

University of Nebraska at Kearney

## OpenSPACES@UNK: Scholarship, Preservation, and Creative Endeavors

---

Saunders County Bicentennial Educational History

Schools

---

1976

### District #51 - Willow Creek

Office of the County Superintendent, Saunders County

Follow this and additional works at: <https://openspaces.unk.edu/saunderscounty>



Part of the [Education Commons](#), and the [United States History Commons](#)

---

#### Recommended Citation

Office of the County Superintendent, Saunders County, "District #51 - Willow Creek" (1976). *Saunders County Bicentennial Educational History*. 33.

<https://openspaces.unk.edu/saunderscounty/33>

This Article is brought to you for free and open access by the Schools at OpenSPACES@UNK: Scholarship, Preservation, and Creative Endeavors. It has been accepted for inclusion in Saunders County Bicentennial Educational History by an authorized administrator of OpenSPACES@UNK: Scholarship, Preservation, and Creative Endeavors. For more information, please contact [weissell@unk.edu](mailto:weissell@unk.edu).

School District #51 known as "Willow Creek School" was established in 1883. The sod structure was built in the Southeast corner of the  $W\frac{1}{2}$  of Section 14, now owned by Julius Nemeč. In 1885 a frame building was erected on gratis land deeded by Jacob A. and Martha Wolfe, 500 feet East of the original site in Section 20, now owned by Leo Steinbach. The present building 4 miles North and 1/2 mile West of Prague, Nebraska was built in 1918:

Miss Ella Wheeler (Mrs. Walter Fleming Sr.) was the first teacher hired at a salary of \$25.00 (twenty five) a month. She walked four miles to teach the pupils. Mrs. Fleming was the first County Superintendent. In 1888 and 1889 the school term lasted three months. Teachers during that period were I. J. Truman, Joseph Lewis and William Dael. Other early teachers were Mr. Bohansky, Mamie Vodicka of Omaha, Ella Hanke of Albion, Mable Roberts of Ithaca, Ed Cullen of Cedar Bluffs, Frank Krause of Morse Bluff, Mrs. Brownell and Mary Kaspar Kolbaba of Prague. The attendance numbered 40 - 61 pupils, the older boys attending only during the winter months.

The first dug well was located east of the school house. Water was carried to the school house in a wooden bucket and dipped out with a big tin dipper. Indians camped in a nearby meadow close to the well to be near water.

The school was heated with a big pot bellied stove. Pupils near the stove suffered from the heat, others shivered and were cold. A far cry from today's oil heating systems.

For a long time revival meetings were held in the school house in the evenings. They were well attended and enjoyed by all. Most folks walked to these meetings.

The first settlers were mostly of English, German, Irish, and Scotch descent. Some of the first settlers were: Walla, James, Wolfe, Wakelin, Auten, Haven, Vehis, Sloup, Baldwin, Hall, Nemeč, Kiser, Hotack, Janky, Kaspar, Williams, Scow, Taylor, Ladenburger, McGinn, Wagner, Wilson, Shanahan, Shroeder, and Raitt. One by one the first settlers moved elsewhere and the district was settled by Czech people, some of whom are still in the district. The newcomers were Belik, Pospical, Pabian, Chvatal, Vlasak, Steinbach, Hula and Odvody.

The blizzard of 1888 caught the teacher and pupils in the school for 12 hours before help came. The older pupils had spell downs, cyphering, and so on to pass the time. The younger pupils cried. It was the first time they were ever away from home. It was a never to be forgotten day of their lives.

In 1918 the present school was built and dedicated. Miss Lillian Kastl (Mrs. James Vech) was the first teacher in the new school. Fred Adler was the County Superintendent. Joe Odvody, Frank Sloup and Jim Nemec were on the school board.

The present school district valuation is over three million dollars and the size partially accounts for the 1963 annexation of a large part of District #92.

In 1975 the school interior received a new look. The ceiling was lowered, new walls and fluorescent lights were installed. Miss Rosella Arter of Iowa teaches 16 pupils. She teaches kindergarten through the eighth grade, for a period of 9 months.

The present school board members are Emily Tomek, Adolph Nemec and Agnes Musilek.

While the district cannot boast of any presidents, it is proud of the industrious, properous, and law-abiding citizens who were and are an asset to the community and country.

Grateful Thanks to Mrs. Libbie Racek of Morse Bluff for compiling most of the early history about the school.

Section 23, Township 16, Range 5  
Chester Precinct  
3 miles North, 1/2 mile West of Prague

School Board - Adolph Nemec  
Emily Tomek  
Agnes Musilek

Teacher Rozella Arter

Pupils

Jim Nemec	Barb Dozier
Peggy Polacek	Roy Dozier
Susan Steinbach	Clifford Prochaska
Mike Dozier	Shirley Steinbach
Rich Dozier	Laurie Nemec
Virgie Nemec	Mike Polacek
Bob Steinbach	Krissy Nemec
Tim Wesely	
Mark Nemec	