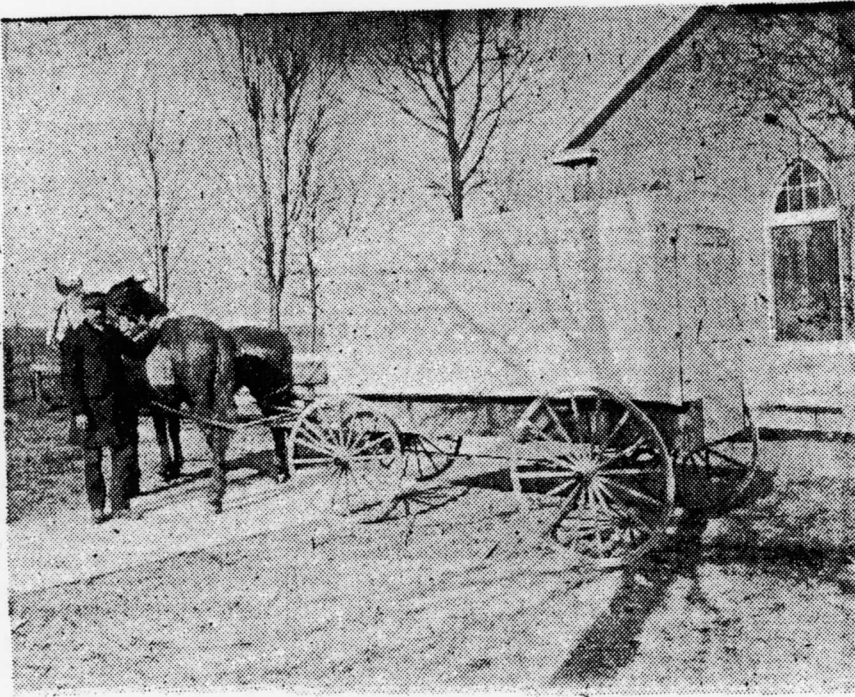


Salem Community Daleville

Album OF YESTERYEAR 1900



Willard VanMatre in 1900 was the first driver of a school bus in Salem Township, and his route transported pupils from Mt. Healthy to Cross Roads. VanMatre received \$1.22 per day. The photo was supplied by the late Mrs. Cora G. Phillips, Muncie teacher and Delaware County historian. Kemper's "History of Delaware County" (1908) supplies information on the two schools. Consolidation of schools in Salem Township was the second in Delaware County, the first having been in Hamilton Township in 1899. "The Cross Roads School (No. 10) was already graded, having been made so in 1891, had two teachers and a two-room building," Kemper's account reads. "In 1900 the seven pupils in District 11 (Mt. Healthy) were hauled to Cross Roads and distributed among the grades, the most distant pupil living not more than five miles. The accession of Cross Roads did not need another teacher nor did it increase to an appreciable extent the burden of instruction or extension of facilities in the school; yet the advantages accruing to No. 10 pupils from the consolidation were all that the advocates of the new system had claimed." Charles A. VanMatre, superintendent of county schools at the time, was a resident of Salem Township.

HERE IS A ARTICLE ON THE EARLY SCHOOL HACKS(BUSES) THE PEOPLE AREN'T SALEM TOWNSHIP FOLKS. BUT, I'M SURE THEY COULD FIT INTO THEIR PLACES. THIS IS THE TYPE OF HACK WILLARD VAN MATRE DROVE IN 1900.IN SALEM TOWNSHIP FOR \$ 1.22 PER DAY. AS SHOWN IN THE PHOTO ALBUM OF YESTER-YEAR.

Community Courier, October 5, 1983

Early Days

by Irene D. Owens

The Old School Hack

The children of 1983 with their air-conditioned, motor driven school buses have no conception of how the children of the early 1900's received their education.

They had to get to the little red school house on their own. No matter how high the snow, they had to wade through it, the taller children helping smaller ones through the drifts. Around 1903 came the school hacks, which people thought a great luxury. The school hack, forerunner of the modern school bus, was a small wooden, four-wheeled wagon with metal rims. It had canvas sides and top which gave some protection, but the cold winter wind whipped the canvas in all directions. The wagon bed was rather high, so steps had to be climbed to get inside.

Bub Wynant was one of the first drivers of the school hack. He was a very small man with a very large moustache. There were no snow suits in those days, so the children waiting along the way to catch the hack wore heavy underwear covered by long black stockings and jumped up and down to keep warm. Caps and long, scratchy, wollen scarves were wound around their heads and necks. Their coats, bought long enough to last for several years, came almost to their ankles. A characteristic day on a school hack might go something like this:

Bub Wynant would have fed and curried his horse until they shone. This day he would start early because he wanted to watch the old Gregory log barn being moved. After watching this for a while, Bub Wynant started on to pick up the children.

There was usually some excitement at the Gelling house. Mr. Gelling was a tall, rawboned Englishman, with unbelievable strength. Where ever Mr. Gelling was you could usually depend on excitement. This particular morning Mr. Gelling was having trouble with a wild steer. The animal started after Mr. Gelling and somehow entangled his horns in Mr. Gelling's gallouses (suspenders). This angered Mr. Gelling. He grabbed the big steer by the horns, flipped him down on his side and was furiously jumping up and down on him.

Bub Wynant, after watching that show, started his horses on down the road. His next stop was to pick up Irene Douglass. She was so wrapped up in heavy clothing that she could hardly bend to sit on one of the benches that ran down each side of the school hack. Around the next corner he stopped for the three Wynant kids, Richard, Vorah and Hobart. Further down the road was one of the highlights of the trip.

No matter how cold or deep the snow in the barn lot, a barefoot old woman would be standing, milking a cow. Most people who milk cows sit on a stool to do this, and go about it in a business like way, but this old woman wasted no time on a milk stool. She simply bent over and started squeezing. The bundled up kids in the school hack would shiver in delight watching the old woman bare foot in the snow.

At the next house further excitement was usually furnished by the Dobson boys. There were three of them; all about the same size, and they loved to fight. Usually at least one would be chasing another around the house with a club when the school hack came along. The story went that one day when the three boys were out in the yard fighting, their mother said to their father, "Dutch, I wish you would go out and seperate them boys. They're tearing their clothes up." The father went out and was gone several minutes. When he came back his jacket was torn, a pocket was ripped off his overalls, his cap was gone and one eye was beginning to swell. He sat down by the cook stove and after a minute spent in catching his breath said, "Lily, just let 'em fight, dam 'em."

After this exciting trip Mr. Wynant unloaded his pupils at the East School Building in Pendleton. In the early 1900's there were 4 or 5 school hacks. The most any hack carried was around 16. They were drawn by two horses over mud roads.