

Spring Valley was near Kremlin; its students could choose between going to Enid or Kremlin for high school. In the mid-1950s when it closed down, both the school district and the building became part of the Pleasant Vale School, which later became Pioneer-Pleasant Vale. Before Pleasant Vale merged with Pioneer, it was a grade school only, and its students could choose Enid or Kremlin for high school. So, there were students who started grade school at Spring Valley, finished grade school at Pleasant Vale, and then chose to go to high school at Kremlin; and other Pleasant Vale students who may not have ever attended Spring Valley. Through Kremlin classmates with Spring Valley connections, we have managed to gather some reasonable parts of the story of Spring Valley.

**Special thanks to the following for their help in paying for the Spring Valley School marker sign:** A very big thank you to Mike Lorenz for his donation to pay for this sign!

**Special thanks to the following for their help with stories and photos:**

*Mike Lorenz; Rodney Regier; Craig Robertson; Rick Toews; Faith Mary (Janzen) Heinrichs*

### **1. Facts.**

District number: 33

Location: KNOWN location and the 1906 plat map location is northeast corner of the SE/4 of Section 7-24-6 in North Enid Township; the 1901 plat map shows it at the northwest corner of the SW/4 of Section 8-24-6 in North Enid Township; likely it was moved across Highway 81 from its 1901 location, but we cannot rule out the possibility that the 1901 map is in error. The 1901 map also shows the Columbia School to be on the opposite side of Highway 81 from its known later location, and we know that Columbia's earlier location on the east side IS correct.

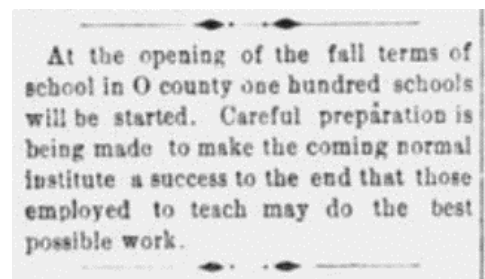
Started: Presumably 1894, the same as all of these schools; see below.

Last year of classes: Mike Lorenz attended Spring Valley through May 1956, the end of his 5<sup>th</sup> grade year, thus providing a reliable closing date.

Fate of building: It was moved to the new location for the consolidated Pleasant Vale school (District 56) east of North Enid; from Rodney Regier, we know it was used there as a 1<sup>st</sup> and 2<sup>nd</sup> grade classroom; and Rick Toews said it was moved again to the Pioneer-Pleasant Vale campus and used as a kindergarten classroom, before being demolished in the 1980s

### **2. Years of operation.**

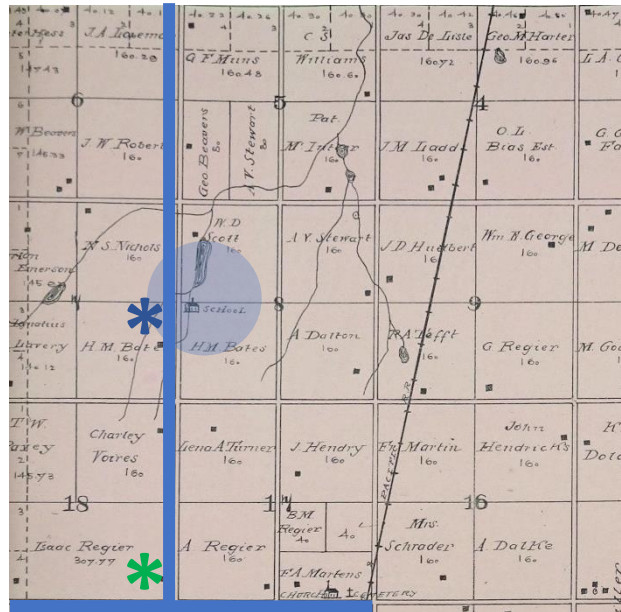
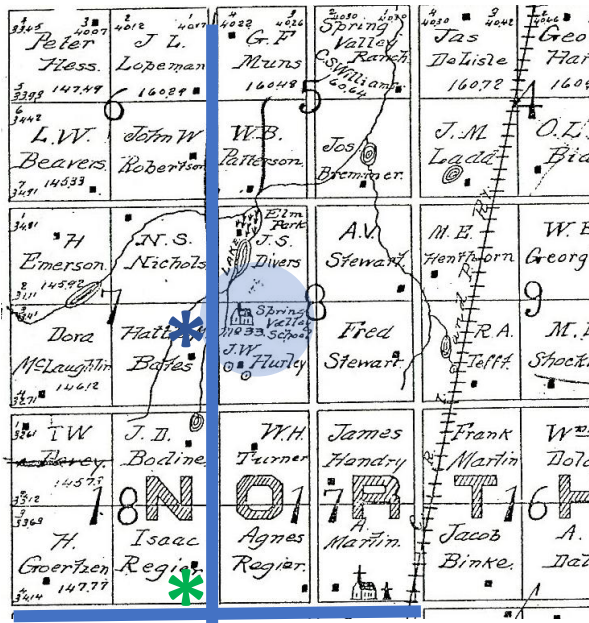
We do not have precise dates for when any of these one-room schools started, but the clipping to the right from an issue of the early Kremlin newspaper "The Cherokee Cosmos" from May 1894 states that "one hundred schools will be started" in the fall of that year. We cannot be certain, but it seems likely that this means "started for the first time"; this would be one year after the Cherokee Strip Land Run opened up this area for settlement by non-natives. The date 1894 shows on the front of the Pleasant Valley School in its photo, lending credence to the idea that 1894 was indeed the first year for these schools in Garfield County.



Like other one-room schools, Spring Valley initially had grades 1-8, but in its later years only grades 1-6. It was one room for all grades, and Mike remembered his teacher there was Ozella James. The school closed in 1956 due to low enrollment, with only 13 students remaining, at which time it merged with Pleasant Vale, now Pioneer-Pleasant Vale. Mike was at Spring Valley for grades 1-5, then went to Pleasant Vale for his 6<sup>th</sup>-8<sup>th</sup> grade years, and then to high school at Kremlin. The Spring Valley school building was moved onto the Pleasant Vale school grounds soon after it closed at its original location. A history of Pleasant Vale from the Cherokee Strip Regional Heritage Center says that several one-room school districts merged with Pleasant Vale to form a new larger school system, and that all of those one-room schoolhouses had been moved onto the new Pleasant Vale school grounds by 1954. Mike believes that this person's history has to be wrong based on his clear memories of being in the Spring Valley school on Highway 81 through 1956. Rod Regier remembers having his first-grade year in the Spring Valley building at its Pleasant Vale location starting fall 1957, so the building got moved and put back into service fairly quickly. My understanding from Rod is that a 4-hole outhouse from Spring Valley got moved to Pleasant Vale along with the school; interesting!

### 3. Location.

A 1901 commercial plat map marking the location of School 33 is shown to the left below, and the 1906 commercial plat map image is to the right below. Current paved roads in the area are shown in blue to help with identifying the school locations; the green asterisk denotes the Chisholm Trail Marker for further orientation. The school locations shown on these plat maps are highlighted in blue; the known location of the school in the early 1950s is across Highway 81 directly west of the plat map locations, denoted by the blue asterisk. The blue asterisk for the 1950s location of this school is just north of the driveway into the current Redbird Farm retail establishment.



For the 1901 plat map, note that this is one of the few schools identified with its school name, Spring Valley, in addition to its district number, with most schools only shown with their district number

on the 1901 maps; only the school location is shown on the 1906 maps, with no indication of the school name or district number. The 1901 plat map is important because it gives clear identification of the school and not just the location.

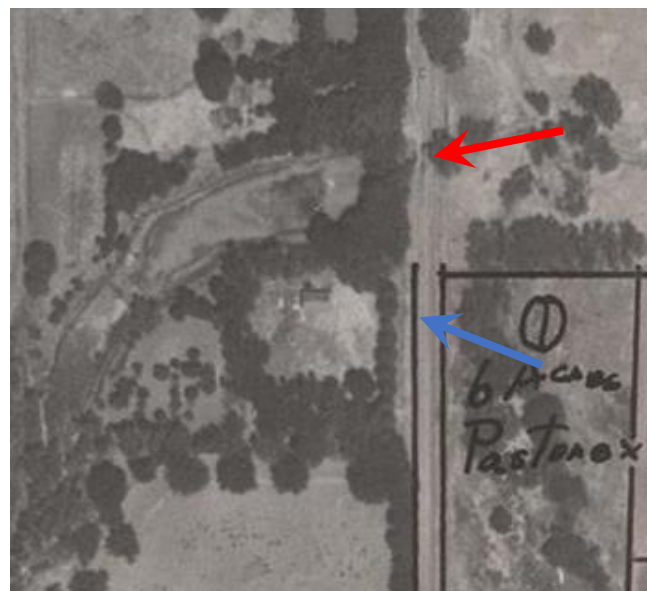
Again, note that this is NOT the location where the school was known to be located in the 1950s and until it was moved to the Pleasant Vale school grounds sometime after 1956. The aerial photo below shows that it was clearly on the west side of Highway 81 by 1937, but we have no further information on exactly when it was moved across Highway 81 to the west. [Any help from anyone familiar with this school would be very much appreciated and acknowledged.](#)

Spring Valley students had the option of either going to Kremlin or to Enid; these were about equally close/distant, and this gave students the choice of a “city school” versus a “small town school”. These options remained in place for students from Pleasant Vale and from North Enid until the 1968-69 school year, my senior year, when more formal district mergers and boundaries were established that continue to this day.

#### **4. School building and grounds.**

To the left below is an aerial image of the Spring Valley school grounds from 1937, indicated by the blue arrow. It shows the school on the west side of Highway 81, clearly indicating that it was moved there prior to 1937. To the right below is the 1954 aerial image. Unfortunately, there were no aerial images of this area taken in 1945, as for several of the other one-room schools; but also fortunately, the Spring Valley school was one of the very few that were still in their original location by 1954, and it was actually still in operation!

The location of the school building on the school grounds can be seen, with the highway to the east, the property line to the north (top), and the many trees surrounding it. To the north of the school is a small recreational lake and resort, indicated by the red arrow, that we knew as Wilmoth Lake, though none of our available plat maps show Wilmoth being the owner of that farm. Not many details of the school grounds are clear in the 1937 photo, but more are visible in the 1954 photo. The school building is most clearly visible in the 1954 map, running east-west near the north edge of the school

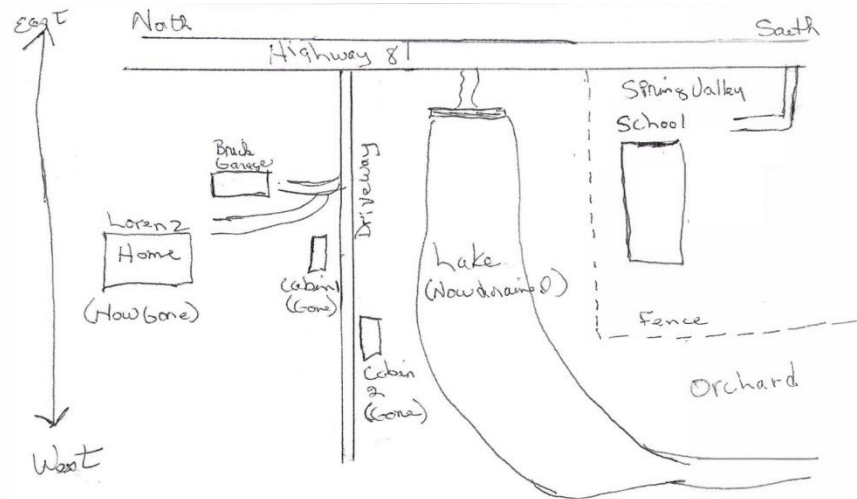


grounds. Multiple out-buildings are visible behind the school (to the west) and at least one building to the south at the west end of the school. What is presumably a large playground area is visible to south also. Memories of the building and grounds from Mike Lorenz and Rodney Regier are below.

Mike Lorenz was a very useful resource; we knew him as a Kremlin High School classmate of our older brother Galen Toews. Mike not only attended Spring Valley through his fifth-grade year (1955-56) but lived close to the lake to the north. His very helpful hand-drawn diagram of the area that is shown in the aerial photos above is shown here.

The top of Mike's drawing is east and the left of the drawing is north, so pay attention to directions. The dashed line at the north edge of the school grounds (left in the diagram) is the dividing line between the south-east and north-east

quarters of that section. Thus, it seems that the upstream part of the resort lake may have had a different property owner than the main part closest to the Highway 81. Mike said that there were 2 cabins on the north side of the lake, and it had several piers on the upper (west end). An orchard was located just west of the school yard. This is shown in his drawing above and is visible in the aerial photos.



All of the buildings from the school and the lake and resort are gone now, except the brick garage in Mike's drawing, which is still there and barely visible from the fence along Highway 81; see the photo to the right. Also, when putting up the school marker sign, the current owner of the property showed us a few remaining slabs of concrete from the school out-buildings, one perhaps being the storm cellar. Photos were not very informative so are not included; and people should not go trespassing to look for them – and will be rewarded with poison ivy if they do!



Mike said there was only one driveway into the school grounds, from the highway; this is likely the current north driveway into Redbird Farm, where our school marker sign is located; that driveway was presumably "shadowed" by trees overhead because it is not very apparent in the aerial photos. He said there was never bus service, and that students either walked or were driven to the school. In earlier days, students likely rode horses or got buggy rides.

Mike said the school ran east-west, in agreement with the 1954 aerial photo and with Rodney Regier's memories below. Mike said the main entrance was a single door, facing east towards the highway, and that he remembered the class desks facing north, and a raised platform (small stage) at

the front of the school room (north side), with the teacher's desk to the north also. This would agree with Columbia School 3 miles north, which also had the stage on the north "side" rather than at an end of the building. Mike said that there was a piano on or near the stage. While the school was presumably heated with a coal-burning stove initially, Mike said that it had gas heat by his early 1950s days. The outhouses were to the west of the school building and can perhaps barely be seen in the aerial photos. He remembered a playground but not many details.

Additional important memories come from my own Kremlin high school classmate Rodney (Rod) Regier. Rod's family owned the farm where the Chisholm Trail marker is located for multiple generations, and said the family home there was a large two-story brick house. He said that both his grandfather and his father attended Spring Valley. Rod grew up on the farm a mile further west from the early family home place. Spring Valley shut down before Rodney started school in the fall of 1957, but his father was on the school board for Spring Valley, and he spent a reasonable bit of time in and at the school. His memories agreed with Mike's about the main entrance at the east end of the building. He remembered a pot-bellied stove about in the center of the room, with desks on both sides, but facing to the west. At the north side of the west end is where he remembered the small stage, with the back door to the outhouses and playground at the south side of the west end. Mike Lorenz thought that the arrangement of the desks likely changed from year to year; he remembered students being grouped by age, and those groups and sizes would have changed from year to year, so likely room arrangements also; and, of course, teacher preferences on how to arrange the room and the students.

Rod had more memories of the school grounds. He remembered a coal shed to the west, and two outhouses to the west also, but said he had never been in those. Playground equipment included a merry-go-round, but not a tall one that pivoted at the top; a slide; a teeter-totter; and he presumed a swing or swings. He said there was both an area for basketball and for baseball.

Rod had further experience with the Spring Valley school building, because it had been moved to Pleasant Vale school by his first-grade year, 1957-58, and that is the building for Rod's 1<sup>st</sup> and 2<sup>nd</sup> grade years. Some of the playground equipment was moved there also. Rod commented on how very fast the Spring Valley merry-go-round was – so fast that one of his classmates flew off of it and broke his arm!

### **5. Known teachers.**

J. W. Kidd, from 1913 photo below

Mrs. Wanda Hoffsommer, from 1930 Enid Events teachers list

John Janzen, from his daughter Faith Mary Janzen's memory of him teaching Faith Mary Crumpacker there, which is why she came to be named Faith Mary

Ozella James, remembered by Mike Lorenz as his teacher there

### **6. The interesting area surrounding Spring Valley school.**

Mike Lorenz not only attended school there, but his family lived just a bit north of the school, so he knew the entire area well; his layout diagram on the previous page shows more of the area. His family



house was on the next quarter north, which was owned and/or rented by the same Oven family who had the Jerry Oven Guernsey Dairy. His dad worked for the Dairy and their house may have been a “perk” for his family, or perhaps was just available and convenient. Mike said that his older brother Bob and sister Janet had also attended Spring Valley. At least some of his cousins, children of Alfie Lorenz, who lived in a house further north from Mike but on the same farm, also attended Spring Valley. The lake and resort directly north of the school has been described above.

The Spring Valley “area” had other interesting things going on. At the south end of the farm where Spring Valley was located were three “mansions” or “estates”. These were home to three of the daughters of H. H. Champlin -- the Ovens, the Crumpackers, and the Cottons, from south to north. Directly to the west of these mansions, on the road that is now Lake Hellums Road, was the Oven Guernsey Dairy. Rod Regier remembered this as a very modern dairy, with an electrified “screen” to keep flies out. That dairy was run by Verl Brainerd in our days, until the 1990s or later. Also behind the mansions was “Oven’s Lake”, a smaller “family” lake but remembered by several.

A mile west of the Champlin mansions was the Lake Hellums amusement park, still going strong in our days in the mid-1950s. See our [Memories of Lake Hellums document](#) on our webpage for photos and memories. Rod Regier remembered another larger lake to the north of Lake Hellums, called Sportsmen’s Lake. Rod remembered campsites and cookout grills plus fishing, boating, and hunting; for \$20 a year, people could use it whenever they wanted. He said the lake was also used for irrigation, perhaps for the several orchards that were nearby. There was another large lake to the west of Lake Hellums, but I have not found people who have specific memories of that lake or its uses.

The quarter section to the south and east from the Spring Valley farm had the Milton Garber estate; Milton Garber owned the Enid newspaper, among other things. Mike said that his only classmate was Vicky Garber, daughter of the Enid newspaper editor/owner Milton Garber; she went to Enid for high school. Another large country estate was located across Highway 81 west from Garbers and across what is now Lake Hellums Road south from the Champlin family mansions.

The quarter section caddy-corner to the north and east from Spring Valley is shown as the Enid Country Club on the 1936 plat map, though there were no obvious remnants of that by the early 1950s. If it was a country club, it likely would have been a true “country” club, with things like horseback riding and perhaps hunting rather than golf, because the terrain there was quite hilly and with multiple creek banks. We know that it was more successful as the Orchard Hill(s) Angus Farm, at one time owned by the Cotton family to the south of Spring Valley.

Finally, to the north-east of Spring Valley, was the large home and estate of George Failing, who was well-known and wealthy from his success in manufacturing oil-well drilling equipment. And to the west, north, and east from Spring Valley were multiple orchards, several of them owned by the Robertson families, including Emmet and Orval Robertson. We remember going to those to pick fruit with our grandfather in our younger days.

## 7. Photos of students and teachers and the school grounds.

To the right is a photo of students at Spring Valley from 1913, from the 1982 Garfield County History volumes. The only IDs there are of J. W. Kidd as the teacher and of George Janssen as one of the students who later served on the school board. It is possible that this photo was of the school when it was on the east side of Highway 81. We have no information on whether the school building was moved to the west or whether perhaps a new school building was built from scratch on the west side of the highway.



To the right here is a 1931 photo of Spring Valley students, nicely identified on the blackboard in the photo. Many of the names here are ones that we recognize, either from our youth or from plat maps of families who lived in the area.

I particularly note the three Robertson children in the photo. A Kremlin schoolmate of mine, Craig Robertson, told me of multiple of his family having lived in the area and attended school at Spring Valley. The Robertsons were known for their orchards, some of which show within a mile or so of the school on the early aerial images.

Spring Valley 1931. (L-R Row 1) Jack Imel, Charles Wilson, Georgie Naugle, Billy Max Bogert, Jr. Welsh, Dwayne Emerson, Ireta Robertson, Ethel Cowsar, (Row 2) Lee Wilson, Lee Turner, Frank Bogert, Jr., Lloyd Powers, Bill Robertson, Johnny Cowsar, Eileen Cowsar, Aileen Stewart, Helen Montgomery, Deloras Robertson, Clara Thompson, Hazel Cowsar, (Row 3) Harry Wasemiller, Ted Imel, Bob Teft, Clifton Munns, Floyd Cowsar, Ralph Greenlief, Mrs. Wanda Hoffsommer (Teacher), Refa Robertson, Neal Powers, Olive McCall, Maurine Teft, Marie Toews, Lottie Powers. [Photo courtesy of Marion Hoffsommer, Hillsdale, Okla.]



## 8. Individual memories and stories.

### Rod Regier.

I mentioned to Rod that Valley Center school had double desks, and he said that Spring Valley did also, at least early on. His dad told him that he was small and shy, so his first-grade teacher had him sit at a double desk with a third-grade girl who both helped him be comfortable at school and helped him with school work.

Rod also said his dad liked to reminisce about sometimes ice-skating to school on the creek that ran through their farm and then behind the school. "Those were the days!"

**We welcome any more information from any other people who know of their own ancestors who attended this school or who might have any photos of the school and the wider area!**