

First, was it Pleasant Plain? Or Pleasant Plains? Well, that is why our school marker sign includes both names, as “Pleasant Plain/s”! Some of the area residents thought it was Plains, some thought “just plain “Plain”! The page on this school in the story published in the Garfield County 1907-1982 history volume called the school Pleasant Plains; that entire article is included at the end of this document for reference. Newspaper stories of local events in the area, in newspapers nearly every week “back in the day”, were about equally likely to use Plain or Plains; in fact, there were many examples where the news story heading might say Pleasant Plain but talk about an event at the Pleasant Plains schoolhouse; or vice versa; or even use both spellings in the same photo caption! Most if not all of the old newspaper listings of all of the one-room schools with their teachers for the coming (or past) year that came from the County Superintendent of Schools called the school Pleasant Plains, so that seemed the best and perhaps most “official” guess to me. But a few of the area residents who went to school there seemed confident that it had been Pleasant Plain instead.

I will particularly acknowledge my friend and consultant Elfrieda Buller, who grew up one mile east of the school, and who was a first-grade student there during the last year the school was in operation, for her firm memory and evidence that it had been Pleasant Plain. Elfrieda clearly (and correctly!) remembered a photo memory book that her first grade teacher had made for each of the students or families at the school to be given to parents as a Christmas present, and she was confident that book said Pleasant Plain; and it did! I was able to borrow that booklet from her brother Alfred Buller, who is now taking care of Elfrieda’s important things for which she does not have room. And not only did the teacher call the school Pleasant Plain, but there was actually one photo in the booklet that showed the school “name plate”, no longer on the school but upside-down in front of the west steps, and that name plate clearly said “Pleasant Plain” and “Dist. No. 16”. That portion of that photo is shown below, enlarged and both right-side-up and up-side-down for easy viewing. The entire photo is also shown, a great view of the front (west) end of the school. All the other photos and views of the school from Elfrieda’s precious memory book are shown and described later in this story. And many other examples of both names will appear in various newspaper clippings. Then I spoke with Elfrieda’s 1946-47 first grade classmate Jere Daykin and asked him about the name, and he immediately said it was Pleasant Plains with an S; even classmates can’t agree! Interestingly, Jere also still had his first-grade class photo book, the same one that Elfrieda shared with me.



Here are just a few clippings of teachers and schools from lists provided to newspapers by the county superintendent, to provide credence to the equally likely or common use of the name Pleasant Plains.

Superior model schools were  
Evergreen, district 7; Pleasant  
Plains, district 16; Reynolds, dis-  
trict 55; Liberty, district 107;

Enid Events, May 17, 1934

8, Pleasant Valley, Florence Derr,  
Billings; District 16, Pleasant Plains,  
Doris During, Hillsdale; District 17,  
Columbia, Anna Toews, Kremlin;

Enid Morning News, August 20, 1939;  
teacher should be Doris Dusing

Rural schools and the teachers for  
the 1943-44 term are:  
Dist. No. School Teacher  
8 Pleasant Valley Mrs. Frank  
Devery  
16 Pleasant Plains Mrs. Inez M.  
Pickens  
17 Columbia Mrs. Dorothy Cook

Enid Morning News,  
September 3, 1943

The naming of the school is credited to Josephine (Beck) Kirton. The Kirton family continued to live near the school well into the 1980s or 1990s at least. Several of us knew Terry Kirton as a local farmer and neighbor.

The second important thing about this particular school is that it is still standing in its original location, but it is now a hidden internal part of a residential house there. In my youth and memories from about 1960 – 1972 perhaps, it was being used as a house, but without extensive modification or additions. The school as it looks now, with significant additions and modifications but still clearly visible, is shown later in this story.

### 1. Facts.

District number: 16

Legal location: Southwest corner of the southwest quarter of section 14-24N-7W in Keowee Township

Location description: 3 miles west of the Midway, or 5 miles west of Kremlin, on the north side of Keowee Road

Modern “street” address: on the northeast corner of the intersection of Keowee Road and Oakwood Road, at 14509 Oakwood Road

GPS location: 36° 33' North, 97°, 55' West

First year of classes: Perhaps August 1897, but not completely clear; see more below; for sure by 1899

Last year of classes: Closed at the end of spring semester 1947

Fate of building: Still standing, with additions and modifications

Known teachers: An extensive list is provided later in this story

We believe that this school was, or became, a part of the Hillsdale Schools when it ceased operations. We know that the Kliewer, Buller, Daykin, and Wilcox children all went to Hillsdale the next year. However, the Zaloudek children all went to Kremlin. Perhaps the Zaloudek children were given special permission to go to Kremlin – their relatives were there, and their home in the far southeast corner of the Hillsdale district was much closer to Kremlin than to Hillsdale.

## 2. Special thanks:

- for their donations for school marker signs and for allowing their donations to be shared among all of the Hillsdale school marker signs: Steve Hoffsommer, Monty Hoffsommer, Jeff Hoffsommer, Kent and Mary Shaklee, Suzy Shaklee Horvath, Quintin Jessup, Tom Seng, and Dale Hayes. **Additional donations are still welcome; we always end up using some of our own money to cover the bill for the signs.**

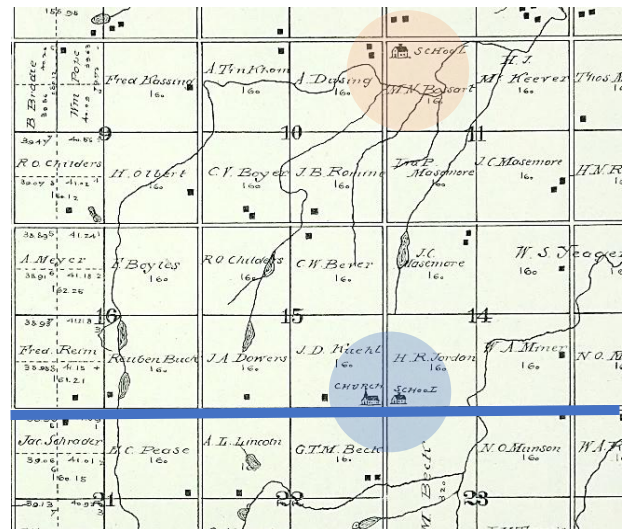
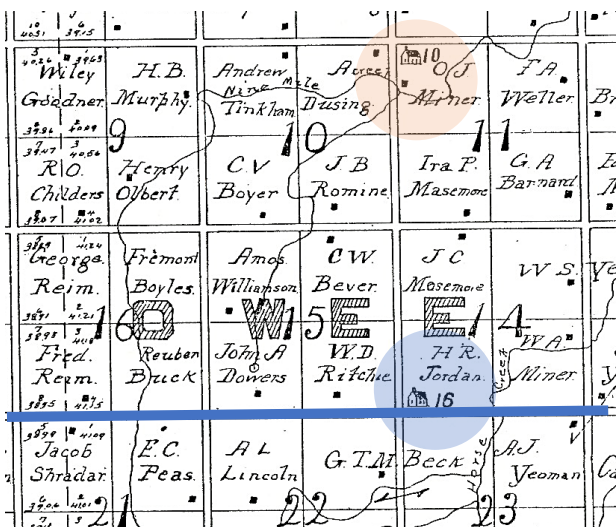
- for their help with stories, documents, and photos: especially to Elfrieda Buller and her sister Rosella (Buller) Funk and their brother Alfred Buller; Garfield County History contributors Flavia Hellums and Dora Froese; Janet Streck; Dale Hayes; **and hopefully more to come!**

- for allowing us to put up the sign in his yard! : Zachary Jones, the current owner of the house that includes the schoolhouse

- to my brother Arrel, as with all of these school stories: for his interest and encouragement, his careful editing, and help with all aspects of this project—especially the work on the school location marker signs

## 3 . Location of the school.

A 1901 commercial plat map marking the location of School 16, Pleasant Plain(s), is shown on the left below, and a 1906 government plat map is shown on the right below. The school location is highlighted in blue, and the current paved Keowee Road is shown in blue to aid with visualizing the location of the school. School #10, Nine Mile School, not quite two miles straight north, is highlighted in pale orange. This is unusually close for adjacent one-room school houses (usually 3 miles apart).



#### 4. Early history of the school buildings

From the story in the Garfield County History book, the building went through multiple changes. The story there, from Dora Froese of Enid at the time, says that school was first taught by Charles Bever at the Maria Waters home before the school was built by the neighborhood men. Charles Bever was also indicated as the main carpenter in the memories of Flavia Hellums. That first building was made of wood and covered with 1x12s. Two photos of that building are shown below.

The top photo is certainly the earliest photo we have of this school building and its students, from 1897. This was likely the first year of school here – see the storm cellar inscription information below. I show this here because it is very early, and it is one of many examples of the name Pleasant Plains. The photo was reprinted in the Enid Morning News on April 16, 1939, indicating a name in use at that time. This is clearly the first wood plank school building that was replaced around 1910-12. The names of the teacher and some of the students in the photo are in the caption. Only a few of the students and the teacher are identified in the photo. There were about 33 students.

### *Schools Crowded Then Too--Picture Of 1897*



HOW'S THIS for a class picture? It was taken of the student body of Pleasant Plains school, near Hillsdale, in 1897 and some of those faces are still claimed by such well known citizens as O. C. Calvert, E. J. Masemore, H. L. Frost and Miss Etha Jones, the teacher, who is now Mrs. Oscar E. Ford of Helena. The picture is the property of S. F. Jones of Hillsdale and is another marker of the refining hand of civilization that swiftly followed the opening of the Cherokee Strip.

The photo below is another photo of early students, from 1900, copied from the Garfield County History book. Thanks to Dora Froese for preserving and sharing these memories and memorabilia. The teacher is Sam Warren, and there are 18 students in the photo.



(L) Pleasant Plains students, 1900. Teacher was Sam Warren. [Photo courtesy of Dora Froese, Enid]

That first 1x12 plank-covered school was replaced with a nicer wood frame school in 1910, according to the story in the Garfield County History, or 1912 based on the newspaper stories below, though those newspaper articles are somewhat confusing. This photo shows the first 1x12 school building on the right along with the new wood frame schoolhouse that replaced it; this photo is from the Garfield County History books. It was presumably taken to celebrate the first day of the new school, and it appears to have the students to the right and their parents and other adults from the community to the left. Presumably this photo is taken to the north; no door shows for the first school, so it must have been on the north side, the east end, or perhaps the northwest corner, hidden by the new building. The top of the cupola on the new school is cut off, so we do not know how tall that might have been.

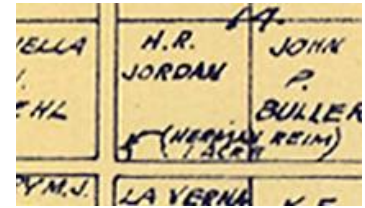


Here is a very early newspaper story about Bert Robertson putting down a cistern in 1905; this would have been somewhere near the first school house at the far right in the photo above. Whether it is the same cistern that was at the final school as seen in photos further below is not known.

Kremlin Journal. September 15.

Bert Robertson is putting down a cistern at the Pleasant Plains school house.

Interestingly, documents from the County Registrar's office show that H.R. and Isabella Johnson from Pennsylvania sold the school land and building to School District 16 in June, 1909, for \$29 (Book 57, p176). Then in December 1949, the Hillsdale Board of Education, successor to School District #16, and by order of annexation by the State Board of Education, sold the school property to Herman Reim "for \$1.00 and other considerations".



Here is an interesting plat map excerpt for the Pleasant Plains school and grounds, the only one I have found that singles out the ownership of a one-room school separate from the ownership of the farm. This 1951 plat map shows the school acre owned by Herman Reim, as indicated by the deed, who also owned a farm on the south side of Keowee Road a mile further east. But the rest of the farm is still owned by H. R. Jordan, who sold the school acre way back in 1909!

The Pleasant Plain/s community was also closely tied with the Olive Chapel church across the road to the west. Here is a 1905 article about the dedication of what I assume was that church. Below is one of numerous newspaper headings showing that the news from this area was in most cases for both Olive Chapel Church, the Pleasant Plains School, and for the entire surrounding community.

Enid Daily Morning News, October 28, 1905

At 7:30 p. m. Rev. W. M. Ayers presiding elder of Alva District will preach. The pastor's absence is necessitated to officiate at the dedication of the new United Brethren church in the Pleasant Plains community.

Olive Chapel  
Pleasant Plains

There are several early newspaper articles about church events at the schoolhouse and about school events connected with the church.

Jere Daykin, first grader 1946-47, the last year for the school, attended the Olive Chapel Church. He said it was Evangelical United Brethren, a denomination that later merged with the United Methodist Church. He thought that the church had closed in the early 1950s, some 5-10 years after the school closed.

The school house had other uses as well. The article to the right shows that one of only 5-6 "granges" was organized by the community and met at the school house, and other articles indicate that the grange met every other week. This is the first time I have seen a county grange referred to as a "Pomona".

Enid Wave Democrat, March 28, 1926

The article below shows that it was the voting place for the Keowee Township, at least in its early days.

Enid Wave Democrat, August 28, 1902

KEOWEE TOWNSHIP.  
Shall constitute one election precinct known as Precinct No. 41 and the place of holding said election in said precinct shall be at Pleasant Plains, school house, district 16.

**COUNTY GRANGE  
IS ORGANIZED  
NEAR KREMLIN**

Four Garfield Orders Assist at Pleasant Plains School

A Pomona, or county grange, was organized yesterday at the Pleasant Plains school, six miles west of Kremlin. Four out of the five granges of the county were represented and 24 charter members were enrolled. Officers were elected and installed by state Master W. B. Han of Enid.

Here are some news clippings about the new wood frame school, the one to the left in the photo above. The article below talks about a meeting at the Pleasant Plains school house to approve bonds to build a new school; but then says "Hurrah for District No. 15"; (Pleasant Plains is #16!). Is the 15 a typo, and the bonds were for Pleasant Plains, #16? Or was this perhaps a vote for a new school in District #15 (as stated), the Lacey school a few miles west and south, with the meeting held at the Pleasant Plains school building as a convenient or neutral meeting place. I believe it was for Pleasant Plains, based on the timing. This perhaps fits with the article to the right, which talks about the new Pleasant Plains school being finished; but completion mid-October from a vote to approve bonds to pay for the school in late July seems perhaps too fast.

Kremlin Journal, July 26, 1912

There was a school meeting at the pleasant plains school house Monday for the purpose of voting bonds to build a new school house. There will be a new house erected before the time of opening school Hurrah for District No. 15! Mr. L. Scott has been employed as teacher for District No. 10.

Regardless, I like the last paragraph of the right-hand article, which talks about people going home feeling good about having been together, looking forward to what the new school will bring, and how it might bring them all closer together and "make each feel that life is worth living". These buildings were more than "just" school houses!

Kremlin Journal October 18, 1912

The patrons and friends of School District No. 16 celebrated the building of the new school house last Monday with a big dinner, such as only the women of this community can give. There were eighty two present and they gathered around three large tables spread with all of the good things which were provided for the occasion and to say that anyone did not do justice to and was not equal to the occasion we failed to note.

The tables were cleared away and short speeches were made by Supt. Geo. Rainey of Enid, Rev. S. C. Allman and Mrs. R. O. Calvert of Pleasant Plains District. Miss Clarkie Van Valkenburg in a few pleasing remarks showed her appreciation at the reception given her and at the demonstration of good will and asked for their cooperation throughout the term.

Everyone went to their homes feeling better for having been together and looking forward to many more such gatherings that brings teacher, patrons, neighbors and friends closer together, and make each feel that life is worth living.

Below are several news item tidbits I found about the early days of this “new” school. The article on the left talks of the school board visiting the school and the pupils enjoying their visits; and also their “pleasant task” of writing compositions. The young lady with the diamond ring could have been the teacher, but more likely a young lady from the Olive Chapel Church. This article also says that the school has a new bell – remember the belfry from the building photo above, finally getting a bell! And a new desk and chair for the teacher. Enrollment for the 1913-14 school year was 41 students.

The top article to right says that 34 students were enrolled by October of 1914 for the next school year, and that more would be joining later. I do not have specific information, but the school year was much shorter in those early days, perhaps not really getting started until after the wheat was sowed, and terms often ending early in the spring, presumably when help was again needed with the farming.

The second article to the right tells of the school getting a new piano in 1918. And the bottom right article tells of a new coat of paint on the school house, with Ross St. John as the boss painter. Things getting better little by little, year by year. But bad news soon to come!

Kremlin Journal, January 9, 1914

The school board called on the school Monday. The pupils enjoy their visits.

Gus Reim and family called Monday evening on Anthony Zelodek and family.

The eighth grade of our school had the pleasant task of writing compositions Monday.

We notice one of the young ladies wearing a diamond ring. Looks rather suspicious.

The Pleasant Plains school house has a new bell. The teacher has a new desk and chair.

Abraham and Tina Sperling have entered school at Pleasant Plains. The enrollment is 41.

The scholars of Pleasant Plains were glad to get back to school Monday after two weeks vacation.

Kremlin Journal, October 1, 1914

Thirty-four scholars have enrolled at Pleasant Plains. More will start later.

Enid Events, January 24, 1918

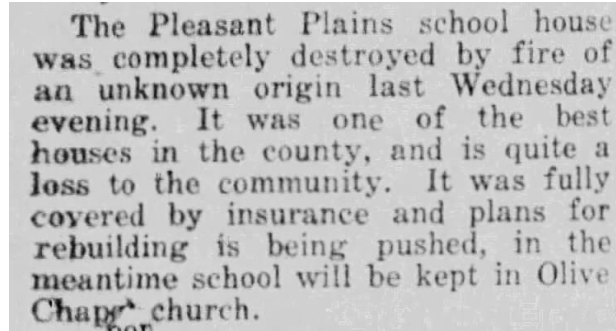
The directors of the Pleasant Plains district have purchased a new piano for the school room.

Kremlin Journal, September 23, 1920

Pleasant Plains school house looks fine in its new coat of paint. Ross St. John was boss painter.

That new building erected in 1912 burned in 1922, and the rest of that school term was held in the Olive Chapel United Brethren Church across the road to the west. Two stories about the fire are below. The left article tells of the fire, that the school was fully insured, and that school would be held in the Olive Chapel Church in the meantime. The right article, from later in the same issue, describes the cause of the fire, a cracked bowl in the heating stove that let fire onto the floor, and how neighbors came to save the church from catching fire also. Fortunately, this was after school was out and all had left the building.

Enid Events, December 21, 1922



The Pleasant Plains school house was completely destroyed by fire of an unknown origin last Wednesday evening. It was one of the best houses in the county, and is quite a loss to the community. It was fully covered by insurance and plans for rebuilding is being pushed, in the meantime school will be kept in Olive Chapel church.

Enid Events, December 21, 1922



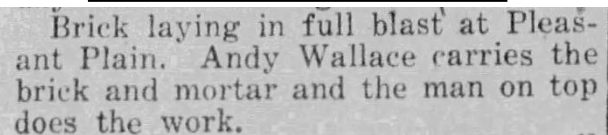
The Pleasant Plain school house burned down Wednesday evening; caught fire from the furnace. The bowl of the stove was cracked all around and let fire out on the floor while all had left the building for home. The neighbors were called to save the church, for fear the wind would change and blow sparks onto the church and catch afire. The meeting at Olive Chapel closed Monday evening.

The article to the right talks about the brick laying going full blast on the third Pleasant Plains school building, the one shown at the start of this story that still stands inside the house that is there now.

Presumably the brick school was done for the 1923-24 school year; and presumably the fire

destroying the previous wooden school is why this one was built of brick. There are stories of several other one-room schools in the area burning also – the fire in the stove would need to stay hot until the end of the school day, when everyone would go home, leaving no one to notice if some hot embers escaped the stove onto the wood floors. This school building is fairly unique among one-room schools in being built up on a higher foundation and with a basement below, the school floor high enough to have basement windows to the outside. Many more photos of this brick school are shown later in this story.

Enid Events April 5, 1923



Brick laying in full blast at Pleasant Plain. Andy Wallace carries the brick and mortar and the man on top does the work.

The article to the right here is of considerable general interest to me, giving important information about many of the area schools. First, note that 8<sup>th</sup> grade graduation (“commencement”) was held together for all of the area’s one-room grade schools. Graduation was in the Kremlin Community Building. C.L. Dalke was the county superintendent for Garfield County for many years, and he was there to hand out the diplomas and to give a speech to those who were there.

This article has a great list of the area one-room grade schools as of 1932 – Evergreen, Pleasant Valley, Wild Horse, Nine Mile, Pleasant Plains, Columbia, and Rosebud. Stories for each of these schools are on our website, or will be very soon; and all of these schools will soon have location marker “memorial” signs as well as their history stories posted on our website.

Also note that Kremlin’s grade school was included with the more “rural” schools. This was the last year before Kremlin built its six-room red brick schoolhouse that included high school classroom space for the first time.

Finally, there is a nice collection of names of the graduates from all of these schools for spring of 1932, including my mother Rosa Voth. I am guessing that most anyone reading this story will know of one or perhaps several of these 1932 graduates as well!

Enid Events, June 2, 1932

## RURAL SCHOOLS COMMENCEMENT

Joint commencement programs were held for eight school districts north of Enid on Thursday night in the community building at Kremlin. Diplomas were presented by C. L. Dalke, county superintendent, who also made the address of the evening.

Those graduating were: Evergreen—Eva Brower. Pleasant Valley—Jock Gracy, Clarence Herbison, Gloria Robison, Charles Rahm, Leon Humphrey, and Richard Humphrey. Wild Horse—Dale Moffitt and Earl Goll.

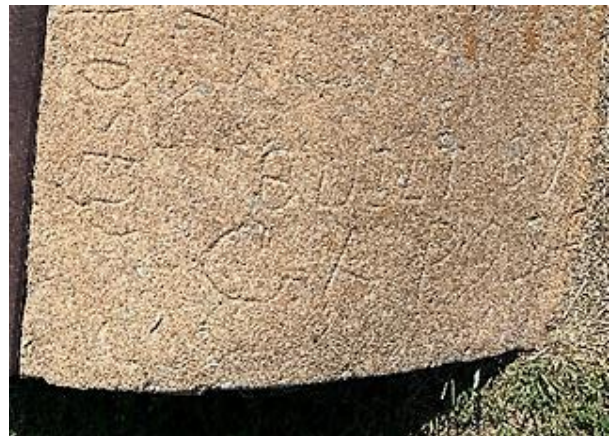
Nine Mile School—Fredith Olbert. Pleasant Plains—Irene Foo-  
shee, Marcella Reim, and Evelyn Buck. Columbia — Cecil Black, Rosa Voth, Lydia Toews, Martha Thesman and Ruby Barton.

Kremlin—Nattie Smith, Anna Janzen, Eleanor Bowers, Hazel Cooper, Cornelius Sperling, and Celestia Bura. Rosebud—Larry O’Brate and Bernice Johnson.

**5. History information from the storm cellar still on site.** The photos below show parts of the schoolyard still “standing” on the site that help to document the early history. The left photo below shows the storm cellar, north and west of the schoolhouse building on Oakwood Road. At the right in this photo is the steel door to a cellar, still in use. The two small “towers” to the left in the photo are air vents, to let air in, and covered with screen to keep snakes and bugs out. The right photo below shows the engraving into the back side of the top tall side of the cellar door, indicating that the school, or perhaps just the cellar, was built (started or finished?) Aug 5 (or 15?) of 1897 (or 1927) and that it is Dist. 16, with the name H. L. Posey. Perpendicular to that inscription is engraved that it was “Built by G. A. Posey”. The 1901 plat map indicates that G.A. Posey owns the SE/4 of Section 9 in McKinley Township, and an S.L. Posey owns the NE/4 of Section 17 a few miles west. I could find no newspaper stories about Poseys building the school, but there were several articles about George Posey losing nearly all of his buildings in a tornado in June, 1899.



Although this cellar does not show up well in the many 1947 photos of the school shown further below, Elfrieda Buller clearly remembered it being there, and I believe I can just barely see it in a couple of the photos. The idea of George Posey being the one who built the school – in perhaps its first iteration, and maybe in 1897 – seems to have considerable credence; though the engraving on the cellar could have been when the cellar was built, not when the school was built. Also, George Albert (G.A.) Posey had a son named Howard Lewis Posey (H.L.), which is the other name carved into the concrete; but this H.L. was not born until 1909, further suggesting that possibly this cellar and the engraving in the concrete may have been done later, perhaps when the cellar was built or the steel door added, lending credence to the possible 1927 date, when H.L. would have been 18 years old. G.A. Posey continued to live in the area until 1950 when he died in Nash. A reasonable possibility is that H.L. Posey added the cement end cap to the cellar door frame later in his life, to honor his father for building the school, and adding his own name as the one who put up the “monument”. Note that “Built By” is clearly with G.A. Posey but not with H.L. Posey. Again, remember that the early students and building photo near the start of this story was from 1897, suggesting that that newspaper story may have run because of the opening of the new school.



## 6. Elfrieda Buller’s amazing photos of the buildings and grounds and students and teacher from 1946.

The photos below are from Elfrieda Buller’s copy of an album made by her teacher Thelma Romine for each of the students (or perhaps each of the families) to give to their parents for Christmas 1946. It is remarkable that this teacher made so many copies of each of these photos and then hand-lettered each of the booklets, in white ink on the black photo album pages. These photos include much important information about the looks of the schoolhouse, the layout of the school grounds, as well as photos of all of the students from the final year for this school. Note that the teacher calls the school Pleasant Plain, in agreement with the concrete name plate shown at the bottom of the first photo below.

This is the best view of the front of the school, including the upside-down school sign and all of the 1946-47 students. There are stairways going up to the classroom level from both the north and the south, with nice concrete sidewalks leading in both directions. Beside the front door is a ventilation window. At the north edge of the front (west) side is a second lower door, leading down to the basement. Elfrieda thought the steps maybe jogged to the south halfway down, and perhaps connected with steps to the basement from inside the school building. On the north (left) side of the building is a cistern pump – note the gutters and downspouts leading to that area.



There is a brick structure coming out from the school by the cistern – this could be a second stairway going down from the classroom to the north, likely to provide easy access to the cistern; we think that more likely this was the opening for the coal truck to deliver and dump coal into the basement for the heating stove. A flagpole is centered in front of the school building. The road to the right (south) in the photo is what is now Keowee Road, which Elfrieda Buller said was still only a gravel road in 1947.

This photo is taken from the front of the school looking to the northwest. The road in this photo is what is now Oakwood Road. This photo also provides a nice view of the Olive Chapel Church across the road to the west from the schoolhouse. It again shows all of the students, this time on the standard style of merry-go-round of those days, which must have been located just west of the south edge of the schoolhouse. This photo was titled “Here’s where we go ‘round and ‘round”.



There appears to be a sidewalk leading from the road up to the schoolhouse just behind the merry-go-round, and further back (north) there appears to be a driveway, which was likely most important for delivering coal to the north side of the basement. At the far right of this photo, the storm cellar that is still on-site is barely visible to the north of the driveway; and the tall “Giant Strides” pole is just south of the driveway; more on the Giant Strides with a better photo of it below. Jere Daykin said that there were not ditches on what is now Keowee Road and he thought horseback or horse-and-buggy access to the stable behind the school was from the south, rather than going around to the driveway from the west. There is a one-pipe “fence” in front of the school by the road, likely to keep the children from accidentally running onto the road while they were playing. **I have not yet learned about the six tall**

poles close together behind the right edge of the merry-go-round; three of those show up more clearly in another photo below.

This is the best view of the south side of the school, and more of the front. All of the girls are in this photo, all except the youngest hanging off of the one-rail pipe fence and in front of the merry-go-round, clearly marking its location. Note how the grass is worn off where the students are hanging, suggesting that playing with this pipe fence must have been a source of regular fun. There is a well pump to the right of the students, which would have been fairly close to both roads – this in addition to the cistern.



The many windows at classroom level are shown – there are two single windows, a set of three joined windows, and then two more single windows, the furthest east (back) not shown in this photo but visible in another. Three basement windows are also shown; note that the basement and the classroom level were one continuous wall, not one set on top of the other. Finally, this photo shows that the chimney for the basement coal stove was at the back (east) end, indicating the likely location of that stove. The pole structure behind the furthest left girl in the photo is described along with a better photo of it below.

Here is a view from the south side of the school looking to the north and east. The fourth basement window is shown behind the right-hand students, and there is a nice view of the girls' outhouse a good ways behind the school; and with no sidewalk! There appears to be sidewalk at the southeast corner behind the school also, though it is not clear where it leads to or from.

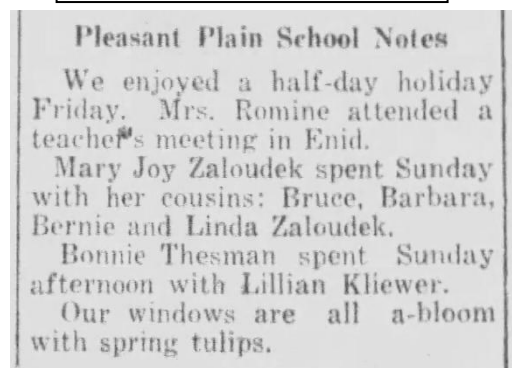


Here is another nice photo of all of the students, AND the teacher, Mrs. Ed (Thelma) Romine, who finally gets to be in a photo with her students. Thanks to whoever took this photo for her! Note what appear to be nice tulips in the windows – I first thought that these were likely the print pattern on the curtains and not real flowers – but then came across the newspaper item shown here, suggesting that they were in fact real – still not sure!. This clipping is from the Enid Events of April 11, 1947, the same year as the memory book. But the photos for the memory book were for Christmas, so would all be from the fall; and tulips bloom in the spring. So my best guess is that the article was tongue-in-cheek, about the tulips that were ALWAYS blooming on the curtains in their windows. Also note that this 1947 article refers to the school as Pleasant Plain singular.



Enid Events, April 11, 1947

Unfortunately, we have no views of the north side of the school house. Elfrieda Buller clearly remembered that there were no windows on the north side, likely because of the strong and cold north winds. Similarly, no good views of the east end. Elfrieda said there was only one door at the east end, from the classroom down to the “backyard”; no east door to or from the basement.



Above are two photos of the boys playing in a dirt hole at the north edge of the school lot and perhaps near the front of the building; Miss Romine called this “the fox hole”. Elfrieda did not remember anything about it, or any construction there, and she thought it might have been a hole dug by the students. The name fox hole suggested to me that the boys might have dug this to hide out in, like they may have heard about soldiers doing during World War II, which had ended a couple of years earlier. This would be consistent with the teacher’s title for that photo, “A fox hole full of sharp shooters”. Jere Daykin confirmed that he and the other boys had dug that hole but did not really remember why – but why not?! Again note the outhouse in the northeast corner of the lot. Elfrieda Buller did remember them being allowed to play in this dirty dirt hole and in hindsight was amazed that they were allowed to do that – it was not completely fenced off like any such construction site would be in our day and age. The photo to the right is all of the students by the fox hole, and it shows some sort of make-shift wall

south of the fox hole. The title of that photo in the booklet was “Watch over the fox hole”, signifying “troops on watch”. Jere Daykin joked that “there were a lot of enemies killed from that foxhole, ha ha”.

This photo is just the girls, on the front steps, the picture taken looking north. Two puzzling items are the nature of the six tall and closely-spaced “telephone poles” along the road just to the left of the front stair rail (only three shown here). The other interesting item is the tall pole with a spinning apparatus at the top and cables coming down to hand-holds near the bottom. This was called a “Giant Strides”, and an internet photo here shows how it was used.



Elfrieda called this a “Giant Strikes” and commented that a student could indeed receive a “giant strike” from hanging and spinning on this piece of playground equipment. She said there was one of these at the Hillsdale town school in subsequent years that she played on, but she did not know whether it was the one from Pleasant Plain. Elfrieda became a teacher herself for many years and finds it remarkable all of the things the teacher allowed them to do – the younger kids going out to play without supervision while the teacher worked with older students, the boys digging and playing in a dirt hole with no safety guards, hanging off of fence rails right next to the road. She said students were allowed to go out to play, but if they came back in the building and bothered those doing school work, then they had to stay inside for the rest of recess.



THE GIANT STRIDE  
A good exercise for all the muscles.

This first of the student photos, the first graders, provides yet more important information about the school grounds. This photo was taken behind the school looking to the northeast, with the boys’ outhouse, not seen in the previous photos. This photo also provides a view of the double shed building that was a stable for the students’ horses, including through its final years.



Elfrieda clearly remembered one of the Zaloudek boys riding his horse to school and keeping him in these buildings for the day. Jere Daykin said his family had a one-horse wagon with rubber tires and a fully-enclosed wooden “cab” to protect

them from bad weather. He was only a first grader and thought that the older Zaloudek boys were probably the ones who drove the horse and wagon to school. On nice days they rode their bicycles or walked. The students are sitting on the teeter-totter, and a tall 6-swing set is behind them. The four first graders are, L to R, Lorene Wilcox, Elfrieda Buller, Linda Zaloudek, and Jere Daykin. The east end of what I believe was a chin-up bar shows here too; this is seen again in the 7<sup>th</sup> and 8<sup>th</sup> graders' photo below. Between the left two girls is what seems to be a basketball backboard, though neither Elfrieda nor her older sister Rosella nor Jere Daykin remembered a goal or playing basketball there. Hidden behind the far-left girl would be the girls' outhouse.

The second and third graders are shown here on the front steps, L to R Bernie (Bernard) Zaloudek, 3<sup>rd</sup> grade, with his six-gun at his side; Phillip Wilcox, 2<sup>nd</sup> grader, with his boxing gloves; Lillian Kliewer with the curly hair; and Marie Buller with the pigtails.

These are grades 4 and 5, all girls; L to R are Sara Buller, 5<sup>th</sup> grade; Barbara Zaloudek, Elfrieda thought 5<sup>th</sup> grade also; and Bernice Wilcox, 4<sup>th</sup> grade. Sara Buller and Bernice Wilcox may have been close friends, wearing matching tops. I believe the darker structure visible at the right girl's left elbow may be the storm cellar shown earlier; that is the right location.

Here are the 7<sup>th</sup> and 8<sup>th</sup> graders, L to R Rosella Buller, 8<sup>th</sup> grade; Bruce Zaloudek, 7<sup>th</sup> grade; and Hanna Buller, 7<sup>th</sup> grade. All of the Buller girls were sisters. This photo shows two more school ground items – what is likely a basketball goal again at the far right, and the girls' outhouse. Note that this outhouse has a pointed and level roof, the same as the one in the "fox hole" photo, whereas the other outhouse, in the first grade photo and the boys-only photo below, has a slanting roof.

Elfrieda remembered the girls' outhouse as being nicer than the boys', she thought brick for the girls' but wood for the boys'. And the level-roof outhouse in this photo looks like it could be brick, so was



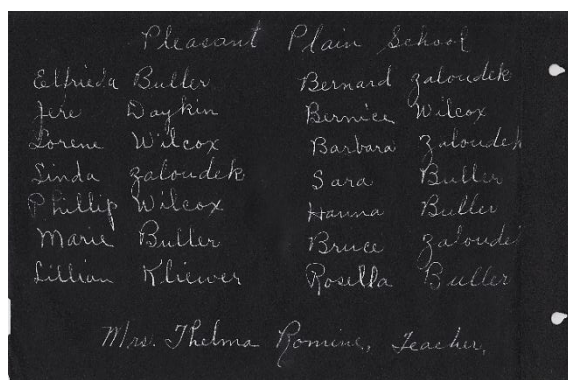
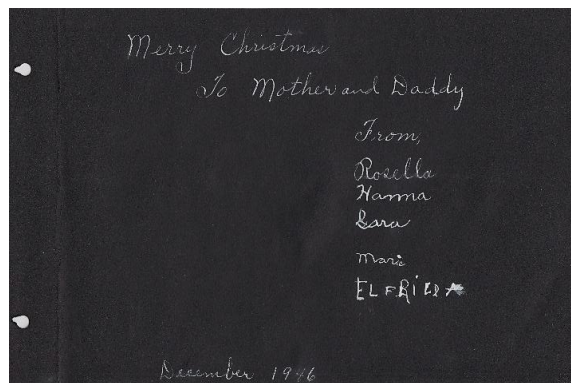
likely for the girls. Also, what I believe is a chin-up bar is again visible behind these children, along with a partial view of the back steps.

Here are "Just our boys", with their boxing gloves, and with a nice view of the wooden slanted-roof boys' outhouse and the north end of the swing set; in front of the lone cedar tree and barely visible is what must have been the basketball backboard.

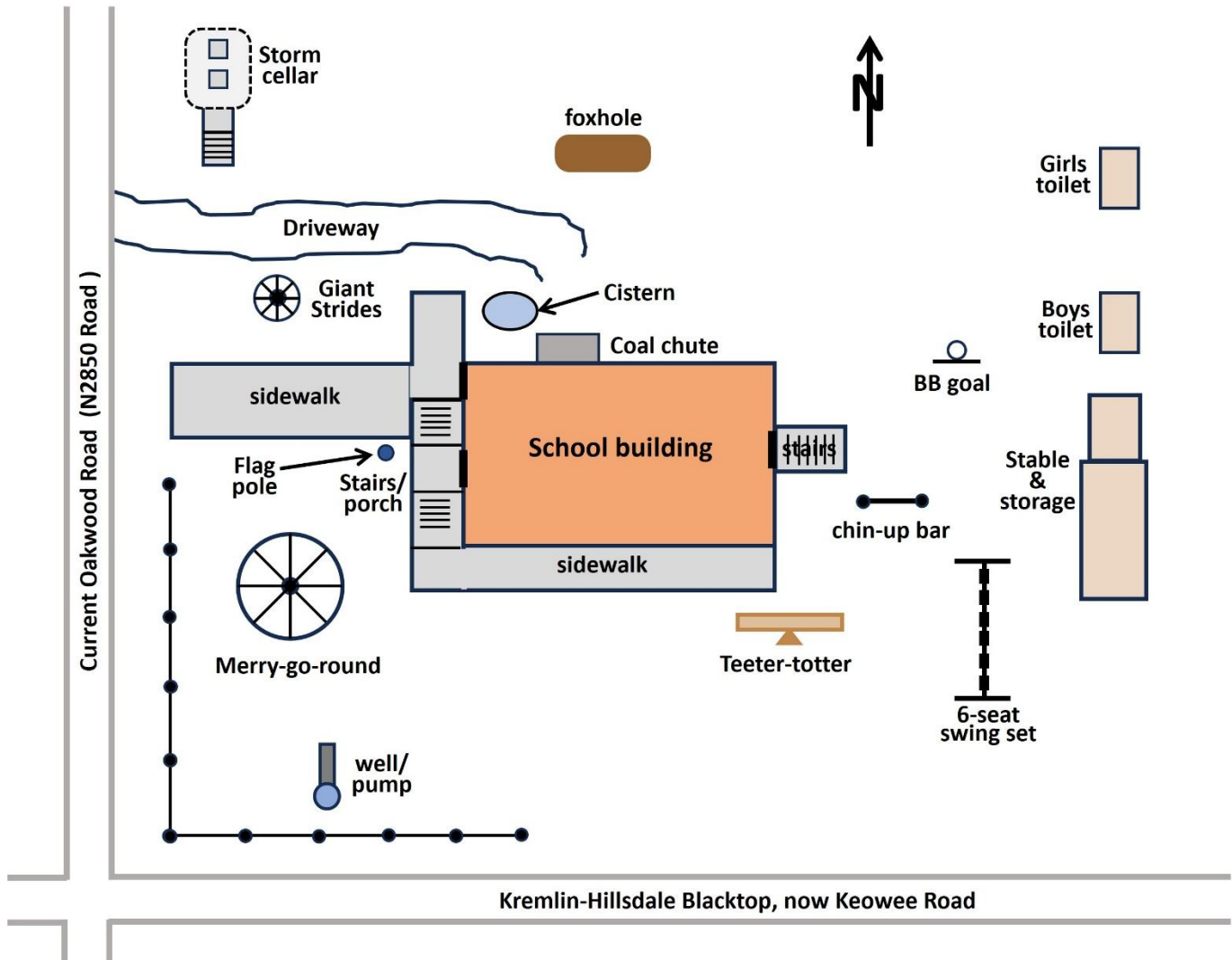


Finally, here is a nice photo of Mrs. Thelma Romine, the teacher, taken at her home most likely, certainly not at the school.

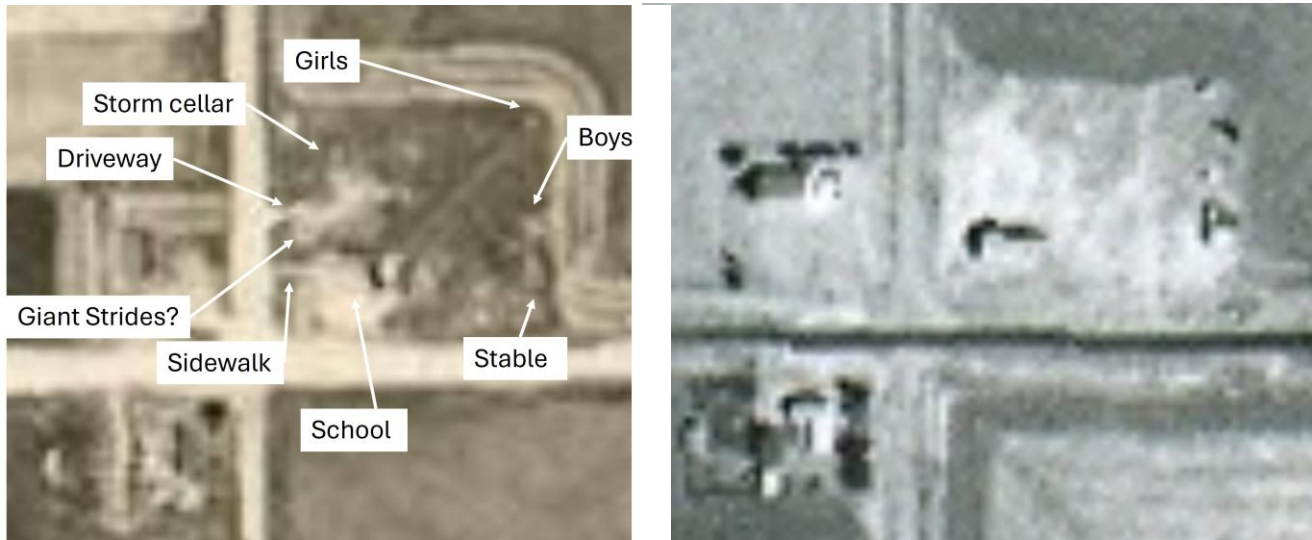
Below are photos of the cover of Elfrieda's photo memory book from Mrs. Romine, the inside cover page, and a list of all of the students, in grade order, again with Pleasant Plain clearly indicated. Note that all 5 of the Buller children wrote their own names on the same page, suggesting that there was one book per family, not one for each student. Their grade levels can be gauged by the quality of their handwriting, Elfrieda only halfway through first grade! Also shown is a sample photo page.



Below is my attempt at a sketch of the school grounds based on the many views from Elfrieda's photos, modified and enhanced by my brother Arrel Toews.



On the next page are two useful aerial photos of the school grounds for additional documentation and perspective – the left photo from 1937, the right from 1954, seven years after the school closed. I have marked a few key elements on the 1937 photo. The stable and the outhouses are visible. Perhaps most striking for me from this photo is how far it was to walk to the girls' outhouse! The Olive Chapel church is also nicely visible, with what appears to be a stable behind (to the west of) the church. Not a perfect photo, but so glad it is available and that I found it! The 1954 photo is a bit clearer. For the school, I think most of the playground equipment has been moved to the Hillsdale school, or perhaps sold to other schools or individuals. Both outhouses and the stable building are still in place. The Olive Chapel church may still be there across the road west, but the location and orientation appear different. Both photos show a large farm yard caddy-corner to the southwest (below and left); that farm is owned by Mary Kirton on 1936 and 1951 plat maps, but Jere Daykin said this house served as the church parsonage in his day and that his grandfather Rev. John Moore had been a preacher there. In earlier years, this was the Beck farm mentioned in the Garfield County History as where the teachers usually lived.



**7. Inside the school building.** Here are memories of the inside of the schoolhouse, from Elfrieda Buller with help by phone from her sister Rosella in California, and with additional help from Jere Daykin, Elfrieda's classmate. Interestingly, they all remember that they usually, maybe always, went into the schoolhouse through the west door at ground level, not through the nice classroom-level doors at the top of the double stairway. Jere Daykin confirmed that there were steps just to the right (north) of the classroom level west door; those steps went down to the landing inside the school at the ground-level door at the north side of the west end. On nice days, they would come in the ground-level door and head up the steps to the classroom immediately. On cold days, they went down to the basement first, which is where they hung their coats, hats, and mittens, before going up to the classroom. The basement is also where there was a sink for them to wash their hands, almost certainly with water carried down from the cistern just above. They then went up to the classroom level on steps that were at the west (front) end of the building.

The heating stove was a coal furnace in the northeast corner of the basement, I believe with a large vent grate above it at classroom level to the north of the east exit door. Rosella remembers standing on that grate above the furnace to warm up after being outside in the winter, and leaving her mittens there to dry. There was a coal bin or "room" in the basement next to the furnace, to make it easy for the teacher to shovel more coal into the furnace as needed. This fits with the idea of the chute for dumping coal into the basement being just east of the cistern at the middle of the north side of the building.

Elfrieda said that she did not remember them ever having to go into the basement for a storm, nor did she remember the school children ever doing much in the basement, other than entering and leaving the school, and using the sink there to wash their hands. However, her sister Rosella, an 8<sup>th</sup> grader the year the school closed, clearly remembered the kids sometimes roller skating in the basement, which had a nice cement floor; likely this roller skating was for some recess and PE when it was too cold to go outside. And the news clip to the right here suggests that

Enid Events, January 21, 1932

### Pleasant Plain School

The young people gave a Christian Endeavor party Friday night in the basement of the school house. Fifteen were present and all reported an enjoyable evening.

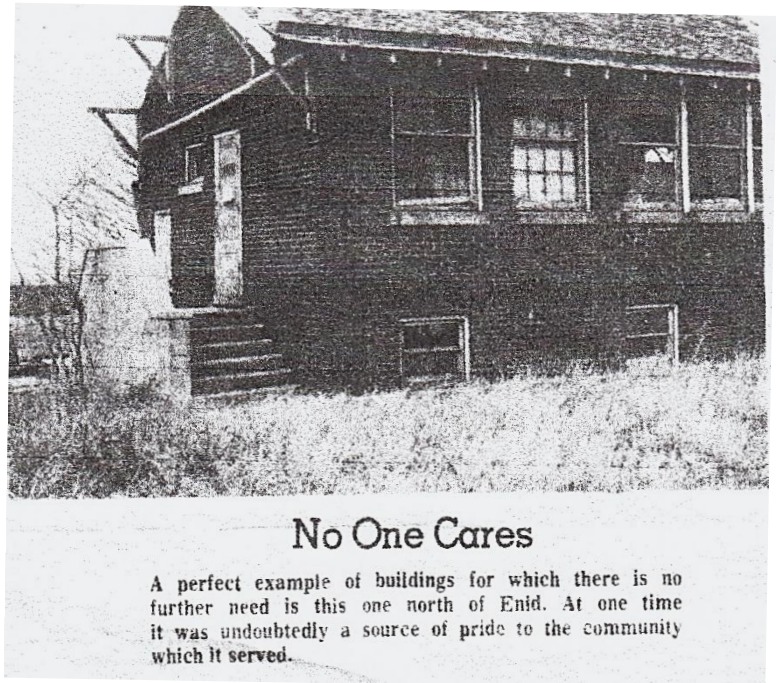
it may also have been used as a community gathering place, in this case for the youth group from the Olive Chapel church across the road west. It is not clear why this was in the school basement, because Jere Daykin said the church had a nice basement as well. Regardless, the school basement may well have been a bit of a community center with good options for setting up the area as desired.

The Flavia Hellums story in the Garfield County History remembers when the desks were simple 1x12 boards, and also that there was a switch to real school desks that sat two students and had ink wells at some point. Elfrieda and Rosella did not remember whether their desks were single or double, but they were certain that they each had their own desk; there were not enough students to need to double up on desks. Elfrieda and Rosella both remembered that the teacher's desk was on the north side of the room; there were no windows on the north side, so this would have kept the students from getting distracted by gazing out the windows. There was also a stage on the north side, with the piano on it, and perhaps the teacher's desk was on the stage also. Elfrieda remembered a table near the teacher's desk also, where the teacher would work with whatever group of students were her current focus, while the others worked at their desks or played outside. They also remembered the "library", perhaps more of a bookcase, being on the stage or platform and having doors that locked, and that the shelves for storing their lunches was there also. Students brought their own meals, in bags or buckets or baskets; she remembered sharing a bucket with an older sister, but that another older sister had her own pail. They ate their meals at their desks.

The single door at the east end from classroom level to the steps going down is how the students went out to the playground, and perhaps equally often to the outhouses out to the east. There was no door to the basement level at the east end.

## 8. The later history of the school.

Here is the first picture we have of the school after it ceased operations, provided by Dale Hayes who lives just  $\frac{1}{4}$  mile west of the school (but lived elsewhere when school age and did not attend here. However, his aunt Doris (Dusing) Hayes taught at Pleasant Plain/s from 1935 to 1940. I was unable to locate the source for this photo. But it is quite ironic that the caption says that “there is no further need” for this building, and yet it stood and was used for many more years, and it is still standing as part of the house located there currently. Dale thought this news item was probably from the late 50’s to early 60’s.



My personal memory of this schoolhouse is from my high school years, probably mostly from farming the Stewart farms nearby for my cousins the Voth Boys, and other trips to Hillsdale. I remember it as looking like a well-kept house but being told that it used to be a one-room schoolhouse. I wish I could find a photo from those years to confirm the “picture” that is in my head. [Does anyone have photos from this time?](#)

Another story from a few years later comes from my cousin Johnny Voth’s daughter Janet (Voth) Streck. She had strong and fun memories of riding with her dad going home from the Stewart farms and driving by the schoolhouse. She remembered there being wild dogs in the basement there, and her dad loved to stop at the stop sign, roll down his pickup window, and howl at the top of his lungs, to get all the dogs howling back at him; and then laugh his trademark Johnny Voth laugh. My aunt Beverly Voth remembers she and husband Jake Voth, Jr., doing the same thing on evenings when they went out driving through the countryside. However, both Dale Hayes and Elfrieda Buller told me that those were not wild dogs; rather, they remembered a woman from Enid using the schoolhouse as a “kennel” for her perhaps pure-bred dogs, and her coming out regularly to feed them and take care of them.

Arrel and I both remember the building being used as a house in between the events above, but how soon, what years, and whom are not yet clear. [If anyone has good information on the 1947 to 1999 events with the property, please share. Again, photos from these years would be great also.](#) Owners on the recent property page from Garfield County are Casey Reed who purchased it in 1999, Deborah Simmons who purchased it in 2011, and Lawrence Luetkemeyer who purchased it in 2018. There is a large increase in purchase price by Luetkemeyer, suggesting that it was Deborah Simmons who had the major renovations to the current house done. The current owner is Zachary Jones.

Below are three nice views of the building as it looks now, from Keowee Road looking north for the left photo and looking northeast for the right photo. Windows have been changed, a wood porch added to the west end (front), and a deck to the back; with privacy fence because it is so close to busy Keowee Road. The bottom photo most clearly shows the large addition to the original school house, including a 3-car garage; but the part that is the original school house is also clear. **Mr. Jones has been most gracious in allowing us to put up a school marker sign in his yard; any who choose to view the school site should show proper courtesy and restraint for his personal property and privacy.**



**9. Teachers.** A list of almost all of the teachers for this school is on the following pages, along with sources for their names and years. The article to the right below is just one example of the kind of newspaper stories that have allowed me to compile this quite extensive list of teachers.



Enid Events. September 11. 1924

Nine Mile, Pleasant Plains and Columbia schools started last Monday. Miss Wanda Haworth at Nine Mile; Clarence Harmon at Pleasant Plains, and Gene Romine at Columbia.

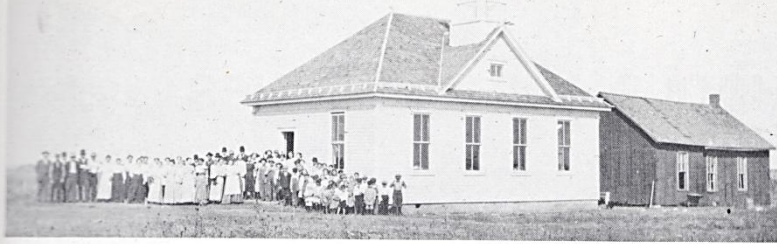
Information from the Garfield County History volumes says that “most teachers boarded at George Beck’s”. Some went to their own homes. Sam Warren boarded at Kuehl’s, at the former Richey farm.” Note from the plat maps at the start of this story that G.T.M. Beck owned the two farms to the south of the school across what is now Keowee Road, so his home would have been a very convenient place for teachers to live; plus some extra income from Mr. Beck, perhaps.

**Key for sources of teacher names:** GCH, Garfield County History; GCD, Garfield County Democrat; EMN, Enid Morning News; KNE, Kremlin New Era; EDMN, Enid Daily Morning News; KJ, Kremlin Journal; EE, Enid Events; RB, Rosella Buller

School Term	Teacher(s)	Source(s)
First teacher	Charles Bever	GCH
1897-98	Etha Jones (became Mrs. Oscar Ford)	EMN 4-16-1939
1899-00	Miss Lillian Case	GCD 9-28-1999, GCH
1900	Sam Warren	GCH photo
1904-05	Miss Krause, Kremlin	KNE 9-30-1904
1907-1908	Clara Beall	EMN 9-5-1907 EDMN 8-22-1907 KJ 4-17-1908; GCH
Years?? These teachers listed; no news articles found to date	Maude Walker (prior to 1899, got married then, English), Josephine Renfrow, Charles Jones, Mildred Winship then Calvert, Edison Kennedy, W.O. Jones	GCH
1908-09		
1909-10	Miss Troxel	KJ 4-29-1910
1910-11-12		
1912-13	Miss Clarkie van Valkenburg (later Clampitt)	KJ 10-18-1912 GCH
1913-14	Myrtle Baldwin	KJ 4-16-1914
1914-15	Myrtle Baldwin	KJ 4-22-1915
1915-16	Myrtle Baldwin	KJ 4-13-1916
1916-17	Lucy Chapman (later Culp), Marshall	KJ 5-10-1917, GCH
1917-18	Thelma Munns	KJ 4-25-1918
1918-19	Thelma Munns	KJ 2-27-1919
1919-20	Zue Pope, Hillsdale	EE 12-11-19
1920-21	Marie Horner	EE 9-23-20
1921-22	Marie Horner	EE 9-15-1921
1922-23	Tommy Liming	EE 4-19-1923
1923-24	(Le)Roy Hoffsommer	EE 1-03-1924
1924-25	Clarence Harmon	EE 9-11-1924
1925-26	Clarence T. Han(n)an ( <a href="#">Harmon, Hannan, Hannon all appear for various schools and years</a> )	EMN 8-23-1925 GCH
1926-27	Dorothy Hoeltzel, Hillsdale	EMN 7-22-1926
1927-28	Dorothy Hoeltzel (later Lewis)	EE 8-18-1927 EMN 8-14-1927 GCH
1928-29??	Dorothy Hoeltzel	EE 7-05-1928 EE 6-6-1929
1929-30	Vera Kirton (later Harmon)	EE 8-29-1929 GCH
1930-31	Vera Kirton, Kremlin	EE 9-04-1930

1931-32	Vera Kirton	EE 3-17-1932
1932-33	Ruby Smith	EMN 9-11-1932
1933-34	Ruby Smith	EMN 9-03-1933
1934-35	Nelson Shoppell (Chappell); Elsie Bengston (later Wight)	EMN 9-02-1934 GCH
1935-36	Doris Dusing	EMN 5-17-1936 EMN 8-07-1935 EMN Apr 11, 1936
1936-37	Doris Dusing	EMN 9-06-1936 EMN 4-08,09-1937
1937-38	Doris Dusing, Hillsdale	EMN 8-29-1937
1938-39	Doris Dusing	EMN 8-18-1938
1939-40	Doris (Dusing) now Hayes, Hillsdale	EMN 8-20-1939, RB
1940-41	Cecil Beck, Kremlin	EE 9-12-40
1941-42	Florence Ashburn (became McCartney)	EMN 8-17-1941 EE 4-10-1942
1942-43	Mrs. Inez Pickens	RB
1943-44	Mrs. Inez M. Pickens	EMN 9-03-1943
1944-45	Alma Thesman, Kremlin	EE 7-30-1944
1945-46	Mrs. Vera Harmon	EMN 8-19-1945
1945-46	Mrs. Homer Harmon	EE 4-12-1946 EE 8-31-1945
1946-47	Mrs. Ed = Thelma (Munn) Romine	EMN 4-13-1947 EE 9-13-1946 GCH

10. The Pleasant Plains page from the Garfield County History 1907-1982, Volume II. This is the source for some of the photos and facts in this story.



### PLEASANT PLAINS SCHOOL

Pleasant Plains was a rural school, grades 1-8. It was southeast of Hillsdale in the SW ¼ — Sect. 14 — Twp. 24 — 7 W.

Early day families who had settled that area included: **J.C. Masemore, W.S. Yeager, Wm. A. Miner, Mrs. Maria E. Waters, John A. Dowers, Charles W. Bever, Amos G. Williamson, Edward C. Pease, Altert L. Lincoln, George Beck, Calvin L. McCracken, Louis Travis, Allen J. Yoeman, Constantine Calvert, John Zelenka, Sumpter P. Redding, James E. Hill, Blanche L. Messer, Wallace Daykin, William Lay, Peter Dixon, Isaac Pennock, J.J. Burk, Dorsey D. Mason and Daniel Wallace.**

**Josephine (Beck) Kirton** named the school. The first school for the neighborhood children was taught by **Charles Bever** at the **Maria Waters** home before the school house was completed by the neighborhood men.

Across the road west of the school was the United Brethren School.

Some of the early day students who are still living, as of 1980, are **Nellie (Beck) Frost, Lulu (Burk) Marquis, and Iva (Hill) Lebow**, all three of Enid; and **Flavia (Miner) Hellums** of Seattle, Washington.

Following are some of Flavia Hellums'

Pleasant Plains School, first day in the new building. The earlier generation attended school in the old building at the right. [Photo from M.O. Beck]

memories of Pleasant Plains:

#### Flavia's Memories

"I don't know how Pleasant Plains got its name. The school house was built by volunteer labor if I remember right. Charles Bever was the main carpenter and he was the first teacher. It was only a three months term. Later we had six months and then seven. They had school from the first in the same place as always.

The first building was made of 1 X 12s. Our desks were also mostly 1 X 12s. Later we had desks that had ink wells and seated two pupils. There was a bench where we went up front to recite. I don't remember if there were any other teachers between Mr. Bever and Miss Walker. Never heard that there were to be 'only male teachers'. Any way, we never had many.

Here is a list of the teachers I remember (not in order, however): **Maude Walker, Lillian Case, Josephine Renfrow, Miss Krause, Charles Jones, Mildred Winship, Edison Kennedy, Mrs. Mildred Winship Calvert, Sam Warren, Clara Beall** (she was my last teacher). The teachers mostly boarded at **George Beck's**. Some went to their own homes. **Sam War-**

**ren** boarded at **Kuehl's**, at the former **Richey** farm. Don't know where Kennedy boarded. School was on the southwest corner of the Perry homestead. The United Brethren Church was across the road."

The first school was replaced in 1910 by a much nicer frame building. It burned in 1923 and the last part of the school term the pupils met in the Olive Chapel Church.

The third building of the Pleasant Plains School was a brick building built in 1924. After the school was discontinued it was remodeled into a residence at that site.

Other early students, but later than the four named above, who are still living are:

**Violet (Hill) Crawford** of Oxnard, Ca., **Bernice (Miner) Hughes** of Modesto, Ca., **Era (Burk) Binning** of Meodesha, Kan., **Orville Reim** of Blackwell, Okla., and **Abe Sperling** of Downey, Ca.

Both Orville Reim and Roy Dakin attended school in the first two buildings.

Some of the teachers who served Pleasant Plains School were:

Charles Bever	Tommy Liming
W.O. Jones	Clarence Hannan
Sam Warren	Dorothy Hoeltzel
	Lewis
Edison Kennedy	Vera Kirton Harmon
Lucy Chapman Culp	Ruby Smith
Thelma Munn	Doris Dusing Hayes
Romine	
Clarkie Van	Nelson Chappell
Valkenburg	
Clampitt	Elsie Bengston Wight
Leroy Hoffsommer	Clara Beall

These five former teachers are known to be living in Oklahoma: **Clarkie Van Valkenburg Clampitt, Leroy Hoffsommer, Dorothy Hoeltzel Edwards, Vera Kirton Harmon, Doris Dusing Hayes.**

**Mrs. Thelma Romine** was the last teacher, 1946-1947, at Pleasant Plains. The last student body:

Elfrieda Buller	Bernard Zaloudek
Jere Daykin	Bernice Wilcox
Lorene Wilcox	Barbara Zaloudek
Linda Zaloudek	Sara Buller
Phillip Wilcox	Hanna Buller
Marie Buller	Bruce Zaloudek
Lillian Kliewer	Rosella Buller
	By Dora Froese, Enid



(L) Pleasant Plains students, 1900. Teacher was Sam Warren. [Photo courtesy of Dora Froese, Enid]