The meaning of Article VI, section 2 of the Ohio Constitution: "The General Assembly shall make such provisions, by taxation, or otherwise, as, with the income arising from the school trust fund, will secure a thorough and efficient system of common schools throughout the State; but, no religious or other sect, or sects, shall ever have any exclusive right to, or control of, any part of the school funds of this State." Part 2

The Northwest Ordinance of 1785 set aside the 16th section of each township for the support of schools. Townships were laid out in six-mile squares divided into thirty-six 1-mile square sections (640 acres each); hence 640 acres in each township were set aside for the operation of common schools.

Until 1837, there was no administrative leadership for education. When Samuel Lewis was engaged by the legislature as the Superintendent of Common Schools, Lewis lamented that the 16th section set aside for the support of common schools was almost universally mismanaged, actually squandered, and thus this great asset for schools provided little benefit toward the education of youth.

For three years Samuel Lewis, with no staff, attempted to develop a system of common schools. He rode horseback across the state visiting schools and promoting the advancement of education. He was well-suited for the task of advising the legislature regarding education policy. He had been very much involved in promoting public education in Cincinnati.

Lewis submitted three annual reports to the legislature which provided assertive guidance on how to advance public education in Ohio. He was a forceful advocate for improvement in public education. He pushed for additional funding. This possibly was the reason the legislature eliminated the Office of Superintendent of Common Schools when Lewis resigned.

Part 3 will focus on the development of the constitutional provisions for a thorough and efficient system of common schools.