

# Jackson Township

Cambria County, Pennsylvania



## Chapter 10

Annals of Jackson Township

**Mrs. Betty Burkhart**  
**Nanty Glo Journal**  
**June 11, 1942**

### Schools

The naming of the Chickaree school occurred in this manner, according to a story told by Thomas Clinefelter, a descendant of one of the earliest settlers of the Clinefelter community. He says that previous to a certain evening the school was called the "Rager School." Due to the success of a singing school conducted at the Clinefelter school, a group of young people decided to organize one at the Rager school also. On arriving at the building they found the door locked and one of the young men climbed in the window to open the door for the rest to enter. They found a small squirrel, known as the chickaree, in the room and much merriment resulted as they tried to catch the little animal. They said the school belonged to the chickaree, and the name stuck. Ever afterward the school was known as the Chickaree school. This was in the year 1882.

There is another story told by an old resident concerning the naming of the school, however, which had to do with William Rose, son of Isaac Rose, who was a teacher there at the time. Mr. Rose lived near Wesley Chapel and in the evenings the young men would gather in the store at Vinco and swap yarns, but he always left the group early, remarking, "Well, I have to get my sleep so I can teach my little chickarees tomorrow." He always walked the five miles to and from the school each day.

No foundation can be found for the statement that the rightful name of the community is Chicory, named for a plant or herb (not native here), but many of the present day maps still spell it that way. Before the bill was passed to provide free education for children, a school was conducted in an old mill on the Joseph Burkhart farm. (This is the farm later occupied by John Shultz and now owned by a coal company). A teacher was brought in and the children from other communities attended. Singing was also taught at this school by Joseph Burkhart who was known as a musician. Later a school building was erected not far from the mill near the now abandoned highway leading to St. Paul's Lutheran Church and near the spot known to many picnickers as "the old oak tree." This edifice was small in size, estimated as ten by twelve feet in dimensions, and was of log construction. School was in session three or four months. The benches were slabs with the rough side down and the desks were home-made. Later another school house was built across the road near where the old Shultz barn stood but it too served its time and another was built where the present Burkhart school now stands on the Summerhill road. This was of frame construction and served the children of the community until the present school was built about 1919 or 1920. Mrs. Wilbur McFeeters of Conemaugh, the former Rhoda Funk, was the last teacher in the old building.

A school building once stood near the line joining Jackson and Croyle townships and was known as the Joint School. It was maintained by the two townships. About thirty years

ago it burned down and another school was built by the Croyle township and used by the children of that community.

A frame school building once stood near the Brown Cemetery north of Vinco, just about where the house of James Gillin now stands. Rose Lowman, Mollie Brown and Billy Davis were three who taught there for a while. William Gillin, Christian Good, Ephraim Burkhart, Arthur Devlin, Jerry and Daniel Brown and Henry Funk all had children who attended there. Mrs. James singer of Vinco, who was Matilda Sell, went to school there also when she was a small girl. The school was also used for funeral services and that was when the Brown Cemetery was started. There were no churches or schools at Vinco or Mundy's Comer at the time.

The Jack Rager school was named for Jackson Rager, who was a son of Michael rager, the first settler in the community. The present structure is the second to be built on the site. The first school was built about 85 years ago. Like so many of the old schools, it had slab benches for the pupils to sit on, and high, home-made desks. There were several families of Ragers represented at the school as well as the Ed Davis family, Brackens, Shumans, Nathaniel Teeter, Wilkinsons, Noah Dishong, Shearer family, Refiners and James Cleavenger family. The Sunday school and church services were conducted there by the Evangelical denomination, continuing up until 65 years ago. In the summer time the children would attend services barefooted and the little girls wore calico dresses and big sunbonnets. Rev. Miliron and Rev. Bird are two ministers that are remembered as conducting services at the little school. Some of the teachers that are remembered who taught there over sixty years ago were Maggie Moore and a Miss Blue. Flora (Davis) Custer also taught there at a later date.

The Dishong school was named for Paul Dishong who was the first of the family by that name to settle in that community. The school is located on the old Johnstown road that leads into Minersville. The first school was located on what is now the John Dishong farm, but it burned down about 80 years ago and for a time school was held in a small house owned by Henry Adams until the new school was built. Mary Adams was a teacher at the school. The new school was built about three-quarters of a mile south of where the old one stood and on the site of one that stands there now, which was built shortly before 1920. Mrs. Henry Riblett, who was Catherine Dishong, attended school in the old school. As at the Jack Rager school, religious services were held there, Sunday school every Sunday and church every other Sunday with the same ministers preaching there that did at the Jack Rager school. James Blake and Emily Roberts were among old time teachers at the school.

The Gray school was named for John Gray of Ebensburg who bought a farm from Timothy Davis, his father-in-law. The school building stood on the opposite side of the road from where the present structure is on what is now the Ed Smith farm. Before the Grays lived there it was called the Pike school. At the opening of the 1941-42 school term the pupils of the community were transported to the Mundy's Comer school and the building was sold to Richard Alien of South Fork who now lives there. This building was erected in 1919, and the author of this column was the last to teach in the old building.

On the corner lot at Vinco where the Walter Mackall home is, there was once a little school building about 20 by 30 feet in dimensions. In 1873 or a little later it was moved across the road, a man by the name of Empfield remodeled it, and David Simmons conducted a store there. Later it was enlarged and remodeled and today it is the Brethren parsonage at Vinco.

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