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Saunders County Bicentennial Educational History

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District #70 - South Center

Office of the County Superintendent, Saunders County

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DISTRICT #70-SOUTH CENTER

District 70 Works Together for more than
100 years

In collecting historical information about District #70, the students of 1976 have found that from the 1800's to 1976, people have worked, played and learned together to build a better community. There has always been a great deal of pride in this district, located in Section 19 of Center precinct, one and one-half miles west and one and one-half miles north of northwest Wahoo in Saunders County.

The first classes held in District #70 were held in a home that was made of sod. It was located somewhere near the vicinity of the Harvey Wageman farm. A wooden structure was later built in the same area. The next school building was a small log cabin on the hill west of Ernie Chapek's. It didn't last long. After this, (between 1872-1880) a large one-room school was built on the site of the present school building. A pot-bellied stove stood in the middle of the room. There was a 6" to 8" high platform at the front of the room for the teacher's desk and recitation area. Pupils sat in double desks. At times in the winter when the farm work was done, more students came to school. Some of the boys were 18 to 19 years old. Families were large, (at one time there were five families that had twelve children). As many as ninety pupils attended on some days. The older boys were usually given the honor of doing the janitor work. They came early in the morning to start the fire. Sometimes they would find signs that a tramp had spent the night.

In the fall and in the spring, as soon as the snow melted, the children loved to go barefooted. Their lunches, often carried in syrup pails, consisted of homemade bread, jams, rabbit and fruits from their orchards.

The teachers were strict but students did find ways to outwit them and have fun. Holding open books up on desks during school time and munching apples behind them was a good way to have an early lunch. One time a pupil threw Oscar Samuelson's shoe up on the roof. When they were getting the shoe off the roof, the teacher, Mr. Hawkinson came around looking to see what was going on, and down came the shoe right on the teacher's head. The pupils later nicknamed him "Old Hawk-Eye". Teachers frowned upon pupils leaving the room during school time.

In the spring of 1917 through the encouragement of R. H. Watson, it was decided to build a two-room building and include the 9th and 10th grades. Everyone in the district came to help dig the basement. They

dug it with horses and scrapers and spades. When September came the new building wasn't ready, so for two months classes were held in the old building. In November of 1917 the first classes were held in the present school building. What a big day that was! Two large lovely rooms!

Through the years the school has been well kept and many additional comforts and equipment have been added. These include indoor plumbing, an oil furnace, carpeting upstairs, astro-turf downstairs, new fluorescent lighting, kitchen equipment, a telephone, a fire alarm system, and many books and audio-visual aids.

District #70 has always had many activities. About 1916 the families of District #70 organized "The Moonlight Social Club". Most families belonged and every third Tuesday evening each month they met in the homes, children included. There was always a short program, lunch served by the hostess, and lots of visiting. Soon the group grew too large for home meetings so they continued at the school house. These meetings went on for many years but have gradually been cut down to two a year - the Christmas and Spring programs.

It is also traditional to have a clean-up day before school starts. This began in the early 1920's.

In the fall of 1925 the District #70 orchestra was organized by Earl Morin of Wahoo. About 20 pupils joined - none with any previous experience. They practiced for six weeks and presented a concert to a full house. They were an active group. They held dances at the school house and celebrated every holiday with a dinner party and dance.

School days of yesterday are quite different from schools days of today. And so are the expenses! In 1897 District #70 employed one teacher for an annual salary of \$320.00. Other expenses were fuel, \$23.10; text-books and supplies, \$34.30; and all other expenses, \$43.30. The amount on hand with the treasurer was \$40.19 for a total value of district property of \$1395.00.

The number of children in the district between the ages of 8 - 14 that attended 12 or more weeks of school was 5 boys and 15 girls. The school census did report, however that the district had 26 boys and 37 girls between the ages of 8 and 14. (Throughout the history of the district there usually have been more girls than boys.

There has been a significant increase in expenses. In the 1974-75 school year fuel cost \$711.32; electricity, \$146.25; water, \$18.00; telephone, \$85.00; other expenses, \$26.84; and replacement of instructional equipment \$174.97. During that year the district had total expenses of \$17,176.00.

In 1974 the building was valued at \$20,000.00 and the contents were valued at \$4000.00 for a total valuation of \$24000.00.

So ends the story of the history of District #70. May its pupils go on working, playing and learning together to keep its good community.

Section 30, Township 15, Range 7
Center Precinct
2 miles West, 1½ miles North of Wahoo

School Board - James Bauer
Lyle Christensen
Robert Lindgren

Teachers - Dolores Maly
Phyllis Ulrich

Pupils

Ann Brabec	Bruce Lindgren
Stacy Motes	Dan Veskrna
Nancy Chapek	Jim Jelinek
Ronnie Jelinek	Denise Christensen
Russell Bauer	Lisa Houfek
Susan Houfek	Theresa Jelinek
Marcia Lindgren	Jerry Sherwood
Jayne Wageman	
Karla Christensen	
Cindy Bauer	