


1976

District #104 - Prague

Office of the County Superintendent, Saunders County

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The first school house in Chester Precinct was in District No. 51 and was known as the Willow Creek School. It was a sod house and the first teacher was Miss Wheeler. She walked four miles to school and was paid \$25.00 a month.

Later on District No. 84 was organized, being partly in Elk and partly in Chester Precinct. The school house was located on Martin Vanek's farm about $2\frac{1}{2}$ miles southwest of the present village of Prague. The district was found to be too large so it was divided. One school was located at Vaclav Frana's farm, half a mile west of Prague. This took the name of District No. 104, while the former retained the name of District No. 84. The school building was built in 1878 and the first teacher was Annie Kliment. Meanwhile the village of Prague was founded in 1887.

In 1888 a meeting was held to determine the location of a new school house as the old one, owing to the increase of pupils due to the existence of the village, was getting too small. There were two factions, one wanting the school to remain where it was, and the other one desiring it in town. Those wanting it in town won. There were three members on the school board - Joseph Kaspar, Frank Placek and Frank Vlcan. They were succeeded by a six-member board, made up of the following: Thomas Simanek, Anton Kaspar, Frank Ruzek, Vaclav Kaspar, Frank Kubik and Joseph Kaspar. They were asked to select a block of ground on which to erect the school. They visited the nearby towns of Linwood, Cedar Bluffs and Weston and came to the conclusion that a school house similar to the one at Weston would fill the needs of Prague the best, and hence it was practically copied. The contract for the creation of the building was given to the local firm of Petrzelka and Dobrusky for \$3000.00. This building was dedicated in 1889 and was a four-room school, two rooms on the ground floor and two above.

As time went on and the enrollment increased, it was necessary to build an addition to the school house. This was done in 1913, making a six-room building, three rooms on the ground floor and three above. The cost of the additions was more than that of the original building.

Czech was taught in the upper grades once a week for some time and many of the teachers were of Czech nationality.

Quite a misfortune befell the district in 1921 when the school house burned down. The fire started at the noon hour and made such rapid headway that practically nothing was saved, not even the library. Teaching was then carried on in various buildings in town.

It was then necessary to erect a new building. The question arose as to how expensive a school should be built. Some felt that a \$40,000.00 to \$50,000.00 building was sufficient, while other favored \$60,000.00, the amount recommended by the school board. At the ensuing election, bonds to the amount of \$60,000.00 were voted. Architect Berlinghoff drew the plans, and the contract for building was awarded to Vrana Bros., of Omaha.

The cornerstone for the building was laid November 24, 1922 by the M. W. Grand Lodge of A. F. & A. H. The new building was ready when the fall term started in 1923.

The anticipated enrollment in Prague High School should exceed 190 students this fall of 1976. At the present time School District #104 is Nebraska State Department of Nebraska Approved.

On June 4, 1974 a \$320,000.00 bond issue was approved, to add on a new building annex to the District No. 104 building. Boyer, Biskup & Bonge, Architects of Omaha drew the new addition plans. The contract was awarded to the Fauss Construction Company of Hooper. Construction started in November, 1974, following the completion of the surveying. The new addition was permissively completed when the school fall term resumed classes August 25, 1975. The new addition includes a large gymnasium flanked with folding bleachers and all modern athletic facilities, a Voc Ag classroom and work shop, rest rooms and offices.

Over a span of time several other areas about the school house have been remodeled to meet the current requirements that arise and new equipment added to the respective places.

Attempts at reorganizing the school district have been partially successful thus far; however, if pursuing achievements materialize for completion, teaching staff and facilities will continue to expand likewise.

The most recent addition to our curriculum was the initiation of the FFA and FHA Chapters.