

COLUMBIA COUNTY

At your request I submit the following statement in regard to school affairs in Columbia county for two years ending June 30th 1898.

New Buildings.--Six new school houses have been built and properly furnished with desks, heaters, etc., at a cost of \$7,200. The school houses and grounds throughout the county are neatly kept, and in most instances are supplied with good drinking water.

Uniform Examinations.--The uniform examinations for teachers have greatly raised their standard, and meets with the approval of all interested in education. The demand for better teachers continues to grow, which evidences the fact that people appreciate a good thing when they get it.

Teachers' Association.--Appreciating the value of county teachers' associations as a stimulant and an incentive to better work in the schools, we organized a Teacher's Association in October 1897, and have held monthly meetings ever since. Though not as well attended as I would like, yet great interest is manifested by those who do attend. The object of the association is the professional improvement of teachers, and I am glad that it is having the desired effect, increasing a stronger desire to do more and better work.

Improvement Steady.--While our growth pertaining to education has been slow it has been steady on all lines. A marked improvement in teaching force is manifest. Teachers who are ambitious have acquired professional libraries and are keeping in touch with educational progress. This is due first, to the Uniform Examination law; second, to the regulation of the School Board which provides that third grade certificate holders be paid not more than \$25 per month.

High School.--The High School building in Lake City, located on a four acre lot, is a magnificent one, with seven class rooms, properly furnished with desks, heaters, apparatus, etc. The enrollment of the High School for 1898 is 240, and under the able management of Prof. Henry Rickards and his assistants, excellent work is being done. We feel that it is a success, and accomplishing its aim, as is evidenced by the work and success of its pupils in the Uniform Examination for teachers.

Sub-Districts.--We have only one sub-district in this county, levying a tax of three mills, which is applied for lengthening term and paying teachers.

Summary of Present Status.--The condition of our school affairs can be summarized about as follows:

1. Financial condition is improving.
2. Interest in education is increasing.
3. We are supplied with school houses.
4. We have two advanced graded and one High School.
5. We have one special tax school.
6. The general term of school is four months.