

Of the one-room schools that fed into the Kremlin School system, we have the most information about Valley Center, Columbia, and Wild Horse schools, because the Mennonites of our parents' generation that we grew up with left behind photos and other memorabilia plus their own memories that they or their children have shared with us.

Special thanks to the following for their help in paying for the Valley Center school marker sign: Doug Toews, Jakie Lee Rempel, Dennis Toews, James Buller

Special thanks to the following for their help with stories and photos: John Regier; Ed Barkman; Jeanette (Regier) Ratzlaff; Kathleen (Regier) Kloepfer; James and Beverly Buller; Bill Buller, James's father; Joel Toews; Vic Rempel; Dennis Toews; Ellis Toews

1. Facts.

District number: 32

Location: Southeast corner (how far south?) of the SE/4 of Section 3-23-6 in North Enid Township

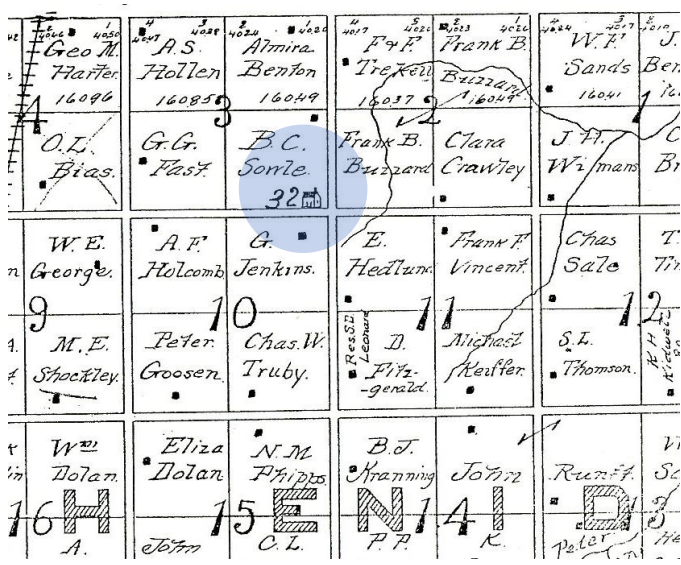
Started: Presumably 1894

Last year of classes: 1946, as best we can tell.

Fate of building: Still standing early 1950s; eventually bull-dozed and buried (**when?**)

2. Location and school grounds.

This school building was located at what is now the intersection of 42nd Street (of Enid) and Robertson Road. This location is about 3 miles south and one mile east of Kremlin, across the road west and nearly a half mile south from current James Buller farmyard. The school was on the north-west corner of that intersection, which is the south-east corner of the farm on which it was located. Roads to and near this school are not paved. A portion of a 1901 commercial plat map showing the site of the school and its district number for identification is shown to the left below; the school site is highlighted in blue. The same region from the 1906 government plat map is shown below right.



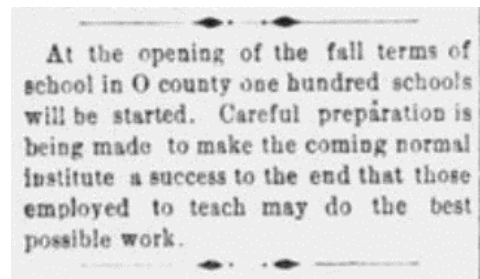
Plat maps show that the farm on which the school was located was owned by B.C. Sowell in 1901, S. Arnold in 1906, I. S. Arnold in 1936, and Margaret I. Arnold in 1951. I'm guessing some called it

“the Arnold place”! All owners of this farm and other farms in the area can of course be tracked down at the County Court House.

The two images below are from aerial photos of the Valley Center area, the left from 1937 and the right from 1954. The gold arrow in the left image points to the school site. It appears that there may have been a large farmyard to the west (left), but the plat maps do not show any farmyard there. The later photo to the right nicely shows the trees that were growing around the school (see building photos below, but I don't see any clear evidence of a building there, at least not standing upright enough to create a shadow or clear image.



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.



3. Student photos and memories.

This school building was located across the road from where James Buller grew up and lives now. James remembers he and his sister Loretta playing there as children, perhaps 1948-1952, but that it had not been used for many years by his day. He thought that a windstorm blew the remains down years later, and that this same windstorm damaged the barn on their farm also. The school building and the trees surrounding it were eventually bull-dozed and buried on location, he thought at the time that Ed Zaloudek and/or his sons bought the farm (when?). Thus, we know that Valley Center was NOT one of the one-room schoolhouses that got moved onto the Kremlin school grounds in the years from 1946 to 1951 or so.

The photo here, provided by John Regier, is the best view we have of the entire Valley Center school building. John Regier clearly stated that this view is looking north and that the front of the school faced the road to the east. He said the school was at the northeast corner of the school property. The swing set and the merry-go-round on the playground to the south of the school are clearly visible. There is a nice porch and traditional steeple and bell tower at the front (east) of the school. The chimney is at the back (west) end of the roof, so presumably the



coal-burning stove for heat was at that end of the building also. The trees in front of the school are fairly large, and it appears that newer smaller trees were planted along the north edge of the school property.

The photo here, provided by Jeanette Regier Ratzlaff, shows the back of the school; note the two basketball goals. John Regier said the small building to the left was the girls' bathroom. The boys' bathroom was likely just to the left of this photo. These two photos were likely taken around the same time, because of the similar size of the trees in both. We do not have IDs for the students for either photo.



John Regier and his older brother Jacob Regier, father to our cousins Jeanette and Kathy Regier, both attended Valley Center. In addition, Jeanette's mother Anna Voth, a sister to my mother Rosa Voth, was the teacher at Valley Center in at least some of its later years; and that is where Jake Regier and

Anna Voth met, eventually marrying, with Kathy and Jeanette as their daughter. That is the reason that these two people had these nice photos of Valley Center to share.

The photo below, again from John Regier, nicely shows the front porch of the school, along with students that we can identify. This photo provides a great view of the nice front porch, with some ornamental elements and nice shelter from both north and south winds.



John Regier originally sent this photo and said that it was the last group to attend Valley Center; that there were only these 9 students, and three were heading off to high school, and there were no new students entering the next year. But this disagrees with Ed Barkman's memories – he is not included in John Regier's list of students in this photo yet, and Ed said that HE was in the last class to attend Valley Center, for grades 1 and 2, the 1944-45 and 1945-46 school years. In the 1946-47 Kremlin yearbook, Ed shows up as a 3rd grader, but not in the years before. Since Ed is NOT in the photo above, it is likely that this photo was from May of 1944. Ed would have attended there the next two years, 1944-45 and 1945-46, his first and second grade years, with May 1946 being the most likely closing of Valley Center. Ed said that he was the only student in his grade, so he would have been one of the few Valley Center students from its last years who is NOT in the photo above.

I believe that this photo is from 1944 and that the correct names and grades are John Barkman (8th), Isaac Regier (8th), John Regier (5th), Jake Barkman (5th), Ida Belle Kirkpatrick (6th), Rubena Barkman (6th), Dora Lee Kirkpatrick (8th), Matilda Barkman (3rd), and Sylvia Kirkpatrick (2nd). These years agree with the 1946-47 Kremlin yearbook, 3 years later, when John Barkman, Isaac (Ikie) Regier, and Dora Lee

Kirkpatrick were juniors; Ida Belle Kirkpatrick and Rubena Barkman were freshmen; and Jake Barkman and John Regier were 8th graders; Matilda Barkman was a 6th grader; and Sylvia Kirkpatrick was a 5th grader. None of these students were in the Kremlin yearbook for 1945-46, so they were still at Valley Center that year. So, again, May 1946 must have been the last year for Valley Center. These IDs all either match or are one year off from John Regier's original IDs as Ike Regier and John Barkman, grade 8, John Regier and Jacob Barkman, grade 6, Ida Belle Kirpatrick and Rubena Barkman, grade 7, Dora Lee Kirpatrick, grade 8, and Matilda Barkman and Syliva Kirpatrick, grade 5.

John Regier noted the two doors on the front porch; "boys to the left, girls to the right." He said that there were coat rooms partitioned off just inside each of the two doors, but otherwise only one large room. There was no electricity or running water, with a hand pump presumably down to a well in front of the school. Heating was with a coal oil stove in the northwest area of the room. On cold days, students kept their coats on. On cloudy days, students moved their desks near windows. He said that the school did have a piano and a stage with a hand-rolled curtain that was lowered from the top down. Thanks again to John Regier (92+!) for his clear memories and for sharing them!

John Regier's early school history is interesting! His older brother Jake and sister Aganetha went to Valley Center also, but they were riding the bus to high school in Kremlin by the time John started school, so he rode the bus with them and went to school in Kremlin his first three years. For his 4th grade year, his older siblings had finished high school, and he sensed that his parents feared there might not be enough students to keep Valley Center school open, so starting in 4th grade (1942-43), he began attending Valley Center, and he went there through 7th grade, when the school closed. He clearly remembered John Janzen as his 4th grade teacher there, and he thought that John Janzen had taught there for perhaps the previous 3 years also, while he was in Kremlin. For his 5th and 6th grade years at Valley Center, his teacher was his future sister-in-law Anna Voth, who married his brother Jake Regier.

From John and Jake Regier's younger sister Viola, I learned that Anna Voth had lived with the Buller family across the road to the east and a bit north from the school while teaching there; we presume for both of her years of teaching there.

Helen Kroeker lived near the Regiers and Valley Center, and she may have had a similar experience as John Regier. She is in early grade school photos at Kremlin but then shows up in the photo below at Valley Center.

On the next page is the next older photo of Valley Center students. This photo and the next one, taken the same day, were provided by Faith Mary (Janzen) Heinrichs, the daughter of John Janzen, who is the teacher in these photos. From John Regier, we know that John Janzen was his teacher at Valley Center for his 4th grade year, 1942-43, and thought that John Janzen had maybe taught there for several previous years, while John Regier was in grades 1-3 at Kremlin. So this photo was likely from the years 1939 to 1942, with John Janzen as the teacher. John Regier did not identify himself in the photo, so it was presumably not 1942-43.

Besides John Janzen, Helen Kroeker is the most clearly identifiable person in the photo, the 5th girl from the left looking at the photo, in the dark dress. The two boys at the far right looking at the photo were clearly identified as John and Jake Barkman, but both John Regier and Ed Barkman – John Barkman the taller boy with straighter hair and Jake Barkman the shorter boy with dark curly hair. Both John Regier and Ed Barkman thought that the boy next to John Janzen in the back row was likely Louis Kirkpatrick, who would have been an eighth grader in 1942. The other two in the back row were not

identified; Alvina Barkman was in the same grade as Louis Kirkpatrick, but both John Regier and Ed Barkman said that the back-row girl was not her. John Regier thought that the two girls to the right of Helen Kroeker were likely Dora Lee Kirkpatrick (older) and her sister Ida Belle Kirkpatrick, and their ages in 1942 seem to agree. John and Ed both thought the girl to the left of Helen Kroeker was Rubena Barkman but did not know the girls in the heart dress. Both thought the two youngest girls were Matilda Barkman and Sylvia Kirkpatrick. Sylvia would have been a first grader and Matilda a second grader. John and Isaac Regier would have been at Kremlin School this year. These are the best IDs available at this time.



The other photo to the right is some of the same students, taken the same day; note matching dresses. This photo makes it clear that this is Valley Center, by matching many elements with the other Valley Center photos.

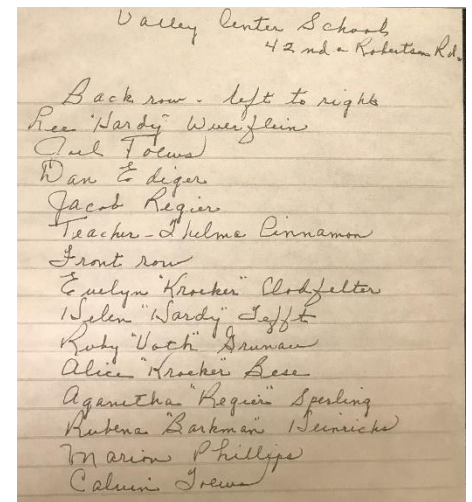


Again, John Janzen is to the left. The young boy in the front and center of the photo is John Janzen's son Dwayne. Dwayne was not a student there, so must have been visiting for part of a day, or for recess, or perhaps just for this photo. John Janzen taught at several one-room schools through the years; his Valley Center photo was labeled as his "4th School". We have another photo of him at Daniels School District 21, which was near Hunter, and at one other one-room school. Later, John would teach

7th and 8th grades at Kremlin and be the grade school coach, including coaching his daughter Faith Mary and her classmates.

Though the two photos above were taken the same day, they were taken on different sides of the building. Note the metal screenwork on the window in the top photo but not on the windows in the bottom photo. We can only guess that these “shielded” windows were located on the north side of the building, but why they were shielded is not known.

The photo below is another for which we have good IDs of the students. This is Joel Toews’s photo and student IDs that he kept on the wall of his room at Golden Oaks retirement center in Enid, where I took a photo of his photo. The photo gives the current address for the school location, at 42nd St. and Robertson Rd.



Some of Joel’s original IDs with his photo have been corrected by others. Best IDs to date are: back, l to r – (Virginia) Lee Hardy (b. 1922, married John Wuerflein), Joel Toews (b. 1922), Jacob Regier (b. 1923), Dan Ediger, and teacher Thelma Cinnamon; front, l to r – Evelyn “Arlene” Kroeker (b. 1929, married Walter Clodfelter), Helen Hardy (b. 1929, married LeRayne Tefft), Rubena “Ruby” Voth (b. 1927, married Frank Grunau), Alice Kroeker (b. 1927, married Alvin Bese), Aganetha Regier (b. 1925, married Ruben Sperling), Alvina Barkman (b. 1927, married Herbert Heinrichs), Marion Phillips (b. 1925), and Joel’s younger brother (David) Calvin Toews (b. 1925).

The year is not identified, but it is likely 1935 or 1936 -- Lee Hardy was a Kremlin Senior in 1940, so 1935 if she is a seventh grader and 1936 if she is an eighth grader; and Calvin Toews and Marion Phillips were Kremlin seniors in 1944, so maybe fourth graders here if this is 1936 (they look too big to be third graders from 1935); and 1935 if Evelyn Kroeker and Helen Hardy were first graders, 1936 if they were second graders. Anyway, all close enough, and thanks to all for IDs and fixes.

Though we did not know Joel and Calvin Toews to have lived near Valley Center, but further west and south, Joel’s son Doug, a school mate of mine, said that at the time of this photo their family had rented and lived on the farm in the second mile east of Valley Center and on the north side of the road,

where his brother Darrell ended up living for his married years. We also would not have expected the Hardy girls to have gone to Valley Center – we knew them to have lived a few miles too far east and north to have been in the Valley Center school district. But the identification seems strong and by multiple people.

At least some of us knew Thelma Cinnamon's son Earl, who attended Hunter school but was an active 4-H Club member (and with me, one of the winners of the F. W. Zaloudek trophy as outstanding 4-H'er of the year). Earl said his mother taught at two other area one-room schools; he was pretty sure one was Eureka, three miles south of his home, and that the other was about 6 miles south, which would make it Union, both in Buffalo Township, the next township east from Kremlin Township.

An earlier photo of Valley Center students graduating (8th graders), from James and Beverly Buller, is shown to the right, with most but not all of the students identified. William "Bill" Buller, James's father, is far left in the back row; his grade cards (included later below) show that he finished fourth grade in 1923 so would have been an eight grade "graduate" in 1927, thus dating this photo. I have available information on most but not all of the other students as well. This photo also IDs J. D. Koop as one of the earlier teachers at Valley Center.



Below are two more photos from James and Beverly Buller (via Bill Buller, and likely including him) of unidentified students at Valley Center; perhaps the same students as in his "graduates" photos above, but taken in an earlier year. Three of the hats match between the two photos, so perhaps these were taken the same day.



The photo to the right is also from Valley Center, as ID'd on the back; this photo was in family photos that we inherited. We had at least one Voth relative who lived in the area, and Buller relatives who lived there also, but perhaps later than this photo, whose date is unknown. This photo perhaps represents Valley Center's "heydays"; note the large



number of students compared to the 9 students in the 1944 photo from just before it closed, the first student photo above. We do not have firm IDs on the students in this photo; a clearer copy of the photo might make at least some tentative or likely IDs possible. Because it should be in our family's possession, I will try to get a better copy, if the original is in fact better.

The photo below is yet an earlier photo of Valley Center students from our family photos. The basketball is clearly labeled with Dist 32, the number for Valley Center. It is labeled as "Xmas to Anna Voth from Agnes Pierce Teacher 1916-17", giving a clear time frame for this photo. The youngest children would have been born around 1910 and the oldest perhaps as early as 1903! This photo came from my oldest brother Galen's collection of our family photos, so I presume this Anna Voth was a Voth relative of ours. Our great-grandpa Jacob J. Voth's brother John Voth lived in the area and had a daughter Anna, born

1910, so she could be one of the youngest girls. Jacob J.'s brother Gerhard Voth had a daughter Anna (whom we knew as "Kloas") born in 1905, so she would fit as being one of the older girls. The girl third from the right in the middle row looks very much like a Voth to me. Note the two girls toward the back and a younger girl in the



middle row between the two girls in white dresses who all have the same "box" pattern on the collars of their dresses; and the three girls middle row left whose dresses all share the same "box" pattern (but different from the other three girls); presumably these would both be sets of sisters. FUN!

And yet one more and earlier photo, this one from the Garfield County Centennial History volumes, #2, p 894. The photo is identified as 1912-1913, with Ferrol Ellis as the teacher. Presumably some of the younger children in this photo may be among those students in the 1916 photo above. There appear to be perhaps 3 adults in this photo; there is some indication that adults attended some of these early schools so that they could learn to read and write also. It is also interesting to note that some of the children are barefoot, even though they all have on long sleeves.



The earliest stories that we have for Valley Center come from David Ediger's memories, recorded and transcribed by his grandson Jerry Ediger and a copy passed on to me by David's son and Jerry's father Loyd Ediger. David Ediger would have been at Valley Center from about 1918 to 1926 or so. Perhaps most interesting to me was his memory of about 40 students attending the school in his days, far more than in any of the photos that we have been able to collect. The entire section of his memories about the school is included near the end of this document. I recommend reading it all!

Below are the "outsides and insides" of two of Bill Buller's Valley Center report cards. I show them not for his grades (strong A's and B's, and he got promoted!), but for historical interest, and to highlight a few things of interest. As in our day, parents had to sign report cards, but maybe every month rather than every quarter. Grades were also given monthly. Student "behavior" factors were also noted, I think to a greater degree than in my day – note "Care teeth" and "Cleanliness" for 1922-23! I was interested to see that Jacob Rempel was the custodian, perhaps meaning the one who kept the records and not the one who cleaned the buildings. Again, Bill Buller was always Excellent or at least Good – he had to be, with his parents right across the road! These grade cards also show J. D. Koop as teacher for 1925-26, and Thelma Romine as the teacher earlier, in 1922-23. This Thelma Romine does not seem to be the teacher identified in the Joel Toews photo as Thelma Cinnamon; a Thelma Schmidt is listed as the wife of Ervin Cinnamon. And a Thelma nee Muns is listed as the wife of a David Romine in Keowee Township, where Hillsdale is located, so she must be the Thelma Romine. Likely just a "freak" thing that there were two Thelmas as teachers there. Thelma was a popular name back then!

TO THE PARENTS

This report is sent to you in order that you may know of the work that is being done by your child in school. Please examine it carefully each time received – it talk it over with your child. If the marking is not satisfactory please confer with the teacher about the matter.

—THE HOME AND THE SCHOOL SHOULD WORK TOGETHER FOR THE GOOD OF THE CHILD.—

After examining card please sign promptly and return to teacher.

Signature of Parent or Guardian
1st Report *P. A. Buller*
2nd Report *P. A. Buller*
3rd Report *P. A. Buller*
4th Report *P. A. Buller*
5th Report *P. A. Buller*
6th Report *P. A. Buller*
7th Report
8th Report
9th Report

Pupil's Report Card

PUBLIC SCHOOLS
Superintendent

School Year 1922-1923

REPORT OF
William Buller
Valley Center School

Class _____ Grade 4

Promoted to 5

Promoted to _____ Teacher
Thelma Y. Romine

REPORT OF GRADES
SCHOOL YEAR 1922-1923

| REPORTS | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 | 8 | 9 | 10 | 11 | 12 | Year | Final |
|---------------------|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|----|----|----|------|-------|
| Agriculture | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| Artistic | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| Civics | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| Composition | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| Drawing | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| Domestic Science | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| Geography | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| Grammar or Language | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| History State | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| History U.S. | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| Music | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| Physiology | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| Reading | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| Spelling | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| Writing | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| Care Teeth | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| Cleanliness | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| Days Absent | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| Times Tardy | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| Times Truant | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |

EXPLANATION OF GRADES
1—Excellent, 90 to 100 per cent. 3—Good or Fair, 70 to 79 per cent.
2—Good, 80 to 89 per cent. 4—Unsatisfactory, 60 to 69 per cent.
5—Good, 60 to 69 per cent. 6—Doubtful, less than 60 per cent.

HOME CREDIT REPORT

| 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 | 8 | 9 |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | | | | | | | | |

PLACE CROSS MARK (X) OPPOSITE ITEMS TO WHICH ATTENTION IS CALLED

Attitude toward school work
 Diligent
 Works True
 Works reasonably hard
 Gives best too much help
 Gives Up Too Easily
 Shows Improvement
 Very Satisfactory

RECIPIENTS
 Comes Promptly Prepared
 Appears Alert in Class
 Keeps Desk Well
 Neatness
 Punctual in Duties
 Quality of Language in Lecture
 Work Shows a Feeling of
 Work of Grade too Difficult
 Showing Improvement
 Very Satisfactory

CONDUCT
 Restless Inattentive
 Difficult to Molested
 Makes Inconveniences at Times
 Always Obedient
 Whispers Too Much
 Shows Improvement
 Very Good

PUPIL'S CLEARANCE RECEIPT (Form F1B-9)
I hereby certify that *William Buller* (Name of Pupil) has satisfactorily accounted for all free textbooks issued to him or her by this district during the school year indicated below.

Jacob Rempel
Signature of Custodian or His Authorized Agent
Linda, Okla.
(Post Office Address of Custodian)
32 Valley Center Garfield
(No. of Dist.) (Name of School) (County)

Date 27 1926 School year 1925-1926

NOTE—This receipt will be issued to each pupil at the time of his permanent withdrawal from school or when he transfers from one school district to another, provided he has accounted for ALL free textbooks issued to him. The pupil MUST keep this receipt; without it, he will not be entitled to textbooks when reentering school.

Use above form only if free books are provided.

Signature of Parent or Guardian
1st Mo. *P. A. Buller*
2nd Mo. *P. A. Buller*
3rd Mo. *P. A. Buller*
4th Mo. *P. A. Buller*
5th Mo. *P. A. Buller*
6th Mo. *P. A. Buller*
7th Mo. *P. A. Buller*
8th Mo.
9th Mo.

Report to Parents

The Home, the School, and the State should work together for the good of the child

Report of
William Buller
Dist. No. 32
For the School year
1925 and 1926

J. D. Koop Teacher

| Subject | Class Grades by Months | | | | | | | | | | Average | Exam. Grd. | Term Ave. | Yearly Standing | |
|------------------|------------------------|----|----|----|----|----|----|----|----|----|---------|------------|-----------|-----------------|----|
| | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 | 8 | 9 | 10 | | | | | |
| Agriculture | 73 | 72 | 74 | 74 | 73 | 72 | 73 | 88 | | | | | | | |
| Arithmetic | 70 | 70 | 71 | 71 | 71 | 71 | 71 | 71 | 71 | 71 | 71 | 71 | 71 | 71 | 71 |
| Civics | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| Chaucer | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| Composition | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| Domestic Science | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| Drawing | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| Geography | 82 | 84 | 83 | 85 | 81 | 85 | 87 | 82 | | | | | | | |
| History U. S. | 85 | 85 | 86 | 86 | 85 | 87 | 88 | 87 | | | | | | | |
| History State | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| Language | 73 | 72 | 72 | 70 | 88 | 88 | 85 | 85 | | | | | | | |
| Manual Training | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| Music | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| Physiology | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| Reading | 89 | 88 | 89 | 87 | | | | | | | | | | | |
| Spelling | 90 | 89 | 92 | 94 | 93 | 94 | 93 | 94 | | | | | | | |
| Writing | 90 | 91 | 92 | 92 | 93 | 90 | 93 | 92 | | | | | | | |
| Average | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |

Markings: Excellent 95 to 100 Good 85 to 95 Fair 75 to 85 Unsatisfactory 60 to 75 Poor Below 60 Honored Average 75 Minimum 60

ATTENDANCE

| Month | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 | 8 | 9 |
|--------------|----|----|----|----|----|----|----|----|----|
| Days Taught | 20 | 17 | 18 | 20 | 20 | 20 | 20 | 20 | 20 |
| Days Absent | 2 | 2 | 1 | 2 | 2 | 2 | 2 | 2 | 2 |
| Times Tardy | | | | | | | | | |
| Times Truant | | | | | | | | | |

TRAITS OF PUPIL

| Month | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 | 8 | 9 |
|------------------------|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Interest | G | G | G | E | E | E | E | E | G |
| Conduct | G | G | G | G | G | G | G | G | G |
| Preparation of Lessons | G | G | G | G | G | G | G | G | G |
| Carefulness | E | G | E | G | E | G | E | G | E |

Markings: E, Excellent; G, Good; F, Fair; U, Unsatisfactory; P, Poor

CERTIFICATE OF PROMOTION
This certifies that *William Buller* has completed the work of the seventh grade and is hereby recommended for promotion to the eighth grade of the Public Schools of this County.
April 23, 1926
J. D. Koop TEACHER

Finally (for now), the two photos below show that Valley Center was not just a one-room school building or school district, but a rural community. These photos show the barn on the farm that was Bill Buller's and is now James and Beverly Buller's, which either Bill or perhaps more likely Bill's father Peter A. Buller proudly marked as "Valley Center Farm", way back when, and still there. Thanks much to James for telling me about this little treasure.



4. Known teachers. (From photos above and personal memories below; no official list available)

Agnes Pearce, from Anna Voth photo, 1916

Anna Splane, Miss Letson, Thelma Romine, Inez Bowman and J.D. Koop – 1920s era, from David Ediger memories; J.D. Koop and Thelma Romine from Bill Buller photos and documents also

Marie Casper, Isabella, 1930 Enid Events list

Thelma Schmidt Cinnamon, from Joel Toews photo, 1935-36 era

John Janzen, maybe 1941-1944, from John Regier memories

Anna Voth (later Mrs. Jacob Regier), 1944-1946, when it closed, from John Regier and Ed Barkman

5. Valley Center personal stories

John Regier.

John Regier, now about 91 years old, had multiple close connections with Valley Center school – he attended there, as did his older brother Jacob Regier; and Jacob Regier married Anna Voth, who was his teacher at Valley Center. So, his sister-in-law Anna Voth Regier was also his Valley Center teacher. And Anna Voth was my own mother's sister.

One story John told me was that his older brother Jake would often come to school in his car to pick him up and take him home. He said that he often got quite frustrated with waiting to get home while his older brother was “visiting” with his teacher.

He also said that one day the students arrived at school, but the school building was locked. Jake Regier was at the school also, inside with Anna. It turned out that this was the day that Jake was leaving for the Army during World War II, and presumably he was saying what he feared might be his last farewell to Anna. I have no evidence, but I have wondered whether this was perhaps the occasion when Jake proposed to Anna, or perhaps he had the night before. Regardless, it is a fun story about the school and about my own extended family.

Ed Barkman.

Ed Barkman remembered that the road to the south from the school was often a muddy road – no bridge had been built over the creek yet – and was for tractors only. He said that the Regier kids came to school on a tractor, presumably only on days when it was wet (?). I am fairly certain that the Regiers lived one mile south and one mile east from the school, on the north side of the road. The Barkmans lived about $\frac{3}{4}$ mile west from the school.

Memories of Jacob Rempel, father of Jackie Lee, Vic, and Ben, from Vic.

Jake Rempel (b. 1916) remembered being the only student in his grade at Valley Center. When he graduated, he went on to two years of further study at the Bible School at the “country” or “north” Mennonite Brethren Church. His older sister Elizabeth Rempel Buller also attended Valley Center, in addition to his younger sister Eva shown in the photo earlier. Vic thought that his dad's other older siblings maybe all completed grade school in Henderson, Nebraska, the family having moved to Oklahoma around 1919 or 1920.

Vic remembered his dad talking about a horse barn at the school. When the weather was very cold, his grandparents would heat bricks and put them on the floor of the buggy to help keep the kids' feet a little warmer on the ride to school.

James Buller.

Somewhere I should have notes of James Buller remembering his dad or grandparents talking about housing Valley Center school teachers at their house, but he did not have specific names. Anna Voth was one for whom we have other stories of her staying with the Bullers; her home was a good 6 or 7 miles away and she likely did not have a car at that time. Thelma Cinnamon was married when a

teacher there (maiden name was Schmidt), so she likely would have gone home to her husband each day, but I am not certain.

Dennis Toews.

Dennis remembered his father Bill Toews talking about attending Valley Center, and that he walked to and from school each day. Bill's family lived a mile west and a mile south of the school. Dennis remembered driving by what remained of the school when he was young, which agrees in time frame with James Buller remembering playing there.

Loyd Ediger.

Loyd said his dad David Ediger went to Valley Center also. Dave was a brother to Dan Ediger in the 1937 photo above, but 10 years older. Presumably John Ediger, between Dave and Dan in age, went there also, as well as their older siblings Cornelius and Bertha, but I do not have documentation. Loyd said that his dad Dave went to Valley Center only through 7th grade; at that point he took the 8th grade graduation or "competency" exam and passed, so he was able to get on with his life a year earlier. David Ediger's personal memories are below.

David Ediger's recorded memories.

When we started to the Valley Center school in Oklahoma, it was my first year. I didn't know any English and our teacher didn't know any German so for a while, I went by pointing and by so-many fingers to get permission for the restroom and such. It was a one room school with about forty kids. Some of the family names were Bullers, Kroekers, Rempels, Harms, Voths, and Vogts. There were also about four non-Mennonite families.

Our school was one and a half miles from home if we went on the road, but we usually walked through the fields since it was shorter that way. It was even shorter if we could walk through the Buller's pasture but they didn't like that too much. From our place, the school was a half mile west and a mile south, on the west side of the road. There is no trace of it now in that field).

Even though we only had eight grades, I think our school was good back then, as good as schools are now. Everyone who completed school could read and write and do basic mathematics. We also had classes in geography, history, grammar, and spelling. On Friday afternoon we would have spelling bees and math bees. We liked the math contests on the chalkboard, we would race against each other to add up a column of numbers or do multiplication or division. For the older classes, the girls took "domestic science" and learned sewing and nutrition and things like that.

We boys took agriculture. I remember I went through our ag book and learned it all pretty thoroughly. I think it was written by the extension agencies from OSU, or Oklahoma A&M as it was then. I always read and studied anything I could find on agriculture, even after I got out of school. As I recall, my Dad was skeptical about learning farming from a book. He thought the best way to learn was to just get out and do it.

At recess we played baseball, basketball and other games that we made up ourselves. The first social or "boy-girl game" that was played was called "Clap-in, Clap-out". The boys and girls took turns in being seated inside or outside on the porch till they were invited one at a time to come inside to sit beside the person who had requested him or her. If they guessed right they could stay seated till the game was over, if not they were "clapped out"- At that time the desks in our school were all double desks. This game was for the big kids. I was still one of the little kids at that time.

One teacher who did not approve of this game was Katheren Shellenburg. She was a cousin to the Regiers of A.L., D.L., Dan, Mary, Tena, Menno, and P.L. and was from Hillsboro Kansas. After teaching a month she resigned and went back home. Later she married Professor Solomon Loewen of Tabor College. As a kid I wondered whether her courtship with him was the reason for her short teaching career or if Valley Center was too tough for her taste. I thought she was a good teacher and had the privilege to talk to her during a reception on our last visit in Hillsboro. Some of my other teachers were Anna Splane, Miss Letson, Thelma Romine, Inez Bowman and J.D. Koop who was my last and best teacher.

To graduate from country school you had to pass an examination or else come back next year until you did. After country school I went to Bible school (run by our church) for two years. I studied German I and II since it was still our church language at that time. I also enjoyed music theory. Since I was a tenor, I had the chance to sing in a boys quartet; that lasted through my teen-age years. I sang tenor, Corny Grunau lead, his brother Henry was baritone, Henry Thesman on bass. We had lots of chances to sing and I always enjoyed that.