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Saunders County Bicentennial Educational History

Schools

1976

District #82 - Carey High

Office of the County Superintendent, Saunders County

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DISTRICT #82-CAREY HIGH

Early records indicate that a small one room school was painstakingly raised before the turn of the century, in 1876, which was 9 years after Nebraska attained statehood. The land had been plotted and arranged in districts, each serving its own community needs.

That first year 60 students were enrolled, ranging in age from 5 to 20.

It sometimes took two decades to complete requirements for a grade school (sometimes called grammar school) education, as school was held on a "come when you are able" basis.

One particular school year was divided into 3 terms. School began on September 4 and ran until October 27, at which time it was closed for a month. After the corn was all husked, school opened again on December 4 and continued until March 23 for four months. The winter months were particularly suited to "book learnin'" while deep drifts of snow covered the ground and most outside activities were curtailed. Then spring vacation lasted from March 23 to April 2, at which time school commenced in full swing from April 2 to June 22.

One school year ran as late as July 9 but the school board thought it was best to give the children a free day on July 4. This fact was carefully recorded on a daily attendance record in 1876.

In the year 1876 Katie Carey received \$22.00 per month for her long hours of toil, with the added promise that she build the fires, sweep the school house and provide the fuel for heating the building.

After serving for 22 years the people thought it was time for a change so the school house was sold to Mr. Homer Wild's father, Charles who used it for a very solid, dry granary. At that time a new school was built in 1890. It was quite an impressive building 50' x 28' in size and accommodating 60 students. It was widely used for community gatherings, various League meetings, Farmers' Grange meetings, Polling Center, and during World War I served as a meeting place for the Home Guard. It was not unusual to see the Guard pacing up and down the school while executing brisk hand salutes.

As one can imagine the heating stoves weren't always the best in those days having probably been ordered from a nearby mail order house with directions for adjusting the damper in the stovepipe for maximum efficiency, and instructing one absolutely not to allow ashes to collect, thus interfering with the proper draught. An oversight in regulating the fire or defective equipment caused the school to burn 42 years later.

Out of the ruins emerged the present brick building built in the early 40's and named Carey High in honor of the man on whose land it is located. In its early era it was a high school with 3 teachers, enabling it to be an approved high school. Two of the teachers set up housekeeping in the basement. It was also common for a teacher to board at one of the patron's home nearby, always walking back and forth to school, often carrying the drinking water supply in a covered cream can.

Mr. Homer Wild has two diplomas from the high school, having first graduated from the 11th grade. Then the grades taught were extended to 12 grades so he went back the next year to receive a new diploma from the 12th grade. His entire education was earned at District #82. His father served there as Director, as they were called, for many years. He then served as a board member succeeding his father.

Many of the pioneer families at that time had 10-13 members in the family so it did not take long to fill every corner of the school room. The lucky ones sat close to the wood burner while those less fortunate shifted restlessly in the far end of the room, being very thankful for their long stockings and heavy work shoes.

Visitors were frequent and unexpected in those days. It seems someone had visited in every month of the year and carefully recorded their names testifying to the active interest of the people in their school in those days.

Titles of library books were recorded in the register. One year 28 books were enjoyed by all with such titles as "Black Beauty", "Pilgrim's Progress", "The Bird Book", "Last of the Mohicans", and the "Pathfinder".

Long columns of grades were marked with percents quickly showing each one's academic progress in such subjects as Reading, Geography, Arithmetic, History, Spelling (Orthography), Physiology, Grammar, and Government.

One Director's book, yellow with age, states that there could be a \$50.00 levy per child in each school with more than 4 and less than 16 enrolled. However, this was quickly limited to not more than \$400.00 expenditures per year to be spent in the district.

The present and third school built is located on the east ridge of Todd Valley. Most of the residents have lived an entire lifetime in this district and their children have attended one of the schools here.

One can drive through the countryside in our district and pass the Skoog, Mangunson and Wild homesteads.

NE $\frac{1}{4}$ Section 20, Township 16, Range 8
Pohocco Precinct
3 $\frac{1}{2}$ miles East, 3 miles South of Cedar Bluffs

School Board - Shirley Auch
Earl Pedersen
Elaine Martens

Teacher - Dorothy Carlson

Pupils

Todd Phillips	Ada Doescher
Wayne Phillips	Donna Doescher
Ricky McLey	Shawn McLey