

CHAPTER X

EARLY SCHOOLS

1. First Schools in County
2. Early Private Schools.
3. Early Schools of Van Buren
4. Crawford Institute, Later Wallace Institute
5. Young Ladies Seminary
6. Crawford County Teachers Institute
7. Schools—1887
8. Essay
9. Formation of School District No. 1.

First Schools in County

Possibly the first school taught in Crawford County was the one at Mulberry Camp Ground. This settlement, situated on the banks of the Mulberry Creek, was so named because of the fame and popularity of camp meetings held there. The school at Mulberry was famous throughout that section of western Arkansas, and drew students from points as far away as Fort Smith and Dardanelle.—Diamond Jubilee Edition of the Press-Argus, July 4, 1934.

Early Private Schools

There were private schools very early in the county and one of the earliest, if not the earliest, was on Mulberry Camp Ground. This was attended by students from the surrounding settlements. Albert Pike taught school near Van Buren in 1832, from then on there were private schools taught over the county.

In the early sixties Mr. Peter Moses opened the Southern Literary Institute at White Sulphur Springs. This was closed, after a year's existence by the war between the states.

As soon as possible after the war, private schools were established over the county until the latter part of the sixties or early seventies, when the public school made its advent. The growth of this was slow as much

prejudice had to be overcome. When that was established the school system had a steady growth, until now, every hamlet has a school under the consolidated school system.

Miss Stewart opened a school during the last half of 1845, as she advertised to open the second term of her school of eleven weeks on December 3rd, 1845. This was a school for young ladies and the terms were \$4.50 a quarter. It is not known how long this school continued.

The following reports on this school will be of interest:

We had the high satisfaction last Thursday (July 3) of witnessing the smiling faces and interesting improvement manifested among the scholars of Miss Julia Stewart's school at the examination. The youthful misses were very expert in their answers and exercises and showed that they had been under the direction of a good and faithful teacher.

Arkansas Intelligencer, July 5, 1845.

Rev. Daniel S. Butrick at Mt. Zion.

Rev. Samuel A. Worchester at Park Hill.

American Board of Commissioners for Foreign Missions among the Cherokees. 2/17—1844, Ark. Int.

Miss Stewart respectfully informs her friends and the public that she will reopen her school on Monday, Nov. 3, 1845.

Terms: For tuition in all English Branches usually pursued by young ladies \$4.50. Per session of eleven weeks further information as to the course of study and other particular may be obtained on application to Miss Stewart.

Van Buren, October 11, 1845.

Just when Mr. E. D. Powers opened his school is not known but a notice in the Arkansas Intelligencer of February 11th, 1843 speaks of Mr. E. D. Powers having associated with him Dr. J. S. Davis in the Van Buren Academy. This school may have been taught in the Union church, it was still in existence in the fall of 1845 according to an advertisement in the paper, which read:

The fall session of my school will commence on Monday 27th inst. terms as heretofore.

October, 1845. E. D. Powers.

Early Schools Of Van Buren

An act to establish a system of common schools in the state of Arkansas was passed by the General Assembly and approved the 3rd day of February, 1843. But until after the war between the states there were very few common schools in the state.

The first school at Van Buren of which we have been able to find any account of comes from Judge Paschal's letter book in a letter written in June 1840 to Rev. Mr. Henderson in which he says that the Rev. C. R. Kelleam, a Baptist minister has a school of fifty pupils. This school must have been located near the Union church as Mr. Kelleam owned the adjoining lot. Later from the same source we learn that "he does not care to be a regular minister here as he prefers to give his time to his school."

This school must have been established during the latter part of the thirties. How long it continued is not known whether it was composed of both boys and girls.

Rev. Daniel McManus, an Episcopal minister assisted by Mr. Thomas McKinney opened an English and Classical school on August 1st, 1843 in the Van Buren Seminary.

Terms: Higher branches including Greek and Latin per quarter \$8; English, grammar, spelling, geography, arithmetic, bookkeeping and defining \$5; spelling, reading, arithmetic and other primary lessons \$4.

Young men desiring to prepare for college can procure excellent board in private families.

Later Mr. McManus removed the school to his private residence formerly occupied by Col. Starr. He remained here until during 1845 when he went to Fort Gibson as chaplain.

Thomas J. McKinney continued the school at the Van Buren Seminary. Don't confuse this building with the Young Ladies Seminary which was not built until the latter part of the fifties.

These schools must have been continued during 1844 and the early part of 1845 but no mention was found in regard to them.

Mr. P. T. White opened the Van Buren Academy on March 9th, 1846. The course of instruction embraced the

elementary branches of literature. Unfortunately it is not known where any of these schools were taught. Although Fort Smith at this time was in Crawford County the schools have not been considered. But there was one taught by Mr. Connall also a Mrs. Walker during the years 1843 and 1844.

But there was one that was attended by both Van Buren and Fort Smith young ladies. This was located between Van Buren and Fort Smith near Noland Springs and known as the Prairie Female Seminary. The advertisement says "The third session of this school will open the second Monday in September 1846 under the supervision of Rev. C. C. Townsend assisted by Mrs. Townsend. Boarders are accommodated in the family of the preceptor where a parental watchfulness will be exercised over them and assistance freely rendered in preparing their lessons. At the pleasure of parents and guardians they can be taught needlework or any branch of domestic industry. They will attend private worship and on Sunday's public worship under the care of their teachers.

"Drawing, painting and fancy needle work taught. A library has been commenced.

"Terms in higher branches for session of twenty weeks: board \$25, tuition \$10, making \$35. Lower branches for children; board \$17, tuition \$8, total \$25; washing extra."

On the first Monday in September 1847 Mrs. Marshall opened a school at Van Buren. The session consisted of eleven weeks. For children in the first rudiments a charge of four dollars was made and for the higher branches five dollars. Board, tuition, room rent and lights \$25. Drawing, painting and ornamental needlework was also taught for \$10.

In March 1849 we find from an advertisement in the Arkansas Intelligencer that the Van Buren Female school was opened under the supervision of Rev. W. K. Marshall, with competent female teachers, on the first Monday in March. The year consisted of two sessions of twenty-two weeks each. From the fall advertisement the higher branches were taught and a commodious building erected

in which to accommodate boarding pupils, the price now being charged for board and tuition was forty dollars.

The school was located on the block bounded by Drennen and Vine and between what is now 6th and 7th streets. Mr. Marshall was an Old School Presbyterian minister and occupied a house which stood on the northeast corner of Drennen street. The Misses Butler, daughters of Rev. Elizur Butler, a missionary to the Indians, taught a school in a house which stood on Vine street between 6th and 7th streets.

After Rev. P. A. Moses resigned from the Wallace Institute he opened the Southern Literary Institution situated at White Sulphur Springs. These springs were located twelve miles east of Van Buren, on the Van Buren and Little Rock stage road.

There was a school taught in the Union church by a Mr. Frederick Wood and his wife about 1857 and 1858.

A Mr. Carr was at the Wallace Institute at the breaking out of the war between the states. He joined the Frontier guards and was killed at the battle of Oak Hill.

In 1861 and 1862 Miss Belle McLean taught a private school for small children in the front room of the middle boat house.

Miss Amanda Buchanan was principal of the Young Ladies Seminary which stood where the City Hall is now located.

Much of this information came from the pages of the Arkansas Intelligencer.

Crawford Institute, Later Wallace Institute

Whether the Crawford Institute was the outgrowth of a plan of Mrs. Alfred Wallace's to establish a school for the children of ministers is not known, but her plan had been presented to the annual conference and considered very favorably and a committee appointed to confer with Mrs. Wallace, but the plans had not been perfected at the time of her death which occurred in June, 1854.

No record of how the institute came to be established has been found. But during the legislature of 1854 and 1855 a bill was introduced to incorporate the "Crawford

Institute." As there is much sameness in a bill incorporating an institution, only extracts are given. As trustees: "That Alexander McLean, Jesse Turner, Alfred Wallace, Henry Wilcox, Charles Scott, C. F. Brown, Charles C. Heard, John B. Ogden, James Woosley of Van Buren, Presley R. Smith of Fayetteville, James R. Spring of Fort Smith and Jacob Rogers of Clarksville and their successors be and are hereby created a body corporate and politic under the care and patronage of the Arkansas Annual Conference of the Methodist Episcopal church South, and shall be known and called by the name of the Crawford Institute."

The latter part of section 9, is as follows: "Said corporation shall according to their best judgment, apply the funds that may come into their hands, in erecting suitable buildings, supporting necessary officers, instructors and servants and in procuring books, maps, charts, globes and philosophical, chemical and other apparatus necessary to the success of said institution."

Section 4th refers to the appointment of the teachers of Crawford Institute by and with the consent of the annual conference."

Section 5th. "That it shall be the duty of said corporation to transmit, to the Annual Arkansas Conference of the Methodist Episcopal church, South, a report of the progress of the said Crawford Institute including statement of finances thereof, number of pupils, courses of studies; and the said annual conference as they think proper, appoint a committee to visit said school and inspect its condition.

Section 6th. "The corporation has power with the consent of the annual conference to establish necessary departments of study; to institute and grant diplomas and to confer the degree of doctor and other degrees as are usually conferred by the most learned universities.

Section 7th. Refers to a board of competent persons whose duty it shall be to examine all applicants for Academic degrees and if they are found worthy, shall be given a diploma; they also setting the price to be paid.

Sections 8 and 9 refer to the meetings to be held by the

board and their requirements.

This bill was approved December 18th, 1854.

On January 25th, 1855 John B. Ogden and Jane B. Ogden, his wife, issued to the trustees of the Crawford institute and their successors forever a deed to fractional lots number one (1), two (2), three (3), four (4), five (5), in block forty (40) each fronting 33 feet on Lafayette street for the consideration of one dollar. John B. Ogden and Jane B. Ogden acknowledged this deed before J. A. Eno, justice of the peace.

Filed for record by Alexander McLean April 3th, 1856. After the burning of the courthouse in 1877 it was refiled for record and recorded by L. C. Southmayd, clerk, April 3rd.

Deed recorded in Book "G" page 444.

Awaiting the erection of the building the school must have been opened in the Union church and moved from there to the Crawford Institute building which was completed as far as can be learned sometime during 1856.

The building was a two-story brick and as the writer remembers it, a large building and occupied a fine location on the hill above the town having a splendid view of the town, and river for many miles and the wooded bottom lands.

In 1862 the building was used as a Confederate hospital; when the Federals occupied Van Buren they also used the building for different purposes. While there they removed the cornerstone thinking to obtain gold and destroyed the contents.

They also abused the building to such an extent that it could not be used without the expenditure of much money and that, the trustees did not have, owing to the depreciation of the property in which their money was invested and the citizens were not able to aid them, as at the close of the war between the states very few had any means left, so the building was demolished.

When Mr. Alfred Wallace died the latter part of April 1856, he left a thousand dollars towards the completion of the building and ten thousand as an endowment fund for the institution. When the legislature met in November

1856 the remaining trustees had a bill introduced in the legislature asking that the name of the institution be changed from Crawford Institute to Wallace Institute in memory of Mr. Alfred Wallace. This was granted January 10th, 1857.

Rev. P. A. Moses was the first president, assisted by Robert W. Moses and later in 1859 Rev. J. L. Denton was added to the faculty.

This was a school for young men and drew its patronage from the surrounding counties as shown in the catalogue of 1858 and 1859. From Van Buren there were 31, Crawford county 5, Creek nation 6, Cherokee nation 1, Sebastian county 3, Franklin county 2, Pope county 4, Prairie county 2, Dallas county 1, Texas 2, making a total of 57. These young men found homes with the first families of the city.

The following advertisement appeared in the Van Buren Press during the fall of 1859.

“WALLACE INSTITUTE
VAN BUREN, ARK.

Rev. P. A. Moses, A. M. President and Professor of Mathematics, Mental and Moral Science.

R. W. Moses, Professor of Ancient Languages.

Rev. J. L. Denton, Professor of Natural Science.

We take pleasure in announcing to parents and guardians and the friends generally that the fall session of this institute will commence on Monday, August 29th and will continue 21 weeks. No pains will be spared in furnishing as ample facilities for the acquisition of knowledge, through mental discipline and moral training of those intrusted to our care and supervision as can be obtained in any college east or west.

Arrangements have been made, by which all objections to sending sons and wards to boarding school are removed; therefore the parties need have no fear or apprehension in regard to the morals of their sons.

This arrangement positively prohibits students from frequenting places having a demoralizing tendency nor will they be allowed to spend their recreation hours loiter-

ing about the streets. Students from a distance are imperatively required to remain in their homes at night and to attend religious worship on the Sabbath. This institution is situated in very healthy portion of the state, accessible by the river and several stage lines and possesses every advantage in regard to cheapness, convenience and health.

The preparatory department embraces a period of two years; a thorough classical and mathematical and scientific course has been carefully selected which embraces a course of four collegiate years.

Terms per session of 21 weeks, invariably in advance.

Beginners \$8.00.

Orthography, reading, elementary, mental arithmetic and penmanship—\$10.00.

Modern geography, history, defining and declamation—\$12.00.

English, grammar, scholar's companion, arithmetic and composition—\$15.00.

Political economy, rhetoric, physiology and sciences—\$10.00.

Ancient languages—\$25.00.

Matriculation fee—\$1.00.

Board, including light, fuel and other room expenses furnished as per week—\$2.50.

Students charged from the day of entrance, and no deductions made except for protracted sickness.

For further particulars address the president.

July 6th, 1859."

The Van Buren Press of February 3rd, 1860 says: "Messrs P. A. and R. W. Moses having resigned the charge of the Wallace Institute, Mr. C. K. Marshall Jr., has taken the school and will commence the spring term next Monday.

Through the years many of the city's finest business and professional men served as trustees of the Wallace Institute.

It was reported that there was a good library of between six and seven hundred volumes when the school was closed, some of which found their way into some of the homes of the city, others being destroyed as

was the apparatus of the school. When we look back and realize what that school would have meant to Van Buren, we can not but regret its destruction.

The Young Ladies' Seminary

In preparation for building the Broadway school in 1884 a building known as the "Seminary" had to be demolished. This building had occupied that site for nearly thirty years. It was a one-story brick building not quite as long and between half and three-fourths as wide as the present one, with a hall nearly the width of the building, from which you entered the main room which occupied the entire building, from the end of the hall towards a room extending out from the main room. It had been built for a music room when it was the Young Ladies Seminary, later the building used for the public school and this room was used for the primary grade and there was very little space that was not occupied.

This building was built for a Young Ladies Seminary and was used as such until the spring of 1862 when the unsettled conditions, caused by the war necessitated its being closed.

The school was attended not only by the young ladies of Van Buren but by those living in the adjoining counties. There many of the citizens of Van Buren received their education either from the Seminary or the public school. Among the teachers previous to the war were: Mr. I. N. Smith and Miss Kinney, Mr. and Mrs. Leaverworth and Miss Amanda Buchanan. Among the public school teachers were: Mr. Lewis Bryan, Prof. Logan and Misses Maud Clegg, Margaret Wood, Clara B. Eno, and Fannie Thompson.

Thinking it would be of interest the deed to the lots is given:

Know all men by these present that I, John Drennen of the County of Crawford and the State of Arkansas, in consideration of the sum of one dollar to me in hand paid, the receipt is hereby acknowledged, I do hereby give, grant, bargain, sell and convey and donate unto Alfred Wallace, Charles G. Scott and James A. Dibrell as

trustees of the Van Buren Female Academy and their Successors in office Certain lots or Parcels of lots, situated in the town of Van Buren, County and State of aforesaid and known and more particularly described on the plat of the city of Van Buren as lots numbers one, two, three, four, five and six, (1 2 3 4 5 6) and fractional lots of seven and eight, thereunto belonging to have and to hold the aforesaid granted premises to the said Alfred Wallace, Charles G. Scott and James Dibrell as trustees of the Van Buren Female Academy and their successors in office in fee simple forever. And I the said John Drennen for myself and my heirs, executors and administrators, do covenant with the said Alfred Wallace, Charles G. Scott and James Dibrell as trustees of the Van Buren Female Academy and their successors in office that I lawfully seized in fee of foresaid granted premises, that they are free from all encumbrances, that have a good right to sell and to donate the same to the said names above, and that I will and my heirs, executors and administrators shall warrant and defend the same to the said names above.

And I, Kate Drennen, wife of John Drennen, do hereby release and quit claim unto the said Alfred Wallace, Charles G. Scott and James A. Dibrell as trustees of the Van Buren Female Academy and their successors in office all my right, claim or possibility of dower in or out of the aforesaid granted premises for a valid consideration to me in hand paid. In Witness whereof, we the said John Drennen and Kate Drennen, his wife, have hereunto set our hand and seals this fourteenth day of July, A. D., Eighteen hundred and fifty-four, 1854.

John Drennen (Seal)

Kate Drennen (Seal)

Executed and delivered in the presence of J. A. Eno.
State of Arkansas,
County of Crawford.

Be it remembered that on the fourteenth day of August, 1854, at the County of Crawford before me, J. A. Eno, an acting and duly commissioned justice of the peace, came John Drennen, grantor in the above

deed to me personally well known and acknowledge that he voluntarily executed and delivered the foregoing deed for the use, purposes and consideration therein expressed and desired the same to be certified. And on the same day and at the same place also came personally before me Kate Drennen, wife of said John Drennen, and of full age and to me well known who being then by me examined in the absence of her said husband and the contents of the foregoing deed being by me fully explained to her she declared that she has of her own free will and accord executed the same for the uses and purposes therein expressed without compulsion or under influence of her said husband and desired the same to be certified.

Given under my hand this 14th day of August, 1854.

J. A. Eno, J. P.

State of Arkansas,
County of Crawford.

I, Alexander McLean, clerk of the circuit court and ex-officio recorder for the county aforesaid, do hereby certify that the annexed and foregoing instrument of writing was filed for record in my office on the 19th day of February, A. D., 1855, and the same is now duly recorded in Record Book N, Pages 82 and 83.

In testimony whereof, I have hereunto set my hand and affixed the seal of my office, this 19th day of February, A. D., 1855.

A. McLean, Clerk and

(Seal of County)

Ex-Officio Recorder.

House Bill No. 33

Section 1. Be it enacted by the General Assembly of the State of Arkansas that the Female Institution of Learning located at Van Buren in the County of Crawford, be and the same is hereby created, a body corporate and politic shall be known and called by the name of the Van Buren Female Academy and by that name and style to be and remain a body corporate for ninety years and to have power to sue and be sued, pleaded and be impleaded, to have a common seal and to alter the same at pleasure.

Section 2. Be it further enacted that Charles G. Scott, James A. Dibrell, Joseph Green, William F. England and David C. Williams be and they are hereby appointed trustees of said Van Buren Female Academy and that they and their successors in office shall have power to make and alter from time to time such by-laws as they deem necessary for the government of said institution, its officers, teachers and professors, provided such by-laws are not inconsistent, with the constitution and laws of this state and of the United States.

Section 3. That said trustees shall have power to fill such vacancies in the body as may happen by death, resignation or otherwise in such vacancies of manner as may be prescribed by their by-laws and they and their successors in office shall hold the property of such institution solely for the purpose of education and not as stock for the individual benefit for themselves or of any contributor to the endowment of the same. Provided that the amount owned by said corporation shall not exceed at any one time one hundred thousand dollars over and above the building, library and apparatus necessary to the institution.

Section 4. Be it further enacted that said Van Buren Female Academy shall be competent in law equity to take, in its said corporate name, real, personal or mixed property by gift, grant, bargain and sale conveyance, will, devise or bequest of any person or persons and the same estate whether real, personal or mixed to grant, bargain, sell, rent, mortgage or placed out at interest or otherwise dispose of for the benefit for said institution and to apply the funds arising therefrom in erecting suitable officers, instructors, teachers and in procuring books, maps, charts, globes, philosophical, chemical and other apparatus necessary to said institution.

Section 5. That said trustees shall have power to select all necessary teachers to carry on said Van Buren Female Academy and to appoint the principal thereof who, with the other teachers in said institution, shall constitute the faculty and shall have power to carry out and enforce all such by-laws as shall be made by said

trustees for the government of said institution. Provided, that no student shall be expelled unless by the consent of two-thirds of the trustees called for that purpose.

Section 6. That a majority of said trustees shall constitute a quorum competent to transact all ordinary business of said institution to make and alter all by-laws for the government of said institution but not to expel a student and they shall as soon after the passage of this law as convenient elect one of their number who shall be styled president of said Van Buren Female Academy and said institution shall sign all diplomas or certificates conferring academy degrees.

Section 7. That said trustees shall have power to institute a board of competent persons always including the teachers and three of the trustees and such other persons as said trustees may select not to exceed five who shall examine all applicants for Academical degrees and if such applicants are found to possess such acquirements as in the judgment of said board under them worthy they may be considered graduated in course and shall be entitled to a diploma accordingly on paying such fees as shall be prescribed by the by-laws of said institution which shall not exceed twenty-five dollars, said examining board shall not exceed five persons in addition to the teachers and three of the trustees, a majority of which shall constitute a quorum to examine applicants for graduation.

Section 8. That said trustees shall have power to confer all such Academical degrees as are usually conferred by the most learned female academy and to grant diplomas to all applicants when in the opinion of such examining board are qualified to receive the same, which diploma shall be signed by the principal teachers of said institution and the president of said trustees.

Section 9. That the house and lot on which said Van Buren Female Academy is located, together with the philosophical, chemical and other apparatus belonging to said institution be and the same are hereby exempt from taxation for eighty years.

Section 10. That this act be in force from and after

its passage.

Approved 21st December, 1858.

This building must have been erected the latter part of 1855 by a Mr. B. F. Reevis or Rives as there seems to have been a suit between him and the trustees in regard to the way the work was done. Reevis to select one man either Abraham Matthews or select some one he might select, one to be selected by the trustees and in case they can not agree a third one to be called and both parties to abide by the verdict.

This was signed January 29, 1856.

The following articles are taken from the Van Buren Press which was published in 1869.

February 7, 1869—

The Van Buren Academy and the Free School will commence February 15.

February 23, 1869—

Our Schools —

Below will be found a circular from Colonel S. E. Cooper, School Trustee for Van Buren, Township. We are glad to know that the supervision of our schools have fallen into so good and competent hands, and it is only necessary for the hearty co-operation of the parents of pupils to make our schools equal, in every respect, to any in the State. A new era is upon us; let us accept the situation and enter at once upon its work:

Editor of the Press:—

I desire to give notice that through the munificent contributions of the citizens of Van Buren, and the liberal action of the Trustees of the Van Buren Seminary, ample provisions have been made and schools already opened for the education of at least Two Hundred children and youth of the District, during the entire year of ten school months. The High School and Intermediate department at the Seminary building. The Primary department at the Methodist Church building.

The schools will be in a measure under one supervision, will be taught by experienced and competent teachers, and will be free to do all residing within this School District. It is earnestly hoped that parents throughout

the District will avail themselves of the rare privilege thus extended, by early application to the undersigned, who will assign the pupils, upon such application, to the department for which they are respectively qualified.

SAMUEL F. COOPER,

Trustee for V. B. School District

Crawford County Teachers Institute

Pursuant to a call of the Circuit Superintendent of Public Schools for the 5th Judicial Circuit, the Crawford County Teacher's Institute met in Van Buren on the 5th day of December, 1870 and continued in session until the 9th. During which time more than ordinary interest was shown in the proceeding both by members and visitors from the city. The following named teachers were present:

Mrs. Ada Barbour, W. J. Alexander, Miss L. Gardner, J. M. Ewing, Miss L. Harrell, G. P. Byers, H. Shibley, E. Scott, S. P. Brown, H. Toler, A. S. Reynolds, R. B. Creekmore, M. C. Moore, L. F. Bryan, J. C. Helm, C. E. Defenbaugh, C. M. Avery, A. Hardy, L. Neal, J. W. Walker, J. R. Brunk, J. Bryan, J. C. Chapin and V. Moon.

An organization was effected by the election of E. E. Henderson, President, J. C. Helm, Vice President and V. Moon, Secretary. The following subjects were discussed by the members of the Institute. "The best method of teaching the alphabet;" "Prizes as incentives to study;" "Orthography;" "Mental and written Arithmetic and the best method of teaching them;" "English Grammar and Analysis;" "School Government;" "Corporal Punishment;" and "The introduction of a uniform system of text books into our common schools.

On Friday afternoon a permanent County Teacher's Association was organized and officers elected as follows: President, S. P. Brown; Vice President, J. C. Helm and Secretary, C. M. Avery.

Van Buren Press, Dec. 2, 1870.

Mr. Dunham: At a special meeting of the School Board, on Saturday last it was voted

1st—That the schools commence again in September after the present term is closed, and continue ten months as usual.

2nd—That one principal, and three assistants for the white school, and one principal and one assistant for the colored school, be employed as heretofore, and that applications for these positions stating terms and qualifications be received until 14th July next. I may add that the teachers, in the past year have, it is believed, been more than commonly successful. But, among the greatest achievements of Miss McBride, the principal and superintendent are those seen in her Normal and Training Department, while much credit is due to her pupils, for so successfully mastering the science of teaching in one year. I refer particularly now to those who are fully fledged, viz; the Misses Maud Clegg, Maggie Wood, Fannie Thompson, Clara Eno, and Hattie Hinkle, who have recognized, and thus prepared to meet a local want. Of course we can claim for them, as a corollary, the self imposed obligation, to forever teach in the public schools of Van Buren and state of single blessedness.

Essay Written in 1909

Feeling the following essay gives much information on early schools of Van Buren, and the information will be of much interest, the entire essay is given.

The Van Buren Schools Sixty Years Ago

“We find the conditions existing in the public schools of Van Buren twenty years ago somewhat different from those of today. In 1888, the site of the school building was the same as it is at the present time. The building was composed originally of six rooms, the wings having been added in 1891-1898. On the lower floor were two rooms and a hall, on the upper floor were two rooms and the recitation room. The north room on the lower floor was known as the first and second reader room, opposite was the third reader room. Upstairs on the south side was the fourth reader room, on the north side the principles room, and between these two was the recitation room, now the office, presided over by the principles assistant. This building had been occupied but three years, and it was in the year 1888, that the grounds were fenced, and the shade trees planted.

The school board of the year 1888 was composed of: Messrs. D. W. Moore, president; J. J. Warren, secretary; F. R. McKibben, Alvis Smith, Thomas McGee, and C. G. Smith, colored. It was thought necessary at this time to place a negro on the board.

The teachers were J. S. Cox, principal, of Missouri, connected with the school for two years. His assistant was Miss Kate Finley, of Mound City, Illinois. In the fourth reader room, Mrs. Bessie Quesenbury, in the third reader room, Miss Alice Brelsford, in the first and second reader room, Miss Clara B. Eno, with something like 125 pupils enrolled. There was a total of about 400 pupils enrolled this year.

In the principal's room the following courses were studied, first year Latin, Algebra, Elements of Natural Philosophy, Physical Geography, Ray's Higher Arithmetic, Ray's Practical Arithmetic, Civil Government, Zoology and Botany. The library consisted of the dictionary and the encyclopedia which were found in the recitation room.

The graduating class of this year was the first class to graduate from the public schools in eleven years. When the building had been erected three years before there had been no public schools for so long a time that there was great difficulty in classifying and grading the pupils. The members of the class were, Misses Cass, now Mrs. Dan Miller, Kate Warren, Mrs. Dudley Bourne, Dora Thomason, Mrs. Bert Hoffman, Laura Sagely, who died soon after, and Mr. William O'Kane. There were no first and second honors at that time. Professor Cox selected Miss Kate Warren, Valedictorian. The graduating exercises were held at McKibben's Opera House. The address was given and the diplomas presented by Prof. W. J. Murphy, President of the University of Arkansas. A marked peculiarity of the principal was that he never did anything without asking the advice of the seniors and was always ready to carry out their wishes to the minutest detail. It was not considered such a misdemeanor for a boy to take a day off and go fishing or to be tardy occasionally. As to whether the school improved or retrograded in this re-

spect we refer you to the Junior boys. The Seniors studied reading and spelling up to the day of graduation. Sometimes now, we study it till the shades of nights are falling. The reading was taught not so much for their literary value as for expression. For there were no books of real literary worth in the school then. Reports were given only to the Senior, and we sometimes wish that was the case now, when we view our long lines of D's and C's.

It is evident that the class of 1888, the members of which are among our most prominent citizens were well satisfied to graduate under the conditions of their day, and we will be highly pleased to graduate in the class of 1909, from Van Buren's New High School.

Formation of Some of the School Districts—Rena and Dora

The school District of which this record is a history, covering the period of time from 1870 to 1878, is designated first, as School District No. 1 of 25, then for a number of years No. 1 of 10, finally as No. 36, which number it retained for many years.

The territory embraced in this School District was the same as is now contained in Dora Township. All that part of Crawford County lying west and south of Lee's Creek, east of Oklahoma, then Indian Territory, line, and north of the Arkansas River.

The school house, Mount Vernon, was a one room, one story log structure situated on the Van Buren and the Territory line on what is now known as the Cordell Place.

The record shows that during this period the following named citizens served as Trustees and Directors. The trustee was elected for one year and had full authority over all school matters.

Robert Norwood, is the first trustee mentioned. He was elected and served 2 successive terms, followed by John P. Turner who also served 2 terms.

Then M. C. Moore, who served one term was re-elected and died during his second term.

John P. Turner, W. A. B. Davenport, and S. C. Cottrell seem to be the first board of 3 directors elected in the district and that was the year in which the district was first designated as district No. 36.

The record shows that the amount of school tax voted varied from one-fourth to one-half of one per cent, school terms ran regularly at 3 months term per the year.

Teachers employed were John P. Turner, James Neal, R. A. Allison, W. H. (Buck) Neal. Teacher's salaries varied from \$40.00 to \$45.00 per month.

In the late Seventies this district was divided and District No. 54 was formed in the Northwest corner of the district. In the late eighties, the district was again divided and district No. 89 was organized on the west side.

These 3 districts then formed, remained as organized, until 1916, when all of 36, all of 54, and a part of 87 went into consolidation that formed Rena, rural Special School District and retained the number 36, until later annexed to the Van Buren School District.

The district No. 89 (Dora) is now the only common school district west of Lee's Creek in Crawford County.

—Written by J. F. Roberts