

James Leonard "Link" Perry

April 14, 1905 – January 15, 1959

(From Hinton News – August 27, 1981)



HISTORY OF HINTON HIGH SCHOOL PART LXII By Frederick D. Long

James Leonard (Link) Perry, County Superintendent of Schools, died January 15, 1959. Death was due to cancer.

Mr. Perry was appointed superintendent September 18, 1944 and held that position until his death, Thursday morning. A total of 14 years 3 months and 28 days, the longest term in the Summers County school system.

The Board of Education met Jan. 19 and on motion from P. B. Halloran and seconded by Donald L. Brightwell the board voted to rename the High School Gymnasium—"Perry Memorial Gymnasium." It was largely through Mr. J. L. Perry's efforts that the gym was built.

The following account of the life of Mr. Perry is copied from the 1960 High School "Dart." The author is not given, but it is believed to be written by Mr. John E. Faulconer.

In Memoriam

"The brief but fruitful life of James Leonard Perry, respected and beloved Superintendent of Summers County Schools, came to an unexpected close on Thursday morning January 15, 1959. His passing came as a great shock to a host of associates and friends and left a tremendous challenge for fulfillment of his dreams.

"Soft spoken, mild of manner, shy and courteous to a fault J. Leonard Perry was a dedicated person: dedicated to the education of youth, dedicated to making the world a better place in which to live. In his position as Superintendent of Schools he had his critics, but more often than not he would 'turn the other cheek,' making the wise decision that was for the best interest of all. He was a true scholar and a man with vision; recognized for his ability as an administrator. His experience, added to a rare sense of human needs and values, peculiarly fitted him for the Superintendency of the School System and the service to this position was marked by clear insight, wisdom, and unswerving loyalty. His integrity and devoted to his duty are exemplified in his life and should be an inspiration to those touched through his association.

"'Link' as he was known to his countless friends was responsible for many fine deeds that were never known to the public. It was through his help and encouragement that many Summers County youths are permitted to hold responsible positions in their respective field of endeavors.

"His deep and genuine concern for all students, and especially for those who were deserving and capable was undoubtedly rooted in the experiences of his own early life. He was born April 14, 1906 at Talcott, West Virginia and was the son of Charles Marion Perry and Mary Virginia Gwinn Perry, prominent pioneer residents of Summers County. After attending elementary school in Talcott he came to Hinton to complete his studies and graduated from Hinton High School with the class of 1923. Following his graduation he enrolled in West Virginia University where he received his A. B. degree in 1927. He later completed work at the University for a Master's degree. While there he was prominent in social and campus affairs and was a member of Kappa Sigma and Sphinx, a campus honorary society. He was a member of the school's rifle team and compiled the best record in its history.

"After graduation from the University he returned to Talcott where his teaching career began in Talcott High School

and took him by gradual steps to the Superintendency, the highest ranking position within the County. During this period he was instrumental in establishing the first four year high school at Talcott. His tenure as Superintendent of Schools of Summers County is one of the longest in the State of West Virginia and his service to the patrons of the county in this respect has been outstanding. There is not a district within the county that has not felt the impact of his well-planned building program. Under his direction many worthwhile innovations and programs have been worked out for the betterment of the educational program.

"Even in illness he could not leave the work to which he had

dedicated his life. Despite his critical condition, he made a determined fight for life and directed the numerous duties of his office through consultation.

"As a tribute to his ceaseless efforts the Memorial Gymnasium was renamed J. L. Perry Gymnasium. Also, he had expressed a wish that he might establish a scholarship for a student desiring to enter college and it was felt that this, too, would be an appropriate way to pay tribute to his memory and his service to the schools of Summers County. With the establishment of this scholarship his work lives on in the hearts of his students and co-workers in the school organization in which he believed."