

Pleasant Prairie school in 1895, Martin County, Minnesota

Source: Copy of newspaper article received from Laura Steverson

Transcribed: 25 April 2001 by Mike Borchardt

"No. 58 Of A Series -- When Grandfather Was A Boy"

(Accompanied by a picture of a school class subtitled,
"Pleasant Prairie School Children In District 10 Back in 1895".)

"When Martin County's board of commissioners met Sept. 20, 1864, in the little court house that stood within the stockade of old Ft. Fairmont, United States soldiers in blue uniforms were in garrison there, marching to and fro.

"The board then consisted of but three members and only two -- J. C. Hudson of Center Chain, and C. H. Bardwell of Amber lake -- were present. The third member, Lewis F. True of what's now Center Creek, had enlisted in the union army a month earlier and the vacancy had not been filled.

"W. W. Carrington, who had a store in what is now Ward park, Fairmont, was county auditor.

"There were then no townships in Martin county as we knew them today. There were three "towns" extending across the county from east to west. They were named Waverly, Fairmont and Nevada. There was not even a village of Fairmont, just a settlement where the city exists today. There was one county commissioner from each of these "towns".

"At this meeting the two commissioners holding the meeting found that people away down on the east line of the county had filed a petition for a new school district, showing that there resided in the territory described enough children of school age to make the school a necessity.

"So the commissioners entered their order creating Dist. No. 10, established its boundaries and ordered the first school meeting. The district was ordered to include nine government sections, those that later became 1, 2, 3, 10, 11 and 12, Pleasant Prairie, and 34, 25 and 36 Center Creek.

"The school house was built in the northeast quarter of Sec. 11, pretty central to the so-called Irish colony that located that and subsequent years in what is now Pleasant Prairie. In that vicinity and dating from that period one still finds members of the tribes of Daly, Sullivan, Horgan, Kennedy, Garry, Clifford, Shea and others.

"In the early days about a mile southeast of the school house was the rural postoffice of Pleasant Prairie.

"This picture was made in 1895, has been preserved by the Clifford family, by whom it was loaned for reproduction here.

"Calling the roll of that old school today we find:

"Top Row, Left to Right

1 Nellie Garrison, now Mrs. Ed Schleinger, Granada.

- 2 Tom Daly, deceased.
- 3 Annie McNerney (Mrs. Dan Murphy), deceased.
- 4 Ella Daly, deceased.
- 5 Gertie Priest (Mrs. Clint Garrison), deceased.
- 6 Maggie Daly, deceased.
- 7 Nellie Priest (Mrs. Dan Oxreider), deceased.
- 8 Louisa Hill, now Mrs. Wilson Closs, Granada.

"Second Row, Left to Right

- 1 John Clifford, deceased.
- 2 Will Daly, Granada.
- 3 John Garry, Guckeen.
- 4 Mamie Shea (Mrs. Dan Durham), deceased.
- 5 Julia Kennedy, now Mrs. Lawrence Murphy, Fairmont.
- 6 Oscar Hill, Granada.
- 7 Tom Clifford, Camas, Wash.

"Third Row, Left to Right

- 1 Celia Daly, now Mrs. John Garry, Guckeen.
- 2 Jim Sullivan, Fairmont.
- 3 William Wilcox, address unknown.
- 4 James Clifford, deceased.
- 5 Henry Murtaugh, teacher. Mr. Murtaugh's picture appeared here recently as a member of a pioneer Fairmont fire company, and it was stated he was deceased.

We have since been informed that he is still living, his home in Chicago.

- 6 Leo Daly, Granada.
- 7 Mike Garry, Fairmont.

"Front Row, Left to Right

- 1 Frank Garrison, Minneapolis.
- 2 Katie Kennedy (Mrs. Jim Horgan), deceased
- 3 John Hines, Fairmont.
- 4 Emma Garrison, now Mrs. Roy Dunn, California.
- 5 Hannah Kennedy, now Mrs. James Clifford, Fairmont.
- 6 Katie Clifford, now Mrs. Geo. Sullivan, Guckeen.
- 7 Thresa Daly, now Mrs. Ed Boisclair, Granada.

"The roster discloses that there were 29 pupils receiving instruction at that time in this tiny one-room rural school house. Many of them lived two to three miles from school and there were no cushioned and heated buses to tote them back and forth. They walked, Lord bless 'em, and were all the better men and women for it.

"Mike Garry, a sedate oldster of this city, is one of the lads shown in the picture. He recalls that the whole school was hauled to Blue Earth to have the photograph made. The present Faribault county court house was then new and this was visited. All the party climbed up to the cupola for the view, and away up there each wrote his or her name on the wall, where the writing remains to this day.

"The same school house that accommodated the pictured generation of boys

and girls is still doing duty at the old stand. It was built 52 years ago. It replaced a much more primitive structure that did duty in the earlier years of the district."

Transcribed: 25 April 2001 by Mike Borchardt

Reformatted: 15 January 2024

Martin County portion of the MNGenWeb