

First county schoolhouses constructed from 1835-1836

Van Buren, Prairie and Turkey Creek townships had the first schoolhouses in Kosciusko county, with the first structure built in 1835-36.

The early schools were made of logs, heated with wood fireplaces and had greased paper windows. The bigger boys cut the logs for the fires they built to warm the building.

All the schools from 1836 to 1853, were subscription schools, maintained by people in the community. A teacher's pay ranged from five dollars to \$15 per month for their instruction in spelling, reading, writing and arithmetic.

Log houses gave way to frame buildings with glass windows after free schools came. The inside siding of these buildings were painted black for black boards.

Van Buren township was the site of the first public schoolhouse on section 29 southwest of Dewart Lake, about one mile north of Musquabuck's

reservation. John G. Woods was the school's first teacher.

A log cabin on the Timothy Mote farm was the next school, in Turkey Creek township at Syracuse. The building had previously been used as a stable.

In 1836, a log cabin in section 10 of Prairie township was the next school, with a Mr. Moore as the teacher.

About the same year, a school in Harrison township, section 29, had Henry Bradley as the teacher.

Thomas Warner was the instructor at the Tippecanoe township school in 1838. But soon this school was abandoned.

Jefferson and Clay townships followed with schools in 1841. The Clay township school was then named Mount Pleasant, which was replaced in 1859 by a frame building and later replaced by a brick building.

Shortly after these schools were built, the first Washington township school was built on the William Moore farm.

Seward and Franklin township schools came in 1842. The Seward school was on the farm of John Robinson with the teacher being Mark Smith, Jr. The Franklin school was built on the Solomon Nichols farm.

Later, brick schoolhouses were built from 1880 to 1900 with better equipment.

Buildings for more than one teacher were constructed in villages and towns after 1906.

Examinations were instituted in 1871 and uniform textbooks adopted in 1873. The textbooks

were later regulated in 1875, followed by the regulation of teacher's pay in 1907 and the inspection of schools in 1913.

By the year 1918, Kosciusko county was credited with 85 schools, 220 teachers, 6,349 pupils and a value of \$591,420.

Information used in this article was compiled by a former Kosciusko county superintendent.