

There are several important things to mention at the start of this story on the Prairie Center one-room schoolhouse, District #6, which was 4 miles west of Hunter, before getting into all of the facts and details and photos.

First is that there were two schools named Prairie Center very close to each other, the other being District #1, at the far northeast corner of Blaine Township (and Garfield County), near Billings, only about 15 miles east of Prairie Center #6, west of Hunter. Because of their locations, both schools were often covered by the same newspapers, not just Enid papers, but Hunter and Garber and other smaller papers as well. So it is very important to study any of these newspaper records carefully, to make sure which school the article is referring to.

Second, Prairie Center #6 is interesting because it remained standing at its original location until early in 2006, long after most of the other county one-room schools were gone. It had an interesting life and many uses after it was done being used as a school.

Finally, and perhaps most interesting, is that this Prairie Center school is still standing and in beautifully restored condition – not in its original location, but now near Ardmore OK, almost 200 miles south of Hunter. Much more on this later in this story. This makes it one of only two schools in the north end of Garfield County that are still standing – both will be getting their marker signs put up this summer. The other is Pleasant Plain/s, District #16, which is still standing in its original location, but now as one “wing” of a modern house with a large garage and more living space added on to it, perhaps around the same time that Prairie Center was being moved to southern Oklahoma for restoration for planned use as a museum. The Pleasant Plain’s school story has many fascinating photos and memories as well.

Needless to say, this Prairie Center school has an interesting history, and it has been a fun project for this retired biomedical researcher to track down the missing pieces of the history of this school, particularly where it went when it left Hunter. I think I connected with at least 15-20 people around the state in trying to track down its current location and the story that goes with that move. I wish I had more information on its early days at its original location near Hunter. [As always, I hope that someone reading this story will be able to help me with additional information!](#)

One photo of the school in its original location and somewhat sad condition from 2005, and another matching view in its current location, restored to perhaps better than new, are shown side-by-side below. It almost looks as if the same tree at the back left corner was moved to the new location also! Many more photos at both locations appear later in this story.



1. Facts.

District number: 6

Legal location: Southeast corner of the southeast quarter of section 9-24N-6W in Buffalo Township

Location description: 4 miles west of Hunter, or 4 miles east of the Kremlin – Pond Creek blacktop, on the north side of the Hunter blacktop, exactly 2 miles east of the Evergreen School location and marker sign

Modern “street” address: on the northwest corner of the intersection of “the 8-mile road” (E0310 Rd) and North 102nd St

GPS coordinates: 36° 33’ 52” North, 97°, 43’ 45” West

First year of classes: No information, presumably soon after the Land Run

Last year of classes: Closed at the end of spring semester 1939, we believe, the last year for which the school shows up in teacher lists or newspaper stories

Fate of building: Moved to private property near Thackerville OK, in January 2006, where it still stands

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

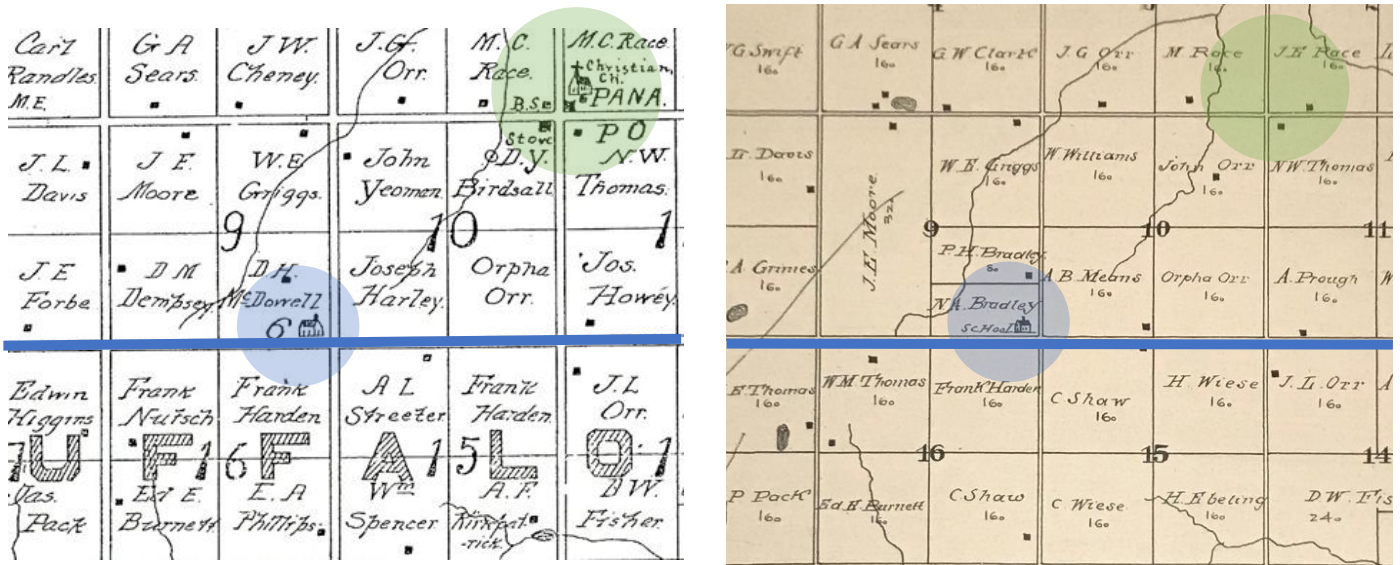
Students began attending grade school in Hunter, District 4½, when Prairie Center closed

Special thanks to the following:

- *for providing funding for the the Prairie Center school marker sign* – Diana Nelson Griffith, who grew up in the area and remembered the school well, from having played there as a child.
- *for allowing us to put up the sign on their property* – Terry Ingham and the Ingham family, current owner of the farm, and to Gary Peck, who currently farms the land.
- *for help with memories, photos, mementos, and additional contacts* – too numerous to mention all, but for sure Susie Patterson Jackson, current owner of the school building; Reva Inghan Simmons, who helped me find Susie and the schoolhouse; John Easterly, who lives a mile north; Steve Schovanec, who also lives nearby; Rosemary Cinnamon, who shared her memories; and so many more.
- *as for all of these stories, to my brother Arrel for his many suggestions, edits, advice, and formatting help, and for enthusiastically helping get the signs put up!*

2. Location of the school and the school grounds.

A 1901 commercial plat map marking the location of School #6, Prairie Center, is shown to the left below, and a 1906 government plat map is shown to the right below. The school location is highlighted in blue, and the Hunter Blacktop, Buffalo Rd, E0310 Rd, is shown in blue to aid with visualizing the location of the school. Note the town of Pana (pronounced Pay-nah, not Pan-ah), one mile north and one mile east from Prairie Center on the 1901 map. The town of Hunter does not appear on the 1901 map (area not shown). By the 1906 map, the town of Pana is completely gone from the plat map, and the town of Hunter is present, large and thriving! Many of the farms have changed hands, but many have not.



Below are two aerial photos of the school grounds, the left from 1937, the right from 1954. The left 1937 photo, with the school still in operation, clearly shows the location of the school relative to the roads, and also the location of the main driveway entrance to the school, to the north and east. There appear to be other well-worn paths to what is now the Hunter Blacktop (Buffalo Road), perhaps students crossing onto the school grounds from that road rather than going around to the formal driveway.



There is another fairly large building to the north (top) and the west end (left) of the school building in the 1937 photo. This fits perfectly with where John Easterly said he thought there might have been a stable at one time. We know from later photos (more below) that there was an outhouse at the southwest corner of the school (lower left), very close to the school, and this can just barely be seen (or imagined?) in the photo. Perhaps the building straight south (down) from that outhouse was the other outhouse, quite close to the road, and with a clear path running to it from the south west corner of the school. No one had clear memories of any of the playground equipment, and none can be made out from this photo either. There is a lighter area, fairly large, at the west (left) edge of the school grounds that could perhaps have been a baseball or basketball field, but I have not firm information.

Finally, there is another building a little way west (left) from the school that looks like a small residence. Perhaps this was housing for the teacher, but I have no information; and that building and its grounds are completely gone in the 1954 photo. The school grounds are a nice square, likely one acre, in the 1937 photo; by the 1954 photo, farming is done up to a 45-degree angle to the north and west of the school building. It appears as if a row of trees or bushes may have been planter along that angle edge of the school grounds.

3. The outside of the school building.

Next are very important photos of the school that were taken late in 2005 by Susie Patterson Jackson, the woman who bought the schoolhouse and moved it to her family's ranch near Ardmore, to document all that she could of the schoolhouse in its original location at that time. We are all greatly indebted to her for having done this and for being willing to share all of those photos with me for this story.

The school faced to the east, toward Hunter. There was a double-door entryway into a porch at the east end, with windows to both the north and south off of this covered entry. John Easterly remembers coat hooks on the walls here, as for most of these schools. There were three windows on the south side of the schoolhouse, and originally a matching set of three windows on the north side. The outhouse can



be seen at the back left of the building, nearly touching the schoolhouse, and there is an exit door from the classroom at that corner to make it easy to get to that outhouse. Note the chimney at the back (west) end of the classroom, consistent with another photo below of where the heating stove was located.

Two other items of interest are shown in this photo. First, the yellow sign on the pipeline standpipe at the front left of this photo is still in place today, giving a clear image of where the school was located. Second, John Easterley said he thought he had memories of a cistern in front of the school, and the left

and darker of the two pipes sticking up at the far right edge of this photo looks like it could be a water pump; but it looks more like the kind of pump that would have been on a well rather than a cistern. And they could just be fence posts!

To the right is the corresponding view of the school, but this one taken to the southwest and showing the north side of the building. Perhaps the main things of interest are that the north porch window and the front and back of the three north-side windows have been covered over with siding. Whether these windows were broken and not repaired, or perhaps intentionally replaced with siding to keep the cold north wind from blowing in is not known.



Two additional photos of the front end and north side of the school are shown below, in case they add any useful new information about the building. The left photo gives another view of the post and/or pump near the road in front of the school, and the right photo gives another nice view of the boarded-up windows and of the tin roof, which I would guess was added later in the school building's long life.



The photo to the right is important for several reasons. It gives the best front-side view of the school. It is the best documentation the the front doors were in fact double doors, and it is the only view that clearly shows the sidewalk going up to side steps and up onto a porch to get to classroom level, keeping the classroom floor well above ground-level. The wooden shake shingles that are seen on the porch and the two small side roofs are almost certainly the same as the original roofing on the entire school.



The photo to the right is yet another view of the north side of the building, but an important one, because it is by far the best view of the location of the one remaining outhouse at the southwest corner of the building. A more close-up photo into the outhouse is below. This top photo also documents Susie Patterson Jackson's visit to check out the school and photograph it at its original location before moving it. Her car is at the front of the building. Finally, this photo provides a nice view of how far behind the school it was where the trees started, as of 2005.



The photo to the right is one of the few good views we have into a one-room school outhouse, with some revisions from its days of use by school kids. Note that there are strong corner posts or "highline" posts bracing the building on both the north and south sides, and tied together with strong wire, to keep the building from collapsing. The outhouse faced to the east, toward the front of the school. It is a one-seater with what appears to be a home-made make-shift seat, and there appears to be a flat board for covering the seat hole. It should be emphasized that this is the outhouse as it was after 50+ years of use of the school for community gatherings rather than as a school. Electrical wires run to the outhouse, and there is a light bulb on the ceiling. As was typical for these old buildings, the "handle" for pulling the door shut is just a loop of wire, and there does not appear to be any kind of latch – likely one held onto that wire loop to keep intruders out.



4. The inside of the school building.

Before starting with the photos and features of the inside of the building, it is important to say that the building had been changed on the inside from a school to a community gathering building, likely soon after it ceased operations as a school. The desks were taken out and sold soon after the school closed; perhaps some Hunter residents have one of them? John Easterly has a teacher's desk that he "was told" was the one from Prairie Center, but he is not certain. The desks were removed to make room for tables for community meals and for donated old sofas for use by the women's groups (and others!) who made use of the building for at least the first 20-25 years after it shut down as a school. Nonetheless, the

photos below with this “newer” generation of furniture give a good view of how things were inside the building in its days as a school.

The photo to the right here provides what I think is the best orientation to the inside of the building for starters. This is clearly looking to the northwest, the right side and back of the classroom. We know this because there is only one remaining window with glass, the other two north windows being boarded up. The stove pipe coming in just under the ceiling from the back reveals where the heating stove would have been located, and it appears that the chimney may have run up the outside of the building rather than being on the inside.



Note the nice wainscoting on the walls, and in two different heights. My best guess is that the taller wainscoting around the center window on the north side is an indication of where there would have been a raised stage and/or where the teacher’s desk might have been, but I do not know; there should be some reason for the taller wainscoting there. The blackboard is on the north wall at the far west end – this would have placed it near the teacher’s desk and also near the heating stove. Also note the nice set of light bulbs on the ceiling – at what time these might have been added to the building is not clear – perhaps already for its last years of use as a school, but perhaps only in its later years.



The photo to the right shows a closer view of the blackboard as it was in December 2005. Note what is almost certainly a barn swallow’s next high up on the wall above the blackboard. The item on the floor in the corner looks like it could have been some part of a connection from the stove to the flue, presumably just stashed in that corner and not in its original location, because where it is in the photo would have blocked access to the blackboard. The bottom photo here shows the west (back) end of the south wall, the wall with all three windows still with glass. The door to exit the classroom at that back corner, perhaps mainly for access to the outhouse but perhaps also for access to the playground, is nicely shown. The lace curtains as they were in 2005 are shown also. Not only were there ceiling light bulbs, but an electrical outlet is shown on the back wall also.



Next is a quite informative view of the inside of the building at the front entrance, to the east. There are two entry doors from the porch, suggesting to me, but with no evidence, that one door may have been the main entrance and the other door may have been access to a coat closet, or “cloak room” as they were often called in those days.



The photo to the left is looking into the classroom through the north door from the entry porch; it does not add much except to show the quality of the door and that the wainscoting was used in the entry porch as well.

Two of the photos below are of the inside of the school as it is now, restored by Susie Patterson Jackson, in its new location near Ardmore, OK. To my knowledge, none of the items inside the classroom are from the original school west of Hunter – all of the desks, the stove, everything – was gone from its Hunter location long before Susie bought it, moved it, and refurbished it. It was quite a labor of love for her to get it back to the way it likely was in its days of use as a school near Hunter. The top photo is a panorama view, and lower left is a normal photo. The right photo is another view of the outside of the building in its current location.



4. School days at Prairie Center.

OK, enough about the building – but any additional information or photos from its earlier days are of course welcome! But now let’s get on to what I have been able to track down about its days as a schoolhouse and some of the people and activities from those days.

First, the article to the right, from 1932, provides nice documentation of the two Prairie Center schools near Hunter. The schools are listed in order by district number, so the first school listed is Prairie Center District #1, the furthest northeast in the county, with Mrs. Lillie Stehno as teacher; then Enterprise #2, Custer #3, Sunnyside #4; and then the Prairie Center of this story, District #6, with Vera Phillips as teacher. This article also provides just one example of the many newspaper listings of teachers in the county that allowed me to generate the fairly comprehensive list of all teachers for all of the schools that I am now adding to each of the school stories completed earlier. The list of Prairie Center #6 teachers is a bit further below in this story.

Below is the only old newspaper photo I have been able to find of students and teachers at Prairie Center. It is from 1939, [so I am hoping that there may be some older Hunter area residents who can identify at least some of the students.](#)

Schools Are Rated Highly

Reports From C. L. Dalke, Co. Supt., Show "Model" Schools Increasing

Garfield county has 108 model and superior model schools and 89 accredited elementary schools this year, according to the report of C. L. Dalke, county superintendent of schools. This is an increase over the number last year. There were 104 model and superior model and 74 accredited elementary schools last year.

Following is a list of the model and superior model schools:

Prairie Center, Mrs. Lillie Stehno; Enterprise, Ruth Reynolds; Custer, Wilma Bowers; Sunnyside, Alberta Johndrow; Prairie Center, Vera Phillips; Evergreen, Thelma Hickman; Pleasant Valley, Mrs. Lelia Tefft; Wild Horse, John Doop; Nine Mile, Mrs. Rea Reim;

Enid Daily Eagle, April 8, 1939

Enid Events, March 17, 1932



RURAL SCHOOL STUDENTS of the two schools shown above will be dismissed for the summer holidays on April 21. At the top is the Columbia school in district 17. Supervised by Miss Anna Toews, the school boasts 14 students and is located nine miles north of Enid. Pictured below are the 12 students of Prairie Center school in district six. The school is taught by Miss Margaret Conklin and is located four miles west of Hunter. (News-Eagle Photos.)

On the next page are several newspaper articles that provide the names of many or perhaps most of the students from 1929-1932, for any who might be interested in tracking additional students of these years. I do not think that I saved all of these kinds of articles that I came across while hunting for teacher’s names and more interesting school stories, but it is nice to have at least some of the names, many of which may be familiar to current Hunter area residents. Even I recognize a few!

It is nice that several of these articles mention "district number six", to confirm that they are from Prairie Center #6 and not Prairie Center #1.

Eleven pupils of Prairie Center school, district six, were neither absent nor tardy during the month of February it was reported by the teacher, Miss Myrtle Brower. They are: Charles Campbell, Elden Campbell, Junior Pickerel, Elden Massie, Dorothy Campbell, Leland Massie, Virginia Campbell, Laurence Clegg, John Kaiser, Edward Massie, and Myrtle Lewis.

Enid Events, March 17, 1932

Eleven pupils of Prairie Center school, district number six, were neither absent nor tardy during the month of November, according to Myrtle Brower, teacher.

Those with perfect attendance include: Charlie Campbell, Junior Flekerel, Laurence Clegg, Dorothy Campbell, Myrtle Lewis, Lucille Clegg, Virginia Campbell, Billy Uickerel, Elden Massie, John Kaiser and Edward Massie.

Enid Morning News, December 5, 1929

Record students reported by Miss Myrtle Brower for Prairie Center are: Charlie Campbell, Elden Campbell, Dorothy Campbell, Virginia Campbell, Laurence Clegg, Junior Pickerel, Elden Massie, Edward Massie, Leland Massie, John Kaiser and Myrth Lewis.

Enid Morning News, January 8, 1930

SCHOOL REPORT.
 Prairie Center School for month ending February 21, 1908. Number enrolled 21. Average daily attendance 20. Those perfect in attendance: Bert Moore, John Sears, George Horton, Perry Moore, Minnie Griggs, Julia Orr and Edith Sears.
 First grade: Roy Sears, Rank 1. Raymond Gelino, Rank 2.
 Second Grade: Bert Moore, Rank 1, Julia Orr, Rank 2
 Third Grade: Minnie Griggs, Rank 1, Edith Sears, Rank 2.
 Fourth Grade: Maud Sears, Rank 1, Hawthorne Kennedy, Rank 2. Eight Grade: Edison Kennedy, Rank 1. Capitola Horton, Rank 2. Alda M. Lounsbury teacher.

Hunter Enterprise, March 6, 1908

The article to the left is a much earlier list of students, from 1908. A few things to note are that there were 21 students enrolled, nearly twice as many as by the 1930s. There are not 21 names listed, so presumably those listed are only the students who got Rank 1 or Rank 2, perhaps meaning A's and B's, but I do not know. Interesting to me is that I also came across Bert Moore's obituary from 1973, which states that he was born in 1901 and lived northwest of Hunter and attended Prairie Center school; this was actually one of my first confirmations of this school in the early days of me hunting for information on this school.

The article to the right, from 1929, has a lot of nice information about students and classroom activities and work at the school. Some of the students are listed, and also people who came to visit the school. There is a nice indication of things that were required to get an A rating for the school – good hygiene, neat desks, perfect attendance and spelling. The students are working on exhibits to display at the Hunter Fair and at the county fair. It was fire prevention week, and someone from the state fire marshal’s office came to visit and the students made fire prevention posters. Important? YES! In my

Prairie Center

School opened with an enrollment of 15. We have three beginners, Nettie Bell Jupe, Junior Windfield and Bonnie Bankston. We'll have to give them full credit for number one pupils too, for they have had perfect attendance this month, with Junior's exception. He was absent one day on account of illness.

Those having perfect attendance record this month were: Gladys Windfield, Nettie Bell Jupe, Bonnie Bankston, Francis Culp, Harry Balzer, Edna Campbell and Kendall Campbell. Several absentes were due to illness.

Our visitors this month were: Mrs. Jupe, Mrs. Elanor Skinner, Misses Pearl and Alta Terry. We enjoy having visitors and invite the patrons to visit us often.

Much interest is shown in the honor system by some of the pupils. New tooth brushes have been purchased by several. Clean hands and manicured nails are displayed; neat desks, perfect attendance, and good spelling records, plus many small factors that go to make up the 100 points for an Honorary Certificate. We hope several "A" certificate will be earned at the close of school.

Gladys Winfield has a perfect record in spelling this month. We appreciate the work done for us by the district and school board. Providing us with new equipment, and re-arranging the fixtures for our convenience. Work on the sidewalks and storm cave will soon begin now. Some sand and bricks for the project has been hauled.

We are busy making exhibits for the county fair. Some fine work will be displayed and you will be well paid for visiting Prairie Center's booth. We hope to have them finished in time to exhibit at the Hunter fair.

Pearl Blocker was absent last week on account of illness.

This is Fire Prevention Week. We had a representative of the state fire marshall's office, Richard Romang, to call at our school this week and give a lecture on fire prevention. We also made English posters representing various phases of fire prevention. We derived much good from the observation of this important fire prevention anniversary.

Enid Events, October 17, 1929

stories so far, there are at least 5 of these schools that burned at one time or another!

Work on the school grounds is also listed here – both new equipment and re-arranging things. Work is just beginning on sidewalks and a storm cave.

Below are two additional newspaper stories about improvements to the school grounds – a coal house, which I have not heard about anywhere else, and presumably near the south door at the west end of the school to make it easy to carry in coal to the stove; and a cistern being put in, confirming John Easterly’s memory of there being a cistern at the school, though the location is not given. John thought it had been “right in front of the school”.

Prairie Center has a new coal house.

Hunter Enterprise, December 26, 1912

The school board of Prairie Center are having a cistern put in at the school house.

Hunter Enterprise, May 14, 1914

Another important event for the school is one for which I have no firm documentation, just a memory from John Easterly. He told me he had been told that at some point, he thought maybe very early, “turn of the century”, that a tornado had hit the school – apparently picked it up in one piece and set it down in the middle of the intersection. Presumably the school was rebuilt and not just moved back onto its foundation, because John had a clear memory of seeing a somewhat smaller brick foundation inside the perimeter of the later foundation after the school was moved away. [If anyone has any more information on this, please let me know.](#)

5. The Prairie Center teachers. My subscription to Newspapers.com gave me access to many articles from Enid papers listing all of the teachers for all of the one-room “rural” schools for either the coming year or the past year, from the County Superintendent’s office, making it easy for me to start a massive spreadsheet of schools, years, and teachers. Additional searching for Prairie Center teachers gave me more names. Perhaps some of you will see names that are familiar. [If anyone knows of any more teachers, please let me know.](#)

Key for sources of teacher names: EMN, Enid Morning News; EDMN, Enid Daily Morning News; EE, Enid Events; Hunt Ent, Hunter Enterprise

1899-1905	No teachers known	
1905-06	John P. Kennedy, Hunter	EE 10-26-05
1907-08	Alda M Lounsbury	EMN 9-5-1907
1908-10	No teachers known	
1910-11	Lula Spargur	Hunt Ent 10-7-10
1911-12	Lula Spargur	Hunt Ent 9-29-11
1912-13	Ivy Roberts	Hunt Ent 12-26-12
1913-14	Miss Florence Baker	Hunt Ent 6-5-13
1914-15	Mabel Folger	Hunt Ent 4-30-14
1915-16	Winona Evans, Hunter	EMN 9-14-15
1916-17	Zelda Hughes, Hunter	EMN 9-24-16
1917-25	No teachers known for these many years!	
1925-26	Mrs. Pearl Lewis	EMN 8-23-1925; EE 3-6-26
1926-27	Vera Phillips, Hunter	EMN 7-22-1926; EE 9-30-26
1927-28	Vera Phillips, Hunter	EE 8-18-27; EMN 8-14-27
1928-29	Helen Reger	EE 7-5-28
1929-30	Myrtle Brower	EE 8-29-29
1930-31	Myrtle Brower, Kremlin	EE 9-4-30
1931-32	Vera Phillips	EE 3-17-32
1932-33	Ruth Reynolds	EMN 9-11-32
1933-34	Velma Murray	EMN 9-3-33
1934-35	Velma Murray	EMN 9-2-34
1935-36a	Velma Murray, start of year	EMN 8-7-35
1935-36b	Grace Corn, end of year	EMN 5-17-36
1936-37	Grace Corn	EMN 9-6-36; EMN 4-8,9-37
1937-38	Grace Corn, Hunter	EMN 8-29-37
1938-39	Margaret Conklin, Billings	EMN, 8-18-38

6. The school building's "second life".

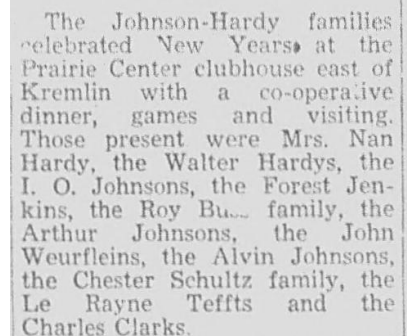
After the school building ceased being used as a school, the building continued to have a very active "social life", being used as a community meeting place for a variety of groups, at least well into the late 1960s and maybe beyond. In fact, in several of the newspaper articles about these meetings, the building was referred to as the "Prairie Center Clubhouse".

To the right is one early article about a family reunion held at the "clubhouse", in 1952.

Probably the most common events held in the Prairie Center Clubhouse were women's "home extension club" meetings. I talked to many Hunter area residents from the 1950s and 1960s who remembered going to those meetings with their mothers. Thanks to the many of those who shared their "shaky" memories of where things were in the school in those days, most of which became either confirmed (or not!) when I was finally able to track down the location of the school and the many photos shared by Susie Patterson Jackson.

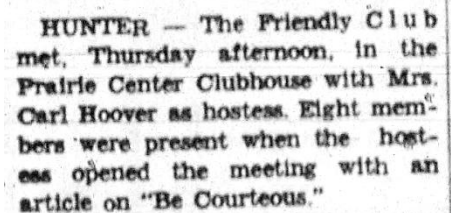
The stories to the right are all from just one article in the Enid Morning News from March 1, 1962. One of the things that many of my contacts remembered was their mothers being part of "The Friendly Club", and the first clipping is about that club, including examples of activities at their meetings.

This article is important because it also shows (I presume) that the Custer one-room schoolhouse also became a clubhouse when it shut down as a school. Custer was about 4 miles east of Hunter.



The Johnson-Hardy families celebrated New Years at the Prairie Center clubhouse east of Kremlin with a co-operative dinner, games and visiting. Those present were Mrs. Nan Hardy, the Walter Hardys, the I. O. Johnsons, the Forest Jenkins, the Roy Buss family, the Arthur Johnsons, the John Weurfleins, the Alvin Johnsons, the Chester Schultz family, the Le Rayne Teffts and the Charles Clarks.

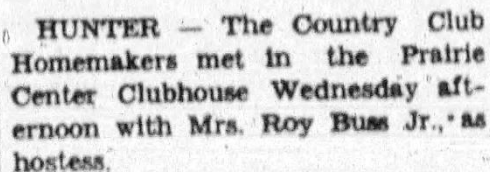
Enid Events, January 10,



HUNTER — The Friendly Club met, Thursday afternoon, in the Prairie Center Clubhouse with Mrs. Carl Hoover as hostess. Eight members were present when the hostess opened the meeting with an article on "Be Courteous."

Mrs. Hulda Hedgecock gave a report on the Farm-a-Rama. Mrs. Dale Moore led the lesson on Social Security. Winning prizes during the social hour were Mrs. Hedgecock, Mrs. Wayne Cinnamon, Mrs. Omer Buss and Mrs. Rollo Smith.

HUNTER — The Mother's Recreation Club met in the Custer Center Clubhouse with Mrs. Harold Chain as hostess.



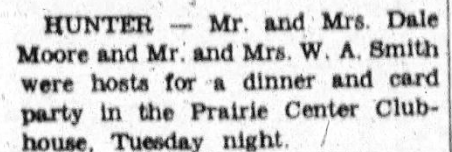
HUNTER — The Country Club Homemakers met in the Prairie Center Clubhouse Wednesday afternoon with Mrs. Roy Buss Jr., as hostess.

Eleven members and one guest, Mrs. I. O. Johnson, Enid, answered roll call with excerpts from the Country Parson.

The Constitution and By-Laws of the club were read as the lesson-study. Three amendments to the constitution were proposed and laid on the table for a vote at the next meeting.

The clipping to the left, from the same article, shows that another women's group, the Country Club Homemakers, were using the Prairie Center Clubhouse at the same time.

And finally from this article, the clipping to the right is about a gathering of area people for a dinner and card party, not associated with any formal "club" meeting, it seems.

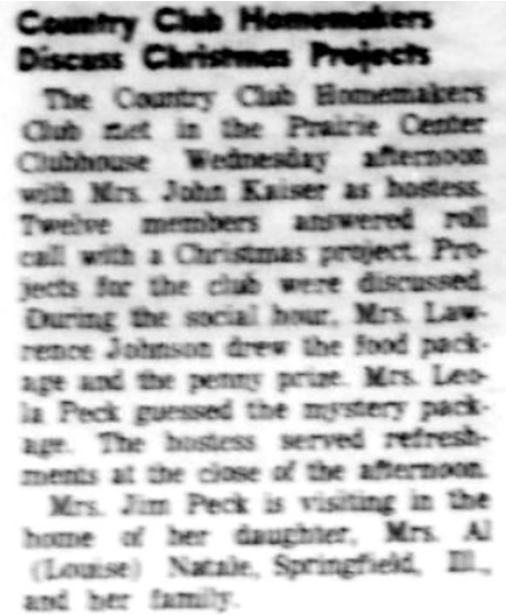


HUNTER — Mr. and Mrs. Dale Moore and Mr. and Mrs. W. A. Smith were hosts for a dinner and card party in the Prairie Center Clubhouse, Tuesday night.

What a busy place this little old school house club house was in those days!

The earliest reference to the Prairie Center Clubhouse that I found was from September, 1949, already – saying the next monthly meeting of the Country Club Homemakers would be held there. And the rather blurry article to the right is the latest article I was able to find about meetings at this “clubhouse”. It could be that this is when the building became no longer usable, but it may just be that 1969 was the latest year of old newspapers available online.

On a lighter note, and perhaps inappropriate, I do have evidence that the building continued to be used occasionally, apparently a place for young lovers to spend a bit of private time. When I posted a photo of the inside of the school with the old couches on Facebook, one person proudly stated his memory of helping a young Hunter girl lose her virginity on that couch – names withheld to protect the guilty!



Garber Free Press September 25, 1969

6. Tracking down the school's current location, move, and restoration.

Finding the current location and owner of the Prairie Center school house was a major and difficult effort, taking over a year of off-and-on searching for clues and involving correspondence of one means or another with at least 20 people to get whatever clues I could find.

Several Hunter people remembered seeing the school being prepared for moving, about what time frame that might have been, and that it went somewhere in southern Oklahoma, near the Texas border, but nobody could remember enough details to find it. Rosemary Cinnamon gave me a good start, but her leads did not get me what I needed. She or others got me connected with John Easterly and Steve Schovanec, who both farm near the school location, and they helped me connect with Terry Ingham, whose family owned the farm when the school was sold. Terry Ingham did not remember where it went, or exactly when, but said his sister Reva Simmons would. She did not have family records of the sale, but she had been to see the school, and she had important memories from that. Importantly, she got the nearby town correct – Thackerville – and remembered going a ways out of town and having to ride on an ATV to get to the schoolhouse, and that it was located across the road from an old cemetery that had not been well maintained. But searching for cemeteries near Thackerville did not get me anywhere, except Google Earth views of WRONG cemeteries.

One important clue I was able to figure out on my own, by looking at historical aerial images of school location at Hunter. These clearly showed that the schoolhouse was still at its original location in the image from July 2005 but no longer there in the image from October 2006, thus greatly narrowing down the time that it was moved. With this important clue, I went to the Forgotten Oklahoma Facebook group page, hoping someone from Thackerville would see it and know something – a one-room school moved into the countryside nearby in 2005 or 2006 and now located close to an old cemetery. I was quite excited to get several responses from people who did remember this happening and saying that it was

the Gordon Cemetery on Oswalt Road that I should be looking for. Back to Google Earth to find the long and winding Oswalt Road, and the sign for Gordon Cemetery, but seemingly with no gravestones or schoolhouse near. Next I went to the Gordon Cemetery site on Find-A-Grave, where I connected with the woman who had posted the information for that cemetery on the site. She was able to tell me that the cemetery was a mile or more into the countryside from the Gordon Cemetery sign on Oswalt Road, which finally allowed me to get my first view of the schoolhouse in its new location, the image to the right.



More important, and very fortunate, she had the name and just a bit of information about the owner of that property, Susie Patterson Jackson; and she knew that Susie was active on Facebook and was heavily involved with Oklahoma Christian University alumni activities. I contacted two different people from that alumni office and asked them to pass on my name and contact information to Susie if that was allowed, and to tell her why I wanted to connect.

I think that I will never forget the day I was just leaving the church parking lot when I got a call from Susie, and she was gracious enough to share 30 or more minutes of talking about her finding and buying and moving and restoring the school and her ambitions for it, along with many personal details about her life. Most important is that she said she would send me photos of the school from when she bought it and how it looks now; and she did! She said she had a bit of memorabilia from the school also, but she thought nothing of true interest.



The schoolhouse is now on a large ranch near Thackerville, OK, private property owned by the Jackson family. Susie has lived in Forth Worth, TX, for many years, but she grew up in Moore, OK. She is now in the process of selling her current house in Fort Worth, TX, and then plans to move "back home" to Moore, OK, to be closer to Oklahoma Christian University and friends. She has high hopes of moving the schoolhouse again also, to an appropriate place in or near Moore, so that she can continue her dream of having it be an educational museum for current-day students. So stay tuned!

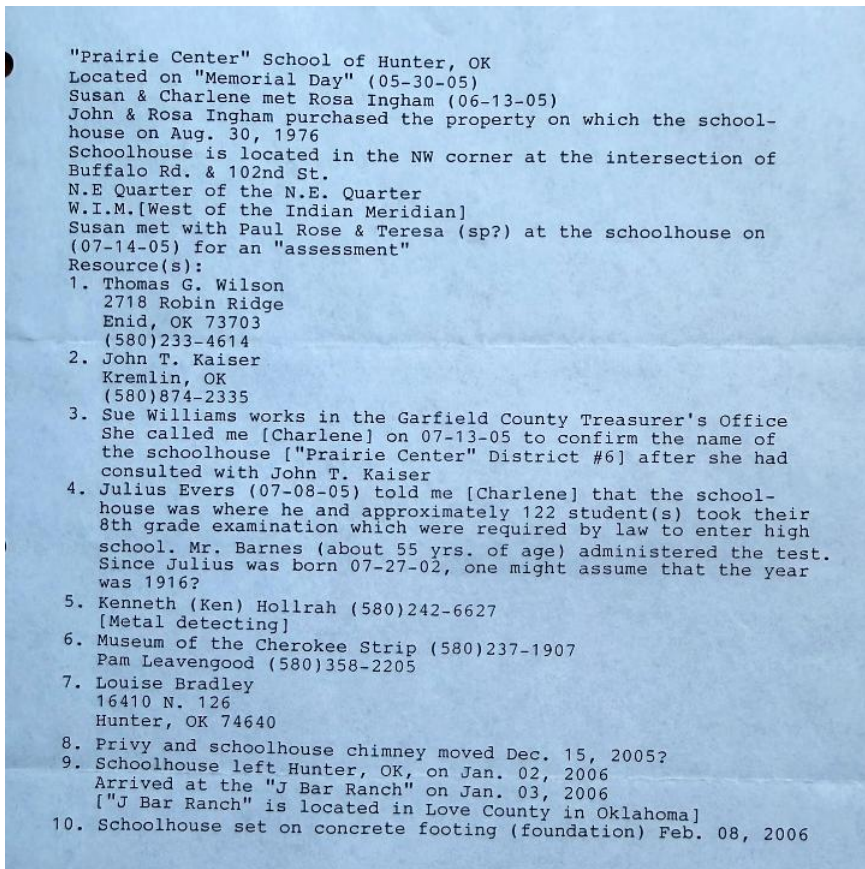


To the right are another person's photo of the school in its current location, and another with a nice view of, and through, the small cemetery looking toward the school.

Susie's finding and moving of the school was interesting. Although she grew up in Moore, OK, she spent lots of time with her grandparents who lived near Garber, and so Garfield County was an obvious place for her to look for a one-room schoolhouse that might be movable and in good enough shape to restore. The Prairie Center school building fit her needs. Her notes on the move are on the next page. The chimney was moved around December 15, 2005; she told me she had decided at the last minute not to move the outhouse; but she did save the seat!. The roof was then removed from the school, but it is not clear to me whether it was discarded or also moved. The remainder of the building was then wrapped in tight plastic to hold it together during the move – several area residents clearly remember seeing the school without its roof and wrapped in plastic. It apparently had a safe trip to Thackerville on January 2 and 3 of 2006 and was safely placed on its new concrete foundation. Susie said that the success of this move and remodel was in large part due to help and supervision from her close friend Paul Rose from Tulsa, who is a professional with these sorts of projects, though usually much larger buildings than a one-room schoolhouse! I do not have details on where Susie obtained all of the current furnishings, but it is my understanding that essentially none of them are from the original Prairie Center school.

To the right are Susie's typed notes about the school, both facts and resources and details of the move.

An interesting sidelight for me is that Susie remembered when she was visiting with the younger Ingham children about buying the school, she could hear their mother Rose Ingham telling them that if someone wanted to buy the school, they should go out and burn it to the ground before that could happen. My guess is that she feared that the buyer might want to continue to leave the school in its original location. Regardless, I am so very glad that it did NOT get burned and was lovingly restored instead!



"Prairie Center" School of Hunter, OK
Located on "Memorial Day" (05-30-05)
Susan & Charlene met Rosa Ingham (06-13-05)
John & Rosa Ingham purchased the property on which the schoolhouse on Aug. 30, 1976
Schoolhouse is located in the NW corner at the intersection of Buffalo Rd. & 102nd St.
N.E. Quarter of the N.E. Quarter
W.I.M.[West of the Indian Meridian]
Susan met with Paul Rose & Teresa (sp?) at the schoolhouse on (07-14-05) for an "assessment"
Resource(s):
1. Thomas G. Wilson
2718 Robin Ridge
Enid, OK 73703
(580)233-4614
2. John T. Kaiser
Kremlin, OK
(580)874-2335
3. Sue Williams works in the Garfield County Treasurer's Office
She called me [Charlene] on 07-13-05 to confirm the name of the schoolhouse ["Prairie Center" District #6] after she had consulted with John T. Kaiser
4. Julius Evers (07-08-05) told me [Charlene] that the schoolhouse was where he and approximately 122 student(s) took their 8th grade examination which were required by law to enter high school. Mr. Barnes (about 55 yrs. of age) administered the test. Since Julius was born 07-27-02, one might assume that the year was 1916?
5. Kenneth (Ken) Hollrah (580)242-6627
[Metal detecting]
6. Museum of the Cherokee Strip (580)237-1907
Pam Leavengood (580)358-2205
7. Louise Bradley
16410 N. 126
Hunter, OK 74640
8. Privy and schoolhouse chimney moved Dec. 15, 2005?
9. Schoolhouse left Hunter, OK, on Jan. 02, 2006
Arrived at the "J Bar Ranch" on Jan. 03, 2006
["J Bar Ranch" is located in Love County in Oklahoma]
10. Schoolhouse set on concrete footing (foundation) Feb. 08, 2006

To the right is a letter to Susie from Louise Bradley in Hunter that includes some interesting history. In particular, she states that everything from inside the original school, desks and the like, had been sold "years earlier". She, in contrast to Rose Ingham, expresses her gratitude that the school will NOT be destroyed!

Louise Bradley's letter also mentions Susie's hopes for the school, to turn it into a schoolhouse museum for educating area children about school life "back in the day". I believe that she had already done at least some restoration of the small church near the cemetery, and I think that she had aspirations of moving in yet more old-time buildings. Time will tell where and how all of these things end up.

Thanks again, very much, to Susie Patterson Jackson, for graciously sharing so much about this building, especially all of the photos.

August 16, 2005
Hunter, Oklahoma

Dear friend, I've heard you are going to move the four little Prairie Center school houses to Admore and restore it for a learning Center. Rose Ingham called my 96 year old brother for information, but our family attended school in town.

I'm sending a copy of Buffalo Township, circa 1906 that denotes the location of Prairie Center in Section 9, Quarter 1, Township 14N, Range 10E. The school house is in the SE 1/4 -- the Bradleys who owned the plat are not related to me.

Long years ago (9 year) the desks etc were sold, and my dad bought a few school books -- if I can locate them, I'll give them to you. I am grateful this building that has been a part of our landscape would not be destroyed. Good luck!

Sincerely,
Louise Bradley
10410 N 126
Hunter, Ok 74640