

COLFAX TOWNSHIP

During the school year of 1918-19, Colfax township had four school districts and employed teachers as follows:

Number 2, the "Wildrick" school: Katherine Schick
Number 3, the "Mead" school: Coralie Franklin
Number 4, the "Switch" school: Mattie Geesa
Number 6, the "Harris" school: Esta Perigo

Operation of schools were partially supervised by the people living close by. The Meade School was built parallel to the road, but Mr. Meade thought the pupils were looking out of the windows too much so he turned the building around so that the windows did not face the road!

"We would walk to school two miles. Sometimes the snow was so high we couldn't see much of the fence, just enough of it so we could find our way," Lovina Blankenbaker told me.

At that time, George H. Hillis county commissioner, and the late Alexander B. Tolin, two progressive citizens of the township became interested in the idea of the consolidation of schools. Mr. Tolin's son, Forest A., was then township trustee. These men, as leaders, held conferences and conducted a campaign of education which led to a meeting of interested citizens, at which time it was agreed to erect the modern brick central building, a picture of which appears herewith.

The site of the building, which was donated by John J. Lawler, was at one time a part of the "Beaver Lake" region. It contains five and one-half acres and afforded ample playground for all kinds of school activities. An ocean wave, teeter boards and a baseball diamond afforded materials for play activities. The school was fortunately located in the center of the township, so that it was accessible from all parts.

The school building contained two recitation rooms, a large community room, play rooms, rest and library room, and indoor toilets for both boys and girls. It was erected in the year 1921, at a cost of \$18,000; all but \$6500 of which sum had been paid at the time of completion of the building.

Colfax was the first township in the county to establish a real community center, where Church, Sunday School, Ladies' Aid, Missionary Society, farmer's clubs and institutes, lyceum courses, suppers, moving picture exhibitions, and various other forms of entertainment were regular features.

The consolidation of the schools in Colfax township, the result of the vision of a few of its enterprising citizens, had brought better things to all people within its borders. Through the social solidarity that consolidation brought about, latent talent to entertain was discovered in many different homes in the township, a widening vision of the people was very soon apparent, and the whole community took on new life. The problem of furnishing social life activities for its people was solved, and more contented rural workers was the result.

The community center idea in that township was so well worked out that President L.N. Hines, of the State Teachers College, who was at that time State Superintendent of Public Instruction, used this school as a model rural school for the entire State. This honor and recognition brought a great deal of satisfaction to the patrons who had given so freely of their time and money to build up the school. The Men's club of Kentland recognized the progressive things that the township had done, by entertaining all of the pupils and teachers in Kentland, one day in April, 1921. The pupils were transported to Kentland in new auto buses which were the first to be used in the county to haul children to school. A banquet, a short talk by Judge George A. Williams, a moving picture entertainment, visits to printing offices, to the various offices in the Court House, to the Seed Corn House, and a trip to the Orchard Lake Stock Farm, were some of the features of the program prepared for the northend guests.

Recapitulating, we find that Colfax township was the first township in the county to complete consolidation of its school districts; the first to install a moving picture machine, its own electric light plant, a telephone, and a cooking range stove. It was the first township to purchase motor buses and was the first one to establish a real community center. Last, but not least, the necessity of improved roads for the buses was recognized, and road building was kept in pace with improved transportation.

Another result of consolidation was a reduction in the number of teachers needed in the schools. The work which formerly required four teachers was being done in the new building by two teachers. The following teachers have been employed in the new school:

(1919-20) Mattie Geesa, Advanced
Opal Padgett, Primary

(1920-21) Mattie Geesa, Advanced
Opal Padgett, Primary

- (1921-22) Estella Clarkson, Advanced
Opal Padgett, Primary
- (1922-23) Estella Clarkson, Advanced
Bertha B. Payne, Primary
- (1923-24) Estella Clarkson, Advanced
Bertha B. Payne, Primary
- (1924-25) Sidney Carlson, Advanced
Lenora Stombaugh, Primary
- (1925-26) Hazel Brown, Advanced
Pearl L. Beesley, Primary
- (1926-27) J.A. Ashby, Advanced
Pearl Beesley Baker, Primary
- (1927-28) J.A. Ashby, Advanced
Pearl B. Baker, Primary
- (1928-29) Lawrence D. Koons, Advanced
Leona Kosta, Primary
- (1929-30) Lawrence D. Koons, Advanced
Leona Kosta, Primary
- (1930-31) Herbert B. Emley, Advanced
Leona Kosta, Primary
- (1931-32) Herbert B. Emley, Advanced
Leona Kosta Kanne, Primary
- (1934-37) Arnold Harris, Advanced
Julia Henry, Primary
- (1937-38) Dennis McDonald, Advanced
Julia Smith, Primary
- (1938-40) A.O. Hopkins, Advanced
Julia Smith, Primary
- (1940-41) Clem Earhart, Advanced
Julia Smith, Primary
- (1941-42) Leroy Hobbs, Advanced
Julia Henry, Primary
Carol Weveth, Music
- (1942-43) Leroy Hobbs, Advanced (resigned)
Frances Barker, Advanced
Kathryn Clark, Primary
M. Boehni, Music

- (1943-44) Delmas Moore, Advanced
Leona Kanne, Primary
- (1944-45) Estella Burnside, Advanced
Gertrude Miller, Advanced
Leona Kanne, Primary
- (1945-46) Tillie Meyering, Advanced
Oka Pancoast, Advanced
Jessie Rardin, Primary
- (1946-48) Tillie Meyering, Advanced
Jessie Rardin, Primary
- (1948-49) Marie O'Conner, Advanced
Jessie Rardin, Primary
- (1949-50) Robin Smith, Advanced
Jessie Rardin, Primary
- (1950-52) Robin Smith, Advanced
Margaret Leturg, Primary
- (1952-53) Robin Smith, Advanced
Lorraine Pombert, Primary
- (1953-54) Robin Smith, Advanced
Bertha Shuster, Primary

The Colfax School closed for use in 1954 at the end of the term. Pupils were then transported to Mount Ayr Grade and High School. On September 15, 1958 at 3:15 a.m. the school was demolished by fire.

The following served as trustee of Colfax Township:

1872	Phillip Miller	1919	Dan Odle
1878	S.A. Martindale	1927	S.E. Robbins
1885	Henry Collins	1935	Frank Henderson
1892	Ike Kight	1943	Joe Berenda
1902	Dan Odle	1947	Harry Sullivan
1907	Joseph Kosta	1954	Clifford Bingham
1911	George Hillis	1960	W.R. Robbins
1915	Forrest Tolen		

Thanks and appreciation of help to: Cora McDonald, Julia Henry, Francie and Wesley Robbins, Lovina Blankenbaker, Andy Studer, North Newton School Superintendent's Office, Kentland Democrat 1932.

Leona Kosta Kanne

TOWNSHIP 30-N. RANGE 8-W.
 Federal or State Highways
 County or Township Roads
 Railroads

- No 1 Odle School
- 2 Wildrick
- 3 Mead
- 4 Switch
- 5 Harris Land

COLFAX

