

Francisco Sutphin Alley

Frank Thompson writes a great blog about many subjects. He researched Frank Alley, one of our early pivotal superintendents that made Lucasville High School a grade 1 rural school in the state. In 1912, the name changed to Valley Township School. Frank has given LAHS permission to use his blog entry as an introduction to Alley being a 2022 Lucasville Legend. Thank you, Frank. He writes,

I had never heard of Professor Alley except for a small paragraph in the Sesquicentennial publication. The entry reads ...

“Also in 1909, Mr. Frank Alley took charge of the Lucasville schools. It was mainly under his leadership that the new high school building of the time was built. He drew the plan. He raised the class of Valley Township schools from third to first place in the State.”

Such a claim as this made me wonder more about Alley. After all, this exalted standing for a small rural school was remarkable. I longed to read more about Alley and the schools of that time, but I could never find any other reference.

Then, I discovered *The Whittlers' Gazette*. The Portsmouth Library has several editions of the wonderful publication on public view. And guess what? In Brant's newspaper I found a story about Professor F. S. Alley. It is a gem for those who hold Lucasville schools near and dear. Allow me to share it with you ...

“I went to our High School Alumni Banquet and had the pleasure of listening to an address by Prof. F. S. Alley. Professor Alley is past 85. He spent 48 years supervising schools in Ohio, Indiana, and Kentucky, seven at the head of the Lucasville schools. He is now a successful poultry raiser and lives on Cockrell's Run.

“Contrary to precedent, Mr. Alley deliberately left a large city school to devote the rest of his active school life to work in the hills, in response to a call from the forward-looking, local board of education which had asked the head of Ohio State University to recommend the best educator in Ohio to assist in carrying out its revolutionary plans.

“Under his leadership, Valley Township was the first in all Ohio to centralize its schools and establish a first grade, rural high school. Mr. Alley said in his address that he had never known of any other school that supplied free text books. So new and successful was the whole idea, Dr. Graham from Ohio State University paid the school several visits and made *lantern slides which he used in lectures and duplicate sets were sent to colleges in every state in the union, to South America, Canada, Mexico, and even to London, England. Mr. Alley has one of these sets in his possession.

“Dr. Graham is now at the head of a department of our Federal Bureau of Education in Washington and no later than last summer, in a lecture before the 4-H Clubs of Ohio again told the story of the development of the Lucasville Schools.

“It is significant that Mr. Alley who had lived in and was familiar with every nook and cranny of at least two states should choose from among them all to come back to the hills of Lucasville to make his permanent home. And the Whittlers' Gazette for one herewith pays tribute to his exceptional abilities and accomplishments. Proud indeed are we to call him a fellow citizen.

* Lantern slides – a slide or transparency for projection by a slide projector or magic lantern.

(The Whittlers' Gazette. Official publication of The Whittlers' Clubs of America. National Headquarters Brant's Store, Main Street, Lucasville, Ohio. July 1930 Edition.)

With this link, I soon discovered an article from *The Newark Weekly Advocate*...

“One of the best examples of what can be accomplished in a centralized school through better trained teachers and more complete equipment is found in the school at Lucasville, Valley Township, Scioto County, Ohio.

“The valuation of this township is but a million and a half dollars. Still, through the leadership of Superintendent F. S. Alley, a centralized school has been erected and fine equipment for industrial work installed in the building.

“A regular four-year course is given in the high school by three trained teachers, each of whom conducts a particular phase of the industrial branches, manual training, domestic science, and agriculture. A large basement room is divided into laboratories to aid in the teaching of chemistry, physics, biology, manual training, and domestic science. The manual training room contains 15 individual work benches and the domestic science room 10 individual stoves, two sewing machines, dining room table, and dishes. All counters, lockers, and tables were built by the boys in their manual training work.

“There is also a room in the building which is frequently used for public lectures. Three acres of land space for a school garden and plans are being made this spring to set out shrubbery in desirable places about the grounds.”

(“Lucasville Valley A Progressive School. The Newark Weekly Advocate. <http://old.minford.k12.oh.us/mhs/history/PortsmouthHistory/Schools/Valley.htm>. May 28, 1914.)

Professor F. S. Alley's long history as an educator is full of praise. He was a native of Union County, Indiana, and he was employed as superintendent of Preble County schools from 1884 until 1891 when he removed to Ripley, Ohio, to take charge of the schools there. He organized the first rural high school in Preble County. A description of Alley:

“To Professor Alley, perhaps, more than any other single individual, was due the credit of the organization and development of the New Paris schools, which has made them among the best in the county. He revised the course of study and systematized the work of the high school, which had not previously reached that stage or real organization.”

(Robert Eaton Lowry. History of Preble County, Ohio: Her People, Industries, and Institutions. 1915.)

Professor Alley also worked with distinction in Dayton, Kentucky ...

“When the present superintendent, Prof. F. S. Alley, came into charge (1896) a notable change was inaugurated in the school management. It had been the custom to adhere to the Cincinnati course of study and the methods there, but these have largely been superceded in the more advanced and

progressive schools of the country. Prof. Alley has reconstructed the course of study in harmony with the best of educational thought and practice of the foremost educators of the day.

“HE has introduced new principles of classification, or of grading. Promotions from class to class are made according to the pupil's advancement, and not with an arbitrary interval of a year between classes. This does away with the final examination, and with that, of course, goes the practice of 'cramming' for the occasion. The reward is given for every-day work and affords a continuous stimulus instead of a spasmodic one - the former as healthful as helpful, the latter often positively injurious, and never an unmixed benefit.

“Where there are two or more classes in the same grade, as it often happens, the pupils are divided according to ability to do work, so that the quicker pupils may not be held back by the slower, nor the slower unduly urged or discouraged by their more rapid fellows.

“By these advanced methods the Dayton schools have been brought to the front rank in scientific education, far ahead of others in this vicinity, a matter of proper pride in parents and of momentous interest to the coming generation.

“There could be no more hopeful indication about the schools than the fact already mentioned, that the attendance in the higher grades is increasing, in comparison with the aggregate attendance. This is a testimony to the wise and efficient management, as well as to the appreciation of the people.

(“The City of Dayton, Kentucky.”

http://www.nkyviews.com/campbell/GAR/GAR_texts_hist.html.)

The *Whittlers' Gazette* article also mentions Albert B. Graham, another famed Ohio educator and friend of Professor Alley. Graham (1868–1960) was born near Lena, Ohio. He was a country schoolmaster and agriculture extension pioneer at The Ohio State University. He received his teaching certificate from the Ohio State University in 1890. For the next decade, Graham taught in rural schools in Champaign, Miami, and Shelby Counties. He organized a Boys' and Girls' Agricultural Experiment Club in 1902.

Graham became superintendent of Agriculture Extension at Ohio State and continued his work educating rural youth. He also worked for the Federal Extension Service from 1919 to 1938.

His ultimate fame? Alfred Belmont Graham established the earliest 4-H club (a Boys & Girls Agricultural Club) on January 15, 1902. Members learned production practices to improve corn yields and learned "the 4-H Way" through hands-on activities. The four "H's" are for head, heart, hands, and health. And the rest is history.

* * Addition to original post from local historian, Jim Detty:

"Had to dig some more into Mr. Alley's past. Born March 8, 1850, in Franklin County, Kentucky. He was Superintendent of Valley Schools from 1909 to 1915 and retired in 1921 following 49 years in the education field. In March 1917 he and his wife Emma purchased a 100-acre farm on Cockrell's Run from John and Martha Kelley, and this is where they retired to. Emma passed away on June 2, 1933, at the age of 75 and is buried at Maple Grove Cemetery in her hometown of Brookeville, Indiana (about halfway between Cincinnati and Indianapolis). Spending his remaining time continuing to educate others at agricultural shows, etc., Frank passed away at his home on August 14, 1936, at the age of 86, and is buried next to his wife in Brookeville. He was survived by four sons."