


1976

## District # 75

Office of the County Superintendent, Saunders County

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### Recommended Citation

Office of the County Superintendent, Saunders County, "District # 75" (1976). *Saunders County Bicentennial Educational History*. 26. <https://openspaces.unk.edu/saunderscounty/26>

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## DISTRICT #75

When I was asked to write a history of School District #75, my mind, in memory, went back 75 years and longer, to the stories of pioneer life as told to me by my grandfather.

The following narrative is as it was told to me by him.

In June of 1870 my grandfather, the late M. S. Hills homesteaded in Section 2, Township 15, Range 6 of Mariposa precinct, Saunders County. He was the first settler in the area.

The surrounding area settled rapidly. Many of the settlers were foreign born, and while they had received a good education in their native country, they could neither read nor write in the English language. Many of them could not express their ideas or thoughts in what was a foreign language to them, and they could not speak the language well enough to be understood.

It did not take long for the settlers to become acquainted. Soon they came to depend on my grandfather to accompany them to Fremont, Lincoln or Ashland, which at that time was the county seat of Saunders County. He explained the business they wanted done. Also they wanted him to tell how to plan for their families, should they be taken by death. All of these trips were made by lumber wagon.

Late in the summer of 1872 a number of these neighbors came to my grandfather asking him if he would start a school. They wanted their children to be educated in the English language and to be able to handle business deals. My grandfather told them that he had no authority to do so, but if some of them wanted to <sup>go to</sup> the State Superintendent in Lincoln, he would go with them.

After the superintendent heard their story, he told them that since no school district had been laid out, no school tax had been levied, and before the district could receive the State Apportionment, school would have to be held in the district for one year.

The gentlemen with my grandfather made themselves understood that they wanted my grandfather to teach the school. They thought that he was smart enough to do so and knew a lot about doing business.

The State Superintendent asked my grandfather what education he had, if he had a certificate or had ever taught school. He replied that he had

attended school in his home state of Illinois and "no" to both other questions.

The State Superintendent told my grandfather to go home and see Walter Fleming who lived in Douglas Precinct, Saunders County. He was the Superintendent of Saunders County and would have the questions to be answered to receive a teaching certificate.

Early in the fall, my grandfather went to see Mr. Fleming. Mr. and Mrs. Fleming were in the field husking corn. Mr. Fleming told grandfather to go to the house and build a fire in the kitchen stove. He would find the questions in a cupboard, also paper and pencils. He was to write out the answers, leave them on the kitchen table, put a stick of wood on them so they wouldn't blow off, should anyone open the door.

He should mail the answers to the State on the first mail. The mail was carried by horseback from Ashland to North Bend and left at the postoffice "Sand Creek" which was in a country home.

In time grandfather received his certificate. Now, "Where to hold school?"

My grandparents live in a one room house. A curtain was hung up across one end of the room and this portion of the house was used for a bedroom. The rest of the room was kitchen, living room and school room.

At the time my father, the late Frank Hills was four years old. My grandmother would be up early, hurry through work, prepare for the noon meal, and try to keep her son relatively quiet through the school hours.

During the cold days of winter she would prepare enough food so that the pupils might have a warm meal as all, but the very small ones, had to walk to school

When the school house was to be built my grandfather deeded one acre of the farm on the north edge of the section line to the school district. The understanding was that when school was no longer held on the property, the land would automatically revert to the farm.

I went to the County Assessor's office and found the original transaction of the deed.

I could find no records as to when the school house was built.

My father attended school there, I entered school there in September, 1900. At that time the school house was so crowded that the beginners were

seated between two of the "older girls". For the first two years I attended school seated between two other students. There was an average attendance of 40. There would be five or six beginners who knew no words of the English language.

Until 1906 there was no formal grading system as there is today, but all subjects were taught. It was in these early schools that the first essentials of education, the "three R's" were stressed.

In the winter months after "corn picking" was finished and until work in the fields started in April, the big boys, up to 21 years, would come to school. The teacher would have extra classes for them and "English Grammar and Composition" were stressed.

I'm sure the Lord has an extra star in the crown of those early teachers for all the energy and patience they had to give to cope with the obligations they had to endure.

Up until the fall of 1909 the school year lasted 8 months. At that date, according to state law, the school district had to hold school 9 months of the year or forfeit its state apportionment.

Fourteen boys who had attended District #75 served in World War I, one of them never returned. 10 boys from the district also served in World War 2 and in Korea. One did not return.

I went to the County Superintendent's office hoping to find information there, but the first records were dated in 1886 - 14 years after the organization of the district.

Census - year taken	Director	Persons 5-21	Apportionment
1886	Peter Riemers	84	
1887	A. G. Larson	88	
1888	A. G. Larson	77	
1890	Lave Isaacson	79	91.50
1891	Lave Isaacson	79	76.42
1892	Lave Isaacson	94	76.10
1893 (June)	Peter Knuth	85	91.66
1894 (Jan.)	Peter Knuth		86.34
1894 (June)	M. S. Hills	93	90.05
1895 (June)	M. S. Hills		64.18
1896 (Jan.)	M. S. Hills	69	58.85
1896 (June)	M. S. Hills		56.22
1897 (Jan.)	M. S. Hills		74.25

No records of the teachers or their salaries were found. It was stated in the census report that all teachers for the above years had second grade certificates.

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The above information was compiled by Alta Hills Smith on December 19, 1975.

Addition to History of District #75, Saunders County

Several families have lived in the district since 1900. Some of the names are: Hills, Barry, Johnson, Reimers and Dael. One student, Kenneth Johnson a second grader this year (1975-76) is the fourth generation of the Johnson family to attend this school. His mother Darlene, grandfather, Kenneth Johnson and great grandfather, Elmer Johnson all attended District #75. Other present students whose families were longtime residents are Daryl Barry and Dale Needham. Daryl's father, Medford Barry and grandfather, Oscar Barry attended school here and great grandfather, Barney E. Barry settled in District #75 in 1884. Dale Needham's mother, Darlene Barry Needham, grandfather Arthur Barry attended this district and great grandfather, Swan Barry settled here in 1892.

Section 2, Township 15, Range 6  
Mariposa Precinct  
3 miles North, 1/4 mile East of Malmö

School Board -      Robert J. Meduna  
                             Medford O. Barry  
                             Ronda Kim Meduna

Teacher -             Bonnie Roberts

Pupils

Margaret Flanagan	Kenny Johnson
Daryl Barry	Dwaine Brabec
David Chvatal	Danny Brabec
Dale Needham	Shawn Flanagan
Kathleen Flanagan	Danny Gruenes
Tammy Obert	Jeffry Meduna
Todd Obert	Eric Obert