



A Newsletter of the Norman County Genealogy Society

Schools in Lee Township

There were five rural schools in District 26, Lee Township, organized on April 10, 1882. They were:

Riverside School, sometimes called the Odegaard School. It was located in Section 23, near the former Mrs. Mary Engel farm;

Sunnyside School, located in Section 35, north of the Fredrickson Brothers farm;

Open View, located near Clarence Lee's in Section 2;

Western Star was near the John Helland farm in Section 9; and

Alrick School, in Section 32 near Colin Krogstad's.

Riverside School was the first school organized in District 26. Greta Johnson (Bennett Houglim's grandmother) was its first teacher.

At first these rural school operated only in the spring and fall because of the difficulty of getting the children there in the winter months.

Gradually this was lengthened to eight months.

The schools usually contained eight grades, with one teacher. Besides teaching, the teacher was also required to start fires, clean the school after each day's session, and sometimes oversee the lunch preparations. The salary was low – anywhere from \$15.00 to \$30.00 a month. The teacher often stayed with a family in the district.

As transportation improved, these rural schools began phasing out. Records show that Western Star and Open View closed in 1940 and Alrick closed in 1941. Riverside was the last rural school to close in 1956 and the last teacher employed there was Mrs. Peter Gaare (Thrine). This building is now serving as the Red River Valley Sportsmen's Club.

The school in Perley was built in 1900. It was situated in Block 3 in the

northwest corner of the town. In the beginning it had eight elementary grades and three years of high school.

The Finney School, District 71 in Georgetown Township burned in the early 1930's. For a short period of time, classes were held in the Tom Finney home and then their students were sent to the Perley School. Alice Tweeten was the teacher at this time, and she moved into Perley's system when her students came from the Finney School.

District 71 provided busing for their students. Willard Harker was the first bus driver. He built a wooden box on the back of a farm truck and this served as a bus for several years until they obtained a "regular" bus in 1936.

In December 1974, the Perley School was closed and all the children went to the Hendrum School.

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Death Certificates

When requesting death certificates, you may be surprised by the “depth or dearth” of information recorded. Death certificates were not always required and were rare before the late 1800s.

Early information is reconstructed from a variety of sources--manuscript books, civil registrations, cemetery records, parish records, etc. Town clerks or recorders issue certificates from available information, which often lacks genealogical details, such as a surviving spouse, parentage, cause of death, and burial location.

Until recently, each location, whether it be a country, state, county, or city, followed its own format.

Death certificates evolved over time and now display more than thirty details, such as:

- Decedent's name
- Sex
- Date of death
- Social Security Number
- Age
- Birthplace
- U.S. Armed Forces?
- Place of death
- Marital status
- Surviving spouse (if wife, give maiden name)
- Occupation

- Residence
- Hispanic origin?
- Race
- Education
- Father
- Mother
- Informant's name / address
- Method / place of disposition
- Signature / license of funeral service
- Name and address of facility
- Signature, pronouncing physician, and date signed
- Time of death
- Date death pronounced
- Referred to medical examiner / coroner?
- Diseases, injuries, or complications that caused death
- Autopsy?
- Manner of death
- Date, time, description and place, if injury
- Certifier or certifying physician, license, date, and signature
- Name / address of who completed cause
- Registrar's signature
- Date filed

Pitfalls and Tips

A death certificate is not primary proof for a decedent's birth or parentage, so seek confirming documents.

Remember items “recorded” at the time of the death, such as the date and cause, are primary sources, but those “reported” later by an informant are secondary.

To determine the veracity of the reported items, identify the informant. The closer the familial relationship, the more likely the accuracy.

If parentage is not identified, cross reference with a sibling.

If a female informant's surname differs from the decedent's, she may be a married daughter.

Adoptive parents can be erroneously indicated as birth parents.

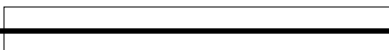
Cross reference causes of death with current terms. Shaking palsy, for example, may indicate Parkinson's disease.

Burials may be recorded by a town name, and not a cemetery, and since town names change, do your homework.

When ordering death certificates, you can save time by using a service, but you can save money by ordering directly from a registrar.

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Death Certificates (continued)

Some excellent sources for finding death records and information are:

1. RootsWeb's Death Records Database. This has a variety of search options, and readers are welcome to contribute their research via a text file or Excel database.
2. Ancestry.com at www.Ancestry.com, a subscription service with multiple indexes to death records and some original death certificates.
3. The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints (LDS), which has a free pilot website

and their main web site. The pilot includes original, digitized records, while the main site has links to family trees and records stored at family history centers around the country.

Sometimes the factors involved in ancestral deaths could indicate that family members died as the result of a disaster. Disasters should be considered when multiple family members died at exactly the same time. A disaster could be an earthquake, flood, fire, shipwreck, mining accident, train wreck, etc.

<http://www.cyndislist.com/disasters.htm>

Deaths of more than one person over a short time period (but not necessarily on the same day), especially when children are involved, might indicate an epidemic caused by the flu, typhoid, yellow fever, or any other contagious disease.

<http://www.cyndislist.com/disasters.htm#Epidemics>

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Translating and Deciphering Documents

As you progress in tracing your family history, you will eventually encounter one or more of the following stumbling blocks:

- 1) Documents in languages with which you are not familiar,
- 2) Correspondence written in a foreign language,
- 3) Tombstone inscriptions you cannot translate or interpret, or
- 4) Old script or handwriting in an unfamiliar writing style.

ONLINE TRANSLATION PROGRAMS AND RESOURCES

One of the oldest and most popular online translation services is [Babel Fish](http://www.babel-fish.com).

Google also offers a translation service from and into many languages:

A translation program such as those found at Babel Fish or Google will most likely not provide a perfect translation of the text you input, especially where slang is involved or

where the text may include misspellings or obsolete terminology.

These programs may, however, be sufficient to offer a clue to the meaning of an e-mail you have received from a potential cousin or the subject matter of a document.

RootsWeb/Ancestry.com has a message board where you can ask for help with a translation.

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Translating and Deciphering Documents (cont.)

DECIPHERING OLD SCRIPT AND HANDWRITING

Old script (for example, old German script), foreign language vital records, church registers in Latin, or merely old handwriting styles with lettering that differs from today's writing can be a challenge.

Scan the document and

post it on a Web page or message board. The RootsWeb/Ancestry.com message boards allow uploading scanned documents and images as attachments. Post your query and attachment on a message board with a topic relevant to your document.

Subscribe to a RootsWeb mailing list where the

subject matter of your translation or interpretation request is pertinent. Post a message with a link to the attachment and query on the message board. List members with experience in reading these documents can view them and render an opinion as to the wording and meaning.

Schools in Shelly Township

The first school built in Shelly Township was Sharpe School, organized in 1879.

Sharpe was followed by Pathfinders, Perseverance, Irvin, Garfield, Opportunity and Cheerful Hut, all one-room country schools educating students from grades 1 through 8.

Pathfinder School, also known as Stromstad, was organized on July 18, 1881 as District 57 of Polk County. On April 10, 1882, Norman County was formed and Pathfinder became District 13 of the new county.

The school was located in Section 14 of Shelly Township, one mile north and three and a half miles east of Shelly.

Students in 1910 included: Myrtle Mitsven, Alice Hanson, Otto Larson, Henry Peterson, Hilda Mitsven, Magnus Larson, Lawrence Mitsven, Helmer

Hanson, Lawney Hanson, Hannah Hanson, Agnes Peterson, Morris Eia, Albert Larson, Albert Hanson, Hans Larson, Josie Evje, Joan Eia, Christine Eia, Annie Larson and Carl Peterson. The teacher that year was Lawrence Mauritson.

The students in 1947 included: Elaine Jacobson, Curtis Jacobson, Luther Jacobson, Ordean Jacobson, Gloria Eia and Marcella Olson.

The school closed its doors in 1949.

Perseverance School District 17 was also known as Hanson or Malme School. It was first organized by Polk County on March 19, 1878 in Section 6 of Shelly Township. It was built about one mile west of what is now Highway 75, close to the farm currently occupied by Jamie

Tronnes. The school was later moved to Section 1 of Little Shelly Township, west of Cecil Malme's farm.

In 1927-28, the teacher was Grace Langhus and students included: Mae Aure, Glenn Rude, Maurice Strand, Bertha Aure, Kenneth Malme, Clara Aure, James Tronnes, Geneva Strand, Clyde Dahl, Arvid Strand, Gilmer Rude, Peral Johnson, Franklin Johnson, Irvin Rude, Myrtle Malme, Joseph Tronnes, Bella Tronnes, Minnie Rude, Irvet Tronnes, Earl Rude, Henry Haugo, Marian Rude, Irene Tronnes, Deloris Tronnes, June Merkins, Inez Merkins, Edna Merkins, Muriel Tronnes, Doris Rude, Elaine Tronnes, Marian Malme, Mary Lou Merkins, Lillian Rude and Irene Strand.

The school closed in 1942.

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From
*"This Is Our Story
Shelly, Minnesota
1897-1997"*

Schools in Shelly Township (continued)

Irvin School, also known as Blix, Holte or Oistad School was organized on March 19, 1879 as District 21 on Section 28 of Shelly Township, just fifty feet from the Oistad farm.

Later the school was moved to Section 29, one half mile west of the original location, also in Shelly Township in the vicinity of farmsteads now owned by Gregg Holte and Julian Aamodt on the East side of the Marsh River.

The school was named after Irvin Isaacson, who died as a young man.

Irvin School, which closed in 1940, is one of the few one-room schoolhouses still left standing in Minnesota. Jerome Oistad has preserved the school located on his farm with a nostalgic heart and gentle touch for generations to come.

Garfield School, also known as Aalgaard School, was organized as District 82 in Section 34 of Shelly Township on July 13, 1896.

In 1899, there were twenty-two pupils and the teacher was Dinah Davidson. School board members included Ole Ostenson, Jacob Hetland and John Moen.

Garfield School closed in the 1940s with the consolidation of districts. The students were then transported to Halstad.

Opportunity School, also known as Moe or Swalstad School, was established on January 8, 1901 on Section 10 in Shelly Township. It was one of the last districts to organize in the township.

The school was constructed approximately two miles East and one and a half miles North of Shelly.

Opportunity closed in 1942.

Cheerful Hut, also known as the Orvik or Carlson School, was organized on October 25, 1910 as District 98.

Cheerful Hut was built in Section 27, southwest of Shelly.

Tilda Orvik taught a number of years prior to retiring in 1945.

Arlyne Nelson was hired after one year of Elementary Education at Moorhead State Teachers College and obtaining a State permit.

State permits to teach were issued at that time due to a lack of teachers available for rural schools.

Some students in 1946 included: Roger Orvik, Sherwood Orvik, Dalrene

Orvik, Dennis Hetland, Jerome Orvik, Lowell Orvik, Daryld Carlson, Donald Hennen, Marilyn Carlson and Yvonne Hennen.

The school closed its doors in 1948 and the school building was sold to Knute Anderson, Shelly, who moved it to his farm and made it into a garage. Some years later, the property was sold to a Bitker family who bulldozed all the buildings on the farm.



Some of the information concerning Cheerful Hut School and the photo was provided by Arlyne Hess

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Attach Address Label Here

We're on the Web!

See us at:

www.rootsweb.com/~mnnorman

About Our Organization...

The Norman County Genealogy Society was formed on February 27, 1997 in Ada, MN for the purpose of assisting persons interested in research family histories and sharing information.

Charter members of the society were Roland Carpenter, Iris Duklet, Colleen Goltz, Ardis Horn, Sharon Larson, Roger Niebeling, Gladys Prussia, Ronald Rasmuson, Christine Roesch, Ronald Roesch, DeFloren Rude, Edna Rude and Kathleen Skaurud.

A few resources available include:

- Obituaries taken from area newspapers
- Other newspaper articles of interest
- Cemetery records
- Marriage records
- Death records from 1871 to 1981
- Census records
- Civil War Veterans
- 1883 Pensioners on the Roll
- Churches and Towns

Much of this information is posted on our website.

The Society meets on the third Saturday of the month at 10:30 a.m. in the Summerfield Apartments Meeting Room or at the Norman County Museum (summer months only), Ada, MN.

Annual Dues are \$10.00 for a family membership (local) and \$5.00 for an associate membership (out of area.) Dues should be sent to the Treasurer:

Ardis Horn
100 1st Street East
Ada, MN 56510