

Pigott, Lee

Interview by
Miss Betty Turnell

for the
Decatur Public Library

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Mr. Lee Pigott Interview No. 2

June, 1982

This is Betty Turnell speaking for the Decatur Public Library. Our guest today is Mr. Lee Pigott. Mr. Pigott was one of our early guests in this series, and now we have invited him to return to tell us more of his experiences. Mr. Pigott?

A. I'm anxious to talk about my religious life which I failed to say anything about before. I joined the Epworth League at the Methodist Church when I was about 15 years of age in Murphysboro, Illinois. It was a good group, and we were assigned a new minister about that time by the name of Dr. Cameron Harmon. At the time I was president of the group, and Dr. Harmon and I had conferences from time to time about the activities in the League group. Dr. Harmon and I got to be close friends, and he said, "Lee, what about going to high school?" Well, I told him that I had to quit school when I was in the seventh grade. I couldn't go back to high school. He said, "Why can't you go back to high school?" I said, "I don't want to go back to the eighth grade here," and he said, "I'm president of the board of McKendree College, and I'd see that we could get you in there if you're willing to go there and prepare for the ministry." I said, "Prepare for the ministry? What do you think I am?" He said, "I think you'd do very well if you'd do that." I said, "I could never get education enough to do a thing like that." He said, "I'll help you get a job there to pay all of your expenses so your folks won't have to pay anything at all." "Well", I said, "Dr. Harmon, my father wants me to be a machinist on the railroad, and I want to be one too. But, I'll talk it over with Dad."

I told my father I was thinking of going to McKendree, that Dr. Harmon would help me and that maybe I would think something about the ministry. He said, "Oh, no, Lee!" He told me I had started my apprenticeship for the railroad machinist, and that if I quit the job and went to school one thing was certain. He said, "Never come back and darken my door."

Well, I said, "Dad, if that's the case, I guess I'm as bull-headed as you are. I'm going to go to McKendree."

I went to McKendree, and Dr. Harmon found me a job to pay a lot of my expenses. I enjoyed McKendree - (the athletics). I had a job ringing the rising bell for the girls' dorm for my room, waiting tables for my meals, and I was janitor in one of the science buildings for some of my other expenses.

It wasn't a couple of years before Dr. Harmon was appointed president of Missouri Wesleyan College in Cameron, Missouri. He asked me to go with him and said he'd see that I'd have a chance to earn my way if I went there. I thought if I did not keep contact with Dr. Harmon, I didn't see how I could get along. He had the Missouri Conference to appoint me to a church in a small town - a poor old country boy who had done nothing in the way of preaching or anything else.

The first appointment he got me was a few miles out of Kansas City, I was scared to death the first time I went to the place. I had promised. (I should add that Dr. Harmon and I had a conference about what I should do if I applied myself to the task.)

I took the train out to Kansas City, and then a train out to this little town. I don't remember the name of the town. I got off the train

and stood there not knowing where to go, not knowing a soul. In a few minutes a man and his wife came up and asked "Are you Reverend Pigott?"

"Reverend Pigott?" I said. "No, I'm Lee Pigott."

"Oh, yes," he replied.

We walked to the church - it took us about fifteen or twenty minutes. Then they took me to the parsonage, which was furnished. Next, they gave me the keys to the house and the church, and then we visited the church.

I commented on several things about the beauty of the church, but I noticed that the lighting system was rather peculiar. One system was electric lighting, but another was a gas lighting system.

I said, "Do you have trouble with the electric lights or the gas lighting system?"

They said, "No, we don't have any trouble."

"Well," I said, "I'll take the gas fixtures out sometime when I can come down early. The gas fixtures spoil the looks of the sanctuary."

The two members threw up their hands and almost shouted, "No! No! Leave them alone! If they are taken down, half the members will leave the church."

I thought, "Well, I'll wait my time and then see what I should do."

Well, anyway, I remember the faces of the people at that first church for another odd thing. I had my first funeral there. The night before the funeral they stayed up, visiting and having a family reunion. They stayed all night, drinking and playing cards and having a good time. I do not remember having the funeral services, but I know that I did.

The little town had a custom of playing cards along the sidewalks. I spent some of my time during my week ends of visits there, walking from card game to card game, talking to the men about their work and inviting

them to Sunday school and church.

Well, I decided to take the gas lights out of the church sanctuary. I thought I'd get there early one weekend and do it. I found ladders in the basement of the church and had everything ready.

To make a long story short, I said nothing about the lights. I was afraid to take them down. I am sure that, had I taken them down, it would have been the best thing that happened in the church. But they didn't seem to mind. They loved their gas and they loved their electricity. It seemed like the ones who wanted electricity would sit in one place, and the ones who wanted gas would sit in another.

Shortly after I left that place, I went to conference. I do not remember where that conference was held in Missouri. It was at that conference that I took the first step toward the ministry.

My next appointment was closer to Cameron, Missouri, where I was in school. I had four little places, and I only remember three of them - Proctorville, Catalby, and _____.

These churches were closer to Cameron by about thirty miles. I would take a train down to a little town close to the church, where I was to go on Sunday. Some members of the church I was to attend the next morning came to pick me up each time. Otherwise I would have to walk to some member's home - the closest was five miles. I would speak at one of two churches in the morning, eat dinner with some one visiting, and be taken to the next church in the afternoon. After service at night I would be taken to some member of the church for the night. Then the next morning I would be taken to the train to go back to school. I served this group until I left for World War I in 1918.

I finished the school year and decided to go to summer school in 1918. In the first or second week of the summer school I was sitting in the back of the classroom evidently day dreaming; when someone touched me on my shoulder. I looked up, and it was the Dean of the Summer School.

"What's the matter, Pigott?" he said.

I answered, "Oh, I don't know."

He looked at me, and said "I'll tell you what I'll do. If you want to join the Naval Aviation, go ahead."

The boys had all been talking about going to World War I, and he knew well what we wanted to do.

He said, "I'll give you credit for all your summer school work if you go!"

"You sure want to get rid of me, don't you?" I said. "You mean that, do you, Doctor?"

"Yes," he said, "I do."

"OK," I said, "I'll try it. Don't worry about that."

And so I went to Kansas City to take my examination and was accepted for the Naval Air Force. I stayed in U.S. Naval Force until January 1, 1919, when I came to Decatur.

My church activities have been varied. In Decatur I did fill the pulpit of the Cleveland Avenue Baptist Church for a short time in 1919 and 1920. I talked to the pastor, about how long; he said his records did not go back that far. I was elected president of the Decatur Ministerial Association in 1944 and 45. I joined the Baptist Church in 1900, and I'm not sure of that date. I later was baptized because I was originally a Methodist, and I was only sprinkled, and had to be immersed in order to join the Baptist Church. I taught the ladies' Sunday School class for

ten years. I joined the Baptist Church, baptized by immersion. Then I re-joined the Methodist Church about 25 years ago, and I'm still going there.

I've touched on most of my activities in my religious life. There are many other little things I could name, but in general, those are the main ones.

Q. Mr. Pigott, that's certainly an interesting account of your early life in the church, but of course we know that you turned to teaching and later school administration. You were principal. Why did you change from the ministry to education?

A. Well, I was in Millikin University. I did not really ask for any help at Millikin, but the coach said, "Pigott, come and go with me and I'll get you a scholarship if you want to go to Millikin."

I had played basketball against Millikin, and the coach said, "I'd like to have you play on our team."

I said "If you want to give me a scholarship, OK."

He said, "Come on."

So we went over to see the president, and he gave me a scholarship at Millikin. That was on January 2, 1919. He didn't know me at all.

I was going through the machine shop at Millikin one day. A boy was trying to put a piece of pump on a planer. He and his teacher were trying to get that piece on the bed to plane it off. They were having trouble. I stood there and watched them and then said, "Would you mind if I helped you?"

I had had experience with the planer so I laid it out for them. They did it. They looked at me. Then Prof. Cole came along. He was the man in charge of manual training. He said, "Pigott, why don't you take some manual training?"

I said, "I'd love to." So I took some manual training, and Prof. Cole was my staunch defender.

My first job at Millikin was to dig a tile ditch around a quarter mile track to drain the water out of the track.

I took a course under Doc Cole. I made a table and some other things. I was much older than most of the boys. Prof. got to liking me.

When I graduated, Prof. Cole said to me, "Pigott, go to the superintendent of schools and ask for a job."

I said, "They wouldn't take me, I know."

"You go and see him."

I said, "No, I won't, Prof."

He said, "Yes, you will."

So I said, "OK."

The day I was to see him, I thought, "Well, I'll see him anyway." So I went to the superintendent's office and said I have an appointment with the superintendent.

The secretary said, "I know you have, Mr. Pigott, but he has an appointment to go to St. Louis on that afternoon train, and the taxicab is out there now to take him. He hasn't time to see you."

(That was about 1921.)

I said, "Well, you go tell the superintendent that I'm here so he'll know at least that I honored my appointment."

She went in and then she said, "Stick your head in there and don't go any farther."

So I stuck my head in and the superintendent said, "I'll send you a contract tomorrow." I didn't get to say anything. That was how I got my first job in teaching.

Well, then in the summer of 1922 after that first job, I was washing walls at Durfee School and the elementary supervisor came around.

I had had classes in manual training in 1921-22 that came into Durfee School. It was the roughest part of town, with a foreign group there. I just loved those kids and had a good time with them. I could tell you a lot of stories about them.

I didn't even know this teacher was a supervisor.

She said, "Mr. Pigott, would you please come from that ladder and come out here? I want to talk to you."

I came down from the ladder, and we moseyed off so no one could hear the conversation. This was the middle of August.

After talking a while, she said, "How do you like it out here?"

I said, "I like these kids. I have a good time here with them."

She said, "Well, you've just been appointed principal of this school for next year."

I said, "I don't know anything about being a principal!"

She said, "Well, you're the principal."

I said, "How come?"

She said, "You're the only man in the system who has a degree and is not in a secondary school or has a principalship. You seem to get along out here. So we want to try you as principal."

So that's how I got my first principalship. As I said, I liked those kids and we just had a good time.

Then I stayed there until the new school - Centennial junior high school - was built. They moved me out there - they didn't ask me.

We were having a program after two years. We were having a banquet for those kids if they made an average of "C". They had to make an average of "B: in department. Then they could go to the banquet free.

The secretary came down as we were getting ready for that banquet in 1932, and said, "Mr. Pigott, you're wanted on the telephone."

I said, "What for?"

She said, "The paper wants to know if you have a portrait, glossy print."

I said, "No - why do they want that?"

She said, "You've been appointed principal of this "classy" school."

I was there from 1932 to 1943, and the same thing happened. The newspaper called and asked for a print.

I said, "Why?"

They said, "You've been appointed principal of the high school."

Q. It seems to me you were always getting jobs you didn't apply for!

A. That's right. I didn't apply for any of those. But now then, the superintendent called me one time and said, "Mr. Pigott, I want you to be the superintendent of the schools and don't you worry about what's happening up here and what it looks like. I'm recommending you to be superintendent."

Well, I applied for that job and did not get it!

Q. It would be better if you didn't apply - Well, even though you turned from the ministry to education, your church and your religion were a strong influence in your life.

A. I think there was guidance there in some way. Maybe I had guidance to take that route instead of the other.

Q. Yes - think of all the young people you influenced. It must be a great satisfaction.

A. I had a boys' club at that first school where I was principal - up near Malleable Iron - and it was rough! Well, I asked them about their old office building. The official said they weren't doing anything with it. I asked, "May we have it for a Boys' Club?"

"Sure," he said, "Don't let them tear it up."

We had a bunch of boys there, and some would go out there at night. They wouldn't go home as they should.

We had one boy by the name of Henry. Henry would get up there, and his father or mother would call me and say, "Mr. Pigott, will you go find Henry? He's not home yet."

So I'd go out and honk. One time she called, and I said, "I just can't go and get Henry all the time."

"Oh, please go get him."

Well, I went there, and it looked as if there wasn't a soul there, but I honked and honked, and finally three of them came. Henry was one of them.

I said, "Henry, your folks are just raving. They want you home. Jump in and let's go."

We took Henry home, and I found out later what happened. They gave him a whipping, took all his clothes off him, put him in the basement. There were just those little windows up high. They knew he couldn't get out and there weren't any clothes for him to put on if he did get out. But he was gone the next morning anyway. What he had done was get up on something (they didn't think he could) looked out and saw some of his sister's clothes on the line. Some way he got that window open, got out, and put on his siter's clothes... But, it turned out that Henry was the

only one in that bunch who graduated from high school... Well, that's all.

Q. It has certainly been interesting to see these influences in your life and to see how you've influenced others in Decatur too.

A. I could tell you a lot of other stories, but I don't want to talk on.

Q. But that gives us an idea of how your life has gone. Thank you very much, Mr. Pigott. We certainly appreciate your coming back to add to your story.

You have been listening to the second recording made by Mr. Lee Pigott for the Decatur Public Library. This is Betty Turnell.

Aluminum Drive

August 30, 1941

Mayor Charles H. Lee
Mayor City of Decatur
Decatur, Illinois

Dear Sir:

I was appointed by you to collect scrap aluminum in the city of Decatur in connection with the National Defense Aluminum Collection Committee. Below is a sketchy outline of the activities of this committee during the drive itself. The organization of the drive included people from most all organizations within the city. The following committees directed the campaign:

(1) ✓ Advertising Committee.

The members of this committee were Ken T. Livesay of the Association of Commerce, Chairman, Bert C. Whitsitt of the Herald and Review, Charles Schaffer of the Retail Merchants Division of the Association of Commerce, George John of the Junior Association of Commerce and Don Hathorne of the Senior Association of Commerce.

A. Activities of this Committee.

Posters. 300 posters were made by the N. Y. A. Art Department which were placed in the display windows of the city. These posters were distributed by the boy scouts, the material was furnished by the city itself and the work done by the N. Y. A.

(2) ✓ Newspaper Advertising.

The committee arranged a schedule of events for newspaper advertising from July 20 to July 30. Each day during this time the newspapers gave advertising space urging the community to participate in the scrap aluminum collection. The schedule of these events for these days is listed below.

NATIONAL DEFENSE ALUMINUM COLLECTION

✓ Schedule of Events, July 20-30

✓ SUNDAY, July 20 - Inventory Day all housewives and others are to look over their aluminum articles and utensils to determine what ones can be turned in for defense purposes without having to be replaced.

- ✓ MONDAY, July 21 - Check-Up Day Everyone is to check-up to see just what articles were found.
- TUESDAY, July 22 - "Double-Check" Day A second look is to be taken to see if every piece has been found which can be spared without replacement.
- ✓ WEDNESDAY, July 23 - Reminder Day Members of the F. T. A. will phone every housewife in Decatur who has a telephone to personally inform her of the plans to select all aluminum she can spare without replacing and put it on her porch Thursday morning before 9:00 A.M. The Boy Scouts, Girl Scouts and Playground groups will deliver a hand-bill to every home, explaining the purpose of the collections, the time, etc.
- ✓ THURSDAY, July 24 - Collection Day
9:00 - 12:00 A. M. The Boy Scouts, Girl Scouts and Playground groups of boys and girls will collect the aluminum from the porches and steps of each home and deliver it to the nearest school building, where provision will be made to receive it.
- ✓ 1:00 - 4:00 P. M. Trucks will pick up the aluminum from the school buildings and deliver it to a large bin to be erected in Central Park. Each truck load will be officially weighed before being unloaded, so that an accurate record may be kept of the amount collected.
- ✓ FRIDAY, ✓ July 25 - Follow-Up Day A follow-up of all homes not covered in the pick-up Thursday will be made.

Persons not at home at the time or missed for other reasons will bring their aluminum to the large central bin in Central Park

✓ TUESDAY, July 29-30 All aluminum was hauled to Springfield.

✓ (3) Radio.
 This committee was responsible for spot announcements over WSOY during the week of the collection.
 News Publicity Chairman - Lee D. Pigott
 The General Committee felt that it would be best for all announcements and newspaper items to be given out through the general chairman. The Decatur Herald and Review

August 30, 1941

the city editors, cooperated excellently in suggesting what news items should be printed and in the order in which they should appear. I am sure the General Committee feels that the newspapers were very generous in their advertising space donated and in the amount of news space given to the aluminum drive. Articles concerning this drive appeared in both papers every day from July 16 to July 30. Pictures appeared in the paper almost daily, the greatest number, however, appeared on the day of the drive showing the method of collection, different vehicles used in collection and the pile of aluminum out in the park. I believe there was more newspaper publicity and advertising given to this drive than to any other community event undertaken within the last twenty years. However, this is only my opinion.

(4) Womans Division.

The members of this committee were Mrs. George Brown President of the City Council Parent Teachers Association, Chairman. The members of her committee were the President of each local Parent Teachers Association. On July 23, this committee called each home where telephone communication was possible. They were given instructions just what to say and the time in which to do it. These instructions are listed below.

INSTRUCTIONS TO TELEPHONE CALLERS
DECATUR'S OLD ALUMINUM ROUND-UP

Telephone calls should not be made before 9:30 a.m. or after 9 p.m. As a rule the times for calling are 10 a.m. to 11:30 a.m.; 1 p.m. to 3 p.m. and 4:30 to 8 p.m. Do not call businesses or offices.

For best results use the following procedure:

- (1) Dial the number
- (2) Ask for Mrs. Blank
- (3) Say something like this:

"Mrs. "Blank," this is Mrs. "Jones", calling in behalf of Decatur's Old aluminum campaign. You've read about the appeal of the government for donations of old aluminum so badly needed in defense production.

Tomorrow an authorized solicitor will call for your contribution. Will you please be ready with any old aluminum that you no longer use?

The government and all the local committees will appreciate your cooperation.

Thank you."

This committee was also responsible for a representative from the local Parent Teachers Association to be present at the 39 collection points. This person was responsible for the safety of the aluminum at that point until it was loaded and sent into Central Park. I estimate that about 250 people worked on this committee.

✓(5) Bin construction in Central Park

Members of this committee were R. E. Grossman, Chairman and Paul Lyons, committee member. This group erected one bin in Central Park to hold about 2,000 pounds of aluminum. The wire for the first bin was donated by the Black Hardware Company. The stakes were donated by Lyon Lumber Company. When the aluminum started coming in from the different districts the committee decided it was necessary to construct another bin of the same size. In the early part of the afternoon it became evident that another bin would have to be constructed. Because of the rush we did not have time to solicit donations for wire. Because of this the chairman took the responsibility of purchasing wire at Blacks Hardware Co. and charging it to the city. I am sure if we had more time we could have found someone to give us the material needed.

(6) Collection of aluminum

The members of this committee were Sergeant L. C. Lycan, Chairman, William F. Souls Boy Scout Executive, Joanne McDavid Girl Scout Executive, Miss Freda Combs Decatur Community Recreation Association, and Beecher Huey, City Commissioner. This committee used the 39 political precincts as division units for the collection of the aluminum. Adult representatives from the Parent Teachers Association and the Recreation Association were assigned to each of these 39 points. About 20 to 25 workers from the organizations named above were assigned to each precinct. These workers passed handbills to each home in the city on Wednesday July 23. About 22,000 bills were passed out. On Thursday, July 24, this same group went back over the territory and collected the aluminum. Beecher Huey was responsible for a truck at each collection point between the hours of 9 to 12. These trucks took the aluminum to the park at noon or whenever they had a load. I feel that without the excellent work of this committee the campaign would not have been so great a success as it was. I estimate there were about 1200 workers on this committee.

✓(7) Guarding the Aluminum.

Members of this committee were Mayor Charles E. Lee, Chairman Chief of Police Charles Schepper and the Chief of the Fire Department Osborne and Scout Troop No. 6 whose Scout Master is R. E. Grossman and Troop No. 21 whose Scout Master is Al Ewing. Troop No. 6 pitched their tent on the night of July 23 and stayed in camp until July 26 at which time Troop No. 21 took over until July 29. The Police Department guarded the aluminum from dark until 6 a.m. Chief of the Fire Department, Osborne, assigned men for two hour watches during the day from July 24 until July 30. These men were on duty throughout the day.

✓(8) Transportation Committee

Chairman of this committee was Fay Ickes of the Veterans of Foreign Wars. Mr. Ickes secured Chap's Moving Van to take two large moving van loads of aluminum to Springfield. The remainder of the aluminum was taken to Springfield by a truck furnished by the Decatur Water Dept.

(9) The Disposition Committee

The members of this committee were Orlo King Decatur Community Chest and DonHathorne of the Decatur Association of Commerce

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and Harry Taylor of the Decatur Warehouse. All correspondence concerning the weighing of the aluminum in Decatur and Springfield was carried on through this committee. The attached copy of the amount collected will show that our drive netted us 10,992 pounds of aluminum or about 2/3 pounds per dwelling in the City of Decatur.

(10) Miscellaneous

Lights were furnished on a minutes notice for a band concert in Central Park by Mr. Rhefelt and the city electrical workers.

The W. P. A. Band under the direction of Mr. Heines played from 7:30 to 9:00 on the night of July 24.

Letters of appreciation were sent to all committee chairmans and copies were sent to committee members.

The above is a rough outline of the organization followed. I want to express my appreciation to you as Mayor of Decatur, for giving me the opportunity to help in the scrap aluminum drive. I feel that all the work that I spent on the organization was well worth all the efforts given to it. While I may be prejudice I believe that the city of Decatur is to be congratulated on its wholesome reactions and the wholehearted spirit given to the committee in this drive. If the work were to be done over I am sure that there would be many changes in the organization which would help a great deal. But I am also sure that any changes in organization would not get a more wholesome or better response than did this committee.

Very truly yours,

Lee D. Pigott, Chairman
Scrap Aluminum Drive

LDP:LD

TO -

The Honorable Board of Education of
The Decatur School District,
Decatur, Illinois.

932-33
This was during the depression when the
Decatur School Board was considering closing the school
because of financial difficulties

WE, THE UNDERSIGNED, being supervisors, principals, teachers and employees of the Decatur School District, realizing that from the reduction of the assessed valuation of property in the Decatur School District made after contracts were entered into between ourselves and the Board of Education, and that from the failure of many persons to be able to pay taxes for the past year, and the probable inability to pay all of their taxes for the ensuing year, there will be a shortage of funds in the hands of the Board of Education to meet the payment on all contracts in full as heretofore made with us, and

FURTHER realizing that the Board of Education and the people of Decatur School District desire and expect that the operation of the Decatur Schools be kept within the budget of money available for the payment of salaries and necessary expenses, and

FURTHER realizing that the primary importance of this and any school system is the education of children for the full period of time required by law, if possible, and desiring to add to the help already given by the voters of this District in providing for an increased levy of taxes for the ensuing years by doing everything in our power toward the keeping of the schools in Decatur open for the full period of nine months, even though there will not be enough money available for the payment of our salaries, as provided by the contracts which we have already signed.

THEREFORE, we do hereby offer and agree to continue our employment and perform the services required of us by our contracts for the full school year of nine months from the date of the opening of the schools, with the understanding that as long as the Board has power to anticipate taxes that we will accept the tax warrants in payment of our salaries, and after such tax anticipation power is exhausted, we agree that we will accept evidences of indebtedness from the Board of Education to the extent of further taxes and income to the Board of Education, as known at that time, and we further agree that when the taxing power and other income is exhausted for the current year, that we, separately and individually and as a body, will continue to perform our duties and continue our employment for whatever time may remain to complete the operation of the schools for a full period of nine months, without any recompense or expectation of recompense by us in any manner, or if necessary at that time, in the judgment of the Board, that we will and do enter into a separate agreement with the Board of Education to complete said period of nine months school, at whatever nominal salary may be set by the Board, such as One Dollar per month.

DATED at Decatur, Illinois, this _____ day of October,

a. D. 1932.

Please return
to me. Lee D. Pigott
1176 W. Main Street
Decatur Ill.

HISTORY OF LEE D. PIGOTT

Born - July 9, 1893 - Murphysboro - Jackson County, Illinois

Work

Sold newspapers - St. Louis Globe, Star Chronicle, Post Dispatch,
Murphysboro Independent

Quit Logan Grade School in 7th grade to help support family.

- 1907- Worked in Brown Shoe Factory.
- 1907-12 Mobile & Ohio Shops - car yards - machinist apprentice.
- 1913- Followed harvest of wheat in Kansas and Oklahoma.
- 1919-20 A. E. Staley Mfg. Co., Decatur - vacations - some night - handy man.
- 1921-22 Carpenter

Schooling

1912-16 McKendree College Academy
Took 7-8 grade with help of some professors in McKendree
and then entered Academy.
Did janitor work - rang rising bell in dormitory - head
waiter in dining hall.

1916-17 Missouri Wesleyan College, Cameron, Missouri
Took one year schooling and worked in boys dept. Y.M.C.A.

1917-18 World War I
Naval Aviation
Enlisted at Kansas City

1919- James Millikin University

1921 Graduated from Millikin June, 1921 - A. B. Degree
University of Illinois on Saturdays - 1928 - M. A. Degree.

Teaching Profession All In Decatur, Illinois

- Sept. 1921 Roosevelt Junior High School - few weeks.
- Oct. 1921 Gastman School - Taught woodwork to all 7th and 8th grade in
Decatur Schools.
Taught 9th grade woodwork class at Central Jr. High School.
Taught 7th and 8th grade woodwork class at Durfee Jr. High
- 1921-29 Principal - Durfee School.
- 1929-32 Principal - Centennial Junior High School.
- 1932-43 Principal - Woodrow Wilson Junior High School.
- 1943-59 Principal - Decatur High School

Married

- Nov. 6, 1921 - Jessie Elizabeth Crowder
- Nov. 5, 1953 - Mrs. Jessie Elizabeth Pigott passed away
- June 12, 1955 - Married Mrs. R. H. Carson

Children

- ✓ Mrs. Elizabeth Lee Allen
- ✓ Mrs. Ronald Colton

Grand Children

- ✓ Elizabeth Ann Allen
- ✓ John Joseph Allen
- ✓ Sara Catherine Allen
- ✓ George VanCleve Allen
- ✓ Jannet Colton
- ✓ Karen Colton
- Janey A*
- Charles H*

Honors in Education

- 1924-5-6 ✓ President - Decatur Teachers Association
- 1932-33 ✓ President - Macon County School Master Club
- 1933-34 ✓ President - South Central Division, Illinois Education Association
(10 counties) *4500 members*
- ✓ 1938-39 ✓ President - Illinois Junior High School Association
- 1959 ✓ President - Illinois Association of Secondary School Principals --
- ✓ National Association of Secondary Schools - Program several times.
- ✓ North Central Colleges & Secondary Schools - program several times
- ✓ Illinois Association Secondary Principals - programs several times.
- 1946-48 ✓ President - Central Illinois Conference - ("Big 12") *collected*
- 1929 ✓ Phi Delta Kapa - National Education Honor Society

College Activities

- 1918 ✓ President - College Y.M.C.A. - Mo. Wesleyan
- 1914-15 ✓ President - College Athletic Association - McKendree
- 1914-16 ✓ President - Plato Literary Society - McKendree
- 1918 ✓ President - Adelpian Literary Society - Missouri Wesleyan

Decatur Community Activities

- ✓ 1928-32 Manager Community Chest Christmas Store.
- 1933-38 Member Community Chest Board.
- 1933-37 Chairman - Leadership and Training Boy Scouts of America
- ✓ 1938 ✓ President - Decatur Area Boy Scouts of America (now Lincoln Trails)
- ✓ 1939 ✓ Boy Scouts of America - Beaver Award
- ✓ 1934-59 Member - Kiwanis Club of Decatur *Perfect Attendance 28 years*
- 1937 ✓ President - Kiwanis Club of Decatur
- 1938 Lieutenant Governor - Kiwanis Illinois-Iowa District
- 1939 Kiwanis - Illinois-Iowa District Underprivileged Children - Chairman
- 1940 Kiwanis - Illinois-Iowa District Safety - Chairman
- 1943-45 ✓ President - Decatur Church Council
- 1919-59 ✓ Mason - 40 years Eastern Star - 20 years
- 1921-59 ✓ American Legion - 38 years
- 15 years DeMolay Board - Sponsored by Masonic Commandery

- 1943-47 World War II - Selective Service Decatur City Board #1
- World War II - Chairman of Aluminium Drive for Macon County Council Social Agencies
- Education Council
- 1921-59 City Council Parent-Teacher Association
- 1921-59 Parent Teacher Association - Father Club

1961

Chairman of the Church Activities to save Sunday for Family & Community of Decatur

1912-59

Baptist & Methodist, Church member
Taught Sunday School Class - Elementary, Jr. High School, High School, Adults 20 years

College Athletic Awards

Baseball	-McKendree - 4 awards	Missouri Wesleyan - 1 award
Basketball	-McKendree - 4 awards	Missouri Wesleyan - 1 award
Football	-McKendree - 2 awards	Missouri Wesleyan - 1 award
Tennis	-McKendree - 1 award	Missouri Wesleyan - 0 award
Track	-McKendree - 1 award	Missouri Wesleyan - - -

Athletic Official

Officiated football - 15 years
basketball - 15 years
baseball - 2 years

Honors at the Close of the Year

A rose bush (Peace) - by the Bios Research Club.

Traveling refrigerator cabinet from Gay Kintner.

Dedication of the 1958-59 Parent-Teacher Yearbook to me.

The Vocational Cabinet Making Class made me two wooden horses.

An oil painting from the Art Class painted by Jennifer McLeod of New Zealand.

A scroll of honor given to me at the Latin Banquet.

The Stephen Decatur High School faculty dinner - present was a 11" delta drill press with 1/2" chuck.

Stephen Decatur High School Band Concert dedicated to me.

An all-school assembly by the Student Council and a program of "This is Your Life". They presented me with a 500 watt slide projector with remote control, one daylight screen, a sound tape of the program itself, 20 slides of pictures taken of the program, 14 slide holders, red and white mortarboard hat, boutonniere, corsage and dozen roses for Mrs. Pigott.

Parent Teachers Association honored me at their last P.T.A. meeting with an R.C.A. portable television set and 16 roses for Mrs. Pigott. They also made arrangements with the Board of Education for me to have my office desk and chair.

✓ The Board of Education named the athletic field the "Lee D. Pigott Athletic Field" as of May 12, 1959.

The National Honor Society gave me cuff links, tie clasp, and a scroll.

The Vocational Auto Mechanics boys simonized my car.

The High School Yearbook, "The Decanois", was dedicated to me. They also gave me a large color photograph of myself.

Mr. Stiegenier gave me a tie clasp.

The Big 12 Principals Association gave me a pocketbook.

The Decatur Education Association gave me a ten dollar gift certificate.

Future Distributors of America gave me a life membership.

The cafeteria ladies gave me a stamp holder.

Ervin Svendsen gave me two dozen plus very beautiful red roses.

My picture was displayed in Linn & Scruggs window with some graduating students from Decatur High School who had won honors the school year 1958-59. Bill Summers took a picture of the window and presented it to me.

Lindquist Studio displayed my picture in their studio as the "Man of the Week".

The Secondary Cabinet of the Decatur Public School system took me to dinner at the Redwood and gave me a Philco transistor radio.

✓ Elected Honorary Father of the Future Homemakers of America and given the honor key that goes with it.

Guest of K. Wilson at the vocational banquet at the Masonic Temple.

*Lee D. Pigott Athletic Field named for me. Lee D. Pigott Field
1959-60 represented the Ford Foundation in Staff Utilization in the U.S.
I was assigned territory in mid west U.S. although I was sent
to educational meetings in both the east & the west.*

September 14, 1932.

To the General Committee Appointed on the
Decatur School Problem:

Your sub-committee appointed to investigate the possible income and the budget of the Decatur School District submits this its report.

We find that the Decatur School District has the past few years faced constantly diminishing income. Last year the combined levy for building and educational purposes was \$784,000.00, of which, at the present time, some \$207,000.00 remains uncollected. The amount collected to date is sufficient to retire all tax anticipation warrants. However, there is now outstanding some \$187,000.00 of paper issued to the teachers for a part of their salaries for last year. To pay this, the District must look to its uncollected taxes of last year's levy, of which the portion to be allocated to the educational fund is slightly in excess of \$155,000.00, and in addition the sum due from the State of Illinois and other high school districts amounting to approximately \$56,000.00. Whether these combined funds of \$211,000.00 will realize sufficient moneys to pay the outstanding paper is a doubtful question.

From the foregoing statement it is readily apparent that the School Board now faces the opening of school without any cash on hand available for the coming year. From this time until distribution of tax moneys next Spring, very likely not earlier than March, the School Board must operate on borrowed money, and the limit of its borrowing capacity is theoretically 75% of the levy.

This results because of the change in system of collection of taxes. As the tax laws now stand, the taxpayers through their representatives have authorized their administrative officers to make contracts and do business on an income budget for a year, and have taken the privilege of waiting until the end of the year to pay a large portion of the money required.

In other words, the public has asked people dealing with the School Board to be the bankers for this School District. This has required many people to carry obligations who cannot afford to do so. Moreover, these obligations are in such form that they are not bankable. This also reflects upon and affects the credit of the District in exercising its power of issuance and sale of anticipation warrants to the amount of 75% of its tax levy to carry on the functions of the District. This situation should not exist and should be remedied.

While the banks have always in the past loaned the District large sums of money on tax anticipation warrants, even to the full legal limit of 75% of the levy, we are not able to advise you at the present time that this can be expected for the ensuing year, and some additional negotiation on this matter may be necessary.

Investigation of the probable income of the District for the ensuing year discloses these facts:

The assessed valuation of all taxable property in Decatur School District for the coming fiscal year, from such information as is now available, would appear to be slightly in excess of \$34,000,000.00, upon which, for educational purposes, the School Board has extended a tax at the rate of \$1.50, the maximum allowed for educational purposes. In addition to this money there will be due from the State of Illinois for the ensuing year, and other districts, approximately \$90,000.00. Assuming that all this money would be paid when due, the expectation of the income of the District would be as follows:

From Taxes	\$510,000.00
From the State and other Districts	<u>\$ 90,000.00</u>
Total Possible Income	\$600,000.00

This income, however, cannot be depended upon. Investigation discloses that the State of Illinois has not yet paid all of the money due the District of two years ago, and has only paid \$43,500.00 of the moneys due last year. In addition to this the errors, abatements and forfeitures of taxes will amount to a very large sum. Without going into all of the factors considered by this committee in attempting to arrive at a fair estimate of the amount of income that may be received by the District for the ensuing year, it is the judgment of the committee that not more than \$550,000.00 can be depended upon with any degree of assurance as the income of the District.

Against this we find that the budget of the School Board made up and approved, which induced their belief that they must go to non-high school territory to raise the funds, is slightly in excess of \$606,000.00. This immediately presents the problem of operating the schools, both grade and high schools, throughout the year on a reduced budget, or abandoning the full four-year high school in order to get the money from the non-high school district to maintain that budget and recoup the treasury for working capital.

The committee fully realizes that either system will require considerable sacrifice in the community. But it is the judgment of this committee that the greater sacrifice would be entailed by adhering to the policy previously announced of becoming a non-high school district.

This committee fully realizes that further reductions in the budget will result in material reduction in wages, and it is with great reluctance that the committee recommends any such action. We have examined the salary schedule of the teaching force, and the salaries paid the faculty are extremely moderate, and but for this emergency, there would be no thought of reduction of the salaries scheduled.

We, therefore, recommend that the school board revise its operating budget, effecting retrenchments where they will do the least harm to the schools so as to operate the schools for the ensuing year and maintain a regular four-year high school on a budget of \$550,000.00. This will enable the school district to operate within its income, although not its cash income to be received during the school year, i.e., it will be operating with the income which may reasonably be expected to be paid upon final settlement with the County Collector in the Fall of 1933, with a reasonable amount of cooperation from the State of Illinois in payment of the amounts due from it. But in this respect the committee must point out that full effort and cooperation must be given by the community towards the sale of the full legal limit of tax anticipation warrants, and the teachers and other employees will have to carry approximately 25% to 30% of their yearly salary from the latter part of the school year until late in the year.

We further recommend that to enable the school district to preserve its credit and operate within its budget and to pay its bills in due course of business, will require a capital account of approximately \$200,000.00. This will enable the district to avoid what has been commonly termed as script, and to preserve a proper banking credit.

To furnish these additional funds necessary, we recommend that an additional levy be voted, the rate to be 40¢, and that this proposition be submitted to the voters of this community at the earliest possible moment so that if the voters approve such action, the School Board will have time to rescind its action making this non-high school territory, and avoid an additional levy of 50¢ by the non-high school board.

Respectfully submitted,

THE COMMITTEES

Lee D. Wright
Geo. Nathan
Teacher Association