

## Remembering One-Room Schools

The Eudora Area Historical Society met at the City Hall on Thursday, October 26, 1990. The evening program was titled "Remembering One-Room Schools." The first part of the program was the reenactment of a day in a one-room school. Several members who had attended the area's one room schools played the role of students.

Class was called to order by the ringing of a hand bell. "Student" Violet Fleming gave the teacher an apple. The first event was the pledge of allegiance to the flag, followed by the singing of several songs including "America" and "Yankee Doodle." Fern Long received an "A" in reading class for reading "The Village Blacksmith" by Henry Wadsworth Longfellow. The history lesson was on Pilgrims. Questions such as "Who were the Pilgrims?" were answered by apt students Ruth Wilson, Paul Sommer, Kermit Broers, Alma Broers, Phyllis Young, and Glenn Wineinger. Six pupils participated in the spelling bee giving excellent performances. They were Ruth Wilson, Merilee Dymacek, Joyce Wineinger, Wendy Dymacek, Marlene Evinger, and Elva Ruth Kindred. "Chrysanthemum" challenged many spellers. Merilee Dymacek and Joyce Wineinger tied for first place. School was then closed for the day.

In the second part of the program, former teachers and students of the area one-room schools exchanged memories. Former teachers present were: Maxine Schellack Averill, Kaw Valley and Weaver; Margaret Gabriel, Evening Star; Lena Milburn, Belle View; and Edna Holmes, Clearfield. They all remembered building stove fires to heat the schools. These stoves kept students warm on one side of the room and cold on the other. The teachers did everything from carrying the coal to organizing the programs. Also, during the term year, school was held every day. There were no snow days nor other reasons to close. Most everyone agreed that one of the most difficult parts of school was the outside privies. There were 2, one for the boys and one for the girls. There also was always a picture of George Washington hanging in each schoolhouse. Mrs. Averill recalled she taught in 1934-35 for \$57.50 a month. This was quite good pay for those days as most schools were paying \$35-40 a month. Some students were not much younger than she.

Kaw Valley was unusual because it had classes for 9 months of the year instead of the usual 8-month term. Evening Star [3 miles east of Eudora closed in 1946] was the next school to be remembered. Elva Ruth Kindred was a student in this district. Elva Ruth recalled it was a square building. They drank with tin cups

from a well, which occasionally went dry, and the students would have to go to the neighbors up the road to get water. Everyone wanted to do this job as then they got out of class. Also remembered were the fall and spring programs and lots of community support. Roscoe, south of Eudora, was remembered by Lois Neis as having very large enrollments through the years. Nora Vitt was one of her teachers. A memorable day was had when the stove chimney was plugged and school was closed for the day. Belle View enrollment increased substantially when the Sunflower Ammunition Plant opened.

Tom Akin, a former student of that district, told of his father taking him to school and picking him up in a bobsled on snow days. This was a real treat. He admired his dedicated teachers who used good discipline to control their pupils.

Ruth Wilson, a former student from the Clearfield area, said she went to Vinland for tests to graduate. Arlene Lawson recalled teacher Doris Moore at Hopewell. Her favorite memory is her dog, Bingo, getting locked in the schoolhouse over the weekend. Hesper was where student Lela Morley remembered teacher Robert E. Lee and how the real candles on the Christmas tree ignited Santa Claus' beard. Jim Harris attended first and second grade at Hesper. His memories included being taught by the older girls and the teacher getting locked in the coal room.

Weaver, located in the Kansas River bottoms, was fondly remembered by students Robert Neis, Kermit Broers, and Louis Kindred who told of the train that ran close by the schoolhouse. Kermit remembered the old bell being turned upside down and filled full of water, then when the teacher pulled the rope the next morning she was soaked. Because she had taken the train called "the plug" to school she had to wear wet clothes for the rest of the day.

This was a very enjoyable evening with lots of happy memories. Pictures, report cards, and other school memorabilia were on display.

*Patty Neis Johnston, 10/1990*