

Families Educating Their Children
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It is the everyday actions families take to reach valued social goals that underpins much of social change. Take for instance, providing the family's children with a high school education during the first fifty years of the 1900s. For much of these fifty years, money was often scarce or non-existent. School books and supplies were not free. School buses to transport teenagers from the far reaches of Haywood County to the high school in Brownsville only became available in the 1940s and they were operated by community individuals not provided through tax-payers dollars.

Haywood farm families tended to be large during this period. The average farm family had eight or nine children. It was not unusual for families to have as many as 14 or 15 children. A contributing factor to these large families was that farming demanded the work of many hands.

Consequently, parents who lived in the country not only gave up a field hand when they sent their daughter or son to high school. These frugal hard-working folk also had to find resources to pay for their youngster to live in town while school was in session. There were Brownsville residents who were known to board students. Ms. Green on Jefferson Street was one and a woman who lived on Tyus Street, where Ms. Susie Taylor Ashworth boarded as a youngster, was another. If a school was a boarding school, as was St. Mary's in Mason, the boarding cost was part of the school fee.

The Geneva Miller Historical Society (GMHS) is beginning a file on families who were able to provide their offsprings with this means of moving on up. Readers may recall an earlier article about Mr. Julius and Ms. Olivia Jones who were recognized for the number of their sons who served in World War II, but were also noted for their ability to provide all of their children with a high school education.

Readers are asked to submit names of farm families who were able to provide high school educations for their children during the period 1900 - 1950. Send the name of the family and the community in which the family lived to GMHS at dgrnbrry@aol.com.