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Saunders County Bicentennial Educational History

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District #117 - Colon

Office of the County Superintendent, Saunders County

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DISTRICT #117-COLON

School District No. 117 was formed on December 6, 1901. It consisted of all of Sections 3, Township 15, Range 7, the West half of Section 2, Township 15, Range 7 and the North half of the Southeast quarter of Section 4, Township 15, Range 7. Jesse M. Galloway was the County Superintendent.

A report filed by Henry Peterson, director in 1901 showed 53 children on the school census.

In August 1903 a petition was filed by the legal voters of District No. 53 and District No. 117 to change the boundaries of District No. 117. The reason stated that the described real estate was only one mile from District No. 117 and one and a half miles from District No. 53.

The two-room schoolhouse was built in 1903.

Statistics from early reports:

1904 - J.R. Collins, director, 69 children
1905 - Henry Peterson, director, 74 children
1908 - 72 legal voters, 87 children

Some of the early teachers are: Blanche Hood, Josephine O'Donnell, Ruth McDermott, L. V. Whinnery, Bess Meduna, Lillie Lind, Victoria Lilledahl, Albert Peterson, Mark Gary, Grace Barber and Arthur Anderson.

Enrollments varied from 30 to 81 pupils. School was usually in session 177 days.

The following information was obtained from interviews with former pupils and teachers.

Teachers often lived in Wahoo and made the daily trip on the Northwestern train as the schedule fitted into the school hours. The building was heated by a furnace in the basement. Teachers often carried a lantern as they went into the dark basement to start the fire. Sometimes a patron living near the school could be hired to start the fire for a small fee of 15 or 20¢ a morning.

Many of the early teachers were very good disciplinarians. The three R's were stressed and pupils were given much drill. One teacher insisted on no counting in numbers (now Math) on the fingers so pupils tried to wiggle their toes.

When the teachers wasn't looking girls would put their coats on backwards and walk around in the back of the room to make the other children laugh. Boys dipped the girls' braids in the inkwells. The inkwells were in the middle of the desk top and held only a little ink. They would have to be filled for penmanship.

One former pupil remember November 11, 1918. Of course there was no school as World War I had ended. Pupils made drums from cans, buckets and tubs. They all marched around town using whistles or anything that made noise. The local druggist, Sidney McCaw gave each pupil a little American flag. These flags were waved as they marched all day.

For many years there was also grades 9 and 10, but this was discontinued in 1941. At one time when enrollment was low only one teacher was employed.

District No. 117 was enlarged in 1972 when part of School District No. 26, northwest of Colon was added.

There is presently a K - 8 school system with 2 teachers and 30 students.

The school building is still the same frame, two-room school, but with many improvements.

Section 9, Township 15, Range 7
Center Precinct
Colon

School Board - Leland Wade
Richard Vasina
Rose Marie Rosengren

Teachers - Deborah Hansen
Judith Kabourek

Pupils

Lisa Chvatal	Rory Jenkins
Matthew Fessler	Marcia Novotny
David McDermott	Shelli Johnson
Ann Nadechal	Randy Banghart
Debbie Reinke	Deanna Woodbury
Kelly Wade	Cindy Banghart
Melinda Ottis	Mary Murren
Jimmy Sawyer	Chris Shaffer
Diane Ottis	Patty Murren
Debra Ann Vasina	Adolph Novotny
John Woodbury	Susan Rosengren
Sean Woodbury	Clayton Wade
Dennis Jenkins	Christy Jenkins
Jerome Johnson	Kathleen Woita
Patricia Johnson	Nancy Johnson
Lanette Nelson	Diane Sawyer
Jennifer Wade	