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Ozarks Country School Association
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A program of University of Missouri Extension

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**Mission & Vision**

The Ozarks Country School Association is a community development effort under the direction of University of Missouri Extension and is coordinated out of the MU Extension office in Greene County, Springfield, Mo. The Ozarks Country School Association works with individuals and groups to research the rural schools that once operated in this region and then educate the public about the historic and community importance of these buildings. Once that importance is understood, the vision is to work with other individuals and groups to preserve and maintain existing one-room schools and put them to work serving rural communities.

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**Miss Virginia—Her Music and Her School**

*by Joshua Heston*

Some folks just talk about preserving their heritage. Others actually do it. Virginia Snyder falls into the latter category. As Gordon McCann, past president of the Missouri Folklore Society notes, "With little help and no grants or outside money, [Snyder] developed the family farm into what you might call a cultural preservation center for Ozark traditions."

Virginia's achievements required passion and determination. Both seem to run in the family.

She tells of a great-grandfather, Ed Adamson, coming to Turnback Creek, so named because it was believed to be uncrossable. He crossed it, then built the first permanent log home in the county — and ultimately owned 800 acres of land there.

Virginia's efforts have led to the preservation of her educational roots and the musical traditions of the region.

"I have so many beautiful memories of the one-room school because I attended one for eight years and taught in one for 11. I was 17 when I first started to teach," she notes, "and I specifically remember how scared I was the first day. But the students didn't know it. At the end of the day, I had three notes — which I have saved — and each one of them said, 'I like you.'

"There have been so many changes in education, but a lot of the values have been lost. The one-room school was the foundation of education in America. I think young people should know the heritage of where all our education came from.

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The entrance to Snyder’s Music Park in Lawrence County just north of Lawrenceburg. Little Moore school is located inside the park.
"[Back then] people seemed to value friendship more. Neighbors helped each other a lot more than they do now. Even though you didn't have much, you made do with what you had and were happy. I had a wonderful childhood even though we were poor."

"I grew up in a musical family. I was born in my grandmother's house and she was a role model in my life. She was a great musician. On weekends, her brothers came from the old home place and we would play music on the porch.

"I was about eight years old when one brother, Thomas Likens — who was a great fiddle player — would call out chord changes [as he played] and that's how I learned to play the guitar.

"My dad played several instruments," she continues, "and was a wonderful singer. He sang in gospel quartets and he and I did a lot of duets together. His brother, W. Carl Snyder, played with Tommy Dorsey and the Joe Haynes Orchestras."

Virginia's father dreamed of a career in music, but "[When] my grandmother became blind, Dad needed to stay home and take care of her. He thought he would just build his own music barn. In 1974, he had a massive heart attack and didn't get to realize that dream."

Virginia, then teaching in Springfield, Missouri, never forgot her father's intent. Retiring in 1986, and returning to the home place to care for her mother, she chose to make that dream real. By first selling some of the farm's timber, and then including her own retirement funds, she had enough money to build Snyder Music Park in 1990.

It has since become home to fiddle contests, fiddlers' jams, bluegrass festivals, gospel sings and — perhaps most importantly — the restored 1901-era school from which her own mother graduated.

"It almost seems like its listening to the music," says Virginia Snyder. "And I kind of feel that my dad is listening too."

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Little Moore School Added to Movie Database

Little Moore School now joins Sycamore School in Lawrence County and Locust Prairie School in Greene County as possible movie locations. All three schools are now listed on the web page http://www.missourifilm.org/ along with information concerning the location such as physical address, history, owner contact information. When filmmakers are interested in shooting at this location, they will contact the location owner/manager directly expressing interest and requesting permission to use the premises.
The Legacy of the One-Room School
Written by Virginia Snyder

Education in America began with little one-room schools which served our country for more than a century. They played a significant role in developing the firm foundation on which our nation stands.

From 1750 through the early 1940s, more than 200,000 one-room schools graced our country’s landscape. Those schoolhouses played a vital role in the establishment of our nation. Rural America was raised in a country school where the values and traditions which became our heritage were taught by resourceful and idealistic individuals in isolated communities. No subject or age was separated from its neighbors. Every school day was an invitation to circles of experience; the community and each child were unified in an adventure of growing and learning. The one-room school and the entire community were one family.

Community church services were also held in those schoolhouses; church was the first priority and the schools supported the strong church ties which made the community close knit. Such was Onward, a one-room school in Lawrence County where I taught for six wonderful years.

Memories of teaching dear to my heart include: starting a fire in the big iron-jacketed stove at seven a.m. each cold winter morning, cleaning the floors with cleaning compound, pie suppers, spelling bees, ciphering matches, Christmas programs, Halloween parties, Last Day of School picnics, the arrival of the bookmobile, first-aid for injuries, supervising the playground and many other activities. Parents also participated in whatever activities were scheduled. The schools were filled with laughter and happiness on those special days.

Other memories of teaching each eight-month term in the one-room school included calling three or four students—sometimes as many as ten—from each class up to the recitation bench to orate the writings they had learned; teaching reading from the Scott Foresman series readers like “Fun With Dick and Jane,” and “Our New Friends;” and using the blackboard to introduce new words. I taught reading skills, phonics, structural analysis and comprehension. Although I followed The Missouri State Course of Study, which stipulated the goals to be achieved for all subject matters at each grade level, my main teaching tools were a piece of chalk and the blackboard.

Reading to the children after lunch was as exciting for me as it was for them—especially stories from books like “Little Women,” “The Boxcar Children,” “Heidi,” “The Secret Garden” and “Charlotte’s Web.” When I would read to them of Charlotte’s demise, there wasn’t a dry eye in the classroom.

Beyond the personal adventures shared between myself as a teacher and the children with their families was the uniting and thriving day to day growth and progress that emerged in the lives of both students and communities.

Events like the pie suppers were popular traditional activities. All of the community and even surrounding communities attended. My dad and our musical group provided the entertainment. The Christmas program at Onward School will always be a treasured memory. The students’ fathers would go into the woods and cut a large cedar tree and place it in the Methodist Church across from the school. Parents, along with others in the community, and I decorated the tree with popcorn, red and green paper chains made

Above, the Little Moore School, prior to renovation, now donated to Snyder Music Park, Lawrence County, Missouri.
The Ozarks Country School Association is a program of University of Missouri Extension

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A photo of Little Moore School when it was first moved to Snyder Park in Lawrenceburg, Mo.

of construction paper, tinfoil stars and lots of store-bought icicles. A big gold star shone brightly at the top of the tree.

Every child participated in the Christmas program. Sometimes the program was two hours long. The last play on the program was always the Nativity scene. Christmas carols were sung by the children and the audience together. Everyone went home with their hearts full of love for their neighbors and a great Christmas spirit.

One-room schools across the United States also served as community gathering places for business meetings, elections and social events. The one-room school was a primary focus of the community. Generations of highly successful individuals graduated from one-room schools (usually from the eighth grade) where they studied alongside classmates of all ages, talents and personalities. I remember a first-grader, Little Johnny Garton, tugging at my skirt, saying, “I love you, Miss Virginia.” My response was, “I love you, too, Johnny.” (Johnny Garton is in the education field today. He is a very successful principal of an elementary school.)

Children learned from each other as well as from the teacher, whose many additional duties included being the cook, custodian and nurse.

What has happened to those simple, wood-framed buildings that clothed the countrysides? We don’t know how many one-room school buildings still stand. Some were demolished; some have burned. Some have been destroyed by neglect and natural deterioration. Others have undergone preservation and restoration and are still being used as community centers.

The one-room school will always be more than just a symbol of the past. It is an important legacy of learning in America—a national icon. My first encounter with a one-room school was as a student for eight years. I loved school. I never wanted to miss. I remember many times when the snow was so deep my daddy wrapped my legs and little brother’s legs with gunny sacks, tied them on with binder twine and walked us to school, two miles away. I also remember walking those two miles to school along a beautiful old dirt road, observing God’s great creations of nature: seeing the way the morning light would catch one autumn leaf as it fell gently to the ground; the vision of tall, strong white oak trees along the side of the road; and the sound of spring water as it bubbled its song on its way to Sac River. There was unexpected beauty everywhere on that two-mile walk to my country school.

While in the eighth grade, I served as a teacher’s aide, helping my wonderful role model, Miss Amogene, by passing out papers and reading to other students. When I graduated from high school, I took the Lawrence County Teacher’s exam and made a good score. I was hired to teach on the stipulation that I attend summer school during the following summer term. Thus began my eleven-year teaching career in the one-room school. I attended school each Spring, Summer and August terms until I graduated from college. My Master’s Degree was acquired in the same manner. Those years of teaching hold precious memories for me.

One of those treasured memories was of assembling the entire student body together each morning at the flagpole in the schoolyard to reverently, and with perfect flag etiquette, raise the American flag and recite the Pledge of Allegiance, followed by a prayer. Sometimes I would read the Twenty-third Psalm. Saying the Pledge of Allegiance to the flag and saying a prayer before school began helped to unify the classroom.

Taken from Virginia Snyder’s book “Books, Pies, Spelling Bees and the One-room Country School Revisited.”
The restoration of the Little Moore One-Room school, Snyder Music Park, Lawrenceburg, Missouri

I believe threads from the past should be woven into the future. Young people need to know that their future is in understanding the past. For that reason we need to preserve the history of the one-room school. I am proud to have restored a one-room school at my park (Snyder Park) to preserve the legacy.

Among America’s 200,000 one-room schools is a restored one-room school called “Little Moore” located at Snyder Music Park in Lawrenceburg, Lawrence County, Mo.

Snyder Music Park is located on the beautifully wooded Ozarks hillside area of Lawrence County, 25 miles west of Springfield and eight miles south of Ash Grove. If you have visited the park during the last few years, you have no doubt seen the Little Moore Schoolhouse.

Little Moore (sometimes called “Little Mowey”) was and still is a very little building. But there is more to Little Moore than one might think! The school was donated to Snyder Music Park by my cousin Gary Adamson. It was located on Gary’s property about three-and-a-half miles from the park he had inherited from his grandparents, John and Margaret Adamson.

In 1996 Gary and I had the shaky old schoolhouse moved to Snyder Music Park. Gary thought that I, a retired school teacher having begun my
teaching career in one-room schools (Union Hall and Onward) near the Lawrenceburg area, would like to restore Little Moore. Of course I was excited about that idea. The little school now sits on a sandstone rock foundation on the hillside overlooking the park. The sandstone rock was taken from my grandmother and grandfather Snyder’s old log house which was built in the 1800s.

How old is Little Moore School? We first thought it was built in 1900 or 1901 because we had found an old photograph of the school with the year 1901 printed on it; the photo was of Little Moore students and their teacher, Spencer Smart. He had a class of at least 35 students.

However, not long ago, Gary was looking through an old Adamson family Bible and was surprised when he read the following on an introductory page: “John E. Adamson of Lawrenceburg, Missouri, and Margaret Burk of Lawrenceburg, Missouri, married at Moore Schoolhouse, October 1887, by D.A. Radley, Justice of the Peace, in the presence of J.M. Moore and Mary J. McDaniel.”

The old Adamson Bible presented absolute proof that the original Little Moore was built in the 1800s. It is believed that the first school was a larger school, but it burned down and a smaller school was built. The first school was called simply “Moore.” The second school, being smaller, was called “Little Moore.” It was built in 1900. The restored Little Moore School now has a place of honor at Snyder Music Park. It is often used for church on Sundays following gospel singing in the park.

Classes from area schools visit Little Moore School to hear presentations concerning what it was like to go to school in the 1800s and early 1900s. Little Moore Church School was restored in memory of the Adamsons (my mother was Mary Lorene Adamson). The school shelters treasures of the past, as well as my own memories and dreams. It is my aspiration to maintain and protect the memories that love built which flow throughout my life. My God, my family, the one-room school, teaching children, the old homestead and my music are my life blood.

Today, as I walk over the grounds, I look up toward Heaven and ask God, “Am I doing things right?” The answer seems to rest in the Little Moore Church School that stands on the sleeping hillside overlooking Snyder Music Park—a testament to the Roots of American Education.

“The one-room school is very dear to my heart. I attended a one-room school for eight years and then taught in one for 10 years. The one room school is a “legacy of learning” and the foundation of education in America. I am excited to be a member of the Ozarks Country School Association and join in its efforts to preserve one-room schools in the Ozarks!”

Virginia Snyder

Article written by Virginia Snyder who served 42 years as a teacher and is the author of “Books, Pies and Spelling Bees: The One-Room School Revisited,” Virginia’s Song, A Country Quilt of Memories” and recorded a musical CD, “The Little One-Room School.” All photos taken in April 2012 by David L. Burton, civic communication specialist for University of Missouri Extension.
Photos of Little Moore School, Taken April 2012

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Ever hear of a school being kidnapped? That’s what Swadley folk say happened

By Dale Freeman Leader & Press
Thursday, Nov. 17, 1949, page 17.

Ever hear about the kidnapping a week ago Tuesday up in this hilly, scrub-baked northern section of Greene County? Somebody “took off” with Swadley school without Swadley’s consent. Or so Swadley district residents say.

And don’t think most of the fold around here like it even a little bit. Though the building hasn’t been moved, it’s been here for more than 50 years – residents in this neck of the woods believe they’ve been done a great injustice.

In fact, they are asking everybody: “How would you feel if someone took your school when you didn’t have anything to say about it?”

The pre-abduction story started on Nov. 8 when the “someone,” a majority of voters in a reorganized Pleasant Hope (Polk County) school district, voted for redistricting.

And included in the seven or so districts which Pleasant Hope annexed into its enlarged unit was the Greene County school of Swadley. According to a before-election straw vote, Swadley patrons voted 22-1 against the measure.

But that didn’t keep redistricting from passing. It squeezed by with 48 votes to spare. “The town vote overruled us,” Swadley folk charge.

That meant that Swadley was now a part of Pleasant Hope and that a district board would take over where the old Swadley board existed.

But the big beef apparently doesn’t stem from “somebody else running our school.” It comes from that old devil taxes, and Swadley folk will tell you so right off.

Their levy moved up to 85 cents (minimum is 65) a year ago. It will be increased to more than $2.25 when reorganization becomes final.

As W. L. Hall, a former member of the Swadley board who attended classes in the present school points out: “We had a good school, maintained it well enough and had enough money to keep it up. But what we’re fighting now is taxes.”

Hall, whose wife is Swadley school board clerk, added. “We’re satisfied the way things are. The school is being run right well on 85 cents.”

Hall was one of five irate patrons who stormed Greene County’s courthouse earlier this week demanding that something be done about the schools annexation by Pleasant Hope. He, as the four other opposition leaders, has no children now attending Swadley school.

“But I’ve got a 4-year-old grandson,” he said. “And I think it’s better for a small child to attend a school close to home than ride a bus a long distance.”

What if he gets sick in a far away school?” he asked. “Or what happens during real bad weather?” Hall definitely didn’t like the idea of small children riding buses into Pleasant Hope.

Others, however, such as Dale Irvine, who lives in the south part of the district, felt that “taxes are the main thing. They’re high enough already,” he believes.

More opponents of annexation pointed out that the school building is in “fairly good shape.” As once said at the courthouse during a conference with Prosecutor E. Wayne Collinson: “We’ve got a nice school and we want to keep it. In fact, we’ve got the money to improve it a bit. But, of course, we won’t now that Pleasant Hope has taken over for us.”

A different view of the shape of the school came from Swadley Board president L. H. Ricketts.

Ricketts said the “roof leaks, the foundation is about to come out and the water supply is very poor.” He believes that the new six-man district board will close the school in the near future because of its condition.

Rickets also believed that the 85-cent levy in Swadley paid for just “the bare essentials. We didn’t have nearly enough money for improvements,” he...
added. “Spent all the incidental money last year and now we’re broke,” he said.

A prominent of reorganization, one of the two or three in the district, said most of the opposition came from residents “who don’t even have students in the school at Swadley.”

The man didn’t want his name used because, “you know how folks are about school fights,” said he’d attended a better country school than the present Swadley building “more than 25 years ago.”

He felt that “every time somebody has to spend a little more money they start kicking,” He said. There also was some “kick” about children getting in too late if they had to ride a busy. “Some students get in pretty late under the present set up,” he countered.

A check at the schoolhouse where Mrs. Ruby Ross Booher has 38 students in tow every day revealed that some 28 of that number now ride a Pleasant Hope bus to Swadley school.

The school is a poorly lighted one-room building with as President Ricketts pointed out, some of the foundation in pretty bad shape. But, says an opponent of reorganization, “we pay our teacher an above average salary for a country school.”

Now, the “againstners” are starting a petition to ask Pleasant Hope district voters to vote them out of the new unit. If they succeed in being allowed a special election the same person who voted them in must vote them out.

Some Swadley folk believe they won’t succeed although they are willing to fight down to the wire, in court if necessary. But there appear to be no hard feelings at all about the measure.

As most of them say: “we don’t blame anybody for our mess but the reorganization law itself.”

Author Looking for Some Answers: Can You Help?

I am researching the economic evolution of one-room schools. One-room school's operated through most of the nineteenth century with a different technology of teaching. Students were not put in age-specific grades. They just brought books and were classified according to how far they had gotten in them. Thus students of different ages could all be in the second reading group, say.

Sometime in the twentieth century, age-grading became the national norm for teaching in all schools. Age-grading had started long before in cities, where enough children could be had to divide into age-specific groups, and by about 1910 or 1920, age-grading was almost universal.

This was a burden on one-room schools, though, since it upset the formerly-efficient process of grouping by progress and added to the number of recitations a lone teacher had to hear. What I don't know much about is how successful one-room schools were in adapting to the age-graded system. Was the burden of age-grading a reason for consolidating schools?

A related question has to do with the end of the one-room school system. Many schools were used until the 1950s and 1960s, long after school buses had been in general use. I know of at least one school system (the one I attended as a child) that had several one-room schools up to 1959, but did not use them for multiple grades in the later years. First grade might be in one school, second grade in another, and so forth, with children being bused to the appropriate school (which must have been a logistical nightmare). Did other school-districts with one-room schools use them in this way? If so, when did it begin? I am interested because I am beginning to suspect that the national statistics about one-room schools, which show them persisting into the 1970s in some places, may actually be exaggerating their use. If most one-room schools in the twentieth century were actually just single-grade classrooms, the true "one room school," with its multi-age and, later, multi-grade student body may have died out sooner than most people think.

William A. Fischel, Professor of Economics Dartmouth College, email bill.fischel@dartmouth.edu

#7 Swadley (Greene County)

Hwy. 13, east on Hwy. CC, two miles, past bridge to North Stokes Lane, a private drive. Turn left. School stood in Greene County at the end of private lane.

Destroyed

School steps still exist. Told actual building was sold and moved for a barn although a teacher said it was destroyed in 1953. District consolidated with Pleasant Hope.
Boston Center near Branson Still Provides Sense of Community

Boston Center School is located on highway 248, Taney County, MO outside Branson. When the school was built the highway was called the Boston Road.

Written by Barbara Henry

Boston Center, as was most one room schools was built of a simple frame construction. Boston Center had a cupola on the roof with a big bell, but the bell was stolen. To get it out the cupola was damaged beyond repair and never replaced.

The land was given to the community in 1903. As in most towns all over the United States, the community would come together and build the school. The foundation is made of rocks found in and around the property. The oak trees were cut down and rough lumber made from them for the building of the school. It took a lot of hand sawing and square nails to build the school. As far as I know, the school has always been white.

The interior had large blackboards which were called that as they were painted with black paint and the boards were wide, not one sheet of wood. Until 1957, when the building was remodeled by the community to become a community building, the blackboards still hung on the wall. Instead of paper, small slates were used by the children to do their work on. Later they had pencils and paper.

The classroom had a pot belly stove, which on really cold days certainly didn't keep the building warm. Children would get one side warm and then turn to get the other side warm. The floor is still the original floor except for one small area that had to be replaced due to a fire from the pot belly stove.

The children were in grades kindergarten to high school. One teacher usually taught all grades. Of course with the younger children overhearing what the older children were being taught it helped them too. School was usually 9 a.m. To 4 p.m.

In the back of the school was a cook shack where women in the area would come every day Monday-Friday to cook for the children. The menu consisted almost every day of beans of some sort. Sometimes corn bread was made. And one year a wild turkey and potatoes. The children couldn't keep their mind on their studies in anticipation of having turkey. It was definitely enjoyed by all. One day in the early 50's the superintendent of schools visited Boston Center. He asked one of the little girls what she had for lunch. She replied “maters and taters”.

Every day children were picked to bring in firewood for the pot bellied stove and take fire wood for the cook stove. Younger children erased the boards and cleaned the erasers, and got buckets of water for various uses including the cook shack.

During lunch some of the older boys would sneak off to the store for candy and cigarettes. Many a time they were caught smoking in the outhouse, but one day there was so much smoke coming from the outhouse, the teacher caught them and they were punished. Another time they walked over the hill so they wouldn't be seen, but smoke rises and they were caught again.

Recess was only fifteen minutes long so there wasn't time to play, just time to go to the outhouse and get a drink from the hand pump that was at the right front corner of the schoolhouse. During lunch they played kickball and baseball. The big old oak trees were the bases.

In the early days most of the children walked miles to get to school which was pretty harsh during the winter months. Other children came by buckboard. During the winter they all huddled together to keep warm while they chatted amongst themselves.
Usually the teacher would live with a family in the community. Her room and board were free and she was given a very small amount of money as pay. It certainly had to be a love of their to be a teacher because they would never really have much money. It was a big thing in the community who the school teacher would live with. Some of the students were excited about it and others didn't want to be observed all the time by the teacher, nor be called the teachers pet.

In 1953, most of the subscription schools were closed and the children at Boston Center School were sent either to Branson schools or Reeds Spring Schools depending on where they lived. It was both a sad day and a time of excitement for the kids. They were about to go to bigger schools and meet more kids. Even being a little apprehensive, there was no turning back.

Boston Center School was no more but the building sat there for three years before it was given back to the community. Many of the men in the community came together once again to make repairs and get it ready to be used as a community building. Schools were always used for community meetings, celebrating holidays, and functions like box lunches and pie suppers. And of course, church services which also meant weddings, funerals, baptisms, and revivals.

Still today, the building is used by the community for all these things, except now we have the Charlie Jones Annex that was opened Christmas 2003. It has a kitchen so no more potlucks in the old school building. And it has a dining room with tables and chairs so no one has to balance their plate on their lap or sit on the ground. And yes, we have bathrooms...no more outhouses as of 2003 when the last remaining outhouse was condemned. The foundation of the other one remains in the opposite corner behind the new building.

The roof of the old school has been patched, replaced, patched some more and finally we have a brand new metal roof. And, heating and air conditioning from window units. There are plans to rejuvenate the interior, but more money has to be raised.

As the economy has been poor, donations are way down. The board started making jams, jellies, relishes, and breads to sell to pay for the new roof.

No longer do we have grange meetings, but we have had conservation come out several times including giving a class on gardening. And Boston Center is a polling place.

Out in the yard we have a basketball court, some playground equipment, and a horseshoe pit, but we need more equipment for the kids.

For over 108 years people have been coming to Boston Center, enjoying spending time with their family and friends. It’s no different today. There are families where four and five generations are still a part of everything that goes on at Boston Center.

Throughout all these years, it has been important to the community to oversee the needs of the buildings and the community members. Boards were set up shortly after the school became a community building. The board members have given in every way necessary. Most of the elders have passed away and we need the next generation to step up to the plate, as has always happened in the past.

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Olive Hampton: Student at Little Creek and Retired Teacher

Written by Olive Hampton

Olive Emogene Pearman Hampton attended Little Creek School in Wright County, Missouri, about 7 miles north of Hartville, MO. This was a rural one-room school with all 8 elementary grades. Usually around 40 students ranging in age from 5 to 18 years of age attended the school each year. My first year began in August, 1930. I was only 4 years old to turn 5 on Sept. 1.

School started in early August so the older students could get out early in the spring to help get the crops planted. Some years we only had 6 ½ months of school because there wasn’t enough money to pay the teacher for more.

My older brother had gone to school the year before and during the year he caught all the contagious children diseases – whooping cough, measles, and chicken pox. As a result of that, I had all those diseases out of the way before I began school. My brother had re-take first grade because of that. (Note: This was Harold who was killed during the World War II in France, 1944.)

So when he got ready to start school in August, 1930, I was still only 4 years of age. My birthday was coming up Sept. 1. I wanted to go to school so very much that my parents decided to let me go. We had to walk about 2 miles to get to the school.

We walked to school whether it was clear, rainy, hot, cold, snow, ice, or sub freezing.

We wore long underwear and long stockings in the winter months. We used garters to keep our stockings up. The girls kinda wanted to hide their long underwear so when they got to school they would roll the legs of the underwear up to above their knees so they wouldn’t show. This would cause a big roll above the knees which probably did show.

When the snow was deep we wore overshoes. Our parents would wrap gunny sack material around our legs and tie strings around them to hold them up.

We carried our lunch to school which was usually a biscuit with a fried egg. We didn’t go to the store to get a loaf of bread because it wasn’t there so we had homemade biscuits. We probably had fresh fruit in season because we had large orchards. We proba-

Olive Hampton (above) shows a picture of when she was a student at Little Creek School in 1930. She was a student at a one-room school and then later taught. In the photo below, she provides basic information to Jeff Corrigan, the oral historian for the Missouri State Historical Society during her interview in Springfield as part of MU Extension’s “Oral History Blast” event.
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The Ozarks Country School Association is a program of University of Missouri Extension

bly has some cookies.

At the end of 1st grade the teacher told my parents that I was a year younger than the others but that I knew as much as they did. She asked them if they wanted me to be promoted to 2nd grade. They said yes so I was only 16 when I graduated from high school.

Our water supply at the school was a well with a big bucket on a rope. Water had to be drawn up in the well bucket and emptied in a water bucket with a dipper to use to get our drinks. We all drank out of the same dipper for a while. Then in a year or two we got a new county superintendent of schools. This was in the early 30’s. The new county superintendent was my great aunt Essa Fusan Findley. She got things changed and improved for the better. The school had to get a well with a pump. The water could be pumped up and caught in a water bucket. Each child had to have his own drinking cup. Then to stop some disease spreading we all had to be vaccinated for typhoid, diphtheria, and smallpox. A nurse came to our school to administer the shots.

We had one little girl who died with scarlet fever and her body could not be taken inside the church for a funeral service because it was so contagious. Everybody was afraid.

The school was one big classroom with 8 grade levels. Some of the students had to be 16 to 18 years old because at that time there were no buses to take them into town for high school so some would attend more than one year of eighth grade.

I loved school and I’m sure I learned a lot from the older grades. We had a morning and afternoon recess to go out and play and use the outdoor toilets.

We played dodgeball. We played marble games. We ran races. We played horseshoes. We played jump the rope and hopscotch.

We had a big ball diamond. We played tag. We played handy over which has 2 teams, one on each side of the building. We would throw the ball over the school house and if it was caught that team ran around the building and tagged anyone they could as the other team came around to the other side. If they were tagged they had to stay on that team. The object of the game was to get everyone on the same side.

When it was time for games to end the teacher would pull the rope with the bell hanging in the belfry on top of the building to tell us time was up. This bell was used in the morning also to tell us school was ready to start.

We had board games to use inside when the weather was unsuitable to go outside. We had checkers, dominoes
The Ozarks Country School Association is a program of University of Missouri Extension

and tic-tac-toe. We could play with a big ball to throw around and catch if we were careful.

The inside of the school house had blackboards on both sides of the room and in front where the teacher sat. Our assignments would all be written on the blackboard.

I remember big pictures of George Washington and Abraham Lincoln hanging on the wall.

We didn’t have electricity for lighting. We used coal oil and kerosene lamps. We filled lamp bowls with kerosene and a wick was in it and extended up above oil so it could be lit. We had lamp globes for the lamps. We also had kerosene lanterns. The building had lots of windows on both sides of the building between the blackboards so we had lots of daylight.

Our heat was a big pot bellied stove. The coals and ashes were in pans under the stove on the floor. Once in a while when we were all sitting around it to get our feet warm someone would accidentally kick a pan over and a mess had to be cleaned up.

We always said the pledge to the flag every morning and sang a few songs. We had teachers who could sing and some of the students were good singers. We had an organ to use. It was my fifth and sixth grade teacher who taught me to sing harmony. (alto)

The teachers were their own janitor. Building fires and cleaning were their responsibility. I’m sure some of the older students helped.

We had good teachers and they would let us have spelling bees and ciphering matches.

Sometimes we would invite another school over to cipher and spell against us or they would invite us to their school.

We had pie suppers to raise money. All the community participated. The girls and ladies would bring a fresh baked pie to be auctioned off to the highest bidder. The man would bid on a pie and highest bid got the pie and he had to eat with the girl or lady who brought it.

Supposedly no one knew whose pie it was but if they found out it could be quite an expensive pie if it was a girl they wanted to eat with.

Each year on the last day of school we would have a program and the parents would bring a basket dinner for a big lunch.

We always had a Christmas program. We drew names so everyone would get a gift. We didn’t want someone get our name because all you would get might be a handkerchief. One of the parents always brought us a big Christmas tree in and set it up for us to decorate.

Each year I had perfect attendance. I didn’t miss a day of school during all my elementary grades 1 through 8 and all my 4 years in high school.

When I graduated from 8th grade in 1938 there had not been any bus to pick students up and take us to high school. So I had planned to go another year to 8th grade. But it happened to be that year that the buses started. So we rode the bus into town to go to high school. We would ride several miles around to pick up all the kids who were ready for high school. There were several older students who had not been able to go up to now. They took advantage of the opportunity.

The rural schools went on as such a few more years. Then there came a time when it was decided that rural schools would be consolidated and all students would be bused to the town school.

This was met with disfavor by some. There was discontent and some angry parent burned the school house down. All the books, furniture, and big pictures were totally destroyed.

Olive Hampton had lots of photos. Here she is showing them to Jeff Corrigan, oral historian for Missouri State Historical Society and Dr. Virginia Lass, a volunteer with the historical society.
Ozarks School Program Featured at National School Conference

The Country School Association of America hosted its annual conference in Ankeny, Iowa, June 17-20. The conference featured two days of presentations on topics dealing with the preservation of school buildings, programs and history associated with one and two-room schools that once dotted the countryside.

One of the keynote speakers was Leidulf Mydland, head of the department of buildings and settings with the Norwegian Institute for Cultural Heritage Research based in Oslo. Mydland contrasted approaches being used to preserve country schools in Iowa and Wisconsin with efforts he has instituted in Norway.

David Burton, a community development specialist with University of Missouri Extension, spoke twice at the conference. His first presentation focused on the regional Ozarks Country School Association.

Conference organizer Bill Sherman praised the regional concept and the work of MU Extension during his introductions. “David is one of two people who have done more than anyone in America to promote the regional preservation of rural schools.”

On Tuesday, Burton did a training session entitled, “Creating an Oral History Project” and discussed the steps for doing oral histories as well as an overview of the MU Extension hosted effort in Springfield during the winter. On Wednesday there was a day long tour that included visits to preserved schools and other historic buildings.

“I’m not sure that we are going to be able to conduct a fall conference this year in the Ozarks,” said Burton. “But I’m happy to speak at other programs on related topics using some of what I learned at this conference. I’d also love to have a sponsor that could help us put together a regional tour of one-room school houses on a few Saturdays this coming year.”

The national conference in 2013 will be held the second week of June in Rome, Georgia.

In 2014, the national conference will return to the Midwest and be held in St. Joe,, Missouri.

“David is one of two people who have done more than anyone in America to promote the regional preservation of rural schools.”

Bill Sherman
CSAA Conference Organizer
Bunker Hill School in McDonald County Kept Alive

*By Linda Johnson*

I’m sending along some pictures (for use in the newsletter) of our school built in 1929 and used until 1948 when schools in this area were consolidated.

Our school house is used for quilt shows in May, spring and fall singings, first Saturday night sing-ins when weather permits, annual homecoming, and can be used by the community for other events as needed. Funding comes from quilting, quilt show, lunch on the square 8 times a year, and auctions when needed.

We also have a newer community building in Anderson that was built using donations from the public. It was constructed in 2005-06.

Thank goodness it has central air/heat, bathrooms and running water. Up until 2006, we were holding all activities in the school house and used the one-holers out back, no running water, wood stove for heat, and fans for air.
**Belfast School in Newton County**

Rebecca Williams: I thought you might enjoy seeing this photo of the old Belfast country school. The school was 4 miles west of Neosho. I am in the center of the center row. This was taken in 1964 (I think) the year before we consolidated and started going to school in town. Yes one room grades 1-4. It had been 2 room (with a room divider) when it was 2 room, grades 1-4 in one area, grades 4-8 in another area that we called "the big room" grades 4-8 consolidated a year before grades 1-4. The schoolhouse burned down in 1966, the victim of an arsonist (never caught) that also burned down Neosho's Big Spring Inn and the city recreation center. My grandfather built the Belfast school it was a field rock structure.

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**Submissions**

Want to submit a letter of memories about a one-room school for publication in this newsletter? Just send your text to David Burton via e-mail (burtond@missouri.edu) or mail it to the Greene County Extension center.

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**Kids Attending Country Schools Could Keep Up, Thank You Very Much**

I have fond memories of going to school in a one-room schoolhouse. One of my good friends who also attended that one room school house ended up as Fire Chief at the City of Branson. I, myself, didn't do too bad and ended up with a post graduate education and retired as a senior executive with the State of California.

Our teacher was the original "multi-tasker. She drove the bus, cooked our lunch over a large wood stove, disciplined the unruly and still taught 8 grades under one roof. Ask a teacher to do that today and you will be told it's "impossible." Of course discipline was not a problem back then (1948/49), if you got out of line, you got a good "whuppin" with a good strong hickory switch that you had the privilege of gathering yourself from the nearby woods. Yes - we even had separate "outdoor toilets for boys and girls".....talk about primitive.

At one time it was thought that kids from these one-room schools could not compete with the city kids education and would therefore lag behind when they eventually transferred to a city high school. That was not the case, in fact, the kids from the one-room school actually did quite well in handling the new environment and education methods.

I think it is absolutely great that an effort is being made to record this part of our history before it is forgotten.

*Tom Gargus · Springfield, Mo.*

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**Fond Memories**

My mom's entire family of 9 attended a one room school house up near Preston on "Maberry's place" near the Little Niangua. This was in the 1930s also. I viewed the site a few years ago. They brought bean sandwiches to school, they were so poor during the depression. When she died in 1996 her teacher who was still alive, came to the funeral.

*Doug Brockman, Springfield, Mo.*
Brock School near Table Rock Lake. Photo by Gloria Hawkins.

If you have photos you want included in our next newsletter, please email them to David Burton at burtond@missouri.edu or bring them to the Greene County Extension Center.