

The Slate

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Crawford One of Last One-room Schoolhouses

BY KYLE KAMINSKI kkaminski@record-eagle.com Oct 9, 2016

KALKASKA - *Savannah Scales wasn't at school Tuesday.*

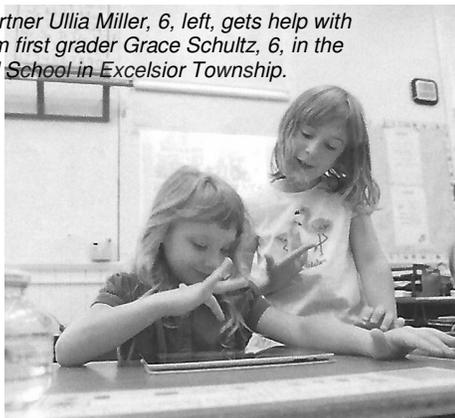
The fifth-grade student at Crawford School was away for an Indiana barrel-racing competition and everyone in the school district buzzed with questions. Where is she? When she will be back? How is she doing? After all, Scales accounts for 20 percent of her fifth-grade class. Her absence was hard to miss.

The sun was still resting behind the trees in a nearby field when the district's only bus - carrying about half of the school's students - rolled into the dirt parking lot. The kids shuffled to their seats just in time for the Pledge of Allegiance and the morning announcements.

"She'll be back soon," said Heath Horn, easing her students' curiosity about Scales' whereabouts.

(Continued on page 3)

Kindergartner Ullia Miller, 6, left, gets help with math from first grader Grace Schultz, 6, in the Crawford School in Excelsior Township.



President's Column

By Tom M. Johnson

The Hazel Miner Incident

My column this time is about an incident that happened in 1920 to three children in a very rural one room school in North Dakota and the bravery exhibited by the oldest child.

I lived in Grand Forks North Dakota from 1977 to 1988 while working at the University of North Dakota. I remember reading that the last survivor of the 1920 "Hazel Miner Incident" had died. The story made an impression on me and I filed it away in my memory. We returned to Michigan and Michigan State University and in 1998 I retired. Shortly thereafter I became acquainted with and joined the Michigan one-room schoolhouse Association.

Since retiring my wife Jane and I have traveled throughout many parts of the United States usually by automobile. Whenever we see a one-room schoolhouse we stop and look in. When we were in Montana last year I remembered the story of the three children and so on our way home we went to the town five miles outside of which this tragic incident took place. Center, North Dakota is the

(Continued on page 2)

President's Column

(Continued from page 1)

County seat of Oliver County and is located about 35 miles northwest of Bismarck, the state capital. The area can best be described as desolate.

On March 15, 1920 Hazel Miner age 16, her brother, Emmet 11 and her sister Myrdith 9 were at school located about two miles from their home. The weather had been mild the previous days and all the snow had melted and filled the coulees (dry streambeds in the area). That day the weather turned cold and a blizzard started with winds up to 40 miles an hour. Hazel and her siblings had a horse and a sleigh at school. Their father came to guide them home and told them to wait until he could get his horse from the school barn.

However, Hazel's horse took off and as is typical in a blizzard, they became lost. Each of them had a blanket but the sleigh tipped over and Hazel found herself in a Coulee and wet up to her waist. She found dry land and placed two of the blankets under the younger children. There wasn't room for her under the other blanket so she laid it on top of her siblings. She then laid on top of them and kept them awake until she died.

They were found 15 hours later by one of the search parties and she had died of exposure but her sister and brother were still alive. It was said that because the sleigh acted as a windbreak it helped the two survivors stay alive. It was also noted by the search parties that they had passed within 200 feet of their home but for those of you who have been in a blizzard, you know you can't see anything in front of you.

At the time Emmet related that Hazel laid on top of him and his sister and tried to keep us awake by tapping us and talking to us. She then started to groan and when she stopped,

I knew she was dead.

Coming into Center we found her specially marked grave in the town cemetery. We then went to the county buildings and found this memorial erected in her



memory. Typical of North Dakota, the people in the building could not have been more helpful. Following instructions we went to the approximate location of the school. It is no longer standing and one can see from this picture that there was nothing to impede the blowing snow.

Jane and I were so impressed with this story (Hazel's bravery, her unselfishness and her sense of duty to protect her younger siblings) that I wanted to share it with you.



Site of Hazel Miner's school

Crawford School

(Continued from page 1)

Horn teaches third, fourth and fifth grade students at Crawford. The balancing act doesn't intimidate her; it's now natural after seven years at the one-room schoolhouse.

Curious students bombarded Horn with questions about her new eyeglasses while she poured herself coffee from a pot brewing on her desk.

"This is Mrs. Horn's personal space," she reminded them - a daunting request in school not much larger than a standard classroom at neighboring Kalkaska High School.

Crawford School, known also as Excelsior School District No.1, is one of only 20 operating one-room schoolhouses in the state, according to the Michigan One-Room Schoolhouse Association. Most were swallowed by larger districts through cost-saving consolidation movements in the 1950s and '60s.

As many as 7,000 one-room schools once dotted Michigan's map. Today about 1,100 of those buildings still stand - most have been converted into homes, antique shops and museums. The others have long since been razed but Crawford remains after more than 140 years.

A few students needed Horn to remind them thrice but eventually returned to their seats. The desks and the whiteboards may have changed but many of the 40 students there have Crawford in their blood. Sixth-grader Lane Cotton's father attended the school. So did his grandfather. And his great-grandfather.

"We're a very close-knit community ... " Horn said. "You get to know the students and what works or what doesn't work. You find out quickly who you can push and who you need to back away from to give them space to work."

But she isn't alone. Horn works alongside kindergarten-, first- and second-grade teacher Samantha Variot and sixth-, seventh- and eighth-grade teacher Brent Miller. Wendy Feeley, a teacher's aide, helps out where she's needed - sometimes as a janitor and other times as a

counselor. She said she's overly familiar with the school's plunger.

Miller didn't know Crawford was a one-room school until he first arrived down the rural stretch of M-72 this summer. He was feeling discouraged after failing to get a job in Grand Rapids. But his attitude quickly improved after taking a closer look.

"It turned out they were actually excited about things that other schools didn't seem to care about," Miller said. "With just a few kids, you really get to know them."

School-of-choice students help keep Crawford alive. Twenty-five students reside outside of the district's 18-mile boundaries but choose Crawford over larger district like Mancelona Public Schools for more personalized attention and unique teacher-student relationships. The student body is a lot like a family, Horn said. That's what drives enrollment.

"It's more one-on-one," Horn said. "The class sizes are smaller. We're not dealing with 28 students in a class. We have more grades but I'll only have seven in a group. I think we're pretty lucky."

Students don't sacrifice much by choosing to attend the school, Horn said. Cafeteria lines are replaced with the Crawford version of a family dinner table. Students tote in brown paper bags and lunch boxes to eat together around an amalgam of desks each day. Sometimes, particularly for holidays, the kids will be treated to a warm meal.

There are no Crawford sports teams but students are encouraged to sign up through neighboring districts and other clubs in the area. Several students said they play on soccer, baseball and other teams in Kalkaska or Mancelona - a key connection to make given the school's relative isolation from the outside world.

"Unless these schools have a relationship with a larger school, they don't have the ability to offer band and other extra-

(Continued on page 4)

Crawford School

(Continued from page 3)

curriculars ... " said Rochelle Balkam, the vice chairman for the Michigan One-Room Schoolhouse Association. "It might not be so crucial for the earliest grades but there are certainly a lot of disadvantages as the students grow older."

Desktop computers line the western wall of the school. Laptops and iPads are available for every student. It's a ratio that many districts - especially those with thousands of students - struggle to afford. But a \$450,000 annual budget is more than enough for the small school's technology needs.

The Traverse Bay Area Intermediate School District provides financial management and curricular support to the district, routinely offering professional development opportunities to the school's three teachers. ISD Superintendent Mike Hill doubles as Crawford's superintendent as well.

Having the same instructor for three grade levels provides consistency for students, Horn said.

"Usually at a public school you'll have students for one year, but here you have them for three so you get to know them at a more personal level," Horn said. "But you also have sisters, brothers, cousins - you get to know the whole family."

Variot sat on the ground with a small group of her youngest students while the others poked through the bookshelves that account for most of the school's wall space. Others scribbled away in their journals, some taking it more seriously than others.

"If the younger ones draw a picture, that's just fine," Variot shrugged. Flexibility is important when you're teaching three grades varying levels of math, reading, writing and science within a six-hour period.

First graders were focused on long vowels while second-grade students chipped away at words with a short "i" sound. The vocabulary lesson lost the attention of one kindergarten girl who blankly chewed her pencil in the corner of

the room - but Variot quickly intervened.

"I think the struggle for me right now is that I'm used to lesson planning for one grade," Variot said.

But that's where older students can pitch in. They've been through these lessons before and many times, they're within an arms-reach of their younger peers. Third-grader Cierra Laukhart doesn't hesitate for a moment to help her classmate Arianna Cobb find a word that rhymes with "goat."

They quickly decide on "float" before she jolts back to her desk to continue her own work. It allows Horn to continue the mini-lesson at her desk; those students are learning how to multiply and divide by four. Others are learning how to subtract larger numbers. Helping other students is almost a mandatory daily exercise.

"It gives them a leadership role," Horn said. "It's really neat to see because kids aren't often in a setting like this. There are some students that you can tell have a difficult time in that role, so if anything, it gets them out of their shell a little bit."

But the future of one-room schoolhouses may be in jeopardy, Balkam said. Her organization bills itself as a clearinghouse of information for historians and others focused on the preservation of these buildings, and carefully and constantly inventorying the remaining one-room schools in the state.

Each year their list grows smaller and their job grows more difficult.

"Fewer and fewer people have direct experience with these schools," Balkam said. "It's sort of like a dinosaur situation ... I do hope they continue and we're doing all we can to encourage that."

Horn remains hopeful as well. Crawford is her livelihood and her students are her family. Enrollment has dipped from a 10-year high of 56 students in 2010 but has remained relatively consistent for years. Horn doesn't see that slipping anytime soon.

(Continued on page 5)

Crawford School

(Continued from page 4)

"I think with the families and the parents and the school board and TBAISD, with that combination of support working together, I see it continuing down the road," Horn said.

Visit crawfordschool.com for more information about the school and visit one-roomschool.org to browse the Michigan One-Room Schoolhouse Association's list of existing buildings throughout the state.

~Article used by permission

Michigan One-room School Annual Meeting

By Rochelle Balkam

The 2017 Michigan One-room School conference opening session was held in the historic downtown Three Rivers Historical Museum. The attendees were greeted by the outstanding staff of Kathy, Martha and Holly. The extensive archives of the county one-room schools are very impressive as is the collection of artifacts and records. A school bus tour of four one-room schools and one of the last covered bridges in Michigan completed the agenda.

The Nottawa (Stone) School was the site of the luncheon and afternoon sessions . It's unique architecture makes it a favorite for those interested in one-room schools. The addition to the school houses a museum full of 19th and early 20th century artifacts. The highlight was a talk by one-room school historian, Dick Cripe. His daughter, Kathy Carpenter, provided a re-creation of the 19th century school experience. Warren Lawrence entertained the guests with school stories and humorous anecdotes.

The 2017 William Winglar One-room School Award was presented to the **Prairie Edge School** (Portage) also known as the District #8 School which has been moved from it's original site to the Celery Flats Historical Park in Portage. Members of the Portage Historic District Commission were there to receive the award.

Schoolhouse Disaster Funding Available from CSAA

By Myrna Grove

As a member of MORSA and also the Country School Association of America (CSAA), I want to call attention to one of the grants which is available for one-room schools. Country school owners with schools affected by Michigan weather may be particularly interested.

CSAA offers up to \$1000 in funding to help repair one-room schoolhouses which have been damaged due to unforeseen disasters, natural or environmental, caused by such events as floods, wind, wildlife, and insects.

This would include uninsured or ones that fall within insurance deductible limits. Funding will only be provided within one year from the date of damage. (This is separate from the Preservation Grant which is for overall restoration projects.)

Application information about Disaster Relief and several other grants may be found at the CSAA website:

www.countryschoolassociation.org.

On the site, under "What We Do", you must drop down to Awards and Grants, and then click on the left sidebar to "Disaster Relief Fund". A file can be downloaded, filled out, and mailed.

Submission for the Disaster Fund needs to include the claim sheet, a short written description of damage, photo images, and expense documentation. Completed applications can be sent any time of the year to Myrna Grove, CSAA Board Member, at the address provided at the bottom of the application form. Call 419-636-3550 if you have any questions.

MICHIGAN ONE-ROOM SCHOOLHOUSE ASSOCIATION

Researching One-Room Schools

by Professor/Author Cheryl Vatcher Martin, M.A.

Research of the one room schools is a topic that I will never tire of. I'm certain those who attended a one room school house, and the country teachers who led the classroom will never tire of artifacts uncovered relative to these historic buildings, both those that are standing, and the ones that are a part of the dust.

Even though the actual act of researching topics, reading primary sources and other paperwork is very important to me, I am also fascinated by the actual items that house these treasures. For example, the various ledgers I work with, are from the 1800's. When these books were bound and printed back then, the dates that are left half blank start with 18____. As I have studied many of the documents and plenty of teacher contracts, it is revealing to see that the bold type for any date, begins with the 19th century. Of course the ledgers that I am researching are from the 1800's, there are also entries from the turn of the century and shortly thereafter. To me, the fact that some saw value in continuing on with these records, possibly saved some trees and the paper that was carved from them.

Recently, I opened one ledger from Mt. Pleasant's One Room School, and a slip of paper from 1871, was tucked in between the two pages. The sturdiness of this paper, and the inscription on it, appeared to me as a document that could have been written last week. The durability of that paper is amazing. I do hope that it lasts for another century! Of course as a researcher and historian, I handle everything delicately and with care so that these documents are available for future generations. I find contracts of interest and the ones regarding the one room school teacher, are in that category. Here is how a contract from the 1800's would read, and where the foundation of it came from.

Teacher Contract- Spelled out in pertinent part, contract Between District Board and Teacher, Section 39, 43, 60, and 85, School Law of 1864:

It is hereby contracted and Agreed Between the offi-

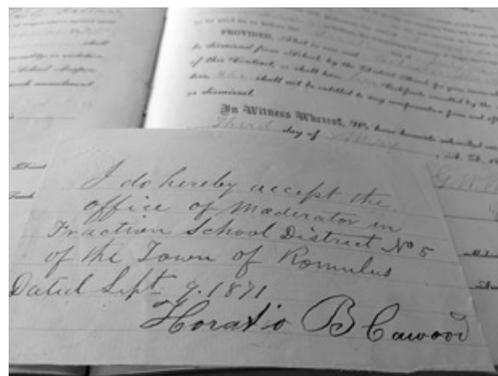
cers, of District No. 5 frac in the Township of Romulus, County of Wayne, and State of Michigan, and Emilie Haak, legally qualified Teacher in said Township, that the said Emilie Haak shall teach the Primary school of said District for the term of Eight weeks, commencing on the fifth day of May, A.D. 1890, and the said Emilie Haak agrees faithfully to keep the list and Record required by law (Section 43) and to observe and the Rules and Regulations established by the District Board.

The said officers in behalf of said District, agrees to keep the School House in good repair, and to provide the necessary Fuel, and to pay Emilie Haak for the Said services as Teacher to be faithfully and truly rendered and performed, the sum of thirty two Dollars, the same being the amount of wages above agreed upon to be paid on or before The first day of July 1890.

Provided that in case said Emilie Haak shall be dismissed from school by the District Board for gross immorality or violation of this contract, or shall have her Certificate annulled by the school Inspectors, she shall not be entitled to any compensation from and after such annulment or dismissal.

In Witness where of, we have hereunto subscribed our names this Fifth day of May A.D. 1890, signed Jasper Moore, Director, and Emilie Haak, Teacher. (Even though the actual document, as well as others have written at the bottom of the contract, Approved by, a blank line for the Moderator, and a second one for the Assessor, most of these are left blank on the teacher contracts, inclusive of the above mentioned teacher.)

The earlier contracts that date right after the Civil War appear to have a few documents with all the signatures on the school teacher's contracts



I continue to compile research inclusive of the one room school houses, and hope to publish more articles and books. My One Room Schools, Vanishing One Room Schools book can be ordered for \$28.00 inclusive of shipping, and also my Haiku For You: With Some One Room School House History at \$34.00. Send an email for my address at Peroinc5@gmail.com.

National Conference Held in New Hampshire

By Myrna Grove

The 17th annual conference of the **Country School Association of America** was held this year on June 11-14 at Colby-Sawyer College in New London, New Hampshire. One-room school enthusiasts from 20 states gathered to hear speakers on numerous topics, share ideas, and tour area one-room schools and historical sites.

Keynote speaker, Steve Taylor, opened with insight into "New Hampshire's Rural Schools". He talked about changes over the years and the lasting legacies of one-room schools.

Twenty additional presentations were on the agenda. Topics covered a range of topics such as 19th century school slates, student recitation as a learning tool, African-American one-room schools, school stories captured through photography, period toys, and country schoolhouse interpretations.

Membership in CSAA is made up of persons from across the country who share a passion for one-room schools. The organization is mainly involved with preserving one-room school buildings, researching the history of this past era, and encouraging educational programming and re-enactments.

Over the years, sharing of information and interaction among participants has greatly expanded. Each conference includes a tour of one-room schools in the area, an annual business meeting, and the giving of several awards and grants.

The awards and grants promote the goals of CSAA. Michigan residents are invited to apply. Information and applications can be

accessed on the website

www.countryschoolassociation.org.

Awards and grants include the following: Scholarship and Artistry Award, Preservation Grant, Service Award, Disaster Relief Fund, Innovative Instruction Grant, Fellowship Program, and Schoolhouse Registry.

The organization also sponsors a Country School Journal, an online publication found at www.countryschooljournal.com. The journal includes interdisciplinary articles about one-room schools. Also, an electronic newsletter publishes items of interest more frequently at <http://csaatypepad.com>.

Next year's CSAA conference will be held in Beatrice, Nebraska at the Homestead National Monument on June 17-20, 2018. Registration will appear on CSAA's website in the spring. The site also has membership information.

Tongue Twisters

- A skunk stood on a stump. The stump thunk the skunk stunk, but the skunk thunk the stump stunk.
- The old scold sold the school a coal scuttle.
- She stood on the step inexplicably mimicking his hiccupping and amicably welcoming him.
- Three gray geese in the green grass grazing; gray were the geese and green was the grazing.
- Sinful Caesar sipped his soda, seized his snoot, and sneezed.
- Does this shop stock short socks with spots?
- The seething sea ceaseth, and thus the seething sea recedeth.

MICHIGAN ONE-ROOM SCHOOLHOUSE ASSOCIATION

Gardner School

St. Joseph County, Michigan
"Built in 1852, the Gardner School stands near the St. Joseph River and is adjacent to the Langley covered bridge, which was erected in 1887. It is also near the Cook School in Mottville Township, which Kathy Schumacher attended":

"Most of the children were from farm families with Mennonite background as was the teacher, Mrs. Hostetler. Christmas plays were most memorable for me. The stage was a wooden platform someone had put together in sections about six or eight inches high. Our curtains were brown wool blankets hung on wire attached to the walls on either side.

All the costumes were homemade and very simple to say the least. There was always a pitiful looking Santa and a reindeer with sparkles on the costumes. Though

quaint and simple, I thought the play was the most beautiful thing I had ever seen. "



Photo courtesy of Michigan One-Room Schoolhouses by Mary Keithan. Photo taken October 16, 1994 This school and Langley Covered Bridge were on the St. Joseph tour venue for the 2017 MORSA Annual Conference.

Michigan One-Room Schoolhouse Association

2016/2017

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Membership Dues:

\$10 Senior (62+) or Student
\$15 Individual,
\$25 Organizations
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Website Address:

<<http://www.one-roomschool.org>

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