

Introduction

Harriet Traxler provided the inspiration for this book. She had begun to take some photos of Sibley County country schools, and suggested Sibley County Historical Society make a book about students attending country school. After some thought, that seemed like a good idea. Little did the board know how big the project would become. Although it was much more time consuming than we initially expected, I feel it was a worthy project to pass on to future generations the experiences of farm kids, attending school, each in their neighborhood, and the unique experiences those generations of students had. For over 100 years this was rural kids' elementary education in our county. Consolidation changed that forever. Now generations to come can read about this in our book. I was proud to be a part of the team that gathered the stories, photos and documents from this bygone era, and putting it all into this book. Although Harriet passed away just as we were getting under way, I think she would be proud of our accomplishment, and we are too.



Harriet Traxler 2006

Jerome F. Petersen, President
Sibley County Historical Society

Forward

The education system in Sibley County developed as school districts were authorized by the Sibley County Board of Commissioners. Official school records predating October 18, 1863 were lost when the county offices in Henderson were destroyed by fire.

Parts of this book were paraphrased or copied from sources listed in the bibliography on page 468.

The book begins with introductory material and history which applies to the entire county. Seventeen sections follow, one for each township listed in alphabetical order. Parochial schools are included in the book, as they were also under the guidance of the county superintendent. They are included in the township in which they were located.

In one section of the book you will find as many programs and pictures of eighth grade graduations as were available. Another section includes colored township maps with small schoolhouses depicting where the school was located. We also have a section of colored photographs of former schoolhouses put to new uses, and lots of group interview pictures.

Due to a large assortment of pictures, records and memorabilia received for some schools, available space did not allow the use of all of it, to keep the balance between school districts relatively even. Where very long memories were submitted we may have used only part of them. Moreover, despite tremendous effort, material for some districts did not produce much information, so regrettably those sections are somewhat shorter.

While doing some research at the Minnesota History Center, we came across teacher records which we had copied and have included in a Teacher Appendix, beginning on page 457. This appendix will tell what districts a teacher taught in and the years. Teachers who were specifically mentioned by students or are in the school history will still be included in the index as well. During the war, when many young men and women teachers were in the Armed Services, former teachers were recruited to teach again. Maiden and married names for contributors and teachers are included in the index when known.

The Country Schools Book Staff is indebted to all who provided pictures, personal memories or records, met with us for interviews or visited on the phone. This project could not have been done without your help.

Thanks to Mari Lu Ebert Martens for writing the dedication.

Thanks also, to my tireless helpers, Becky Briggs, Steve Briggs, Ruth Ann Reiter Buck, Arlene Busse, Mildred Doering, Eldrene Ziegler Ebert, Ruben Ebert, Dwight Grabitzke, Sharon Haggemiller, Millie Tollefson Johnson, Pat Klunder, Marie Main, Rose Ann Nagel, Jerome Petersen, Mary Ellen Foltz Petersen and Sharon Byer Shimota. We owe a debt of gratitude to our proofreaders, Ethel Lieske Beuch, Gail Herschman, Kathy Kent, Kathy Taralseth, Kathy Winterfeldt and Karen Wittgraff. Without their help this book would not have become a reality. To Amy Schimmelpfennig for her computer expertise in assembling the teacher appendix and index, I am deeply grateful.

To Charles and Donna Meyer we extend our gratitude for providing funds to add extra features to the book.

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Dorothy Lieske Peterson, Editor