

1976

## District #74

Office of the County Superintendent, Saunders County

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## DISTRICT #74

In the early 1870's a sod house served as the first school for District #74. The school was given the name Happy Hollow School. The building was located on the NW $\frac{1}{4}$  of Section 24, Newman Precinct. It was later moved a half mile south on a half acre of land donated by Joseph B. Bartek.

A new school with three windows on each side was built in about 1900 by carpenters, Pallat and Brabec. The first building which had two windows on each side was purchased by Joe Caha and moved to his farm one half mile south.

Several years later a belfry containing a 300 pound brass bell was added. The bell, purchased with money raised at Christmas programs was rung a half hour before school started in the morning. In 1967 the brass bell was stolen.

The coal and cob shed holding the supply of cobs donated by farmers and coal purchased at the Weston Lumber Yard was located north of the schoolhouse. Later it was moved to the north edge of the schoolgrounds.

A giant cottonwood tree stood on the school yard where everyone would go to eat their noon lunch when weather permitted. It is gone now.

The water supply was not always adequate and often the teacher and pupils brought their own water in jars. Sometimes water was carried from the homes of neighbors near the school.

Outdoor toilets were rebuilt to meet sanitary requirements of the Board of Health. These were better than the old ones which often contained wasp nests and snakes.

The flag was displayed on a pole south of the school. The storm cave was dug south of the school and was used several times during bad storms.

The first teacher in the new school was Sam Mauck. Early board members were: Joseph B. Bartek, Joe Caha, Frank Hruby, Anton Meduna, Frank Pacula, Frank Maly, Henry G. Bartek, Anton Pacula, Ludvik Chapek, Jarold Bartek, John Kucera. John Furasek, Mrs. Rosie Kucera, Lad Pacula and Adolph Furasek. Some board members served many years.

In early years the enrollment often was as many as fifty pupils. Later the enrollment declined and in 1949 with two graduating from the eighth grade only one first grader was left. This pupil was contracted to District #98. School was then closed for three years and then reopened.

The school was thoroughly cleaned each fall. The wooden floor was kept clean with sweeping compound spread over it and swept.

The blackboard was at one end of the school. Erasers were cleaned by clapping together outside.

An American flag hung on one wall. A bookcase, organ and double desks completed the furniture. Each desk had a hole for the ink-well. Straight pens with removable points were used. Many students carved their initials on these desk tops.

Lessons were written on gray slates as well as in tablets. Slates had to be handled carefully as they often broke when dropped.

The wooden map case hung on the wall. Large pictures of Lincoln, Washington and Longfellow were displayed.

The wash basin, water pail and dipper have been replaced with modern rest rooms.

In the very early years, lunches were carried in syrup pails. Later most students had store bought lunch boxes.

The girls had long hair braided and tied with bows or styled upward in buns. They sewed their dresses and wore long black stockings and high top shoes. Boys wore overalls.

All children walked to school. The teacher boarded with a family in the community. Many first grade students could not speak English but they learned quickly.

Some students finished only the fifth grade but most of them completed the eighth grade. Adult classes were often held in the winter.

Christmas programs and box socials were the social events. Beautifully decorated boxes containing lunch were auctioned and the gentleman who bought the box ate lunch with the lady. Later this was discontinued and lunch was sold. Prizes were raffled and the money used to buy something for the school.

Games played were anti-over, tag, hide-and-seek, drop the handkerchief, rong around the rosy, baseball and others.

While Ray Furasek was going to school he had a different teacher for many years, except one. Enrollment was small and Ray learned to crochet and embroider. He taught his mother to do these things. Ray's teacher was Mrs. Philomena Meduna, now deceased.

In 1969 an addition 12 x 20 costing \$2240.00 was added to the east side of the schoolhouse. Many improvements including a new submersible well, playground equipment, florescent lighting, combination windows, carpeting, furnace, humidifiers, new desks and chairs, paneling and fire alarm system have been added. The building was painted, roof reshingled and belfry removed.

School closes in May with a picnic for all patrons. The stone water cooler is used for a fruit drink.

Within the last twenty years Districts 74, 93 and 113 have merged. The schoolhouse from District #113 now stands at the State Fairgrounds in Lincoln as representative of all rural Nebraska schools.

Material submitted by  
Mrs. Anthony Osmera  
Mrs. James Malina Jr.  
Ray Furasek

Section 24, Township 14, Range 5  
Newman Precinct  
1 mile East, 6½ miles North of Valparaiso.

School Board - Edwin J. Kucera  
Mary Ann Osmera  
Ladislav J. Pacula

Teacher - Helen Sedlacek

Pupils

Allan Osmera	Daniel Kubik
James Osmera	Michael Osmera
Steve Furasek	Carol Kubik
Patrick Osmera	Sandra Strizek
Jacqueline Furasek	Mary Kubik
Jeanne Osmera	Bob Furasek
Steve Osmera	LeRoy Pacula
Lyle Pacula	JoAnn Pacula
Rita Pospisil	Joyce Strizek
Debra Furasek	