were the necessary aptitudes and attitudes required for participation in American economic, social, and civic life. The school connected individuals and the larger neighborhood to a world of ideas and practices. Teachers, students and their families, and community members and organizations shaped the operation and function of the Marshall Center School within the rural community by adapting and transforming larger ideas of rural education to serve their particular purposes in Pocahontas County.
Interpretive Goals

1. Communicate the history of the Marshall Center One-Room School during the early twentieth century by replicating and displaying the stories of families, teachers, and students who interacted with the site.

2. Convey the connection between the Marshall Center One-Room School and the University of Northern Iowa by describing the impact UNI has had upon the development of rural educational standards in Iowa through exhibitions and activities.

3. Encourage the use of the Marshall Center One-Room School by educators, education students, and K-12 students by providing educational curriculum that integrates the site and its history with the Iowa Common Core and teacher training at UNI.

4. Expand and challenge visitors’ preconceived notions of the one-room beyond the 3 Rs (reading, writing, and arithmetic) by focusing on the early twentieth century and sharing a diverse array of human stories.
Visitor Objectives and Outcomes

Objectives

1. Relate to the context and framework of rural education at the Marshall Center One-Room School, at Iowa State Teacher’s College, and in Iowa in the early twentieth century.

2. Engage with the Marshall Center One-Room School experience, particularly through curriculum-based activities, school day reenactments, and guided tours.

3. Inspire future engagement with and research on rural education by making visitors aware of additional resources such as the Center for the History of Rural Iowa Education and Culture and Silos and Smokestacks National Heritage Area.

Outcomes:

1. Physically experience the Marshall Center One-Room School as it was in the early twentieth century and learn the stories of its students and teachers to gain a better understanding of the history and continued development of rural education in Iowa.

2. Experience the types of lessons, exercises, and examinations given at the Marshall Center One-Room School in the early twentieth century.

3. Receive materials that contain additional information and links to the Marshall Center One-Room School website and the Center for the History of Rural Iowa Education and Culture.
Interpretive Themes

Central Theme:

The Marshall Center One-Room School represents the relationship between the rural community in Marshall Township near Laurens in Pocahontas County and the transformation of rural education through the lives of the key families who lived there, their students who attended the school, and the teachers who taught them.

Subthemes:

1. The community surrounding the Marshall Center One-Room School, through their membership and participation in the Farmer’s Union, 4-H, local churches, and the school board, influenced and shaped the curriculum taught students in preparation for becoming good citizens and productive members of society.

2. Those who attended the Marshall Center One-Room School learned skills and behaviors in preparation for becoming good citizens and productive members of society through the curriculum, particularly through subjects such as agriculture, music, and civics, and their participation in 4-H fostered the connection between the community and the school.

3. Educators at the Marshall Center One-Room School taught and modeled skills and behaviors by following community guidelines and attending educational workshops hosted by ISTC to prepare students to be good citizens and productive members of society. Their experience at the Marshall Center One-Room School launched many teachers into their educational career.
Interpretive Method

The visitor goals and outcomes will be achieved through the following arrangement of images and objects in the Marshall Center One-Room School and the interaction of audiences with this space via interpretive curriculum.

Exterior

Placement Suggestions: The text of the abstract, placed on a panel outside the school, would provide an overview of the important aspects of the Marshall Center One-Room Schoolhouse.

Items and Descriptions/ Labels:

Pocahontas County, Marshall Township #5 - Marshall Center School, Undated
(http://www.uni.edu/museum/ruralschool/node/53)

The Marshall Center School is a one-room schoolhouse that operated from 1893 to 1944 in Pocahontas County, Iowa. Through this structure, visitors can catch a glimpse of the world of rural education and its importance to rural communities. During the 1920s, the height of the schoolhouse's operation, the Marshall Center School fostered the lives of a core group of families who lived in the neighborhood and the children who attended the school. It also reflected the changing landscape of teacher training and rural educational practices. Community leaders and education officials at the local and state levels directed and influenced curriculum intended to educate students in what they believed were the necessary aptitudes and attitudes required for participation in American economic, social, and civic life. In addition, the school connected teachers, students, their families, and the larger rural neighborhood to a larger world of ideas and practices, and prepared students for work in the community and in other parts of the country.
Placement Suggestions: One of the first things seen by visitors should be a map that gives visitors a sense of the area where the school originally was located. At the front of the school, a 1920s map of Iowa could replace the pull-down maps, and would also give an idea of place. Photos of Marshall Center School in its original location and being moved to UNI will also give the audience a sense of where the school once was compared to where it is now.

Items and Descriptions/Labels:

1918 Marshall Township Plat Map (Plat Book of Pocahontas County, 1918 - http://digital.lib.uiowa.edu/cdm/ref/collection/atlases/id/5869)
This is a map of Marshall Center Township from the year 1918. This shows who owned the land during the year 1918. Many of the families that play a role in the story of the school can be seen on the map near the Marshall Center School.

This is a map of Marshall Center Township from the year 1930. Just like the 1918 map, this shows who owned the land. Notice how many of the owners are still the same as in 1918.
This map of Iowa shows where Pocahontas County is within the state.

This photo shows Marshall Center School sitting in its original location in Pocahontas County.

This picture shows when the Marshall Center School was moved to UNI in 1987.
Placement Suggestion: Information on McFadzen, Seerley and Gilchrist should be grouped together to provide a connection between Marshall Center and UNI/ISTC.

Items and Descriptions/Labels:

Seerley Hall, Undated
([https://www.library.uni.edu/collections/special-collections/university-archives/building-histories/seerley-hall](https://www.library.uni.edu/collections/special-collections/university-archives/building-histories/seerley-hall))

*This is a picture of Seerley Hall, originally the Iowa State Teacher’s College Library, as it looked in the early twentieth century.*

James McFadzen ([http://www.findagrave.com/cgi-bin/fg.cgi?page=pv&GRid=94138962&Plpi=64128508](http://www.findagrave.com/cgi-bin/fg.cgi?page=pv&GRid=94138962&Plpi=64128508))

*James Andrew “Mac” McFadzen taught at the Marshall Center School from 1922-1923 before he enrolled at the University of Northern Iowa to study commerce education but he was also heavily involved in the music program. After graduation he moved to the rural community of Lindsay, California where he taught for 30 years until his retirement.*
President Homer H. Seerley, a former rural schoolteacher, made many adjustments to the Iowa State Normal School, such as renaming it the Iowa State Teachers College in 1909. Mr. Seerley also established admission and graduation requirements and created the Rural Demonstration Schools, which led to the development of a Rural Education course at the ISTC as well as the formation of the Department of Rural Education in 1914.

James C. Gilchrist served as the principal of the Iowa State Normal School from 1876-1886 where he developed curriculum that involved a vigorous course of study to allow students the opportunity to master academic subjects and gain proficiency in pedagogical techniques. After his resignation he moved to Pocahontas County and spoke at the Marshall Center School on several occasions.
Curriculum and Community

Placement Suggestions: Around the bookcase should be images of the textbooks that were actually used in the school, or real copies of the books should be present if possible. A list of the textbooks approved by the school board in 1916 is included for display as well. An eighth grade examination would show how the students were tested over what they learned. The bookcase should be arranged by subject to make it easier to see the kinds of things students were learning. Next to the teacher’s desk is a dictionary, which is not from the correct period. It should be replaced with dictionary from the correct time period, which would also be a part of the curriculum. A globe at the front of the room would have been used for geography. The portraits of Lincoln and Washington should be moved to the front of the school. Slates and tablets, which can be kept in the desks, were and can be used for individual work, while the chalkboards can be used to instruct the class. The recitation bench sits at the front.

Child mannequins placed on each side of the bookcase represent the students who were using the books and learning the curriculum. We recommend adding a male student’s typical clothing as well. On the back wall next to the closet, there is a photo of a class. A photo of the students who were at Marshall Center during the 1920s should either be added to this wall, or replace the current photo, since the 1920s is the era of focus. This provides a representation of the actual students who learned at Marshall Center. The sand table should be moved out from the wall to make it accessible for students to use, as the students at the time would have used it to depict scenes that they were learning using simple props such as clothes pin dolls and stick trees.

Information about the Farmer’s Union, possibly placed below the clock, provides a connection between the students and their families, the agricultural curriculum, and the rest of the community. Around the piano will be information on the music curriculum at Marshall Center, as well as information on the Methodist Church. Many students attended the Methodist Church, and music played an important role in both the church and the school. The church is also connected with the Farmer’s Union, as Reverend Lease attended Farmer’s Union meetings.
Marshall Center School incorporated a great deal of agricultural educational exercises in its curriculum. Agricultural books, like this one, were used to teach students math and science through applying lessons to problems associated with the day-to-day life of a farm family.

Textbook List, 1916, Rural School Archives
The textbooks used in the Marshall Center School provide a better understanding as to what exactly was being taught at the time. Books spanned numerous categories, from dictionaries to primers and physiology to history. A main theme for these books is agriculture due to the fact that Laurens was a rural farming community and agricultural references resonated with the students.
Eighth Grade Examination
(http://bullittcountyhistory.org/bchistory/schoolexam1912.html)

The 8th grade examination was the test that students took after completing their eighth year. It tested the knowledge they acquired throughout their schooling and their results determined if they would move on to high school.

McMaster's Primary History of the United States, John Bach McMaster, 1901
(http://babel.hathitrust.org/cgi/pt?id=loc.ark:/13960/t5p84nh3p;view=1up;seq=1)

History textbook approved by the school board in 1916.
Steadmans’ Graded Lessons in Writing, Andrew Steadman, 1909
Writing textbook approved by the school board in 1916.

Webster’s Shorter School Dictionary, 1914
(http://www.etsy.com/uk/listing/207055111/vintage-websters-shorter-school)
Webster’s Shorter School Dictionary was one of three dictionaries approved by the school board in 1916. The others were Webster’s Elementary School Dictionary and Webster’s Secondary School Dictionary, all published in 1914. Dictionaries were very useful during spelling bees.
1920s Johnston 12” Terrestrial School Globe
This was an effective teaching tool for geography. An annual statistical atlas may have been used in addition to or instead of the globe.

Lincoln and Washington Portraits, Marshall Center School
Portraits of America’s sixteenth President, Abraham Lincoln, and the first president, George Washington, were common in many one-room schoolhouses. Lincoln’s and Washington’s images were placed at the front of the classroom above the chalkboard. This image was intended to communicate values of patriotism, stoicism and intellectualism.

Slate, Marshall Center School
Primarily, the slates gave the students a valuable tool for practicing their math skills individually.
Big Chief Tablet, Marshall Center School (http://www.amazon.com/Original-Big-Chief-Writing-Primary/dp/B0094ILCJC)

*Big Chief Tablets came in handy when students needed to practice penmanship. Since the written word was the primary form of communication in the 1920s teachers made penmanship an essential part of the curriculum for students of all ages and ability levels.*

Recitation Bench, Marshall Center School

*When students needed to recite their lessons they would sit on the recitation bench and recite for their teacher.*
The cursive chalkboard served as a visual reference for students while learning how to write in the Spencerian method.

This chalkboard could have been used for a number of reasons, a few of which include math, drawing and penmanship. The numbers currently on the board are very versatile due to the fact that different grade levels can work on different problems while using the same numbers.
The front chalkboard was the focal point of the room. It was used by the teacher to instruct students and provide examples to coincide with their lessons, arguably making it essential to the schoolhouse.

This dress is something that a typical student would wear during the school day.
Peg Board, Marshall Center School
The pegboard, holding clothes similar to what students would have worn, provides another way for visitors to see what students wore in the 1920s, and could also give visitors an opportunity to try clothes on.

1925 Student Photo
This is a picture of the students attending the MCS in the year 1925, we don’t know exactly what order they are in but many of the key families can be seen within this photo.
Sand Table, Marshall Center School
The sand table was a popular method for hands-on learning in the early 20th century, especially for younger students. They could use the table to set up scenes depicting the things they were learning.

Phone, Marshall Center School
The phone provided a link with the outside community in the event of emergencies.
Farmer’s Union Sponsored Program synopsis in the Laurens Sun March 24, 1922
This article in the March 24, 1922, issue of the Laurens Sun described the events that took place at a community program sponsored by the Farmers Union. Held at the Marshall Center School, it featured speeches, entertainment, and performances by Marshall Center School students. Many families in the area were members of the Farmer’s Union and communal events sponsored by the organization gave them an opportunity to associate.

The Mission, History and Times of the Farmers Union: A Narrative of the greatest industrial-agricultural Organization in History and its makers by Charles Simon Barrett 1909
This narrative describes the historical framework of the farmers union in America at the turn of the twentieth century. It was very important for members of the farmers union to familiarize themselves with the union’s communal and economic benefits. Many families in regions like Pocahontas County joined the Farmers Union to secure protection for the futures of their farms and families.
This piano was purchased for Marshall Center School in 1922, although teachers such as Elena Kruel incorporated music into the curriculum as early as 1910. Many students were inspired to continue using music later in their lives, including Loren and Lestel Richardson, Vernal Bunch, and Edna Ressegueie.

Students at Marshall Center School used this music reader. A lot of songs that the students sung involved farming, nature, and church. Many of the songs also were almost like nursery rhyme type songs, very short and repetitive. Two of the songs that live on are The Star Spangled Banner and America.
Laurens Methodist Church Music, Laurens Historical Society

Many of the students who attended Marshall Center School also attended Laurens Methodist Church. As described in this church newsletter, music played an important role in the Methodist Church, and this interest in music can also be seen in the school.

Laurens Methodist Church Hymnals, Laurens Historical Society

Laurens Methodist Church used these hymnals, which contain songs familiar to students. School children likely sung these both in school and at church.
Reverend Lease Sunday School Class, Laurens Historical Society
This is photo of Reverend J.T. Lease and his Sunday school class. Vernal Bunch, one of the students at Marshall Center, is sitting directly in front of Reverend Lease. Reverend Lease acted as pastor of United Methodist Church in Laurens from 1919-1923. He also participated as an active member of the farmers union.
Teachers

Placement Suggestions: The mannequins for teacher clothing could be moved to the each side of the chalkboard next to the piano. A chest of clothes for teachers and students to dress up in could be added under the peg board on this wall, which provides more examples of clothing to wear. If such a trunk is utilized, the mannequins could be moved to the closet when school groups come to allow more room to use the chalkboard. On the teacher’s desk, place a class schedule and comments that teachers made about students. A newspaper article could accompany a photo of Marie Edmonds, who was one of the teachers during the 1920s.

Items and Descriptions/Labels:

Teacher Mannequins, Marshall Center School

Teachers were required by code to dress a particular way while in the classroom as well as out of it. They were not allowed to wear bright colors and women were prohibited from wearing anything that fell shorter than two inches above the ankle. Although men tended to wear suits the Pocahontas County Historical Society has record of one male teacher, most likely Ray D. Farlow, who returned from World War I and wore his uniform to class every day.
The class schedule spanned many subjects due to the fact that teachers had to simultaneously teach multiple lessons to satisfy each grade’s learning requirements. Teaching methods focused on wrote memorization and recitation, making it possible to have each grade constantly working on assignments. Schedules were very structured, with intervals of fifteen minutes being planned throughout the whole day, which began at 9am and ended at 4pm. Each teacher planned their schedules differently and focused on different subject; some would spend a great deal of time on recitation, such as James McFadzen, whereas others would dedicate more time to drawing, including Alice Garton.

Alice Garton’s Comments, Rural School Archives
Teachers were encouraged to write comments about their students at the end of each term but not all teachers obliged. Alice Garton was one educator who commented on all of her pupils whereas James McFadzen tended not to focus on each individual but he did make a general statement on his last report that addressed a message to the teacher who replaced him stating that he had a pleasant year and wishing them the best of luck in the following terms.
Marie Edmonds taught at the Marshall Center School for two terms (1919-1920) before she left to get married. It is highly likely that Marie embodied the ideal traits of a community member in the 1920s due to the praise she received in the local newspaper where her husband was congratulated on his choice of a spouse.

The stove was an essential part of the Marshall Center School experience but it also required a lot of attention. Teachers were in charge of maintaining the stove by making sure it was clean but they were also required to arrive at school an hour before class so that they could light it in order for the room to be warm by the time the students arrived.
Students

Placement Suggestions: Students throughout the school day would have utilized the lunch pails near the door and the water and tin cups in the back. Individual desks could be designated for the stories of specific students and items that relate to their lives. Docents could place these items inside the desks if the desks are in use by visitors. Crutches could be used to represent the story of Homer Cundiff, a music book could be used for Edna Ressegue, ag books could be used for Lester Ressegue and Glen and Lewis Newell, and newspaper articles could be used for Marjorie and Luverne Newell.

Items and Descriptions/Labels:

Lunch Pails, Marshall Center School
These are what the students would have brought their lunch in when they came to school each morning.

Water Station, Marshall Center School
Each day a student would walk down to the Newell farm to get water for the entire class. Each family would bring their own cup to drink.
Homer Cundiff

Homer Cundiff attended MSC until 1921 and then again in 1927 to graduate. Homer was stricken with polio at age 16 and would leave him in a wheelchair and crutches for the rest of his life. He went on to become a financial accountant in Fort Dodge, Iowa.

Edna Resseguiie

Edna Resseguiie attended MCS and was one of the brightest students during her time at the MSC. She was awarded Honor Roll when she was in 8th grade. She went onto Laurens High School where she would usually play the piano in class, after graduating she went on to become an elementary teacher.
Lester Resseguie
Lester Resseguie, third from the right in the front, attended the MSC throughout the 1920’s until graduating in 1926. He went onto Laurens High School. He went on to become a farmer in the Laurens community and opened a hardware store.

Glen and Lewis Newell, “Farmers of the Week,” Pocahontas Democrat, September 10, 1953
Glen and Lewis Newell, who were students at Marshall Center School, grew up to take over the family farm in Marshall Township. Together, they raised cattle, hogs, corn, oats, and hay.
Luverne Newell was born in Pocahontas County in 1916. She graduated from Marshall Center School in 1930 with a score of 94.9 on the state eighth grade examination, the highest score of 82 rural students who took the exam in Pocahontas County that spring. She went on to Laurens High School, where she graduated in 1934.

Marjorie Newell graduated from Marshall Center School in 1934 and was one of 31 students in the county to pass all the subjects of the state exam. She graduated from Laurens High School in 1938. She later took some technical courses. Her education prepared her to help her husband manage hotels in Clear Lake, IA and Bemidji, MN.
Items Recommended to Be Removed

Remove the painting that does not belong in the school.
Remove the desk in the back corner of the room, since it came from a different school.
Remove the photos of classes who were not there during the 1920s and are not very good quality.
Remove the pull-down maps that are from the 1940s.
Remove the dictionary from the 1940s.
## Curriculum Plan

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School Age Visitors

Elementary (3-5)

Field Trip School Experience
Elementary school students will experience a Day in the Life at the Marshall Center School (MCS) through various activities and lessons. The standard experience will last for two hours once the children have arrived at the school, although activities may be added should the teacher wish for a longer experience. The teacher will work with the docent provided to supervise the students who will be divided into three or four groups depending on the activities chosen by the teacher. This is intended to mimic the one room school in which several different ages of children would be working on different activities at different times. The activity options and typical schedule are listed below. Each activity provided has been related to at least one Iowa Core standard. Students will be expected to gain understanding of the differences and similarities between school activities and lessons in the 1920s and school today. At the end of their day at the MCS, students will pose for a class picture outside of the school. Teachers will then be provided with materials to encourage student reflection on their experience once returning to school.

SCHOOL DAY SCHEDULE
1-1:15--introduction to the schoolhouse, explanation of activities, allow students to walk around

1:15-1:35--first rotation of activities

1:35-1:55--second rotation of activities

1:55-2:15--third rotation of activities

2:15-2:35--short recess

2:35-2:55--spelling bee

2:55-3:00--class picture in front of the schoolhouse
Elementary (3-5) Suggested Activities

Penmanship Lesson

In this lesson, students will copy down Maxims and Proverbs from *Serl’s Primary Language Lessons*, a book used by students in the Marshall Center School.

1. Do to others as you would that others should do to you.
2. A penny saved is a penny earned.
3. Early to bed, early to rise, makes a man healthy, wealthy, and wise.
4. Where there is a will, there is a way.
5. A good beginning makes a good ending.

After copying down the proverbs in paper pads provided by MCS, students will discuss what the phrases mean and whether or not they’ve heard any of them previously. If the students are able to write in cursive they should use that skill for this lesson; however, it is acceptable for students to write in print.

**Iowa Core Connections:** This activity most closely relates to the literacy requirements of the common core. Students will be discussing what they have read and interpreting these statements (Literacy CC: RL.3.4, RL.4.4, RL.5.4). Additionally, in experiencing a penmanship lesson, students will be able to understand differences and similarities in life today as compared to life in the past, an objective of the history portion of the Social Studies Common Core. (SS.3–5.H.8)
Recitation Lesson

In this activity, students will practice their skills in recitation, an important lesson for MCS students. The passage selected is from a book collection used by the MCS titled The Story Hour Readers. Each student will read the following passage silently followed by a group recitation activity. The students will stand in a line at the front of the room, and each student will read one line from the story, with students reading more than one line as necessary.

**BED IN SUMMER**

In winter I get up at night
And dress by yellow candlelight.
In summer, quite the other way,
I have to go to bed by day.

I have to go to bed and see
The birds still hopping on the tree,
Or hear the grown-up people’s feet
Still going past me in the street.

And does it not seem hard to you,
When all the sky is clear and blue,
And I should like so much to play,
To have to go to bed by day?

Robert Louis Stevenson.

After the recitation activity students should discuss the reading in smaller groups.

Iowa Core Connections: This activity most closely relates to the literacy requirements of the common core. Students will be discussing what they have read, interpreting the story, and practice pronunciation by reading aloud (Literacy CC: RL.3.1, RL.4.1, RL.5.1,) Additionally, in experiencing a lesson in recitation, students will be able to understand differences and similarities in school today as compared to school in the past, an objective of the history portion of the Social Studies Common Core. (SS.3–5.H.8)
Arithmetic Lesson

In this activity, students will practice their math skills using problems from Hamilton’s Essentials of Arithmetic, a book used by students at MCS. The students will receive a handout with several math problems and will be able to use a slate and chalk pencil to solve the problems. The adult supervisor may ask students to display their answers on the slate or ask a student to complete the problem on the chalkboard. Sample problems for 3rd, 4th, or 5th graders are listed in the appendix on page 10.

Iowa Common Core: This lesson most closely relates to the mathematics requirements of the Common Core. The problems include fractions, multiplication & division, and addition & subtraction presented in story format. (Mathematics CC: 3.OA.A.3, 4.OA.A.2, 4.OA.A.3, 5.NBT.B.6, 5.NF.B.3)

Sample Math Problems for Arithmetic Lesson

1. A farmer has 28 cows in three fields. If there are 12 in the first, and 9 in the second, how many cows are there in the third field?

2. The farmer receives 21,500 gallons of milk a year. How much does he receive for it? How much is it worth at 40 cents a gallon?

3. The farmer receives 350 lb. of butter a year. How much does he receive for it? How much does milk cost the farmer to make butter if he sells it at $42.50 a month each, to work on the farm? How much does the labor for the year cost?

4. He sells 5 of the cows at an average price of $35 each. How much does he receive for it? He sells 14 calves for $50 each. How much does he receive on an average price of $800 and 2 wagons at $195 each. Repair on the farm cost $87.50. Find the amount paid. His grocery bill averages $30 per month. Find much do they cost?

5. How much is it worth at 40 cents a gallon?

6. His Jersey cow yields 350 lb. of butter a year. How much does he receive for it?
38

- A steel-car conductor collected 10s. lanes on the first trip, 75 on the second trip, 17 on the third trip. How many lanes did he collect?
- How many steps did Paul take?
- John took 1370 steps in school and Paul took 940 steps. How many more steps did Paul take?
- Follow the directions: 36, 47, 48, 49, 51, 40, 43. What was the attendance?
- Find the value of the dears in the $6.20.
- Find the total cost of the dears.
- Each desk cost $3.26. How much was paid for the dears?
- How much was paid for the @ 8.00 a long? How much was paid for the @ 8.00 a long?
- Find the amount of the teacher's salary for 8 months at $70 a month.
- What was the amount of the teacher's salary for 8 months at $70 a month?

In the classroom:
1. This schoolroom is 22 feet wide and 22 feet long. The walls in each room were 8 feet high.
2. What is the distance around the classroom?
Geography/Agriculture Lesson

In this activity, students will learn about agriculture in Iowa in the 1920s and today. Students will receive a blank map outline of Iowa which they will be allowed to color based on the agriculture map provided of Iowa. The facilitator will discuss agriculture’s importance to the rural community and the curriculum of one-room schoolhouses, particularly the MCS. After examining this map from 1929, the students will be provided with an agricultural map of Iowa in the 2010s to compare.

![Map of Iowa showing agricultural regions](image)

**Figure 3.** Agricultural production regions of Iowa, 1920. Map by Peter Li. Adapted from C. L. Holmes, “Types of Farming in Iowa,” Iowa Agricultural Experiment Station Bulletin no. 256 (1929): 152–206.

Iowa Common Core: This activity most closely relates to the geography section of the Common Core standards. Students will understand the concepts of title, legend, cardinal directions, distance, grids; as well as understand regions change over time and the causes and consequences of these changes. (SS.3–5.G.1, SS.3–5.H.8)

- Cash Grain
- Southern Pasture
- Western Meal
- Eastern Meal
- Dairy
Spelling Lesson

In this activity, students will practice their spelling by participating in a spelling bee, a staple of rural school education. Should the class have a spelling list being used at their school, words used can be chosen by the visiting teacher in advance. Alternatively, the MCS facilitators can provide a list appropriate for the visiting grade level.

Students will stand at the front of the room and take turns spelling words down the line. When a word is misspelled, the student will sit at a desk. Should the students be spectacular spellers, longer and more difficult words should be used to ensure that the bee ends at the appropriate time.

Iowa Common Core: This lesson most closely relates to the literacy requirements of the Common Core in that students will be spelling and assessing the meanings of various words. Students will also be able to understand differences and similarities in life today as compared to life in the past, an objective of the history portion of the Social Studies Common Core
Music Lesson

(This activity may be used if the facilitator is comfortable with music.)
In this activity, students will get a sense of the way music was taught in the 1920s rural schools, and develop appreciation for the ways music provided a bridge between the school, church, and community.

Students should stand in a semi-circle around the piano. Ask for a student volunteer who knows how to play piano. Prompt students, by asking about music class in school. The facilitator may explain that rural schoolteachers were responsible for any music instruction that occurred for rural students. Teach the students a simple song or two by rote with the student volunteer playing along on the piano. (See appendix for suggested music.)

Sample Music Selections for Music Lesson

![Riggety Jig Sheet Music](image)

So fast, so fast my horse can go, O rig-get-ty.

Rig-get-ty jig, you know; He's just the branch of a willow-tree, O rig-get-ty jig, you see.

![The Windmill Sheet Music](image)

Look, on yonder grassy hill Stands the ever-turning mill;

How the wind, with whistling sound, Moves the long arms round and round.
Recess

Recess will generally be outside; however, an indoor game is suggested in case of inclement weather.

Outside: *Have You Seen My Sheep?*

The players stand in a single circle. A player in the center goes to a player in the circle and asks, “Have you seen my sheep?” The one asked responds, “How was it dressed?” The center player then describes the clothing of someone in the ring; for example, ‘He wears a blue suit, a dotted tie and has light hair.’ The one described runs as soon as he/she recognizes their description. The one questioned chases him, and if he catches the runner before he gets back to his original place in the circle, the runner becomes the next questioner. If, however, the runner is safe the chaser becomes the questioner.

Inside: *Hide the Thimble*

To play this game you need a thimble or something small that can be hidden. Choose a person to leave the room (or face away and close their eyes). While that person is gone, find a place in the room to hide the thimble. Have the person return to the room and try and find the thimble. To start, the rest of the students start clapping softly. As the “finder” gets closer to the thimble, they clap louder. As the “finder” gets farther away, the claps get softer. Once the thimble is found, the game is over and you can pick another person to be the “finder.”

Additional games can be found in the original interpretive plan authored by Sue Grosboll.
School Age Visitors

Middle School/High School (6-12)

For Middle School and High School visitors, we recommend the development of two targeted group activities and two outreach programs.

Constitution Activity (ca. early 1920s)

We recommend developing a 30-45 minute activity related to the Constitution, as it existed in the early 1920s. The goal for this activity will be to demonstrate how the constitution has changed over time through the amendment process and in its interpretation. By highlighting the Progressive Era amendments (16-19) students will discover how problems in society motivated people to find solutions to those problems through the amendment process. This could be coordinated with other events held on campus for Constitution Day, September 17. Chad Christopher, UNI Department of History, helps coordinate the other Constitution Day activities on campus.

Iowa Core Connections: (SS.9-12.H.2) (SS.6-8.H.2) Understand how and why people create, maintain, or change systems of power, authority, and governance. (SS.9-12.PSCL.2) (SS.6-8.PSCL.2) Understand how the government established by the Constitution embodies the enduring values and principles of democracy and republicanism.
School Budget Challenge Activity (1923)

Using information from the 1922-1924 Marshall Township school board minutes, groups of students will make simulated budgetary decisions that determine how to allocate the monies for the township’s schools. In the process students will learn that the school board members were often community members and parents of students who attended school, while coming to an understanding of the complexity of school budget decisions. As groups are working the facilitator should circulate and challenge the budget decisions groups are making by suggesting possible consequences to their actions and asking students to weigh the positive and negative outcomes of their choices. This activity is an adaptation of the Legislative Debate and Town Hall Meeting interactive teaching strategies suggested by the Center for Civic Education’s We The People curriculum. We The People: The Citizen & The Constitution, Teacher’s Edition (Calabasas, CA: Center for Civic Education, 2007), xxi-xxviii. (See Appendix for activity.)

Iowa Core Connections: (SS.9-12.PSCL.6) Understand how law and public policy are established at the local, state, and national levels of government. (SS.6-8.PSCL.8) Understand how laws are established at the local, state, and national levels.
School Board Budget Challenge Scenario

Directions:
Each of you is a member of the Marshall Township School Board (in 1923). You each live in a different part of the township and most of you own your own farm. You are in charge of providing a quality education in seven one-room schools like the one you are in right now. Using the following information to prioritize how to direct the township’s school tax money and create high quality schools. Remember your success or failure depends on how you choose to direct your money.

First elect a President, Secretary, and Treasurer.
- President-You will run your meeting. You will facilitate group discussion and call for a vote for each line item. You are responsible for how well your school board operates.
- Secretary-Your job is to keep your meetings minutes. Record the major budget plan ideas and who suggested them. Keep a record of major votes (for example Vote on teacher salary budget 4-1)
- Treasurer - Your job is to record suggestions and decisions on the Budget Sheet.

Director(s) - 1-3 per group. You are responsible for generating ideas and driving the reflection after your group completes the budget. The secretary will record your suggestions in the minutes.

Reflection/Debriefing Questions:
When you finish, complete the reflection activity. As a group discuss the following questions and write your thoughts on the reflection sheet.
- What might be the consequences of your school budget decisions? Think of both positive and negative consequences.
- Which budget items do you think are most important for running a rural school? Why?
- Why do you think there are such a wide variety of teacher salary options?
- Iowa State Law in 1911 required school districts that did not have high school programs to pay tuition for students who attended high school in another town. Why do you think students may have chose not to attend high school? Why do you students would have decided to attend high school? What evidence could you use answer these questions?
- How did having to make difficult decisions about money change your perceptions of how school boards or other organizations today make these type of decisions?
School Budget Handout

Budget Items:
Total Revenue:
Balance Moving forward ($2500)
$6000 (Tax Levy)

Mandatory Expenses:
Tuition to High Schools:
Laurens Consolidated School $654
Pocahontas Independent School $100
Ware Consolidated School $324

Required Supplies:
Coal $350

Adjustable Expenses:
(List Seven Teachers/Previous Year's Pay and Suggestion for new year pay)
First Grade Certificate w/ Experience $90/month $810/year
High School Normal School w/ Experience $85 $765/year
High School Normal School w/out Experience $70 $630/year
Second Grade Certificate w/ Experience $70 $630/year
Second Grade Certificate w/out Experience $65 $585/year

Optional Expenses:
(Both the items and the dollar amounts are flexible.)
School Board Secretary $45
School Board Treasurer $10
Chalk $5
Textbooks $50/school
Paint $50
Piano Tuning $10
Slates $20
Phonograph $25/school

Recommended Final Balance ($2500)

(Adapted from Records of Proceedings, July 2, 1923, July 1, 1924, School Secretary’s Record & Account Book, Book 20, Marshall Township, Pocahontas County, Iowa 7/2/1917-3/20/1933, Center for the History of Rural Iowa Education & Culture (CHRIEC).)
## School Budget Worksheet

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Budget Item</th>
<th>Running Total:</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Revenue</strong></td>
<td>Beginning Funds: $2500</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tax Levy:</td>
<td>$6000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>$8500</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### Expenses

#### Required Expenses

**High School Tuition**

- Laurens CID $650
- Ware CID $325
- Pocahontas ID $100
- Coal $350

#### Adjustable Expenses

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Teachers</th>
<th>Salary Level</th>
<th>Yearly Cost</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Example</td>
<td>HS w/out Experience</td>
<td>$630</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
- Marshall #1
- Marshall #3
- Marshall #4
- Marshall Center #5
- Marshall #7
- Marshall #8
- Marshall #9

Teacher Salary Total:

#### Other Expenses

Recommended Final Balance: $2500

Final Balance:
National History Day (NHD)

We suggest developing outreach materials for high school and middle school teachers that correlate the resources of Marshall Center School and the Center for the History of Rural Iowa Education & Culture with the year’s National History Day theme. This e-mail, flyer, and/or continuing education workshop would provide examples and ideas of ways to use the school and archives for projects based around that year’s theme. For example, 2015’s theme “Leadership and Legacy in History” could inspire research projects into Homer Seerley, James Gilchrist, rural school teachers, teachers at Marshall Center School, or Iowa’s Rural Schools. Additionally, the school could be used as a setting for the production of documentaries exploring the history of Iowa rural education. Finally, each year the Iowa Historic Preservation Alliance sponsors the “Country School Heritage Award” at the state NHD contest for the best project on the history of Iowa’s rural schools. The Grout Museum in Waterloo, IA has hosted the regional competition for National History Day in previous years and we encourage coordinating efforts with their existing programming.
Other Youth Programs

Girl Scout Programming

In the course of developing this curriculum plan, we were in contact with a representative of the regional Girl Scout council. We recommend contacting with Robyn Smuck, Leadership Experience Manager for the Girls Scouts of Eastern Iowa and Western Illinois. Smuck was excited about the possibility of working with the Marshall Center School and was interested in discussing avenues for partnering with Marshall Center School activities. Her office number is 319-232-6601 x515.

Boy Scout/Cub Scout Programming

The Boy Scouts and Cub Scouts are in the middle of program revisions at this time. We recommend waiting until 2016 before developing any specific programs targeted for these groups.
College Age Visitors

Primary Sources:

These handouts can be given separately to education majors when they visit the Marshall Center School or given together as sources to teaching majors. In addition these sources can be used as a way to introduce the idea of rural education to other age groups who visit the school. Example sources include:

**Discipline at MCS**

Discipline in a one-room schoolhouse was notoriously difficult. Once during Marie Edmonds’ term as teacher (1919-1920) a particular rule breaker could not be found. So she held the entire class inside from recess. Helen Edmonds, Marie’s younger sister, found that she didn’t like being held guilty for something she didn’t do. The young girl promptly walked up to her sister’s desk and kicked her in the shin. Afterwards, she said she “...sat down and did not mind ‘staying-in’.” Ducommun, Helen. Laurens 100, Chronicle of Our First 100 Years. Laurens, Iowa: [Laurens Centennial], 1983.

**What did President Homer Seerley Think of Teachers?**

“The schools are, therefore, more or less an experiment station for all sorts of ideas that are developed in life and the thought of the people. The teacher is not responsible for much of this, as he occupies that place of an artizan rather than an architect, makes his methods to accomplish whatever the people want done and thinks he has done his duty when he succeeds in accomplishing this economically as to time and effort.” Seerley, Homer, address, October 22nd, 1897 “The American Problem” Seerley Collection, Box 119, University of Northern Iowa Archives and Special Collections, pg. 3-4.

**What Courses Would a Rural School Teacher Take at ISTC?**

Among other courses offered at the early 20th century Iowa State Teachers’ College, there were several specific for rural schools.

- The Country School
- Rural School Observation
- Agriculture
- Rural Woodwork
- Rural Handwork
- Rural Cooking
- Rural Sewing

While there were non-rural versions of the woodwork, handwork, cooking, and sewing classes, the differences in rural and urban education were distinct enough to require specific courses. “Report of the Iowa State Teachers College 1914-1915” Seerley Collection, Box 118, University of Northern Iowa Archives and Special Collections.
What Should A Rural School Teacher Know?

Iowa State Teachers’ College President James Gilchrist believed rural schoolteachers should know every subject they taught their students implicitly. And what did he think rural teaching students should be taught? From Gilchrist, James, address, 1881, “What Shall the Rural School Courses Contain?” Gilchrist Collection, Box 1, University of Northern Iowa Archives and Special Collections.

Reading
Spelling
Language Construction
Grammar
Penmanship/Drawing
Arithmetic
Rudimentary Algebra
Rudimentary Geometry
Physiography
Ethnography

Earth Life
US History
Natural Science
Elementary Physics
Elementary Chemistry
Astronomy
Physiology
Vocal Music
Gymnastics

And on top of all this, he believed a teacher should have an in-depth understanding of the human mind and teach good morals and manners. Could you do it?

What Course Would a Rural School Teacher Take at ISTC?

Among other courses offered at the early 20th century Iowa State Teachers’ College, there were several specific for rural schools.

The Country School
Rural School Observation
Elementary Agriculture
Agriculture

Rural Woodwork
Rural Handwork
Rural Cooking
Rural Sewing

While there were non-rural versions of the woodwork, handwork, cooking, and sewing classes, the differences in rural and urban education were distinct enough to require specific courses. “Report of the Iowa State Teachers College 1914-1915” Seerley Collection, Box 118, University of Northern Iowa Archives and Special Collections.
Are You Smarter Than A Rural School Teacher?

The following questions are taken from the 1907 booklet “Studies in Education” given to college students to prepare them for their exam. The exam covered a multitude of subjects, including arithmetic, reading, English, geography, botany, drawing, US history, physiology, bookkeeping, music, grammar, psychology, algebra, economics, school law, history of education, civil government, physics, and school management.

Arithmetic
If I can paint 2/9 of a barn in ¾ of a day, how long will it take to paint the entire barn? Give complete solution.

Reading
Name three short story writers of America and one production of each.
1. 
2. 
3. 

English
What are the uses of the figures of rhetoric? Name and illustrate four.
1. 
2. 
3. 
4. 

Geography
Locate six cities in England and four in France. Give reason for location and an important industry of each one.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>England</th>
<th>France</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1.</td>
<td>1.</td>
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<tr>
<td>2.</td>
<td>2.</td>
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<tr>
<td>3.</td>
<td>3.</td>
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<tr>
<td>4.</td>
<td>4.</td>
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<tr>
<td>5.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Botany
Name three common plants which grow in swamps; three from deep woods, three from rocky banks, three from the prairie, and three from sandy places.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Swamps</th>
<th>Deep Woods</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1.</td>
<td>1.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.</td>
<td>2.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.</td>
<td>3.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Rocky Banks</th>
<th>Prairie</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1.</td>
<td>1.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.</td>
<td>2.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.</td>
<td>3.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Sandy Places

1.  
2.  
3.  

Drawing
Who was Millet; Rembrandt; Michael Angelo?

US History
For what is John Paul Jones noted? Where is he buried?

Physiology
Compare the walls of arteries, veins, and capillaries in their structure and function.

Bookkeeping
What is included in an expense account? When is expense credited?

Music
Write the chromatic scale, ascending and descending in the key of B.
“In this necessarily brief discussion of marked tendencies and prospective necessities, every American must be his own prophet of idealism. He must have a real assignment on this vast program of human activity if he is to recognize his supreme duty to accept one of the vast opportunities that await his election and his action. He ought to realize, however, that his outcome depends entirely upon his own superiority of spirit, his own supremacy of sacrifice and his own reliability of aim in producing his creditable, imperishable contribution to the welfare, the uplift, and the salvability of society. For the purpose of individual limitation of this theme, you’re thinking today in this address to the comprehensive program of the elaboration and expansion of progress as it is shown in the single great field of the kind of public service for which this college was established and to which its organization of men and women devotes itself to effectively secure a certain development and a definite end. Education is recognize in this democratic country as a determined policy of government and as a decided necessity for every citizen who has the elective franchise. There is, therefore, no question of its function and the authority of its management or the responsibility of its service. This whole undertaking must depend upon the support of the masses of the people, yet it is regulated by legislative acts that are frequently changed, directed by officials selected at the popular election and managed by employees and experts chosen by these officials in accordance with accepted standards and legal requirements. All these things amplify the mission of the teacher, enlarge the function of the school and dedicate the service as one of human betterment and of protection for civilization’s ideals and aims.”
Student Facilitator/Docent Discussion

We suggest that college students be used as docents and facilitators for the Marshall Center School, specifically targeting elementary education and social science education majors. These future teachers could get practical experience working with visiting school groups as well as developing an understanding for how local history resources, such as the Marshall Center School, can be used for practical learning within the Iowa Common Core standards. As students have a fairly high turnover rate, the Marshall Center School should also focus on training several community members as volunteer docents and facilitators. These community members can monitor the school when the students are unavailable and can also train students to be docents.

Research Projects (Center for Rural Education):

In addition to students participating as facilitators or docents, we suggest greater outreach to University faculty, emphasizing the resources not only of the Marshall Center School, but also the Center for the History of Rural Iowa Education & Culture. This vast archive can be used to teach basic historical research methods as well as promote the study of the history of education. This would encourage undergraduate and graduate research. As students learn more about the history of education in Iowa they can have a better understanding and grasp for

Connections with Education Department

In order to better utilize the Marshall Center School and deepen an appreciation for the history of rural education among future teachers, we recommend developing stronger connections with professors in the Education department. By working in tandem with education professors on projects and programs that utilize the Marshall Center School, education students will be able to develop a deeper understanding of the challenges and pressures of rural school districts in the past and today.
Other Visitors

Friends of UNI Museums

Utilizing the support of groups such as the Friends of UNI Museums is vital to fully realize the interpretive and curricular vision of this plan. In order to have the Marshall Center School available at regular hours and to facilitate group visits, we recommend developing a core group of volunteers that could serve as docents, facilitate group visits, train student docents and facilitators, and support the school with their time and expertise. This may take some effort on the part of UNI Museums, but it provides a key way to meet the goal of engaging other visitors in the work and mission of the Marshall Center School.

Basket Social

Our research demonstrates that outside of the school day, the Marshall Center School was an important location for community events such as basket socials. We suggest that a basket social serve as a fundraiser for UNI Museums, a local charity, or to help raise money for the local schools to be able to visit the MCS. The basket social would ask for volunteers to put together baskets that would be auctioned off to the public in a silent auction. Baskets may include baked goods, candy, or snacks. Additionally, we suggest asking local businesses such as University Book and Supply to donate a basket of goods for auction. The basket social would likely be an afternoon or evening event, which would open the schoolhouse to community members. Food and drink could be made available on the lawn outside the school and there could be live music. We suggest that a basket social could take place on UNI’s family weekend and/or homecoming weekend, introducing alumni and students’ parents to the MCS.

Map Project

This map project is targeted towards adult visitors, specifically those who may have attended a one-room school or had a relative who attended a one-room school. These visitors to the MCS would be able to mark the location of the one-room school on a map featuring the counties of Iowa and key municipal areas. Additionally, visitors who have visited other historic one-room schoolhouses in Iowa could mark that location on the map. This map would provide visitors with an idea of one-room school locations in Iowa and could inspire visitors to interact with the Rural School Collection at Rod Library. The map should be in the front of the school for the visitors to see on their way out of the building. This map could also demonstrate to visitors where the Marshall Center School originally sat compared to its current location at UNI. This would be indicated with a different color of pin or perhaps another form of marking. The map should be 36x60 inches to allow ample space to pin different locations.
Supporting Materials

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Marshall Center School Timeline

1855
- Pocahontas County begins to be settled by both European immigrants and emigrants from the east coast of the U.S.

1876
- Iowa State Normal School (ISNS) is founded, James C. Gilchrist is the first president

1880
- Iowa’s rural population peaks
- Lutheran Church founded in Laurens

1882
- First Methodist service held by a traveling minister in the waiting room of the Northwestern Depot in Laurens

1884
- Laurens Methodist congregation becomes part of the Marathon Circuit

1885
- Albert and Roy Bunch buy land in Pocahontas County

1886
- Gilchrist retires and relocates to Pocahontas County, 6 miles from the future Marshall Center School (MCS), speaks frequently at MCS until his death in 1897

1888
- The first Methodist Church in Laurens is built

1889
- Kintzely family moves to Pocahontas County

1892
- US stock market collapses, worst economic depression until the 1930s

1891
- Laurens Methodist Church becomes a separate charge

1893
- The MCS is built in Pocahontas County, Marshall Township
- School building used as a polling place for the next 93 years
- Marshall Township Board of Education meets regularly at MCS until 1944
School term is 4 months in winter and 3 months in summer
$120.02 spent furnishing the MCS with desks, curtains, and blackboards

1896
- First Country Life Movement Conference is held to begin improving conditions in rural neighborhoods
- A nationwide survey of rural schools reveals problems in the schools that need to be addressed
- School term is 4 months in winter and 4 months in summer

1898
- USS Maine sinks in Havana, Cuba, triggers Spanish-American War
- MCS receives complete set of *The New Education* textbooks

1900
- Iowa, Kansas, and Nebraska have highest literacy rate in US
- Iowa has 2 school systems, modern and traditional
- Henry Sabin influential in the ISTA, but their structure excludes rural education
- School term of 2 months in fall, 4 months in winter, and 2 month term in spring

1901
- Henry Barrett writes *Biennial Report on Benefits of Consolidating Rural Schools*
- *Webster’s International Dictionary* bought for MCS
- MCS installs a heating stove
- MCS chimney and walls repaired

1902
- MCS gets a new experimental heating system
- Teachers begin receiving payment for holidays

1903
- New Methodist Church is constructed

1904
- ISNS begins offering Bachelor’s Degrees
- MCS receives a new *Webster’s International Dictionary*
- MCS gets new wallpaper, the privy is repaired, and the schoolyard graded

1905
- Future County Superintendent Grace Bradshaw graduates from Cornell College and starts as Principal of Fonda High School in Pocahontas County, where she would remain for seven years
• The School Board approves uniform textbooks for the township

1906
• First school consolidation law passed
• MCS gets lightning rod with copper cable wire

1907
• The School Board approves new new set of textbooks

1908
• Kintzely family sells their farm to the Resseguiie family

1909
• ISNS becomes the Iowa State Teachers College (ISTC)
• Cundiff family moves to Pocahontas County from Danville, Illinois
• Shade trees planted in MCS schoolyard so there are at least 12
• MCS is permitted by school board to purchase new furniture or equipment if needed to conform to the County Superintendent’s new instructions

1910
• Globe, maps, and set of charts purchased for MCS
• Elgin Kreul teaches at MCS for one year

1911
• 35th Iowa General Assembly approves measures to strengthen teacher certification requirements and establish minimum teacher salaries

1912
• Grace McMichael (Bradshaw) starts her tenure as Pocahontas County Superintendent
• February 15, Box Social is held at MCS

1913
• Iowa General Assembly votes to place renewed emphasis on agriculture, home economics, and manual training
• Department of Public Instruction created
• Iowa School Consolidation Law passes
• ISTC offers first course in Rural Education
• Homer Seerley writes report indicating the satisfaction of rural schools
• Teacher minimum wages set by law
• Albert A. Bunch become President of the Marshall Township Board of Directors
• Marshall Township, Sub-District #2 consolidates with Laurens CID
- January 31, MCS hosts a Basket Social

1914
- World War I breaks out in Europe
- ISTC forms the Department of Rural Education
- Marshall Township Board of Trustees searches for a new Road Superintendent to help grade and repair roads and to continually improve township roads
- Marshall Township, Sub-District #6 consolidates with Ware CID leaving 7 schools and sub-districts in Marshall Township
- Board of Director’s decides to give teachers two days off in order to attend the County Institute
- Grace Coddington teaches at MCS for one year

1915
- High School Normal Training Programs operate in high schools to train rural schoolteachers
- New dictionary and stand bought for MCS

1916
- Pocahontas County standardizes textbooks
- 4 Consolidated Independent Districts exist in Pocahontas County
- C.A. Wenell becomes Marshall Township Board of Director’s president
- Equal Suffrage meetings are held at MCS

1917
- US enters World War I
- Teacher paid $2 over minimum wage
- Esther Edmonds teaches at MCS for winter term

1918
- State Superintendent A. Deyoe emphasizes patriotism and good citizenship
- An influenza epidemic sweeps through Laurens
- Teacher paid $10 over minimum wage
- The School Board allows MCS to make any repairs if needed

1919
- The Volstead Act is passed establishing Prohibition
- Minimum Attendance Law is passed
- Consolidation law passed
Evans-Smith Bill (creates Standardized Rural Schools)
Number of consolidated districts in Iowa nearly doubles
A tornado passes through Laurens
Teacher paid $10 over minimum wage
Marie Edmonds teaches at MCS for two terms

1920

- Nineteenth Amendment granting women the right to vote is ratified
- Farm prices begin to decline
- McClanahan becomes State Superintendent of Public Instruction
- Telephone added at MCS
- Teacher wage $10 over minimum wage
- Alice Garton teaches at MCS for one year
- Roy Resseguie and Vernal Bunch graduate from Marshall Center School (8th grade)
- Dorothy Bunch graduates from Laurens High School

1921

- Milo Reno becomes President of the Iowa’s Farmer’s Union
- Women’s Division of Marshall Township Farm Bureau is organized
- Richardson family arrived from Mt. Vernon, Illinois
- Homer Cundiff is stricken with polio

1922

- Farmer’s Union Mutual Life Insurance Company is established
- May E. Francis becomes the first female Iowa State Superintendent of Public Instruction, strong advocate for one-room schools
- School term increased to nine months
- An entertainment program sponsored by the Farmer’s Union is held at MCS
- MCS receives a piano
- MCS teacher is given $10 for primary supplies
- James McFadzen teaches at MCS for one year
- Elvira Bunch graduated from Marshall Center School (8th grade)

1923

- Board of Directors decides to pay teacher’s depending on whether they have a First or Second grade certificate and whether or not they have previous teaching experience
• Bertha Schlensig teaches at MCS for two years

1924
• May Francis becomes State Superintendent of Public Instruction
• 4 standardized rural schools exist in Pocahontas County
• Newell family moves to farm in Marshall Township
• New lightning rod installed at the school after a unanimous decision by the school board
• MCS receives 8 new desks
• Vernal Bunch graduates from Laurens High School

1925
• Minimum attendance law modified from 10 regular pupils per year to 7
• $5000 max deposit in National Bank of Laurens
• Anton Thoma becomes President of Marshall Township’s Board of Directors
• Teacher paid $5 over minimum wage
• Roy Resseguie graduates from Laurens High School

1926
• Agnes Samuelson becomes Iowa State Superintendent of Public Instruction, establishes statewide course of study
• L.L. Boyanousky becomes President of Marshall Township’s Board of Directors
• The School Board signs a new book contract
• Teacher paid $5 on top of wage for janitorial duties
• Lester Resseguie graduates from Marshall Center School (8th grade)

1927
• L. D. Newell becomes President of Marshall Township’s Board of Directors
• Ina Bloomer teaches at MCS for two years
• Edna Resseguie graduates from Marshall Center School (8th grade)

1928
• Seerley retires as President of the ISTC
• 2 standardized schools exist in Pocahontas County
• $8,000 max deposit in National Bank of Laurens
• Roy McCormick becomes President of Marshall Township’s Board of Directors

1929
• US stock market crashes triggering the Great Depression
• B.C. Egertson becomes President of Marshall Township’s Board of Directors
1930
- 3 standardized rural schools exist in Pocahontas County
- The School Board signs a new book contract
- Luverne Newell graduates from Marshall Center School with a 94.9 on the state examination
- Ila Bunch and Lester Resseguie graduate from Laurens High School

1932
- ISTC closes the Department of Rural Education
- MCS teacher is given $5 for primary supplies

1933
- Teachers paid in warrants, not cash, due to the Great Depression
- The 21st Amendment ends Prohibition

1934
- Luverne Newell graduates from Laurens High School

1935
- Dale Newell graduates from Laurens High School

1936
- Lestel and Loren Richardson win First Place at the Laurens Community Celebration Amateur Contest

1937
- Grace McMichael (Bradshaw) leaves her position as Pocahontas County Superintendent
- Electricity added at MCS

1939
- World War II begins in Europe

1941
- US enters World War II after the bombing of Pearl Harbor

1942
- Cloakroom walls added

1944
- MCS closed due to consolidation, pupils go to Laurens for schooling

1945
- World War II ends

1961
- ISTC becomes the State College of Iowa

1967
- The State College of Iowa becomes the University of Northern Iowa (UNI)

1979
- UNI establishes the Committee on Rural Education to foster relationships with Iowa’s rural schools
- UNI develops a professor-teacher exchange program with Burt Community School District

1986
- UNI establishes the One-Room School Advisory Committee with the mission of selecting a rural schoolhouse to be relocated to campus
- Last election for which MCS is used as polling place
- Alvin and Bernice Lindquist acquire MCS per an agreement made in 1946

1987
- C.A. Lindquist nominates MCS to the One-Room School Advisory Committee
- MCS is selected by UNI’s One-Room School Advisory Committee
- Dedication ceremony held at MCS site in Marshall Township
- MCS relocated to the west of UNI’s Schindler Education Center

1988
- The One-Room School Advisory Committee achieves its purpose, replaced by the Committee on Rural Education

1989
- Spring Rural Education Conference held at UNI (April 5th and 6th)
- The recently restored MCS opens to the public, initially under the control of the College of Education

1996
- MCS administered by the UNI Museums
Introduction

The Marshall Center School, a one-room schoolhouse that operated from 1893 to 1944 in Pocahontas County, Iowa, offers visitors a glimpse into the world of rural education and its importance to rural communities. Unlike other one-room schoolhouses throughout the state, the Marshall Center School has a unique relationship to the University of Northern Iowa, the former Iowa State Teachers College and the primary venue for teacher education in Iowa. This relationship facilitated the move of the Marshall Center School to the UNI campus where it serves as a reminder of the university’s dedication to rural education and rural communities.

During the 1920s, the height of the school’s operation, the Marshall Center School fostered the lives of a core group of families who lived in the neighborhood and a number of children who attended the school. It also reflected the changing landscape of teacher training and rural educational practices in Iowa, particularly those created and articulated at Iowa State Teachers College, what is now the University of Northern Iowa. Rural education at the Marshall Center School shaped and was shaped by the cultural and educational values held by community members and education officials. Community leaders and education officials at both the state and university levels...
directed and influenced curriculum intended to educate students in the necessary aptitudes and attitudes required for participation in American economic, social, and civic life. In this way, the school connected individuals and the larger neighborhood to a world of ideas and practices. In addition, teachers, students and their families, and community members and organizations shaped the operation and function of the Marshall Center School within the rural community by adapting and transforming larger ideas of rural education to serve the residents of Pocahontas County.

**Rural Community**

**Place**

Located on the campus of the University of Northern Iowa is a white frame schoolhouse. Today, this school stands as a reminder of Iowa’s rural school past. The school was moved to UNI during the 1980s. Between 1893 and 1944, the school served the students who lived in the center of Marshall Township, Pocahontas County, Iowa. More than just a location for learning, the school also provided a nexus for community interactions and through the community’s support the school helped define the boundaries of the rural neighborhood.

In *There Goes the Neighborhood* author David R. Reynolds explores Iowa rural neighborhoods. He defines rural neighborhoods as having small amounts of land and people. In his description, “Neighborhoods were the institutional means of organizing communal and individual work exchanges, the sharing of farm and household
implements and other economic resources, and the trading and marketing of products produced by women.”¹ Rural schools became a place that brought members of the rural neighborhood together. As neighbors joined together to provide an education for their children, the school helped to define the boundaries of the rural neighborhood.²

Located on the plains of Northwestern Iowa, Pocahontas County was settled by European Americans beginning in 1855.³ During the last Ice Age, this area of Iowa was glaciated and when the glaciers retreated, the landscape had been scoured into a flat, marshy wetland. This type of land was more difficult to farm, since the wetter tracts of land had to be tiled and drained in order to be useful for farming. This resulted in the Northwestern part of the state, including Pocahontas County, being the last to be settled. Pocahontas County follows the common Iowa county shape. It is 24 miles x 24 miles, corresponding to 4 townships north and south and 4 townships east and west. As in most parts of Iowa, the townships contain 36 square miles, with each square mile constituting a section.

Marshall Township, on the western edge of Pocahontas County, is the township just south of the northern row of townships. No town has been part of Marshall Township and the Township government is the basic unit of government. The residents of Marshall Township include the descendants of native born Iowans, farmers

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¹ David R. Reynolds, _There Goes the Neighborhood: Rural School Consolidation at the Grass Roots in Twentieth-Century Iowa_ (Iowa City: University of Iowa Press, 1999), 23.
² Ibid., 27.
³ Robert E. Flickenger, _The Pioneer History of Pocahontas County, Iowa, From the Time of its Earliest Settlement to the Present Time_ (Fonda, IA: The Times Print, 1904), 156.
who relocated from other states, and immigrants from Europe. Through the early 20th
century, Iowa natives and migrants from other Midwestern states composed the
majority of Pocahontas County residents. In 1900, some of these migrants relocated
from further east, including New York and Vermont, but by 1920, most migrants were
from surrounding states. Those who emigrated from Europe were primarily Swedish,
but Germans, Austrians, and Danes also moved here. The population of Marshall
Township grew rapidly from 604 residents in 1900 to its peak population of 662 in
1910. Population then slowly declined to 613 by 1940. Ultimately, the population
changed little in the first half of the 20th century. However, the fluctuation in
population rates does reflect the growing migration to Iowa that occurred early in the
20th century and the decline caused by many residents moving further west.

For its schools, Marshall Township followed the school township model of
governance from its inception until 1944. This model dictated that an elected township
school board would oversee the schools in the nine sub-districts (each sub-district
contained four sections or square miles) within the township. Each sub-district elected
their own director to the school board who participated in the governance of the

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4 U.S. Census Bureau, “1900 Federal Population Census,” Marshall Township, Pocahontas County, Iowa,
Enumeration District 165; NARA microfilm publication roll T623_452; Census Bureau, “1920 Federal Population
Census,” Marshall Township, Pocahontas County, Iowa, Enumeration District 204; NARA microfilm publication
roll T625_505.
5 U.S. Census Bureau, “1900 Federal Population Census,” Marshall Township, Pocahontas County, Iowa,
Enumeration District 165; NARA microfilm publication roll T623_452; Census Bureau, “1910 Federal Population
Census,” Marshall Township, Pocahontas County, Iowa, Enumeration District 238; NARA microfilm publication
roll T624_416.
6 U.S. Census Bureau, “1940 Federal Population Census,” Marshall Township, Pocahontas County, Iowa,
Enumeration District 76-20; NARA microfilm publication roll T627_1191.
township’s schools. In Marshall Township each sub-district located their schoolhouse at the center, or the crossroads of their sub-district thus insuring that no student was farther than one and a half miles from their school. The Marshall Center School served sub-district #5, which was the sub-district located at the center of the township. This model of school governance remained unchanged until 1913 and 1914 when two sub-districts, one in the north and one in the east, joined the Laurens and Ware Consolidated Independent School Districts. The remaining seven sub-districts resisted consolidation, remained a School Township, and continued to maintain their rural schools.⁷

For many rural residents of the early twentieth century, land and land ownership were important factors in providing security for farm families. By owning land, families could enhance and strengthen kinship networks, as children could settle nearby in the future. Though settlement of Marshall Township occurred after the 1862 Homestead Act was passed, land ownership was not established through homesteading. The land that made up the Marshall Center neighborhood had been allocated to the Chicago and Rock Island and Pacific Railroad and to the State of Iowa for the support of common schools under the Morrill Land Grant Act. This meant that the original settlers had to

⁷ Reynolds, There Goes the Neighborhood, 60; Proceedings of the Board of Directors, Marshall Township, Pocahontas County, Iowa, 3/21/1887 to 7/1/1916, CHREIC, University of Northern Iowa Museums.
purchase the land, rather than obtain land under the Homestead Act. In Marshall Township in 1920, under half of families owned their home, and of those who owned their home, seventy percent of them had mortgages.

Second only to family, rural neighborhoods were an important institution that helped insure the vitality and success for early twentieth century Iowa farmers. By “visiting, exchanging work, exchanging products, and sharing life events,” residents of rural Iowa neighborhoods created and maintained important social, cultural, and economic connections that were necessary to their survival and success as farmers.

Within the context of the rural neighborhood, the Marshall Center School brought people from a variety of ethnic and religious backgrounds together and helped knit the neighborhood together. A neighborhood connected through marriage, mutual support through community organizations (like the Farmers Union), and support for education. This strong community was able to resist efforts of consolidation in the early twentieth century and continued to support its rural school into the 1940s.

Families and Students

The importance of the rural community was not lost upon the inhabitants of Marshall Township. Central families in the area included the Newell, Cundiff,

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9 U.S. Census Bureau, “1920 Federal Population Census,” Marshall Township, Pocahontas County, Iowa, Enumeration District 204; NARA microfilm publication roll T625_505.
10 Reynolds, There Goes the Neighborhood, 24-25.
Richardson, Bunch, and Resseguie families. Members of these families were active participants in the rural community through community organizations, the Methodist church, and of course the Marshall Center School. They realized as author Sonya Salamon writes, “A school fosters a community’s vitality, identity, and loyalty.”\textsuperscript{11} The Marshall Center School, as well as the Methodist Church, served as a source of unity and created commonalities between the families of the Marshall Center District.

According to scholar Mary Neth, “Larger community rituals were often institutionalized in neighborhood schools and churches, and in some cases church, school, and informal neighborhoods overlapped.”\textsuperscript{12} The Newell, Cundiff, Richardson, Bunch, and Resseguie families epitomize the idea of a rural neighborhood, as they all had children attending the Marshall Center School and many of the families attended the Laurens Methodist Church.

The history of the Marshall Center School displays how families belonging to the rural neighborhood valued education. Children educated at the school would often remain members of the community, providing a sense of continuity in the neighborhood, although some of the children would eventually move away. This is one of the reasons rural families felt it was very important to avoid consolidation. Many rural families did not want to give up their control over choosing a teacher who would


provide students with the quality of education the community desired. Rural families also feared that a consolidated school would teach rural children new values and draw them away from the farm, which would end the continuity of the rural neighborhood.

**Newell**

The Newell family was an important part of the rural neighborhood surrounding the Marshall Center School. Patriarch Loyal Newell was born and Indiana and moved to Laurens in 1916. He married Laura Schreyer, who lived on a farm just west of Pocahontas, Iowa. Embarking on their life together, they moved to a farm in Marshall Township, five miles south of Laurens, Iowa, in 1924, where they resided for 23 years. In 1946, Loyal suffered a heart attack and died. Nine years later, Laura passed away. Funeral services for both Loyal and Laura were held at the Laurens Methodist Church where they were both members.¹³

Loyal and Laura had seven children: Luverne, Dale, Marjorie, Viola, Lewis, Glen, and Earl. The eldest three children, Luverne, Dale, and Marjorie, all attended the Marshall Center School during the 1920s. Luverne Newell did very well in school. When she graduated from Marshall Center in 1930, she scored a 94.9 on the state eighth grade examination. She received the highest score of the 82 rural students in Pocahontas County that spring.¹⁴ Luverne went on to attend Laurens High School and married Truman Woodin soon after graduating in 1934. Truman and Luverne farmed

¹⁴ “Rural Graduation from Pocahontas County Schools,” Rolfe Arrow, May 22, 1930, 1.
in Marshall Township until 1968, when Luverne moved into a retirement home in Pocahontas. Like Luverne’s parents, they were members of the Laurens Methodist Church. Luverne passed away in 2001 and is buried in Laurens.\(^{15}\)

Dale Newell also attended the Marshall Center School and Laurens High School, where he graduated in 1935. At Laurens High School he participated in agriculture and farm shop classes, and represented the school at a convention of the Future Farmers of America (F.F.A.).\(^ {16}\) Following graduation he farmed with his father in Marshall Township before moving to a farm in Garner, Iowa in 1945. Before long he moved to Clear Lake, Iowa to sell feed until he retired and moved to Oklahoma in 1977. Eventually, he returned to Iowa and resided in Mason City until his death in 2008. Like his parents and siblings, Dale was also a member of the Methodist church.\(^ {17}\)

Marjorie Newell performed quite well at the Marshall Center School. In 1934, she made the honor roll and was one of 31 rural students in Pocahontas County to pass all of the subjects on the state eighth grade examination.\(^{18}\) After graduating from Marshall Center she attended Laurens High School, from 1938-1942. Afterwards, she enrolled in technical courses to further her education while also maintaining her membership at the Laurens Methodist Church. Marjorie married Merwyn Keith Johnson and went on to manage hotels in Bemidji, Minnesota and Clear Lake, Iowa. In

\(^ {15}\) “Luverne Beatrice Newell Woodin,” Find A Grave (http://www.findagrave.com/).
\(^ {16}\) Pocahontas Record Democrat, October 4, 1934, 3.
\(^ {18}\) “21 Students Given Awards for Good Attendance,” Pocahontas Record Democrat, February 8, 1934, 6; “31 Passed State Quiz,” Pocahontas Record Democrat, March 1, 1934, 6.
1984 they returned to Laurens after retiring from the hotel business. They remained in Laurens until Marjorie’s death in 2006.19

Glen Newell was born in Laurens in 1923. He attended Marshall Center School and went on to Laurens High School, where he graduated in 1942. At Marshall Center, he had perfect attendance and made the honor roll in 1934.20 In 1935, Glen and his brother Lewis received perfect attendance.21 During World War II he served in the Marine Corps. In 1950, while in Minnesota, he married his wife Gloria and then returned to Laurens where he farmed until his retirement in 1984. He served as executive director of the Pocahontas County Agricultural Stabilization and Conservation Service from 1964 to 1978.22 Glen was also a member of the Pocahontas County Rural Development Committee.23 Along with his brother Lewis, he was heavily involved in agriculture and both were named Farmers of the Week in 1953. They both attended a veterans’ agricultural training program in Marathon, Iowa. Glen and Lewis took control of the family farm located in Marshall Township, which consisted of 325 acres. They raised Yorkshire hogs for market and breeding. In addition, they also raised cattle, mostly Herefords, and experimented with a corn cob diet. They practiced a three year rotation with their crops, rotating fields between corn, oats, and hay/pasture. All

20 “21 Students Given Awards.”
21 “Rural School Notes,” Pocahontas Record Democrat, April 11, 1935, 3.
23 “Rural Development to be Main Topic at County-Wide Meeting,” Laurens Sun, September 14, 1972, 6.
of their crops went towards feeding their livestock.\textsuperscript{24}

\textit{Cundiff}

In 1909 Sherman and Pearl Cundiff, along with six of their eight children, moved to Pocahontas County by train from Danville, Illinois. It is reported that Sherman traveled in box car with the family’s furniture, clothing and personal items.\textsuperscript{25} Sherman and Pearl had eight children: Lavessa, Kimbro, Gladys, Homer, Oscar, Orville, Lewis, and Lois. Two of the eldest children, Lavessa and Gladys, did not move to Laurens with their family in 1909, but they both relocated to Iowa on their own terms. Gladys had returned to Marshall Township by 1930, where she worked as a servant for the Newell family.\textsuperscript{26} The Cundiff family attended Laurens Methodist Church, although Orville became a Lutheran later in his life.

In 1905 Homer Cundiff was born in Danville, Illinois. He attended the Marshall Center School until 1921 when he was 16 years old. It was at this time that Homer contracted polio, a contagious viral illness that has the ability to cause paralysis and make it difficult to breathe.\textsuperscript{27} During the early 1920s he traveled to and from Iowa City, where he received treatment. In the end, Homer overcame the illness but was left

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\textsuperscript{24} “Marshall Township Brothers Operating Farm as Partners,” \textit{Pocahontas Democrat}, September 10, 1953, 15.
\textsuperscript{25} Helen Ducommun, \textit{Laurens “100”: Chronicle of Our First 100 Years} (Laurens, Iowa: Laurens Centennial Corp., 1981) 284.
\textsuperscript{26} U.S. Census Bureau, “1930 Federal Population Census,” Marshall Township, Pocahontas County, Iowa, Enumeration District 20; NARA microfilm publication roll 673, page 5B.
\textsuperscript{27} Mayo Clinic, “Polio,” [online], (http://www.mayoclinic.org/diseases-conditions/polio/basics/definition/con-20030957) (accessed February 23, 2015).
\end{flushleft}
requiring the assistance of a wheelchair or crutches for the rest of his life. In 1927, at the age of 22, he returned to Marshall Center and graduated eighth grade with 76 other students from Pocahontas County.\(^{28}\) After graduation, Homer attended Cedar Rapids Business College and graduated from Fort Dodge-Tobin Business College. Upon finishing school Homer lived at home in Laurens before moving to Fort Dodge in the 1950s. While in Fort Dodge he worked as a bookkeeper at an income tax service until his death on May 30, 1957.

Oscar Cundiff was born in 1907 and passed away on July 29, 1929. He attended Marshall Center School until 1922, when at 14 years old he decided to pursue farming. Throughout his time at Marshall Center he was known as the class clown, often playing practical jokes on his siblings and other students.\(^{29}\) At 22 years of age, he passed away in Silver Lake, Iowa.\(^{30}\) While swimming with two of his brothers, Oscar decided to show-off his diving skills. After his third attempt, he drowned.\(^{31}\) It was later discovered while under water, he suffered from heart failure. Over 200 cars were present at Oscar’s funeral making it one of the largest funerals in the history of Laurens.\(^{32}\)

Orville was born in 1910 in Laurens. As a student at the Marshall Center School,  

\(^{28}\) “Rural Schools Graduate 76.” *The Pocahontas Democrat*, June 2, 1927.  
\(^{29}\) Sue Grosboll, “History of Marshall Center School at the University of Northern Iowa,” Manuscript, University of Northern Iowa Museums and Collections, 1998.  
\(^{30}\) “Oscar Cundiff Drowned In Silver Lake Friday Evening.” *Laurens Sun Times*, August 1, 1929  
\(^{31}\) Ibid.  
\(^{32}\) Ibid.
he participated in the Marshall Minutemen 4-H Club, which added to his agricultural knowledge and solidified his decision to pursue farming as an adult. In 1930 he worked as a farm laborer on the Newell’s farm. In 1936, he married Edith A. Christiansen in Charles City, Iowa. The couple had 7 children. Orville was employed as a farmer and raised cattle in Laurens until May 1953, when he and his family moved Storm Lake, Iowa. In September 1953 he passed away.

Twins Lewis and Lois Cundiff were born in 1911 and attended the Marshall Center School until 1927. After graduation, Lois attended Laurens High School, as did most of the Cundiff children. However, it is not indicated if Lewis pursued further education after attending Marshall Center. In 1950, Lois moved to California with her husband. Lewis also relocated to California in 1953, where he lived until his death in 1965. Tragically, Lois also passed away in 1965. In August 1965, while driving home from Lewis’s funeral service in San Francisco, she drove off a cliff and perished. Her remains were discovered in a California river two months later.

Richardson

In 1921, Roy and Amy Richardson relocated to Laurens from Mt. Vernon, Illinois with their eight children: Dandy, Geneva, Leona, Robert, Kenneth, Lestel,

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33 U.S. Census Bureau, “1930 Federal Population Census,” Marshall Township, Pocahontas County, Iowa, Enumeration District 20; NARA microfilm publication roll 673, page 5B.
Loren, and Bernice.\textsuperscript{35} The Richardson family belonged to Laurens Methodist Church. Only Lestel, Loren, and Bernice attended the Marshall Center School, but all were an integral part of the Laurens community for years. When any member of the rural neighborhood was in need of assistance, the Richardsons stepped in to assist. For example, when fellow farmer Ben Decker was sick, several neighbors, including the Richardsons offered their services.\textsuperscript{36} Another time, the Richardsons and their neighbors banded together to help an ill Lloyd Oleson harvest his corn.\textsuperscript{37}

After attending the Marshall Center School, all of the Richardson children went on to attend Laurens High School. Bernice was an active member of the Happy Go Lucky 4-H Club, which the Richardson’s often hosted.\textsuperscript{38} In 1934, she married Kenneth Mohler and became quite active in the local women’s bowling league.\textsuperscript{39}

In high school, Loren was known for his skills on the football field, while he and Lestel also possessed musical talents.\textsuperscript{40} At the 1936 Laurens Community Celebration Lestel and Loren played guitar and sang in an amateur music contest. They received first place and won the $5.00 grand prize.\textsuperscript{41} Two years later, they auditioned for the WHO radio station in Des Moines.\textsuperscript{42} Unfortunately, the results of their audition are

\textsuperscript{35} Ducommun, \textit{Laurens "100": Chronicle of Our First 100 Years}, 452.
\textsuperscript{36} “Husk Ben Decker’s Corn,” \textit{Laurens Sun}, December 6, 1923, 1.
\textsuperscript{37} “Neighbor’s pluck Lloyd Oleson’s Corn Tuesday,” \textit{Laurens Sun}, November 15, 1934, 1.
\textsuperscript{38} “The Happy go Lucky Club,” \textit{Laurens Sun}, July 28, 1932, 1.
\textsuperscript{39} “Result of second Women’s bowling Tournament,” \textit{Laurens Sun}, November 9, 1939, 1.
\textsuperscript{40} “Laurens High School Wallops Rolfe High on Armistice Day,” \textit{Laurens Sun}, November 14, 1935, 1.
\textsuperscript{41} “Laurens Community Celebration a big Success in of Spite Rain,” \textit{Laurens Sun}, September 17, 1936, 1.
\textsuperscript{42} \textit{Laurens Sun}, January 13, 1938, 8.
unknown.

In 1938, Lestel Richardson graduated from Laurens High School and married Mildred Baily. He gained employment at the Hawks and Sons General Store in Laurens and in 1940 he bought his own gas station. A few years later he was able to purchase another gas station and remained in the business for 35 years. He and his wife had six children. After his retirement, two of Lestel’s sons ran the Richardson Station after he retired. The Richardson Station remains as a part of the community of Laurens.

Loren became a farmer after graduating high school and began farming near Laurens. It is possible that he acquired his father’s farmland after Roy retired in 1946, although no mention of this is reported. During World War II, Loren also served in the United States Army and married Doris Baily, Lestel’s sister-in-law, in 1940.\(^43\) Even after all of the Richardson children were married and living on their own, the family remained close. There are many local newspaper articles referencing the presence of the entire Richardson family at community events.

**Bunch**

The son of Dr. and Mrs. B.F. Bunch, Albert Bunch was born on August 30, 1861 in Liscomb, Iowa. In 1885, Albert and his brother Roy purchased 80 acres of land in Pocahontas County. To relocate the brothers required two teams of horses and a wagon to move the family’s possessions. Their farm was located 3 miles south from Laurens.

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and only had two buildings, a small shack where they lived and a barn for straw. Later on, the brothers were able to buy more farmland near Marshall Center School where they planted corn, hay, and potatoes.

When Albert married in 1901, he and Roy divided their farm. Albert received the original 80 acres of land.\textsuperscript{44} He married Mary Bunch (Craig), who was born on March 31, 1875 in Norway, Iowa. However, her family relocated to Laurens when she was very young. She attended Laurens High School and graduated from Humboldt College in Humboldt, Iowa. Albert was a member of the Laurens Methodist church and served on the School Board. He died on August 5, 1935 at the age of 73. After Albert’s death, Mary held a public auction to sell stocks, farm machinery, and livestock.\textsuperscript{45} On September 17, 1939, she married Ira H. Siddall.\textsuperscript{46} She was an active in the Laurens community as a member of Women's Society for Christian Service, volunteer for the Red Cross, and Farm Bureau leader.

Albert and Mary had five children: Dorothy, Vernal, Elvira, Illa, and Clifford.\textsuperscript{47} The eldest child, Dorothy, was born in 1902 in Laurens. She graduated from Laurens High School in 1920 and married Avery Hershner, an artist and carpenter. Dorothy and Avery moved frequently. Their last known location was McConnellville, Ohio.\textsuperscript{48} The Bunch’s only son, Clifford Bunch, was born in 1904. Shortly after attending the

\textsuperscript{44} “Le Roy Bunch” \textit{Pocahontas Democrat}, July 21, 1927, 1.
\textsuperscript{45} “Albert A. Bunch.” \textit{Laurens Sun}, August 15, 1935, 1,3.
\textsuperscript{46} Grahm, “Mary Bunch,” \textit{Find A Grave} (http://www.findagrave.com/), October 5, 2011
\textsuperscript{47} Ibid.
\textsuperscript{48} “Mrs. Siddal” \textit{The Laruens Sun}, August 29, 1946, 1.
Marshall Center School, he died in 1919 at the age of 15. The cause of his death is unknown.

Vernal Bunch was born on June 10, 1907, in Laurens, Iowa. She attended both Marshall Center School and Laurens High School, graduating in 1920 and 1924, respectively.\(^4^9\) After high school she went to Morningside College in Sioux City, Iowa, where she earned a Bachelor’s Degree in 1928. While in college she studied to become a teacher and had the opportunity to teach in a one-room school. In August 1928, she married Glen Ingram. The couple moved to Lester, Nebraska, where they both worked as teachers. Vernal taught drama and English. When the Great Depression occurred, the couple was forced to move to Sioux Rapids, Iowa, because they were unable to support their growing family on a teacher’s salary. They stayed with Glen’s father and in 1936 were able to purchase his farm. Vernal kept busy teaching Sunday school the Methodist church until she and Glen moved to New Mexico in 1977. On January 16, 1994, Vernal passed away.\(^5^0\)

Elvira Bunch was born on March 17, 1909 in Laurens, Iowa. She graduated from the Marshall Center School in 1922. She eventually became a teacher for the Laurens Methodist Church. On December 14, 1928, Elvira married Myron Glenn Stewart. They lived in Laurens until they moved to Sioux City. Elvira died after giving birth to their

\(^5^0\) Rich Robinson, “Vernal Mary Bunch Ingram,” Find A Grave (http://www.findagrave.com/).
first child, Beverly Jean Stewart on September 18, 1929. 

Ila was born on August 23, 1916 in Laurens, Iowa. She is the youngest member of the Bunch family. She attended the Marshall Center School and graduated from Laurens High School on May 19, 1930. Pursuing postsecondary education, Ila attended Morningside College, and then transferred to Capital City College in Des Moines, Iowa. She graduated from Capital City College with her Bachelor’s Degree in business. On May 17, 1941, she married Leo W. Smith and moved to Houston, Texas. In 1948, they relocated to Waterloo, Iowa, where Ila worked as a teacher’s aid in the Waterloo Public Schools. When the couple retired, they moved to Pine River, Minnesota, where they lived for 25 years. Ila returned to Ames, Iowa, and then moved into a retirement home in Boone, where she died on September 28, 2009 at the age of 94.

Resseguie

The Resseguie family emigrated from France to the United States in 1709. Although the family originally settled in Norwalk, Connecticut, the Resseguie’s, who were Huguenot refugees, settled in Iowa because of their interest in farming. When A.A. Resseguie purchased a farm, he planted orchards, which produced apples, plums, and grapes. Edward Resseguie met Agnes Kintzely as their fathers negotiated the sale of farmland and were married on March 10, 1908 in Laurens. Agnes attended a rural

52 “Miss Ila Bunch and Leo Smith Wed Saturday” Laurens Sun, May 22, 1941.
school in Laurens and received a teaching certificate which enabled her to become a rural school teacher in Iowa. She would teach for seven years. The couple bought a farm in Schaller, Iowa, but frequently returned to Laurens to assist A.A. Resseguie with the farm. In 1915, they moved back to Laurens, a mile and a half from the Marshall Center School, to raise their four children: Roy, Lester, Edna, and Howard.

Roy was born in Laurens in 1909. He was enrolled in Marshall Center School and graduated in 1921. In 1925, he graduated from Laurens High School and went on to attend Iowa State University where he earned a Doctorate of Veterinary Medicine in 1936, graduating with honors. In February 21, 1931, he married Maxine Palmer Roy and they had one son together, Areloe Resseguie. During World War II Roy joined the military and was one of the 9,400 individuals to earn the rank of major in 1946. His military service required the family to move to a military base in Chicago, Illinois. By 1959, Roy was promoted to colonel and received a Silver Eagle medal.

In 1912, Lester Resseguie was born in Laurens, Iowa. He graduated from the Marshall Center School in 1926 and Laurens High School in 1930. On February 15, 1934, he married Frances Clark at the Laurens Methodist church. They had an 80 acre farm in Laurens where they raised chickens and doves and grew oats. After they sold

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54 Ducommun, Laurens "100": Chronicle of Our First 100 Years, 375-376.  
55 “Ed Resseguie” Pocahontas County, February 27, 1918, 3.  
56 “Roy Resseguie Wins Honors” Laurens Sun, May 10, 1934, 1.  
57 “Roy Resseguie married at Mapleton Last Saturday” Laurens Sun, Feb 26, 1931, 3.  
58 “Roy Resseguie Gets Regular Commission” Laurens Sun, July 11, 1946, 3.  
59 Pocahontas Record Democrat, January 15, 1959, 2.
their farm they had their own hardware store in Everly, Iowa. The couple retired in 1975, but continued to manage a campground in South Dakota for the Army Corps of Engineers. They moved to Roswell, New Mexico for a year and finally Arizona where Lester died in 1996.

Edna was born in 1915 in Laurens. She went to Marshall Center and excelled in her classes. One of her teachers recorded that Edna was, “a brilliant student.” To further prove this point, she made the honor roll while in eighth grade. In 1927, she graduated from Marshall Center and then enrolled in Laurens High School. While attending high school, Edna was able to strengthen her musical abilities. At the end of class, she would receive a signal from Miss Olson to begin playing the piano. Every student in the class would then leave one-by-one as Edna played. After graduation, she attended Cornell College and Iowa State Teachers College where she received a teaching degree in 1936.

Edna taught at a rural school in Swan Lake Township, which was directly north of Marshall Township. She also taught in Orange and Waterloo at a consolidated school. On June 4, 1938, Edna married fellow teacher Paul W. Hoemann. The couple relocated frequently and lived in Wyoming, Indiana, and Colorado. They had four children, two of whom became teachers. Edna and Paul retired and reside in Woodland.

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60 “Mr. and Mrs. L Ressegue to observe 40th anniversary,” Laurens Sun, February 14, 1974, 3.
61 “Obituary for Frances Ressegue,” Book of Memories, April 2012.
62 Marshall Center School Collection, Teacher Gradebook 1919-1930, Center for the History of Rural Iowa Education and Culture (CHRIEC), University of Northern Iowa, Cedar Falls, Iowa.
Howard was born in 1920 in Laurens. The youngest member of the Resseguie family, he graduated from Laurens High School in 1936. He went on to attend Buena Vista College in Storm Lake, Iowa. However, he only attended for a year before leaving to pursue farming. On July 8, 1939 he married Ivallee Smith. The couple had four children. In 1971, Howard died tragically in a train accident.

Churches

Many residents of Laurens and the surrounding Marshall Center community were Methodists and attended services at the Laurens Methodist church. Early neighborhood leaders including A.F. Craig and Albert Bunch were notable members of the Church. Though the church building was located four miles north of the Township boundary, the relationships established at church strengthened the bonds within the rural community, which transcended the distance. The United Methodist Church in Laurens followed the guidelines set out by the *Doctrines and Discipline of the Methodist Episcopal Church*. This doctrine establishes and enforces the fundamental law of the Methodist Church. It outlines the Articles of Religion, the General Rules, and the Articles of Organization and Government.

In the spring of 1882, the first Methodist service was held in Laurens in the

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63 Ducommun, *Laurens "100": Chronicle of Our First 100 Years*, 352-353.
64 Rolf Arrow, July 13, 1939, 3.
65 Ducommun, *Laurens "100": Chronicle of Our First 100 Years*, 353.
waiting room of the Northwestern Depot by a traveling minister. Soon after, Reverend A.W. Richards from Old Rolfe, Iowa, began regularly conducting services in Laurens and neighboring communities that were part of the Rolfe Circuit. In 1884, the Methodist congregation in Laurens became a part of the Marathon Circuit. The serving ministers included Reverends F.H. Hungerford, Rhinehart Hild, Lev Jarvis, and Robert Burnip. Services were held either at the Northwestern Depot, local businesses, or schoolhouses.

In the summer of 1888, the first Methodist church in Laurens was constructed on the corner of Third and Olive Street. The dedication was held on December 5, 1888 and completed during the ministry of Reverend Burnip. Construction costs totaled $1,500. On December 5, 1891 the church was organized as a separate charge and Reverend Bristow became the first minister to reside in Laurens. In 1903, plans for a new brick church were in the process of being organized under the leadership of Reverend Robert Reidy. The church was relocated to the corner of Second and Main Street and remains the current location of the Laurens Methodist church. The cost of construction was $15,000.67

Sunday school is an integral part of the Methodist church. Sunday schools are said to “cultivate the spirit of cooperation, while at the same time developing

66 Ibid., 42-43.
67 Ducommun, Laurens "100": Chronicle of Our First 100 Years, 62.
‘denomination loyalty.’

In Laurens, the Methodist church saw a large spike in attendance during the ministry of Reverend W.H. Lease (1916-1923). Sunday school was of particular interest to Reverend Lease. At one point there were 1,000 people present for Sunday school. Attendees of Lease’s record-breaking Sunday school included members of the Bunch, Richardson, and Resseguie families. The mission of Reverend Lease’s Sunday school program was to promote “young people’s and adult Bible classes, teacher training, evangelism, temperance instruction, pledge signing, and regular worker’s meetings.” Common courses taught at Sunday school included: “Jesus, the World’s Saviour,” “Great Men and Women of the Bible,” and the “Missionary Message of the Bible.”

Reverend Lease and his family moved to Laurens in October 1916 from Sanborn, Iowa. “The seven years in Laurens were some of the happiest and most productive of Rev. Lease’s entire ministry,” writes his biographer. In addition to Reverend Lease’s special interest in Sunday school, he also contributed to the rural community through his sermons. He encouraged children to sit in the front of the church and for parents to bring their young children without worrying about the disruption of their crying. His biographer notes, “He said he wasn’t worth much if he couldn’t be heard above a few

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69 Ducommun, *Laurens "100": Chronicle of Our First 100 Years*, 62.
70 Nye, *Between the Rivers*, 268.
babies’ cries!” Reverend Lease also held annual revival meetings during his ministry.

In 1923, Reverend Lease left Laurens for Cherokee, Iowa, and was appointed Superintendent of the Algona School District. However, “He much preferred a regular pastorate to the superintendency, but he often said that the best part of it was that Laurens was on his district!” Reverend Lease died in 1953 in Sioux City, Iowa, where he retired with his wife. Lease’s biographer explains that “they chose to live near Morningside College where the entire family had received their degrees, and where Rev. Lease remained a trustee emeritus of the college.”

Music has always been an important part of services at the Laurens United Methodist Church. Common church hymnals used at the United Methodist Church include Choice Hymns No. 1, The Revival No. 2, and The Evangel of Song: A Collection of New and Familiar Gospel Songs. The importance of music in the Methodist church impacted music curriculum taught in the Marshall Center School because of students’ involvement in and connections to the church.

**Music Curriculum**

Though seemingly far less practical a subject than the sensationalized 3 R’s (reading, writing, and arithmetic), music was an also an important part of the Marshall Center School curriculum. The Marshall Center School did not receive its piano until

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72 Paige, “Biography of Reverend Lease.”
73 Ibid.
74 Ibid.
1922, but Elgin Kruel taught music at the school as early as 1910.\textsuperscript{75} The music book purchased for the school in 1916, \textit{Myer’s School Music Reader}, was specifically targeted towards “Rural and Village Schools and Graded Schools in Which Music Has Not Previously Been Taught”.\textsuperscript{76} The book was filled with advice for teachers--including being aware of boys’ changing voices--and short songs for children to learn. The book also includes the “Star Spangled Banner,” a collection of Christmas songs, and prayers to be sung. Though we have no record of the Marshall Center School interacting with these books, it is possible that they also worked with any one of the several music education texts published by Dr. Charles Fullerton, a professor of music at the ISTC.

Many one-room school teachers had little formal training in music but made due with rudimentary piano skills and recorded music.\textsuperscript{77} Recorded music became more popular in the 1920s and in the process became a more important part of the rural school curriculum. For example, Dr. Fullerton’s passion for music and education inspired him to develop the “Choir Plan” (also known as the “Fullerton Plan” and/or “Iowa Plan”). Through the use of a phonograph the “Choir Plan” provided rural school teachers with a course of study that standardized lessons and motivated students by

\textsuperscript{75} Report of Classification, Standing Advancement and Attendance: Marshall Center School, #5, “Complete Program Showing the Hours of Study and Recitation,” CHRIEC, 232.
\textsuperscript{76} Shilo Shaffer Myers, \textit{Meyers School Music Reader} (American Book Company, 1915), 1.
\textsuperscript{77} Martha R. Ratcliff, “Music in the One-Room Schools of Iowa from 1920-1945: Curricula, Methodology and Recollections”, UNI M.A. Thesis (1996).
requiring active participation. In the case of the Marshall Center School the
importance of music curriculum is visible through the students who pursued music as
an extracurricular activity. For example, Lestel and Loren Richardson won a 1936
amateur contest at the Laurens Community Celebration and in 1938 auditioned for the
WHO radio station in Des Moines. In addition, Vernal Bunch was known to have sung for a Farmers Union program.

**Farmers Union**

On March 23, 1922, the local branch of the Farmers Union held an evening program at the Marshall Center School. This program contained songs, recitations, instrumental solos and two speeches given by leading members of the community including the Methodist minister at the time, Reverend W.H. Lease. This program served as an example of how the rural community utilized the school outside of school hours. Through the Farmers Union, the neighborhood surrounding the Marshall Center School could organize to extend a collaborative voice of advocacy for issues important to their farming community.

The Farmers Union originated in the 1890s as an outgrowth of the populist movement. When the first official Farmers Union formed in Raines County, Texas, in

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79 *Laurens Sun*, January 13, 1938, 8.
80 “Farm Union Program,” *Laurens Sun*, March 22, 1922, 1.
1902, it consisted of ten members. These members included three populists, one socialist, one independent, and five Democrats. The first locally organized Farmers Union in Iowa appeared in the town of Ruther located in Palo Alto County. By 1917, Iowa had enough local branches to form a statewide Farmers Union organization. Milo Reno became the president of the Iowa Farmers Union in 1921 and held the position for the rest of the decade. An influential member of the Farmers Union, Reno helped to make the organization’s message heard. Referring to the purpose of the Farmers Union Reno stated, “A good farmer when he sets himself to farming and yet not contends to solve problems of planting and plowing and care of stock without getting mixed up in the larger problems of marketing and dealing with the ‘money masters’ who seem bound to make an American Peasantry.”

According to authors Theo J. Majka and Patrick J. Mooney, there were four key building blocks in the mission statement of the Farmers Union. First and foremost, the Farmers Union wanted members to rally around a sense of being disadvantaged by framing farmers as victims of natural and political circumstances, which were beyond their control. Next, they exhibited a strong commitment to pacifism because Farmers Union leadership viewed war as an exhibition financed by the rich and fought by the rich.
poor. The third pillar focused on cooperativism, which provided farmers a safe-haven from the whims of capitalism. Lastly, the notion and emotional nuance of the family farm carried great weight in the core value system of the Farmers Union. These values and ideological notions served as enticing selling points for the farm families of a small Iowa community like Laurens. In addition, the empowering rhetoric and the way it was presented at Farmers Union meetings swayed attendees and encouraged further commitment and support by appealing to Christian values.  

The local branch of the Farmers Union likely met at the Marshall Center School because of the central location of the building and the presence of members that were also parents of children who attended the school. The Farmers Union also realized the importance of education and its ability to advance their cause. In The National Farmers Union: Ideology of a Pressure Group author John Crampton describes the methods utilized by the Farmers Union to use farm children to advance their ideology. Found in an issue of the National Union Farmer the organization presented their goals:

“To teach the farm children of America the principles, ideas and philosophy of cooperation that they may be a more enlightened and a happier class of society than their fathers had known. To build through the contacts and idealism of its educational program, a higher rural culture in America, in which our boys and girls may find a fuller, more abundant

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and more satisfying life.”\textsuperscript{89}

By the 1920s, Iowans were also drawn to the Farmers Union because of financial assistance. Such offers came in the form of subsets of the national organization like the Livestock Commission. The Livestock Commission sold livestock on the open market for a fixed fee. Any excess money made became the common property of all patrons.\textsuperscript{90} More importantly the Farmers Union also established an insurance company and bank. In 1922, the Farmers Union Mutual Life Insurance Company was established.\textsuperscript{91} By 1925, the Farmers Union issued $5,000,000 of insurance alone.\textsuperscript{92}

The Iowa Farmers Union faced opposition from another agricultural organization - the Farmers Bureau. In 1911, the first Farmers Bureau in Iowa formed in Clinton County.\textsuperscript{93} The primary difference between the two organizations was in their opinions on governmental controls. Unlike the Farmers Union, the Farmers Bureau thoroughly supported and promoted the involvement of the federal government in agricultural matters. The Farmers Union prided itself on being a grassroots organization formed by farmers to benefit farmers. Although different in scope, the two organizations did have similarities. In 1917, both organizations held their first statewide conventions. Throughout World War I, both organizations were also heavily

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\textsuperscript{89} Crampton, \textit{The National Farmers Union}, 165.
\textsuperscript{90} Rinehart, 37.
\textsuperscript{91} Ibid., 38.
\textsuperscript{92} Ibid.
\textsuperscript{93} D.B. Graves and Kenneth Thatcher, \textit{The First Fifty: History of Farm Bureau in Iowa} (Des Moines: Iowa Farm Bureau Federation, 1968), 12.
involved in producing food for the war effort.\textsuperscript{94} Despite their differences in opinion concerning the federal government, both desired strong representation for farmers. Interestingly, the Farmers Bureau was more involved in 4-H Clubs throughout the nation while the Farmers Union appears to have not made that connection.\textsuperscript{95} Both organizations had a strong influence on the community of Laurens and no doubt upon the students and the curriculum taught at the Marshall Center School. The Farmers Union and the Farm Bureau both worked tirelessly to ensure that the school system of Iowa taught students rudimentary concepts of agricultural science at every education level. This was accomplished by providing assistance to farm families and lobbying Congress for legislation that would positively affect the school system which educated future farmers.

4-H

Originating in Ohio in 1902, the 4-H movement quickly expanded throughout the United States. In the same year, Iowa adopted the 4-H model and clubs instantly became pillars of rural communities. Organized at the township level, Iowa’s 4-H clubs attracted a wide variety of children.\textsuperscript{96} Clubs were formed for both boys and girls who were engaged in learning practical skills to be applied in everyday life. The 4-H movement emphasizes experiential learning or the “learn by doing” approach. For

\textsuperscript{94} Ibid., 15  
\textsuperscript{95} Graves and Thatcher, 23.  
\textsuperscript{96} 4-H, “4-H History,” 4-H National Headquarters, [online], http://www.4-h.org/about/4-h-history/ (accessed April 21, 2015).
example, the 4-H clubs in Pocahontas County had three main areas of emphasis: swine, beef, and clothing. 4-H members would learn the required skills to raise and show livestock and/or design and produce clothing. 97

Agricultural opportunities abounded in Marshall Township and Laurens. Whether for business or pleasure, many of the key Marshall Center School families owned and operated their own farms. Popular products among the inhabitants of Marshall Township included livestock, poultry, corn, oats, and fruit. By participating in the Farmers Union and 4-H clubs, members of the rural community were able to rely upon and broaden their existing agricultural knowledge gained from living on family farms. Students including Mary Bunch (Farm Bureau), Orville Cundiff (Marshall Minutemen 4-H), and Bernice Richardson (Happy Go Lucky 4-H) participated in local agriculture associations, which broadened their skill set and influenced the emphasis on agriculture curriculum in the Marshall Center School. 98

Agriculture Curriculum

In rural communities, like those in Marshall Township, agriculture was an important part of the school curriculum. Most, if not all, of the children lived on farms and many would grow up to become full-time farmers. Some sample lesson topics for agriculture come from *Teaching Agriculture in Rural and Graded Schools*, a bulletin

97 Iowa 4-H Foundation, Iowa 4-H History by County: Pocahontas County,” Iowa 4-H Foundation, [online], https://www.iowa4hfoundation.org/index.cfm/36964/5360/pocahontas_county_iowa_4h_history (accessed April 21, 2015).

published in 1913 by the Iowa State College of Agriculture and the Mechanic Arts (now a part of Iowa State University). The authors suggested that teachers prepare topics like Corn (cultivation of corn, the place of corn in rotation, corn history, how to judge corn); Farm Management (choice of crops and animals to be raised, rural roads, buying and selling); and Machines (kinds and purposes, care and maintenance). The authors also suggest ways to supplement agriculture into other subjects such as singing songs about agriculture for music or calculating farm costs or measuring farm buildings for arithmetic.99 Though the suggestions in these books may not have been exactly how teachers at the Marshall Center School dealt with the subject of agriculture, they likely covered it in similar ways. We do know that the Marshall Center School ordered the book *Goff & Mayne’s First Principles of Agriculture* in 1916. A review of this book published in 1918 claimed that “the fundamental principles of farming” were dealt with in a way that was easy to understand for school children. The review also said “the book serves as a safe guide to the teacher, and to the pupils it is an inspiration to experiment, to inquire of practical farmers and to read and study further.”100 By studying agriculture as a subject in school, rural children in Laurens were learning practical lessons that they could take home to the farm. Several students from this time period became farmers including Dale, Luverne, Glen, and Lewis

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Newell; Loren Richardson; Lestel and Howard Resseguie; Vernal Bunch; and Kimbro and Orville Cundiff.

**Rural Education**

**Department of Public Instruction and County, Township, and District Boards of Education**

The 20th century resulted in a transformation of education in Iowa. Spreading from the Northeast to the Midwest many of these ideas came from reformers who felt students were not receiving the best education in Iowa’s rural schools. In response, the state began to implement changes such as standardizing curriculum and professionalizing school administration. However, reform did not affect the local level of school administration in the same way it did the state and county. The Marshall Township School Board was composed of directors from each schoolhouse in Marshall Township. While the county and state were putting professional administrators in charge of educational decisions, the directors on the School Board were typically fathers of students who were currently or had previously attended the one-room schools they represented. By having families in charge of educational decisions, the rural community was able to influence how and what their children were taught, how schools were funded and how funding was dispersed.

The Marshall Township School Board held an annual meeting on July 1st at the Marshall Center School, although additional meetings were held as necessary.
throughout the year. The Township School Board met at the schoolhouse because the central location of the building made it the most accessible for everyone. At the annual meetings directors would review the minutes from previous meeting and vote for the president, secretary, and treasurer. From 1912-1916 Albert Bunch assumed the role of president of the Marshall Center School Board.¹⁰¹ For the 1927-1928 school year Loyal Newell, was President.¹⁰² Both Bunch and Newell had children who attended Marshall Center. Simultaneously board members and parents, officials with children in school took their work very seriously as their children were directly affected by the decisions of the School Board. Additionally, local taxpayers belonged to the Township School Board to be involved in the dispersal of their financial contributions.

The School Board president was in charge of selecting several directors to review account books to ensure everything was correct. Directors would then decide how much money to levy in taxes from residents and discuss the expenses they had to pay. Expenses varied from year to year, but normally included payment for labor performed by community members for the schoolhouses, teachers’ salaries, high school tuition, and expenses for repairs and equipment for the schools.¹⁰³ More specifically, laborers were paid for hauling coal to the school, directors set aside money as “compensation

¹⁰¹ Proceedings of Board of Directors, Marshall Township, Pocahontas County, IA, 3/21/1887-7/1/1916, CHRIEC.
¹⁰² Meeting Minutes, July 1, 1927, School Secretary’s Record & Account Book (Book 20), Marshall Township, Pocahontas County, Iowa, 7/2/1917-3/20/1933, Center for the History or Rural Iowa Education and Culture, University of Northern Iowa.
¹⁰³ School Secretary’s Record & Account Book (Book 20), Marshall Township, Pocahontas County, Iowa, 7/2/1916-3/20/1933, CHRIEC.
for [their] labor,” and decisions were made about whether a school would receive art supplies or which schools would receive educational items such as globes and dictionaries.\textsuperscript{104}

Payment of teachers was an important matter for the School Board. In 1913 the Marshall Center School Board chose to follow the minimum wage law for teacher wages, but by 1917 they decided to pay teachers an additional $2.00 per month. The following year, salaries increased to an additional $10.00, but returned to the standard minimum wage by 1920.\textsuperscript{105} These changes in School Board decisions often reflected changes in the local economy. In addition, not all teachers at Marshall Center received the same salary. In 1923, wages were based on the certification and experience of teachers and the Marshall Center teacher received an additional $5.00 a month to perform janitorial duties.\textsuperscript{106} The School Board not only decided teachers’ wages, but also when they worked. Directors were responsible for determining the length of the school terms, although state law ultimately limited their decisions. In 1914, the School Board voted to allow teachers two days off to attend the County Teachers Institute.\textsuperscript{107}

\textsuperscript{104} Meeting Minutes, July 1, 1924, School Secretary’s Record & Account Book (Book 20), Marshall Township, Pocahontas County, Iowa, 7/2/1916-3/20/1933, CHRIEC.

\textsuperscript{105} Meeting Minutes, July 1, 1913, Proceedings of Board of Directors, Marshall Township, Pocahontas County, IA, 3/21/1887-7/1/1916, CHRIEC; Meeting Minutes, July 1, 1917, School Secretary’s Record & Account Book (Book 20), Marshall Township, Pocahontas County, Iowa, 7/2/1916-3/20/1933, CHRIEC; Meeting Minutes, July 1, 1920, School Secretary’s Record & Account Book (Book 20), Marshall Township, Pocahontas County, Iowa, 7/2/1916-3/20/1933, CHRIEC.

\textsuperscript{106} Meeting Minutes, July 1, 1923, School Secretary’s Record & Account Book (Book 20), Marshall Township, Pocahontas County, Iowa, 7/2/1916-3/20/1933, CHRIEC.

\textsuperscript{107} Meeting Minutes, July 1, 1914, Proceedings of Board of Directors, Marshall Township, Pocahontas County, IA, 3/21/1887-7/1/1916, CHRIEC.
Curriculum was another item decided by the board. Although the Marshall Township School Board voted for a new set of standardized textbooks in 1907, Pocahontas County Superintendent Grace Bradshaw chose to standardize textbooks for the entire County in 1916.\(^\text{108}\) However, the Marshall Township School Board was still required to vote on the measure, and after being assured by Bradshaw that the cost of new books would not be too high, the Board voted in favor of this change.\(^\text{109}\) This shows that despite outside influences, the School Board was still highly influential in making decisions regarding the operation of Marshall Township schools and the education they provided.

As previously mentioned, special meetings were held periodically. Despite the insistence of rural community members to be directly involved in the governance of their schools, educational reformers believed educational professionals should play a larger role. The Marshall Center School became a figurative battleground of educational reformers and local residents. Rural citizens realized educational reform would cost money and fought reformers despite their insistence that Iowa’s students would be better educated. By 1913, Pocahontas County began consolidating its rural schools. On August 9, 1913, a special meeting was held to discuss the consolidation and formation of the Laurens Consolidated Independent District (CID). This was not simply a nearby

\(^{108}\) Meeting Minutes, July 1, 1907, Proceedings of Board of Directors, Marshall Township, Pocahontas County, IA, 3/21/1887-7/1/1916, CHRIEC.

\(^{109}\) Meeting Minutes, May 1916, Proceedings of Board of Directors, Marshall Township, Pocahontas County, IA, 3/21/1887-7/1/1916, CHRIEC.
township creating a consolidated district, it claimed territory from within Marshall Township. This consolidation forced Marshall Township to relinquish 11% of its territory to Laurens CID, including School #2. Not only did this take away students from the districts located in Marshall Township, it took away taxpayers. Additionally, the School Board was forced to pay Laurens CID $52.00 to settle.110

On July 10, 1914, another meeting was called to discuss the formation of the Ware CID. The Ware CID resulted in Marshall Township losing another 13.5% of its territory and School #6.111 For the Marshall Township School Board this was not just losing students, territory, and taxpayers to their school district, but it also instigated a new expense for the Board. In the following years the district not only paid tuition for students who continued onto high school in Laurens, Pocahontas, and Albert City, but also to the Laurens and Ware CIDs. These changes affected the amount of money collected by the district in levies and limited the amount of money they had available to spend on their own one-room schoolhouses that remained. Even though Marshall Center was successful in resisting consolidation, the school was affected by the actions of surrounding districts.

While the directors of the Marshall Township School Board continued to be led by local farm families into the 1930s, the administration of the county began to

110 Meeting Minutes, August 9, 1913, Proceedings of Board of Directors, Marshall Township, Pocahontas County, IA, 3/21/1887-7/1/1916, CHRIEC.
111 Meeting Minutes, July 10, 1914, Proceedings of Board of Directors, Marshall Township, Pocahontas County, IA, 3/21/1887-7/1/1916, CHRIEC.
transform. In 1912, Grace Bradshaw, a native of Pocahontas County, became County
Superintendent. During her tenure (1912-1937) she helped to reform rural schools
across the county. In 1916, Bradshaw negotiated a contract for standardized textbooks
in Pocahontas County, a critical issue for educational reformers. This benefitted both
rural and consolidated schools as curriculum was expanded and included: reading,
math, writing, geography, history, hygiene and physiology, agriculture, cooking, music,
and commerce and industry. Interestingly enough, Bradshaw married a representative
from the textbook company and became Grace McMichael (Bradshaw). As County
Superintendent, she also hired a Red Cross nurse that visited each of the schools once
a year to perform simple check-ups on students. In addition to implementing
educational reforms, she also took great pride in holding graduation ceremonies for
high school seniors and eighth grade graduates. At each ceremony, students would
receive tokens and souvenirs, which she recalled were highly treasured.112 While
McMichael (Bradshaw) was a resident of the county and considered a taxpayer,
personally invested in the education of the students in the county, she continually
pushed for educational reforms that allowed many of Pocahontas County’s rural
schools to stave-off consolidation but still offer students a well-rounded education.

112 Grace McMichael, “Reminiscences,” in Sue Grosboll, “History of Marshall Center School at the University of
Northern Iowa,” Manuscript, University of Northern Iowa Museums and Collections, 1998.
Beyond Pocahontas County the debate over educational reform raged on. The experience and competence of rural teachers was a particular issue that concerned the Department of Public Instruction. Conducting intense studies, educational reformers discovered that rural teachers were largely ill equipped due to poor education. While consolidated schools required teachers to obtain proper certifications, rural schools did not have such requirements. By 1911, legislation was enacted to create High School Normal Training Programs in certain Iowa high schools, which would properly train prospective rural schoolteachers.\footnote{Camilla Deiber and Peggy Beedle, “Town Schools for Iowa,” The Louis Berger Group, Inc. 8. http://www.iowahistory.org/historic-preservation/assets/Town%20Schools.v3.pdf.} This way, students could graduate from high school certified and prepared to teach in rural schools. Slowly other programs emerged to train teachers to teach in rural schools.

By 1920, the Department of Public Instruction designed a Course of Study that required all rural schoolteachers to complete 12 weeks of normal training and pass examinations in all Course of Study subjects. Once completed, teachers would receive a “First Class Uniform County Certificate.”\footnote{“Legislative Documents Submitted to the Regular Session of the Thirty-Ninth General Assembly,” Volume II, (Des Moines: The State of Iowa, 1921), 74.} For additional training, rural schoolteachers could attend County Teachers Institutes or pursue post-secondary
education. The Marshall Township School Board even granted teachers 2 days off to promote County Institute attendance.115

At least four teachers from Marshall Center School attended educational institutes, which consisted of meetings where teachers were able to discuss the philosophy of teaching. Generally institute attendees were already employed as teachers. The following teachers from Marshall Center School attended Teachers Institutes during their tenure: Elgin Kreul (1910-1911), Grace Coddington (1914-1915), Alice Garton (1920-1921), James McFadzen (1922-1923), and Ina Bloomer (1927-1929).116

Ultimately, rural schoolteachers that attended college and/or university were better prepared to teach Iowa’s schoolchildren. Practical and theoretical experiences gained in post-secondary educational programs equipped teachers to meet the unique needs of rural communities. In Iowa, the most influential institution proved to be the Iowa State Normal School (later Iowa State Teachers College).

Schedule for Students

Which classes were taught and when they were held varied slightly depending on the teacher at the Marshall Center School. However, there was a typical routine for

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115 Meeting Minutes, July 1, 1914, Proceedings of Board of Directors, Marshall Township, Pocahontas County, IA, 3/21/1887-7/1/1916, CHRIEC.
116 “Pocahontas County Teacher’s Institute” The Pochahontas Democrat, July 20, 1911.
most students, outlined by former UNI Museums Director Sue Grosboll.\textsuperscript{117} The school day would generally begin at nine in the morning, but students would likely have been awake much earlier to allow time for completing chores, eating breakfast, and walking to school. Classes would typically break three times during the day: once for morning recess at 10:30 a.m., once for lunch at noon, and once for afternoon recess at 2:30 p.m. Students were dismissed at 4:00 p.m. at which time they would return home and likely complete more chores before resting in the evening with family; no homework was assigned. This typical schedule corresponds exactly with teacher Irene Ashbaugh’s 1922 Teachers’ Report to the Superintendent. She recorded that all divisions - a term essentially referring to grade levels - had recess at 10:30 a.m. and 2:30 p.m. For the most part, the divisions were studying different things at different times. For example, at 9:40 a.m. the first grade was practicing copying, the second and third grades were reading, and the fifth and eighth grades were studying arithmetic. Later in the day the upper grades studied civics, history, and grammar, subject that were not yet taught to the younger students.\textsuperscript{118} School teachers had a similar schedule with different tasks outside of the school day.

**Teachers**

Though many of the teachers Marshall Center School did not attend the ISTC

\textsuperscript{117} Grosboll, “History of Marshall Center School at the University of Northern Iowa.”

\textsuperscript{118} Marshall Center School Collection, Report of Classification, Standing Advancement and Attendance: Marshall Center School, #5, “Complete Program Showing the Hours of Study and Recitation,” CHRIEC, 701.
until they completed their teaching terms, the ISTC and teacher certification laws likely had an influence their choice of curriculum and teaching methods. Teachers that did attend the ISTC, Alice Garton and James McFadzen, did so after their tenure at the Marshall Center School. Due to this fact, the curriculum taught at the Marshall Center School was not directly based on the curriculum taught at the ISTC. Rather, the curriculum taught was based upon the personal needs of the families whose children attended the school as well as what teachers were required to know as part of the Teacher Certification Examination. The fact that families had so much input as to what their children learned resulted in an emphasis on agriculture. Considering the Marshall Center School was at the center of a rural farming community, understanding various aspects of agriculture was not only important, but necessary. Therefore, teachers at the Marshall Center School focused greatly on agriculture.

Teacher Training Examinations provide insight into what was expected of teachers and the curriculum they planned for their classrooms. *The Stephenson’s Teachers Examination Question and Answer Book* was the book used for Iowa teachers during the 1920s, so it is highly probable that McFadzen studied the categories and questions listed in the book. The categories included: agriculture, arithmetic, didactics (teaching methods), domestic science, geography, government and constitution, grammar, manual training, music, orthography, penmanship, physiology (hygiene and

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119 Grosboll, “History of Marshall Center School at the University of Northern Iowa.”
basic medicine), reading, and United States history.\textsuperscript{120} There are examples listed for every category including: agriculture - provide four advantages of crop rotation and give three ways of building up worn out soil; music - write from memory two stanzas of “America”; penmanship - what part of the day is ideal for teaching penmanship - provide a reason; and physiology - what are some simple treatments for colds.\textsuperscript{121} This information provides a better example of what rural schoolteachers would have been expected to know in order to both teach and care for their students.

\textit{Schedule for Teachers}

Teachers at the Marshall Center School would typically live with a family in the neighborhood, near the schoolhouse. Rather than performing chores at home like their students, teachers were responsible for cleaning, starting the fire, and doing other chores to get the school ready for the day. By 1923, the School Board paid the Marshall Center School teacher an extra $5 a month for the janitorial duties they performed.\textsuperscript{122} Teachers may have also used the time before school to prepare lessons plans. After school, they would again clean the schoolhouse before heading home.\textsuperscript{123} Teachers were the foundation of the rural schools. With only one teacher educating students in the area their knowledge and presence became an important factor in rural learning. But the teachers were not only part of the education system. They were members of the

\textsuperscript{120} Ibid.  
\textsuperscript{121} Grosboll, “History of Marshall Center School at the University of Northern Iowa.”  
\textsuperscript{122} Meeting Minutes, July 1, 1923, School Secretary’s Record & Account Book (Book 20), Marshall Township, Pocahontas County, Iowa, 7/2/1916-3/20/1933, CHRIEC  
\textsuperscript{123} Grosboll, “History of Marshall Center School at the University of Northern Iowa.”
community. The rural neighborhood was tightly knit and teachers often came from the town or surrounding areas.

**Guidelines and Rules for Teachers**

Those that taught at the Marshall Center School in the early 20th century were given the task of helping children achieve fundamental knowledge such as reading and writing as well as educating them in areas that were beneficial to their future careers; these educators also had to be prepared to take on a medical role if one of the students fell to illness or injury.\(^{124}\) None of these requirements seem unordinary by today’s standards, however, on top of their professional expectations teachers were also held to high moral standards within the community and they were expected to abide by rules set specifically for them.

Many of the rules that teachers were supposed to follow took place outside of the classroom. They weren’t allowed to marry during their term of contract and they could not keep company with men; even more specifically they were not allowed to travel with a man unless he was their father or brother, and the only allowance granted to them for being out between the hours of 8 p.m. and 6 a.m. were to attend school functions. Teachers were also prohibited from smoking and loitering downtown in ice cream stores and they could not travel beyond the city limits without permission from

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\(^{124}\) Ibid.
the chairman of the board.  

These rules applied not only to the actions of educators but they also regulated how teachers would present themselves; for instance they were not allowed to wear bright colors or dye their hair but they had to wear at least two petticoats and could not have a hemline shorter than 2 inches above the ankle. The only rules listed that applied to the school itself were that teachers must sweep the floors and clean the chalkboards daily, scrub the floors with soap and water weekly and they were also expected to have the fire started by 7 a.m. so that the room would be warm by 8 a.m.  

*Teachers: Marie and Esther Edmonds and Bertha Schlensig*

The most notable instance of the connection between teachers and the community involves sisters Esther and Marie Edmonds. Natives of Laurens, Esther and Marie both served the community as teachers at the Marshall Center School. In high school Esther made the local paper after participating in the three-day Farmers Institute festival, where she won first place for her cake. Esther’s graduation from the Marshall Center School, at which she was the commencement speaker, was also reported in *The Pocahontas County Sun*. Esther taught at the Marshall Center School for the 1917 winter term. Esther’s younger sister Marie graduated from Laurens High School in 1917. She began teaching at the Marshall Center School in 1919, serving for

125 Grosboll, “History of Marshall Center School at the University of Northern Iowa.”
126 Ibid.
127 “The Farmer’s Institute” *Pocahontas County Sun*, December 18, 1913.
two terms, before marrying less than two years later. In her wedding announcement, the local paper stated that Marie’s future husband “is to be congratulated on his choice of a helpmate.”129 As their constant appearance in the local paper suggests, these two sisters were clearly an important part of the community.

The rural community held teachers to high standards. Marriage was one significant area where we can see the traditional values of the community. In some cases, communities implemented strict rules against marriage, but unofficial opposition also resulted from cultural pressures. Bertha Schlensig, a teacher at the Marshall Center School from 1923 to 1925, married after she finished teaching at Marshall Center, and never returned to her chosen profession. Ina Bloomer taught at the school from 1927 to 1929. Then the paper mentions her accepting teaching jobs at multiple schools in the area, but she was unable to accept any of the positions due to illness.130 About three years later, her wedding is noted in the newspaper.131 There were not many male teachers in the employ of the Marshall Center School, so it is difficult to say if men were granted more freedom while teaching. Neither of the two male teachers at Marshall Center School was married at the time of their service, and it is noted that they were generally less involved in school life after marrying.

*Teachers: Alice Garton*

130 *Laurens Sun*, May 18, 1939.
131 *Laurens Sun*, March 10, 1942. Interestingly, the only note the paper makes is that her parents attended her wedding; there is no mention of the groom.
Alice Garton, a Pocahontas County native, taught at the Marshall Center School for three terms from 1920-1921. Originally having planned to teach at a city school, Alice took the job at Marshall Center for personal reasons; her mother’s failing eyesight and her brother’s return from World War I gave her reason to remain somewhat close to her family. During her time at the school she boarded with three separate families where she shared a room with other girls and accompanied the children to school in the mornings. Ms. Garton’s teaching style focused less on agriculture and more on spelling, drawing and reading—especially classic stories, such as Rip Van Winkle. Alice was very involved in her students’ learning and she made a point to write comments for all of her pupils, such as “very bright pupil”, “needs encouragement”, “very industrious”, and “does not need much praise as she becomes very proud”.

**Teachers: James McFadzen**

James McFadzen submitted his final Teachers’ Report to the Superintendent in 1923. Seeking new opportunities, he enrolled at the ISTC where he studied commerce

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132 Report of Classification, Standing Advancement and Attendance: Marshall Center School, #5, “Complete Program Showing the Hours of Study and Recitation”, CHRIEC.
133 Grosboll, “History of Marshall Center School at the University of Northern Iowa.”
134 Ibid.
135 “Report of Classification”; Grosboll.
136 The Monarch Graded School Record: Teachers Record Book of Pupils, Marshall Center School #5 Marshall Township Pocahontas County, 9/1/1919 to 9/1/1930 (actually 5/16/1930), Complete Record of the Marshall Center School Class, CHRIEC.
While pursuing his degree, McFadzen took a heavy course load that included: accounting I and II, commercial law, advertising, and commercial correspondence and marketing. In addition, he participated in many extracurricular activities, which displayed his passions for business and music. He kept himself busy as a member of the Aristotelian Literary Society, Gospel Team, Publicity Chairman of the Young Men’s Christian Association, College Orchestra (doublebass), and College Band (drums). Excelling scholastically, he graduated from the ISTC in 1925. By 1932, he relocated to an agricultural community in Lindsay, California. As noted in the 

Although educated in commerce, he had a passion for music that led him to play the cello recreationally, perform with the double bass in the UNI orchestra as well as play the drums in the UNI band. On top of his musical activities, he was also a member of the commercial club, was Publicity Chair of the Young Men's Christian Association, was involved in the college Gospel Team, as well as being a member of the Aristotelian Literary Society.

After his graduation from the University of Northern Iowa McFadzen continued

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137 Grosboll, “History of Marshall Center School at the University of Northern Iowa”; Former UNI Museums Director Sue Grosboll proposed that McFadzen sought this degree because it was cheaper due to the fact that it required only two years of courses. McFadzen’s last term report was issued in 1923. Assuming he attended ISTC directly after he finished teaching he would have paid roughly $5 per term for tuition. He had earned $65 per month while teaching at the Marshall Center School.
138 Ibid.
139 Grosboll, “History of Marshall Center School at the University of Northern Iowa.”
140 Grosboll.
to teach in Iowa schools for a while, nine years total when including his time at Marshall Center. ¹⁴¹ Although he only taught in Iowa for just shy of a decade he did not stop teaching when he relocated. In 1932, he moved with his wife, Faye McFadzen (Robinson), and their three children: James, Charles, and Robert to the rural community of Lindsay, California. While there he taught in the Lindsay School District for 30 years until he retired in 1962. ¹⁴² After he retired, he and his wife moved to Boulder Creek, California, and built a home in Redwood Christian Park where he began working again for two years at an unspecified job as well as volunteering as a teacher’s aide. ¹⁴³

Although his time at the Marshall Center School and the ISTC proved to be an influential time in his life, McFadzen also spent time as an instructor for the Air Force supply school at Chaffee College in Ontario, Canada, during World War II. He also held the position of Field director for the American Red Cross at Muroc, and wrote several works on commercial subjects. ¹⁴⁴ Some of his works were published as books, such as *Theory Tests for Bookkeeping*, and some were published through New York City as columns for the journal *Business Education World* regarding bookkeeping methods. ¹⁴⁵ He accomplished all of this while maintaining his hobbies: mountaineering and

¹⁴² Ibid.
¹⁴³ Ibid.
¹⁴⁴ Ibid.
¹⁴⁵ Ibid.
woodworking.  

Iowa State Teachers College and Rural Education

A brief look into the history of education in Iowa will yield examples of many influential and talented rural schoolteachers, both male and female. Charged with overseeing all aspects of one-room schoolhouses, Iowa’s rural schoolteachers played an important role in the development of educational standards in the state. Superintendent of Public Instruction P.E. McClenahan stressed the importance of teachers’ recommendations in the 1919 edition of the *State of Iowa Course of Study for Common Schools*. He wrote, “Teachers are asked to report criticisms to the county superintendent of schools, so that when a revision is made, we have the benefit of the experience of those who have to do the actual teaching.” The influence of rural schoolteachers in shaping educational policies and the minds of children throughout Iowa has earned these rural educators the distinction of being considered the cornerstone of Iowa’s educational history.

Early Iowa legislators agreed with former President James Madison that, “A popular Government, without popular information, or the means of acquiring it, is but

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146 Ibid.  
147 RSC/HEC/002 Aletha Hutchison (Jacobs) Collection, 1919 *State of Iowa Course of Study for Common Schools*, CHRIEC.  
a prologue to a Farce or a Tragedy, or perhaps both.”149 Sharing this sentiment, the first Iowa General Assembly immediately went to work to develop a system of education. By 1860, Iowa had a rapidly growing common school system that provided free education to all citizens aged 5-21 years, regardless of race.150 To provide pupils the best possible education, the state realized the need to establish teacher-training centers. Throughout Iowa, Normal Schools, Teachers’ Institutes, and state colleges and universities began offering coursework to increase the aptitude of Iowa teachers. Ultimately, one Iowa institution would have the greatest impact upon the quality and history of rural Iowa. Founded in 1876, the Iowa State Normal School (ISNS) was meant to fill the need for a public institution focused on the education of rural and elementary school teachers. The State University in Iowa City provided this service, but in 1872, had limited their offerings to prospective high school teachers and school administrators.151 Following the appointment of the Normal School’s Board on June 7, 1876, the ISNS named James C. Gilchrist principal. A student of famed educational reformer Horace Mann, Gilchrist held numerous positions in educational administration including Superintendent of Schools in Mason City, Iowa.

Before the ISNS could open for its first term, Gilchrist was required to develop

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150 Ibid., 12.
the course of study. While developing the curriculum, Gilchrist had two motivations: the desire for students to master academic subjects and gain proficiency in pedagogical techniques. To attain his goals, Gilchrist implemented a vigorous course of study and installed the Model School on campus to provide students with practical teaching experience. Although his tendency towards “autocratic leadership and unilateral decisions” often put him at odds with the ISNS School Board, Gilchrist left a lasting legacy that allowed the ISNS to succeed.\textsuperscript{152} In 1886, Gilchrist resigned after 10 years of service and spent the remainder of his life in Pocahontas County where he purchased a farm located 6 miles from the Marshall Center schoolhouse. Until his death in 1897, it is reported that Gilchrist spoke at the schoolhouse on several occasions.\textsuperscript{153}

His successor, Homer H. Seerley was brilliantly prepared to assume the position of President. Although born in Indiana, Seerley’s family soon relocated to South English, Iowa, in 1854. Inspired by his experience in rural Iowa schools he pursued a career in education. During his career as a rural schoolteacher and Superintendent of Oskaloosa Schools he became known as the “Grand old man of Iowa education.”\textsuperscript{154} With professional connections throughout the nation, Seerley was determined to increase the prestige of the ISNS.

\textsuperscript{152} Peterson.
\textsuperscript{153} RSC/HEC/003 Dr. William H. Dreier Collection, From F.C.Gilchrist Jr. to the Committee for the Search for the One-Room School, CHRIEC.
\textsuperscript{154} Susan Witthoft and Gerald L. Peterson, “Homer Horatio Seerley,” Special Collections and University Archives [online], https://www.library.uni.edu/collections/special-collections/biographical-sketches/homer-horatio-seerley (accessed February 20, 2015).
Two early executive orders involved the establishment of standard admission and graduation requirements, which had been lax under Gilchrist. Following Seerley’s revisions prospective students needed to be 16 years of age and provide proof of an accredited secondary education, two years of foreign language, three years of English, one-and-a-half years of Algebra, one year of plane geometry, and one year of history to gain admission. In addition, admission to specific Kindergarten Diploma Courses and Elementary Normal Courses required a high school education, while the Rural Teachers Courses only required the completion of the eighth grade.\textsuperscript{155} To receive rural and elementary teaching certifications students were required to complete the two- or three-year courses of study. The academic year was divided into 12 week terms, allowing students to take 15 credit hours per term. In 1904, the ISNS began offering a Bachelor’s Degree. Students on the Bachelor’s track took a total of 180 term hours of credit, which required 4 years to complete. By their junior year, students were required to select a major and minor field of study.\textsuperscript{156}

Under Seerley’s leadership, the ISNS underwent many changes. Most notably, in 1909, the institution was renamed the Iowa State Teachers College (ISTC). But this was just the beginning. In 1913, the Iowa General Assembly voted to place a renewed emphasis on agriculture, home economics, and manual training in elementary and rural

\textsuperscript{156} Molen, 394-396.
school curriculum. This legislative endeavor concerned Seerley, who believed Iowa’s teachers were largely ill equipped to teach existing subjects. To remedy the situation Seerley implemented teacher study centers and extension services, which sent professional educators from ISTC to observe rural schools and make suggestions for the district to implement.157

One of Seerley’s most effective solutions was the creation of Rural Demonstration Schools. Since the inception of the Country Life Movement, the quality of rural education had become a major concern for educators and rural neighborhoods. Throughout the United States, programs were being implemented with the aim to, “not only to train teachers well for this work [rural education], but to give them a natural adaptability for rural life and needs.”158 In 1913, the ISTC offered its first course in Rural Education. This act was quickly followed by the formation of the Department of Rural Education in 1914. To revitalize the importance of rural schools Seerley enlisted the assistance of Macy Campbell and Harry L. Eells, Professors of Rural Education. Under the direction of Campbell, the ISTC partnered with the Castle Hill School District located 4 miles from Cedar Falls. Castle Hill was the first of many rural demonstration schools to be taught by “critic” teachers selected for their ability to

157 Lang, 323.
158 Arthur E. Bennett, The Training of Teachers for Rural Schools (Des Moines: Iowa State Teachers’ Association, 1910), 323.
Seeking to involve a larger number of rural schools, Seerley hired Eells to oversee demonstration schools, organize additional districts, gain interest in rural school work, and hold meetings to interest farmers. Eells was particularly well suited for interaction with rural residents because of his education from the State Agricultural College in Ames, Iowa, and his interest in the religious welfare of communities. By the start of the 1914-1915 school year, fifteen schools within ten miles of Cedar Falls were participating in the Rural Demonstration School program.

The Rural Demonstration School program proved to be beneficial for both rural communities and the ISTC. Rural students received excited, young teachers with knowledge of current teaching methods. Likewise, students from ISTC received one month of full-time student teaching experience in rural schools under the supervision of a professor. Local school boards found the program to be an inexpensive, yet effective endeavor and enjoyed that no permanent commitment was required. In addition, the agriculture and home economics requirements of the Iowa General Assembly were followed. For rural school teachers Seerley promoted the development of cooperative relationships among teachers and members of the rural neighborhood because local farmers and mothers were often well versed in agriculture and home

159 Lang, 323-328.
160 Ibid., 324.
economics.\textsuperscript{161} Although it never materialized, Seerley desired to involve all of Iowa’s 99 counties in the Rural Demonstration School program.\textsuperscript{162}

In addition to the Rural Demonstration program, the ISTC was influential in the formation of Teachers’ Institutes and their curriculum. Developing in tandem with the Iowa school system, Teachers’ Institutes were designed to offer rural schoolteachers professional development opportunities and foster a sense of community among the teachers of a given county. Each of Iowa’s 99 counties established institutes that typically were held over the course of four to eight weeks during the summer. However, special training sessions were held during the school year, which at times required teachers to cancel classes. Though the loss of a school day was not ideal, teachers voluntarily attended institutes, which they paid for with their own money.\textsuperscript{163} Teachers’ Institute attendees learned various methods to assist in the teaching of subjects including reading, music, agriculture, penmanship, and civics. For educational reformers, Teachers’ Institutes were viewed as a supplement, not a replacement for higher education.\textsuperscript{164}

Throughout Seerley’s administration the interest in rural education grew exponentially. The 1913 minimum wage law for teachers made rural education more attractive to aspiring educators, which increased the importance of the ISTC.

\textsuperscript{161} Lang, 325-326.
\textsuperscript{162} Ibid., 327-328.
\textsuperscript{163} Lang, 16.
\textsuperscript{164} George Herbert Betts and Otis Earle Hall, \textit{Better Rural Schools} (Indianapolis, Bobbs-Merrill Co., 1914), 134-135.
Department of Rural Education. From 1913-1917, the number of rural education courses offered at ISTC increased from one to nine. As the issue of rural school consolidation plagued communities, the ISTC was prepared to answer the call. Special instruction was provided for teachers as evidenced in the 1916-1917 course catalog, which had a section for “The Rural and Consolidated School.”\textsuperscript{165} Seerley was a vocal supporter of “cooperative consolidation,” which emphasized the relationships that could be fostered between rural schools. However, he was against the physical consolidation of schools. Retiring in 1928, Seerley was barely outlasted by the Department of Rural Education, which closed in 1932.\textsuperscript{166}

\textbf{Conclusion}

Despite the closure of the Department of Rural Education the University of Northern Iowa still strives for educational excellence. The College of Education continues to uphold the principles developed by James C. Gilchrist and Homer H. Seerley by providing prospective teachers with the necessary skills to instruct the children of Iowa. Though the principles and objectives of the College of Education have evolved in response to the current needs of the American educational system, UNI has made strides to preserve its institutional history. In 1986, President Constantine W. Curris (1983-1995) created the One-Room Schoolhouse Advisory Committee to emphasize the, “rich heritage of outstanding teacher education and preparation,” at

\textsuperscript{165} Lang, 327.
\textsuperscript{166} Witthoft and Peterson.
Charged with the purpose of identifying and facilitating the transfer of a one-room schoolhouse to the UNI campus, the Committee embarked on an arduous process that included the inspection of 50 schoolhouses throughout Iowa. After much deliberation and research, the Committee selected the Marshall Center One-Room Schoolhouse. The final decision came down to Marshall Center’s strong connection to the history of UNI. During its years of operation, the Marshall Center School acted as a steppingstone for students’ and teachers’ pursuit of higher education. Former Marshall Center students and teachers went on to attend UNI and after retiring as president of the Iowa State Normal School, Gilchrist purchased farmland near the schoolhouse and gave several lectures in the building. Donated by Bernice and Alvin Lindquist, the school was relocated from Pocahontas County to the west of Schindler Education Center in 1987. Initially under the administration of the College of Education, the schoolhouse came under the control of the UNI Museums in 1996. The presence of the Marshall Center One-Room Schoolhouse at UNI serves as a reminder of the university’s dedication to rural education and rural communities and will continue to inspire the leaders of tomorrow.

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167 Marshall Center School Collection, Letter from Constantine W. Curris to the One-Room School Advisory Committee, December 11, 1986, Center for the History of Rural Iowa Education and Culture, University of Northern Iowa.
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