

RURAL SCHOOLS AND SCHOOLHOUSES  
of  
DOUGLAS COUNTY  
KANSAS

by  
Goldie Piper Daniels

Dedicated to all whose lives have touched and thus been  
enriched by the rural schools of our great land.

BY WAY OF EXPLANATION

Having been asked by a number of persons what sparked this effort, the paragraphs immediately following are offered in answer.

It all began when one day with sketch pad and pencil, I went to what was once Winter School No. 70, to make a drawing of that century-old building from which to develop a painting. Slightly later I learned that a retired teacher, Mary Miller Richards, was in possession of this school's original records. These she graciously loaned me and as I read the interesting background of this school, temptation stared me directly in the face. I succumbed and began to make notes, and once begun there seemed no place to stop until I had gathered all the information I could about all the rural schools in the county.

If any spur was needed for continuance, it was furnished by the realization that many of these early records had already been destroyed as having no value or considered as just so much litter, and that the old schoolhouses also were fast disappearing, either by planned demolition, abandonment with its inevitable vandalism, or conversion to other uses, among which are places of worship, family homes, markets or shops, lodge meeting halls, hay barns, garages or even sheds for cattle and hogs.

Furthermore, up to this time, so far as known, no one has written anything on this subject and in a few more years much of what is set down on these pages will be unavailable.

So this is an attempt to put under one cover some of the salient facts and intriguing stories of the rural schools of Douglas County before time shall erase even more of their colorful past, and at the same time preserve something of their rural flavor.

This does not purport to be a complete history of all or any one school--it is doubtful that any such history is a possibility at this late date--nor is it intended to be a compendium of the names of all the teachers, pupils and school board members. It omits the districts of Baldwin City, Eudora, Lawrence and Lecompton. It is not their story.

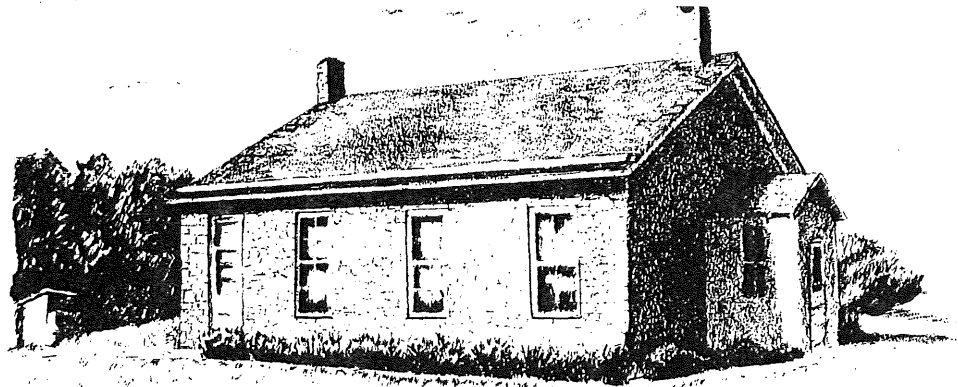
It is the story of the eighty-three one-room schools in the districts that began and remained to the end, strictly rural. There were several exceptions to the one-room designation: Belleview, Hesper and India each built a second room, and several others divided their one room temporarily, hiring a second teacher when needed.

Cora Bailey  
 Wm. Bailey  
 Lucille Craig  
 Clarence Craig  
 Ethel Duff  
 Joe Du Mar  
 Laura Du Mar  
 Emma Du Mar  
 Rosa Eberhart  
 Myra Fitz  
 Jessie Fitz  
 Leslie Fitz  
 Matie Griffis

The hand written notations  
 are my mother's who  
 was correcting the author.

Brian Faust

Edna Holmes  
 Bernice Holmes  
 Ferne McQueen  
 Mary Pardee  
 Ben Pardee  
 Wm. Roe  
 Laura Roe (music)  
 Dorcas Tucker  
 Gladys Waterson  
 Corwin Waterson  
 Susie Wadsworth  
 Ora Wadsworth  
 Luke Welch



*frame*  
 TWIN MOUND DIST. NO. 32

About 1856 Henry Hiatt, a Quaker, came to Kansas Territory and settled in Douglas County near the northwest corner of Marion Township. Here he built a stone house and barn a short distance southeast of the present Twin Mounds Schoolhouse. This home was known as Twin Mounds House, where his wife served meals to travelers on the stage line. John Brown once spent the night there while waiting to have his wagon repaired, and left a broken-down wheel, which is now believed to be in the State Historical Museum in Topeka.

Hiatt was an ambitious man, intensely interested in education, and no doubt sponsored some sort of elementary school in the vicinity in those early years. He envisioned a town at this location and in 1858 sold shares in a townsite company of which he was president and trustee.

The same year he promoted an association to establish a college atop the two mounds west of the settlement to be known as Twin Mounds Harmonic College, dedicated to freedom; a school

where both men and women of any race, color or creed would be accepted. Printed circulars described the location thus: "The location of the college is all that could be asked. Twin Mounds in the county of Douglas, and Territory of Kansas, and named for the two natural mounds near each other, can hardly be surpassed, either for beauty or healthiness, by any locality in the West. Add to this, it is in the heart of a rapidly settling country directly on a great stage route (soon in all probability, to be superseded by a railroad) so that as a pecuniary scheme the college can scarcely fail to prove a profitable investment." Alas! The railroad took another route to Emporia and eventually the stage line ceased to operate. So the college never materialized and in time the little town itself died.

During this period Hiatt built a large stone grist mill about one-half mile north of his home, in which space was reserved for a store and post office, where he served as postmaster until the structure burned Jan. 2, 1881.

Hiatt also helped form a cemetery association of which he was president and trustee, along with Edwin Smith and Cephas Huddleston. The little cemetery is located at the northwest corner of the townsite.

Though the college failed, elementary education succeeded, and formal school began when Henry Hiatt gave a deed Nov. 1, 1865, to Clinton Seamig, John O. Sullivan and Henry Hiatt as District Board of District No. 32, for two acres of land, and which was described as Block 13 in the town of Twin Mounds, all for the sum of \$25.00. On this site a schoolhouse was built and served the district until about 1880, when it was replaced by one of stone, so well built that it still stands in excellent condition. *The stone school was built 1870*

1878 records show Twin Mounds was made joint with an Osage County district under County Superintendent Frank Dinsmoor and so remained to the end.

In 1890 Henry Hiatt and his wife, Abby, deeded an additional one-third of an acre to John F. Badsy, John O. Sullivan and M. Sanders, District Board of District No. 32, adjoining the north side of the original site.

At some time near the close of the 1890's, part of the north wall of the schoolhouse fell out and when replaced, a partial basement was excavated under the northeast corner. *1910 north side*

A Grange Lodge was organized here in 1873, and met in the schoolhouse, but in 1890 was disbanded. *Grange # 123*

To date, no records of names of teachers, pupils or board members, have been found antedating 1897-98. In that year, Elva Helstrom at a monthly salary of \$331 1-3 per month, taught those attending school from the forty-five listed as of school age. This being a joint district and there being nothing to indicate which are actual enrollees, it is not apparent which were residents of Douglas County. Board members at that time were W.M. Sanders, Alfred Porter and a treasurer whose name is not given. Total expenditure for the term was \$266.70.

Following this term to that ending in 1910, the teachers were Clara L. Brewster, Eda Pryor, Henry Fisher, Bertha Crowder, Alma Nelson, Pearl Metsker, Camilla Nelson, Minnie Lyons and Lena Terrell. Board members of 1910 were Clark Cole, S.J. Rukes and Geo. Sullivan.

Those who taught through the next ten-year period were C.C. Sinclair, Adelia Dean, Mamie Haus, Ruth Burgett, Mary LaRue Jecks, Gretchen McCall and Ethel Worswick. At that time the board members were Clyde Hiatt, Elmer Thurber and Geo. Sullivan.

Teachers of the 1920's were Bertha Wogahn, John Easton, Gilmore Nichols, Nina L. Schlink, Camilla Maichel, Rosabelle Gardner, Vivian E. Hobson and Florence Smith for the year ending in 1930. Her salary was \$130.00 per month and the number of pupils enrolled, had decreased to eight. Total expenses for school purposes for the 1929-30 term were \$1229.06. Board members were J.H. Petefish, Elmer Thurber and Geo. Sullivan. During this period a piano and fire-extinguisher had been purchased.

The 1930's had only four teachers. Their names were Loretta Shaw (4 terms), Edith Moses, Cordelia Penn and Coila Thurber (4 terms). The district board for the term ending in 1940 was

*From the Stone School  
it has been reported there  
was a log school, part of  
the Stone School*

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Seven teachers served during the decade ending in the spring of 1950: Dorothy Gene Hart, Ruth Bertschinger, Mattie F. Crow, Olive Schirmer, Anna J. Ward, Martha J. Demeritt and Charles Anderson. Board members were Clyde Hiatt, J.E. Goodyear and H.B. Maichel.

The 1950's and 1960's to the spring of 1966, had the following teachers: Lila Haas, Rosella MeLaas, Lorena Brown, Donna Raney, Merle Holladay, Gwynn Grady, Iola Thompson and Carol Fusco.

Finally with its enrollment only seven, Twin Mound closed its doors, the last rural school in Douglas County to be consolidated. Names of the pupils on the last enrollment were: Cheryl Bagby, Steve Bagby, Kim Benander, Yvonne Benander, Victor Benander, Janet Faust and Robert Schirmer. *Robin Bagby*

In May, 1966, Twin Mound's bell sounded for the last time to summon not only its own but any child whatever, to a rural class-room in Douglas County. The era was ended.

This school was equipped with every modern convenience of its time, maintained a charge account anywhere for the convenience of the teacher in buying supplies and paid the highest salary. But it succumbed to what is known as progress and was joined to Overbrook District No. 434.

Since a decision as to the disposition of the building and contents had to be made before July 1, 1966, a school meeting was held in June for that purpose. A second local Grange Lodge had been organized in 1911 and held its meetings in the schoolhouse. It was decided that since the local Grange Lodge No. 1499 was a neighborhood service organization to which most of the patrons belonged, it be allowed to buy the building for the sum of \$1.00, so that it could be used as a community center and that the contents also be sold to the Grange for a like amount. Overbrook obtained the seats, but the remainder of the equipment together with the playground apparatus was retained.

When the drawing of this schoolhouse was made, flowers were blooming all around the building and both building and grounds showed plainly the care that goes into their upkeep.

#### UNION DIST. NO. 34

The first school in this district began in territorial days in a log cabin located in the N.E. 1/4 of the N.E. 1/4 of Sec. 33, T. 14, R. 19, on what is now the Lester Schwartz farm, about a half-mile north of the later school known as No. 34. This log cabin was in use as a school until 1862, and numbered "6". Since Dr. H. J. Canniff in his one-year term of office as county superintendent (1858-59), established five schools, it is possible that this log cabin school may have been established as early as 1859, and thus the number "6". At a later date when the new schoolhouse was built the district was renumbered "34".

The interesting background of this organized district was laid when Lucy S. Neale, widow of Austin, alias Augustus Neale, Paymaster of Virginia Militia, War of 1812, assigned warrant No. 60282 to one Simon H. Tyrer. He in turn, used this warrant to acquire a grant of 160 acres of land from the U. S. Government under signature of President James Buchanan.

May 6, 1862, Symon Tyrer and Temperance Tyrer, his wife, gave a deed to the Trustees of School District No. 6 in Willow Springs Township, in consideration of \$1.00, for one acre of land in the N.E. 1/4 of Sec. 33, T. 14, R. 19,....to have and to hold....so long as the said land is used for school purposes and no longer. Recorded April 16, 1863.

All school records were destroyed in 1941 when fire burned the home of Roy Schwalm, then district clerk, but Karl Niebrugge remembers that his mother who was a pupil of Union School in