Welcome to **Treasures from the FCS Archives**, a repository of resources for teachers and history enthusiasts! Every month, we are sharing photos, artifacts, documents and other treasures for you to review, discuss and discover. We encourage you to click the links, scan the photos and dig deeper into these treasures, all of which can be found in the Fulton County Schools Archives. Enjoy!

LETTER TO PATRONS OF OUR RURAL SCHOOLS: FCS & THE PROGRESSIVE ERA

BOARD OF EDUCATION

To the Patrons of our Rural Schools:

The Board of Education, after conferring freely with leading farmers in Fulton country, adopted a seven month's term of two sessions a day for our Rural schools into the month's school and the month's school and, where the children corner of attay fully as well, or better than the nine month's school and, where the children corne regularly for the whole seven months, it covers the country. This gives the farmer five months in whoth to work his child and, surely, no child should be worked longer than five months. A child has but one youth—one period in which to get ready for life. This lost, he loses his golden opportunity and suffers a life-long handing from the lack of an education.

The Board of Education thinks that the parents should give us their children unreservedly during the seven months that the schools run. The tachers have a right to the children this whole seven months in the children in the lift. This lost, he loses his golden opportunity and suffers a life-long handing from the lack of an education.

The Board of Education thinks that the parents should give us their children unreservedly during the seven months that the schools run. The tachers have a right to the children the lift of the children in the lift. Or take them out every pretty day in the spring, and frequently wildraw them entirely before the term closes, when the reviews and examinations are in progress—just the time of most importance to the child. Parents think they have a right to the children is the right and the teacher alone has a right to the children's fature, but if the child is to be considered, if he is to be promoted from grade to grade, if his education is important, then the parent has no such right and the teacher alone has a right to the child's time during the seven months that the schools are running.

The Board days, without a written excuss acceptable to the Board, may be superified from schools. The proper has a proper day to the proper day to the proper

Letter: To the Patrons of our Rural Schools, 1914

Superintendent Edwin C. Merry, Fulton County Board of Education FCS Archive: 1914.B23.3.3









Close

Reading

Guide

Curiosity in the Classroom:

A Closer Look

Click on the image above for a higher resolution jpeg. Project or distribute copies of the image. Ask students to read the correspondence and note anything they find interesting or surprising. For more in depth study, click on the close reading guide or use the Library of Congress Teaching with Primary Sources Analy-

Ask students:

sis Tool

- Who is the author/audience?
- What is the main objective of the author?
- Is there anything that is surprising or unusual?
- What questions come to mind from the topics addressed in this letter?
- What does this letter tell you about life in Atlanta during the early 1900s?

his month's Curiosity Corner focuses on a document written by Edwin C. Merry, superintendent of Fulton County Schools from 1908 to 1917. It outlines the parameters for a 7-month school year for students in rural portions of the county; and while it reveals a great deal about the growth of metro Atlanta over the last century, it also informs us about the daily life of students and their families – particularly those outside the city limits.

In 1914, roughly half the 43 schools in the system were at least 5 miles from the center of the city of Atlanta; and thus, considered rural. Communities such as Sandy Springs and Ben Hill faced a constant challenge in terms of attendance because of <u>transportation issues</u> and more importantly, children's obligations on the family farms. Attendance became an enormous problem for schools to overcome, as teachers tried to cover a curriculum and promote students to the next level.

Merry's proposal for a 7-month school year comes in the middle of an evolution in school terms that began with the establishment of the state education system in 1870. Originally, a 3-month school year (from October to December) was adopted; although students could attend longer terms at a cost of 5 cents per day. By the 1890s, the state had mandated a 5-month term, which could be separated into 50-day intervals to work around planting and harvesting seasons. In the early 20th century, 7 to 9-month terms were considered the standard.

Written during The Progressive Era, this letter addresses many of the issues being advanced during this time: attendance at public schools was becoming mandatory, child labor laws were becoming a national debate and wagons were being replaced with automobiles; and eventually, school buses.

To learn more about how these issues played out in Fulton County, click on the bolded text above. Click on the image of the letter for a larger/readable image.

Lesson Ideas & Links: Connecting to Standards

Elementary School Connections











For more information and resources or to connect with staff at the **Teaching Museum**, contact us at archives@fultonschools.org

What was "RURAL" in 1906?

Click here

