

# Apples from Illinois

You will remember, if you have been traveling with me over Illinois, that I have said very little about schools. This is not because I am unkind of the importance of schools. It has been rather that perhaps I have been somewhat confused or puzzled. For in almost every city or town that I have visited, someone, with display of pride, has told me: "You ought to write something about our schools. We have the finest schools for a place of this size in Illinois."

And of course that could not always be true. So the counterclaims have befuddled me a bit and I have rather avoided comparison of schools. I've thought, maybe, it was well to let them keep on thinking that. Too, I have come upon some pitiful schools. I have found schools in re-vented dwellings, old frame houses, in antiquated boxes of buildings and people have said in apology to me, "It is not what has gone into the building but what is going into the head that makes a school."

**Notice Many Things**  
If you will visit many schools you will notice other things — schools where the children have bright faces, where all are clean, all well dressed; other schools where there is listlessness, where hair is unkempt, boys in overalls none too clean,—even in high schools. This is remarkable contrast.

Today I am writing about a school, for the first time, because in a town of 3,000 inhabitants I have found a high school on a twenty-two acre site, with 241 students, which represents an investment, I am told, of about \$275,000. It is called a community high school and is fed from twenty underlying country schools.

In Harvard, Ill.  
The school is in Harvard, in McHenry county.

This decidedly unusual high school has agricultural, domestic science, commercial, academic and physical departments. A club room opening on a patio is used by the glee club, an orchestra, the woman's club and other clubs of the village. A feature is a combination gym and auditorium with a stage.

Floors throughout the building are generally of terrazo and the swimming pool is of white tile surrounded with terrazo floors. The building is of warm cream colored brick with stone trim and the interior walls are rich in appearance, like some good substantial club. Streets and driveways paved with concrete lead to the building.

Grounds are parklike in appearance, rolling, and there is plenty of room for athletics. An athletic director is in charge. Hardly any student, boy or girl, gets through the school without becoming a skilled swimmer.

A cafeteria, modern in every respect, is a part of the school. The domestic science class cooks and serves every school day. If you are in Harvard some noon go out to the cafeteria for your lunch. It will be a good one, I can attest to that, and you are as free to buy as in any restaurant anywhere.

W. W. Meyer, superintendent of the school, has just bought a motion picture camera, using standard film, for class room work.

**Agricultural Community**  
What sort of community is this? I'll tell you. Primarily McHenry county is agricultural. The state department of agriculture credited to McHenry county 56,920 milk cows in 1924 making it the first county in Illinois in dairying. The cows were valued at \$70 each, the highest value per head given in the state.

Kane, the second cow county, was given 35,220 milk cows; Cook, third, 32,500; Stephenson, fourth, 30,960; and Lake, fifth, 29,770. I have referred to dairy cows several times recently. It is because I find something in dairy cows and silos to prosperity, better homes and better children — as well as better schools.

The counties in Illinois that are tail-ending in prosperity are also tail-ending in dairy cows. I visited one county in Illinois, it may surprise you to know, where they told me that there was not one farm house in the county valued at more than \$1,000. That county is credited with only 1,310 milk cows and their value is put at \$46 per cow.

**Big Mills Market**  
Compare that to the situation in Harvard where, at the Bowman plant alone, 265 farmers have delivered up to 106,000 pounds of milk in a day and this is only one of a number of outlets for McHenry county milk. When the current market is supplied the surplus milk is powdered. Powdered milk is a fairly modern innovation in the dairy industry. The big market for it is in the South, the tropics and regions where dairying is difficult. It is also used in large baking plants.

Even the manufacturing industries of Harvard have grown out of the farms. Take the case of Hunt, Helm Ferris & Co., Inc., employing 375 people, covering five acres and capitalized at \$1,500,000. H. L. Ferris, as a boy, lived on a farm five miles out of Harvard. Hunt & Helm ran a hardware store in Harvard; just an ordinary country store.

The youthful Ferris was inventive. He also was ambitious. On his father's farm was a cold spring flowing a considerable stream of water. The spring was up on a hillside. He piped the water down and made a reservoir. About this spring he built up the Cold Spring creamery. In a few years he was receiving, from neighbors, as much as 15,000 pounds of milk in a day.

**Invented Hay Carrier**  
He then invented a hay carrier. It saved farm work. Mr. Helm heard about it, talked with Ferris on its possibilities, and plans were laid. Ferris and his wife moved to Harvard. His house rent was \$5 a month. He worked alone in a little shop and that first year made 700 carriers. Growth was slow: ten years to the first brick unit of the great plant of today.

Sparrows played a part in the plant's success. If anger and violent words are a sin sparrows have sent many a farm boy to perdition. Used to be barn doors were run on a flat track, hung from overhead, covered. In nesting season barn doors could seldom be opened before a boy climbed a ladder and clawed out the nests. It was maddening.

One day Ferris conceived the idea of the tubular track with a slot on the underside and rollers inside. It revolutionized the nesting habits of sparrows and farm boys now have a chance at heaven. Also, it made big profits for the company.

**Other Devices**  
In the years a complete line of barn "hardware" has been added. Mr. Ferris evolved the "unit stall." Some call these facetiously "iron beds for cows." Individual drinking cups are made for cattle. An effete easterner recently wrote inquiring about "cow goblets."

Rounding out the line — roller coasters, tricycles, sleds and play apparatus for childhood. Mr. Ferris began his long string inventions, hundreds of them, in 1883. He is still at it.

"I like the work. I can't quit," he told me. "It is my fun. And, besides — if you are going to succeed you can't get one idea and stop. To keep an industry like this going, you must be bringing out new things all the time. Let up and you begin to slip."

"But please don't call me an inventor. I'm merely doing experimental work. There are too many queer people, a little off, who call themselves inventors. They'll get a five cent idea and instantly become millionaires. Quit? I can't quit. I enjoy it. Why should I?"  
That from a man who has been steadily at work building up a business based on inventions for forty-three years.

**Raises Ginseng**  
Robert C. Uecke, pronounced Eky, of Harvard, told me with a smile that the civil wars of China and the low price of the Mexican silver dollar have interfered with his profits this year. It seems odd that these things might influence a business in a town of 3,000 in Illinois but — Mr. Uecke raises ginseng!

He was in the midst of marketing a \$2,000 crop, raised on a half-acre, when I talked with him! That looks like big money, but, if you'll take his advice, you will never raise ginseng. He has been raising it for 32 years and is going out of the business. It's too much worry and too uncertain, he says. He told me:

"I have been a nurseryman, specializing in evergreens, for fifty years.

I decided to raise ginseng because I was told that it couldn't be raised under cultivation. I decided to reproduce the conditions under which it grew, in the shade, in an artificial way. I did.

**China Only Market**  
"China is the only market. Best wild ginseng brings \$14 a pound; cultivated ginseng around \$8 a pound but the cultivated is more bulky, due to faster growth, so that's reasonable enough.

"People who have tried to raise ginseng have fair luck with small patches but, if they try to raise it in quantity, seems to multiply their troubles and increase chances for failure. I've averaged from \$500 to \$1,000 a year out of my half acre. It isn't worth the bother."

Mr. Uecke also raises hydrastis, commonly called Golden Seal, a bitter root used in medicines as a tonic. The root is of a bright yellow color which gives it the name.

Oh, yes, one runs into other odd things in Illinois towns. E. Saunders is the motion picture impresario in Harvard. He has invented and built in the rear of his theatre what he calls a "cry room." It is soundproof. Mothers with colicky infants may retire to it and watch the picture thru the glass.

Harvard also has an isolation home, not a hospital, for contagious diseases. In case of epidemics a mother may enter with her child or children and nurse them under the watchful eye of physicians. Those who enter become guests of the city. That comes of having a physician as mayor. He is Dr. J. G. Maxon.

Harvard, in the county of cows, seems to be a place of ideas. And substantial prosperity and progress.

## GAMBER RESIGNS AS STATE FIRE MARSHAL

Resignation of John Gamber, state fire marshal since 1917, has been accepted by Governor Small, effective November 20.

S. L. Legried, Centralia, superintendent of fire prevention since 1911, has been selected as successor to Mr. Gamber.

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## INSULL SAYS ELECTRIC POWER GROWTH NATURAL

Speaks at Second Annual Banquet of Association at Chicago

"Growth of the electric light and power industry in the United States has been just as natural and understandable as the growth of a tree — and just as devoid of sinister implications and consequences," said Samuel Insull, chairman of the Public Service Company of Northern Illinois, in addressing nearly 1200 representatives of various electrical businesses in Chicago recently. The occasion was the second annual banquet of the Electric Association of Chicago.

"One Illinois utility company sold 16 times as much electric energy in 1926 as in 1913," said Mr. Insull, "but the total amount paid for this power in 1926 was only five times as great as in 1913, although the cost of labor and materials has greatly increased."

"The average selling price in cents per kilowatt hour actually is lower now than before the war. It is about the only commodity or service of which this can be said. The electric light and power industry has given constantly increasing service at con-

stantly declining rates. What industry can show a better record or, indeed, a comparable one?"

"This development will go on," the speaker concluded, "unless checked by undue political interference, until good electric service is practically universal throughout the United States."

The League of Nations met and adjourned without doing anything. There's a hot tip for a lot of our state legislatures.

We don't know anything about it but we'd be willing to bet that Uncle Sam wouldn't be able to slip any American propaganda into the histories used in the British schools. You have to give John Bull credit for looking after his own.

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