



A Newsletter of the Norman County Genealogy Society

School in the "Good Old Days"

"When she said "First Grade Class come to order" we left our desk, went to the front of the room, and took our place at a table with the teacher on one side and the students on the other side."

Education has changed a lot over the years, but you can't improve on our memories. I started school in the first grade back in 1936 because we didn't have kindergarten in those days. It was a typical one-room school house with one teacher and all grades one through eight.

School started at nine o'clock sharp each morning. The teacher called school to order by ringing the school bell.

When we heard the bell, we hurried into the school room and took our assigned places at our desks. When everyone was in place, the teacher took roll call to see if anyone was absent.

Then we all stood beside our desk, faced the American flag which was stapled to the wall above the blackboards, and in unison said the Pledge of Allegiance. After which, the teacher would call classes to order. When

she said "First Grade Class come to order" we left our desk, went to the front of the room, and took our place at a table with the teacher on one side and the students on the other side.

The teachers in these rural schools were very strict on silence in the school room. But we had a way of communicating

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Have you paid your membership dues?

The Norman County Genealogy Society membership dues are payable in January each year.

Local members pay only \$10 per year and all others pay \$5 per year. The fee is minimal, but funds are needed for the work of the society.

We need your support to continue our work in Norman County. If you have not already done so, please send your membership dues today.

Thank you.

New or Renewal Membership Form Norman County Genealogy Society

Name: _____

Address: _____

City, State, Zip: _____

E-mail: _____

Telephone: _____

____ Local = \$10.00 ____ Other = \$5.00

Mail to:
Ardis Horn, 100 1st Street East, Ada, MN 56510

District #64 - Sunnyhill School – Flom Township



Olga Bakke was the last teacher from 1942-43

Sunnyhill School, also known as the Underdahl School, was organized as school district #64 in Flom Township on January 5, 1886. The school was located at the SW SE ¼ of Sec 8, T143N, R43W, Flom Twp.

The first available records show that Mary Keoverstad was the teacher in 1890 with an enrollment of 39 pupils.

After a few years of use, it became apparent that a larger school was necessary, so a new one was constructed in 1898. The old school building was moved to the Wild Rice Church grounds and was used for confirmation instruction for a time.

Other teachers at Sunny Hill through the years were: Mr. Burseth, August Olson, Gust Kolander, Rudolph Vaaler, Clara Nelson, Inez Holm, Ida Larson, Tina Midthun, Hannah Spangelo, Julia Thompson, Clara Thompson, Ella Stondahl, Minnie Albertson, Julia Birkeland, Mildred

Erickson, Winifred Daniels, Esther Sundheim, Ida Kjos, Hattie Torgerson, Lourena Erickson, Hilda Knutson, and Ila Aamo. Olga Bakke was the last teacher from 1942-43.

Among the first pupils attending were: Emil Moen; Johnny Waller; Oscar Ask; Louise Ask; Mabel Ask; Laura Ask; Willie Waller; James Amund; Olai Holum; Henry Sannan; Lena Waller; Knut Waller; Arnt Waller; Thorvald Waller; Valborg Waller; Tilla Urdahl; Oscar Urdahl; and Minnie Urdahl.

The last pupils to attend Sunnyhill School were: Darrel Underdahl; Carol Underdahl; Gerald Hagen; Allan Hagen; David Lerud; Robert Halvorson; and Lowell Hagen.

Previously published in: *This is our Story...Flom, Minnesota Including Flom and Area Townships 125th Anniversary 2002*

Information Needed on Old Rural Schools

The Norman County Genealogy Society is conducting a search for information concerning the rural schools that used to dot the countryside in Norman County.

Of particular interest is the district number, "official" vs. "popular"

name of the school, its location, what may have happened to the building if it is no longer in the original location, plus names of teachers and pupils.

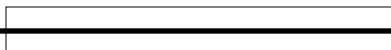
If you have any information, photos or artifacts from a rural

school, please contact:

Roland Carpenter, President at 218-784-7423 rlcarme@gmail.com

or

Marijo Vik, Secretary at 218-784-3794 mvik@loretel.net



School in the "Good Old Days" continued from Front Page

with the teacher that created little or no disturbance to the other pupils. If we needed a drink of water from the fountain in the cloak room, we held up our hand with one finger raised. If we needed to go to the privy out back of the school, we held up two fingers. Three fingers were raised to use the pencil sharpener, and four asked permission to talk to another student to borrow a pencil or a sheet of paper. A raised hand with all five fingers up meant we wanted to ask the teacher a question or that we knew the answer to a question.

At 10:15 a.m. we had a fifteen minute recess, time for a quick bite of lunch and outside to play if weather permitted. If not, we entertained ourselves with indoor games.

At noon we had one hour to eat our dinner which was packed in a lunch bucket from home. Then it was outside to play. At 1 p.m. school was again called to order by the ringing of the school bell. We had another 15 minute break at 2:30 p.m. and at 4 p.m. we headed home.

These little white school houses which dotted the rural American

countryside were an island of education, surrounded by fields and forest and Mother Nature's beauty. They were so located that no one had over two or three miles to walk to school. The teacher usually stayed at a farm place nearby and only went home on weekends.

We must take our hats off to these rural American teachers. They did so much for so little pay. Some of them earned only \$50 to \$75 a month.

*Written by
Vernon Dorseth,
Flom Township*

Previously published in:
This is our Story...Flom, Minnesota Including Flom and Area Townships 125th Anniversary 2002

To be continued in our June 2008 issue

Orphan Heirlooms

Every couple of months I get an e-mail like the following, which a reader sent me several weeks ago:

"I went to a flea market in South Dakota and some people were getting rid of some genealogy-type materials, so I bought them. One is a 1921 yearbook from Ainsworth, Brown County, Nebraska, called the Prairie Schooner. The back lists graduates from 1887, 1890-94, and 1898-1920. There is also a senior booklet for the class of 1922, Ainsworth High

School, and a graduation photo of Luella Williams. I would love to pass these on to someone. How can I do this?"

It seems genealogists just cannot pass on the opportunity to snatch up some bit of historical evidence—whether it pertains to their family or not. For those of you with flea market finds cluttering up your research area, here are a couple ideas on how to return those heirlooms to their rightful families.

ENLIST THE HELP OF AN EXPERT

Megan Smolenyak, chief family historian for Ancestry, has a hobby of returning orphan heirlooms to the owners' descendants.

In fact, she writes a regular column titled "Found" for Ancestry Magazine; each column details the story of an heirloom that she has managed to reconnect with its family.

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“The best part about posting something like this on the message boards is that it stays there indefinitely”.

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Readers are encouraged to visit her website, www.honoringourancestors.com, and submit information about an heirloom they've found.

If it catches Megan's attention, she may be willing to adopt it as the project for her next column. If you want to submit your heirloom to Megan, go to her website, click on the Submissions menu, and select Orphan Heirlooms.

If you're new to this kind of sleuthing, you may want to read a couple of Megan's columns as well. She gives detailed descriptions of what she did to find each heirloom's family member; it may give you some ideas of how to start your hunt.

USE ROOTSWEB MESSAGE BOARDS AND MAILING LISTS

The RootsWeb

community is the perfect place to advertise a lost find. In the case above, I would post information about the yearbook and photograph on a message board for Brown County, Nebraska; or, on their related mailing list.

There is also a Yearbooks and Annuals Message Board, a Found Family Heirlooms Message Board, and an Heirloom Mailing List. I would post the information in all of these places as well.

If the surname of the woman in the portrait was more unique than Williams, I might also post on the appropriate surname message board or mailing list.

The best part about posting something like this on the message boards is that it stays there indefinitely. Even if

someone doesn't immediately respond, you may be surprised a year or two down the road to hear from someone who found your message in the archives.

DONATE THE YEARBOOK

You can send yearbook donations to Ancestry at the following location: *Ancestry Yearbook Donations*
4800 North 360 West
Provo, UT 84604

DONATE OTHER HEIRLOOMS

There are many, many other sites dedicated to finding and posting lost heirlooms as well. One is www.HeirloomsLost.com and www.DeadFred.com, a site specifically for posting photographs.

Don't Let Name Spelling Stand in Your Way

My maiden name is MYERS. I can remember my parents telling me that the name had always been spelled MYERS in our family. What a shock when I began researching many years ago and found my great-grandfather's baptismal record with the name spelled MEYERS. Then I found that his father and grandfather are listed as MEYERS in the 1850 census as well. A couple

more generations back the surname was spelled MEYER. Early generations of MEYERS are buried in Lower Bermudian Cemetery in Adams County, Pennsylvania. How can you argue with a name spelling carved on a tombstone?

Before the days of driver's licenses, Social Security numbers, and military registrations that require a fixed name

spelling, people didn't give much thought to how their surname was written. Not all spelling variations you come across are permanent—some merely reflect a different spelling on a single record and not an actual change of name. (For more information on names, see the RootsWeb's Guide to Tracing Family Trees: Lesson 2.)

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“How can you argue with a name spelling carved on a tombstone?”

Don't Let Name Spelling Stand in Your Way (Continued from Page 4)

Budding genealogists tend to get bogged down looking for "correct" name spellings and overlook variant surnames, or even translations of their surname from another language. Such a rigid view of name spellings can keep you from successfully tracing your ancestors.

"Foreign" names were shortened, translated, and changed outright by families who wanted to fit into the American melting pot. But more often names simply evolved based upon their sound. In some countries where patronymic naming systems were used, permanent surnames were chosen after arriving in America. A Welshman named Humphrey ap [son of] HOWELL may have become Humphrey HOWELL. Or, he may have become Humphrey POWELL, based upon the contraction of "ap" and "HOWELL."

Early Swedish immigrants to New Sweden (the area surrounding what is now Wilmington, Delaware) sometimes took their patronymic name as a permanent surname while others chose "aliases" such as RAMBO and MINK. Others shortened their patronymic names; JONASSON became JONES.

The evolution of surnames is not

exclusively an American phenomenon. My French Huguenot ancestors left France and settled in Germany long before coming to Pennsylvania in the mid 1700s. The spelling of their surname changed over the generations from CHERDRON to SHETRONE and finally SHEDERON as they intermarried with Germans.

Whatever the cause of name changes and spelling variations, make use of all available resources in tracking your ancestors. That includes checking any and all possible spellings. Be creative and sound out the names. Consider translations in your hunt for your ancestors. Your German METZGER ancestors may have become BUTCHERs in America.

Many search engines allow you to use Soundex or Metaphone searches for surnames.

WorldConnect's advanced search engine allows Exact, Soundex, or Metaphone searches. RootsWeb's Guide to Tracing Family Trees: Lesson 9 explains Soundex. Metaphone is similar to Soundex in that it is based upon the sound of a name rather than its spelling; however, some feel it is more accurate than Soundex. Try both to catch variant spellings of a

surname.

RootsWeb's Surname Resource page is another excellent reference for finding variant spellings and may give you suggestions for additional spellings to check.

Take a fresh look at the surnames you are researching. Consider additional spellings and, above all, be creative in your searches.

"Many search engines allow you to use Soundex or Metaphone searches for surnames."

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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 Rasmusson, Christine Roesch, Ronald Roesch, DeFloren Rude, Edna Rude and Kathleen Skaurud.

A few resources available include:

- Obituaries taken from area newspapers.
- 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 am in the Summerfield Apartments Meeting Room or 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