

**ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS AND THANKS TO MAJOR CONTRIBUTORS TO THIS CHAPTER**

My brother Arrel, Class of 1966, is the major contributor to this first chapter. As noted below, he compiled the photos and wrote what our family archives said about this school for his School Memories document, also on this website, and for his help with editing and style content suggestions.

Thanks to the author, unknown, of an earlier Kremlin School history that I obtained from Gini Zaloudek's collection of memorabilia for the 2001 Kremlin Town Centennial. Information there comes from a variety of first-hand memories that are documented there.

Some of the photos came from the Zaloudek building, some from a Kremlin yearbook, and some from our collection of old family photos. Unknown people selling Kremlin postcards on eBay also made important contributions.

I must also thank my father, David A. Toews, for sharing his early grade school memories of this school with my oldest brother Galen, now deceased; and an equally big thank you to Galen for having written up clear notes of our dad's memories.

Thanks also to my dad and everyone else involved for saving his grade school group photos from this early school to make them available for me and this document.

## Chapter 1. The first white wooden school at the north end of town

This first chapter of “my” (Myron’s) Kremlin School Buildings History was actually written first by my brother Arrel and has been extracted from his “School Memories” document, also on this website, with his permission. I have edited it somewhat, to fit the purposes of my own document and to make it consistent with my other chapters.

The first known school building in Kremlin was at the north end of town in Block 2 on the east side of F Street, facing west. This is the same street where the later, and current, school was/is located; this first school was one block south of the current Kremlin post office. Abbie Seapy, first grader 1902, said the school building was at the south end of the school “grounds”.

It was a white wooden building and T-shaped. Interesting to me, it looks like it might have been about as big as the 6-room red brick school at the south end of town that later replaced it (detailed in Chapter 2). But records and/or memories indicate that it had only four rooms, compared to the six in the newer school. According to the “Kremlin History” booklet hand-written by our Uncle Jacob Toews and his classmates when he was a Junior at Kremlin High School, this building was built in 1900, partially by Mr. Dobrey, who also built a lumberyard in Kremlin, and who chartered the first Bank of Kremlin in 1900. This was 7 years before OK became a state in 1907.

F. W. Zaloudek started attending the school in 1909, after first learning enough English to qualify. His native language was “Bohemian”, and his parents hired two young men to live with them and help the entire family learn English. F. W. said that the school when he started was a one-room building, with a single teacher for all 8 grades. then some unknown years later, it was expanded to two rooms; and then later to three rooms, with expansion to include the first two years of high school. F. W. said that in the late teens and early twenties, the primary grades used the First Baptist Church, at the corner of 5<sup>th</sup> and A Streets, basically caddy-corner to the south and west from the town school. [In his interview, F. W. Zaloudek says that there was a stable or barn for horses between the two outhouses back behind the school, right after mentioning the brick school being built in 1929. He talks about both the white wooden school and the later brick school at this part of the interview, and it is not clear at which school the horse barn he mentioned was located.](#)

Marie Wuerflein Meyer started school in the “German school” in the First Baptist Church. She attended school there for about three years, then transferred to the town school for her remaining years. Marie graduated in 1933, so her first year would presumably have been the fall of 1920. Marie was in the first senior class to graduate from the new 6-room brick school at the south end of F Street.

Our father, David A Toews, started kindergarten in Kremlin in 1921; he said that his kindergarten and 1st-3rd grades were in the First Baptist Church, across the F Street on the west side, and a bit south from the school; this is Block 11. Using this church as a school was apparently a long-standing situation, based on the memories of others above. He then attended 4th grade in the white wooden school building, and he was in this building through his freshman year, 1931-32. Dad remembers this as the year that children from some of the smaller rural schools began attending Kremlin School; other records indicate that this is the time that Wild Horse one-room school shut down. That seems the likely reason for the new and presumably larger 6-room red brick school at the south end of town being built that year, with its first use for the 1932-33 school year. We do not know for certain whether the “German” school in the Baptist Church was only for German-speaking students, to help them learn enough English to transfer to the regular school, and there were other K-3 students in the regular school, or whether ALL K-3 students had school in the Baptist Church.

Note that there were only 8 grades at Kremlin for many years; students who wanted to complete high school had to do that at Enid High School. As years passed, the Kremlin School expanded to include 10 and then 11 grades, but students still had to go to Enid to earn their diploma. This apparently changed in 1932-33, when state accreditation standards increased the minimal number of students per school, and the new brick schoolhouse at the south end of F Street was completed to meet state standards, graduating its first class in May of 1933. We believe that our dad finished his high school years, sophomore through senior years, in that new red brick school; he graduated with the Class of 1935, the third class to graduate from that school. Our mother, who attended the Columbia one-room school for grade school, had all of her high school years in the new red brick school, graduating with the Class of 1936.

Dad said that the white wooden school had 4 rooms in his days, and that his 4<sup>th</sup> grade class was in the room on the south side of the “tail” of the T-shaped building that stuck out to the east. The school was cold in the winter and the children would sit around the stove to study. Traditional classes were taught. Extracurricular activities included a glee club and baseball and basketball teams, which played outdoors until the Community Hall was built in 1933, perhaps the first year after the new red brick school was completed.

The photo here, from the early 1910s and hanging in the Zaloudek Building, likely shows this first school under construction, or more likely being expanded-- note the ladder on the roof. My best guess, and a guess only, is the original one-room school described by F. W. Zaloudek is the center of the building with the classic steeple or bell tower. The two sections to the left and right are likely the expansions to two rooms and then three rooms remembered by F. W. The final expansion to four rooms would have been the extension to the back (east) shown in the two photos on the next page.



The sepia photo to the right is of the student body and teachers in front of original Kremlin School building, also around 1912, and copied from the displays in the Zaloudek Building in Kremlin. Somewhere in this photo should be the young F. W. Zaloudek. This seems a very large group of students for just 4 rooms, but likely at this time at least the first 3-4 grades were meeting in the First Baptist Church. Note the bare soil around the sidewalk; but at least there is a bit of sidewalk compared to the photo above.



Here is another view of this school, from the 1994 Kremlin "history" yearbook, where it is indicated as "the first frame building". Note that this photo shows the east end of the tail of the building to be open, perhaps a shelter for horses, but I am not certain.



The bottom photo here shows children outside the schoolhouse, with outbuildings at the back, we presume toilets. The postcard says that it shows the original school building and celebrates the continuing existence of Kremlin. Note that in this photo, the east end has been closed in and extended to make more classrooms, compared to the photo above. In the top photo, the building ends at the back chimney, but in this photo, the building extends "3 windows" further back. You can also see the different shade of the shingles that were added for the new extension, and perhaps in two phases –some dark shingles further left (east) than the chimney, perhaps the back room extended; and then lighter shingles over the furthest east two windows, likely another one or two classrooms added.





Finally, here are three different class photos that we are fairly confident were taken outside the school building above. We clearly recognize our dad, David A. Toews, as third from the left in the front row of the top photo. Knowing his later classmates, we should be able to at least tentatively identify others.

Assuming that our dad is maybe 10 in the top photo, these student photos would likely have been from 1926-1928 or so.

I now believe that all three of these photos are of our dad's class, different years. John Wuerflein and Helena Janzen were his classmates, and I think I can see all three of these people that I knew in all three photos. What fun!

[Help from anyone in identifying any more of the students in these photos would be wonderful.](#)

