

DID YOU KNOW.....

A look back at early area history as found in the archives of the Enderlin Historical Society and Museum by Susan Schlecht

The following information is again taken from the *1891 - 1941 Official Souvenir Program* for the 50th anniversary of Enderlin.

The Beginning of our School District – Part 2

(The Enderlin Special School District No. 22 was organized at a special election held July 12, 1898 and the village school was segregated from the rural district for the first time.)

“The following spring, two of the board members landscaped and planted the school grounds with shade tree because the district felt itself too poor to expend funds on extra improvements. A school reference library was one of the immediate needs. Fred Underwood had an idea and appointed himself a committee of one to execute it. A form letter was prepared, which in substance stated that Enderlin was a new frontier town without adequate schools or money with which to equip them ,(and) that with increasing attendance there was dire need of a school library. Neither money nor subscription were solicited, but would the recipient of the letter feel disposed to search his own private library for some book or books which might be discarded, but which would serve as a book of reference or otherwise in the little school away out on the prairie. If so, it would be appreciated if such book or books might be autographed by the donor and forwarded for library purposes in the Enderlin School.”

“Mr. Underwood was not bashful in his connection, but a copy of that letter went to the President of the United States, to the Vice President, to U.S. Senators, Congressmen and on down the line to persons of lesser note, and even to some who had local investments but resided elsewhere. The results were startling, and few failed to respond. Autographed volumes came from Grover Cleveland, Benjamin Harrison and many others. One person donated a complete set of Encyclopedia Britannica, a set of instructive mechanical works came from the general manager of the Soo Line, and there were books and books galore, until they totaled around five-hundred. These were all placed in the school library and without cost to the district. Unfortunately, those books with large additions made later were destroyed by the fire in 1933.”

“By 1900, we find the city of Enderlin again studying and deliberating the educational facilities. The frame structure was proving inadequate. By 1903 the Enderlin School had an enrollment of two-hundred twelve and was again using private buildings to accommodate the students. In part, this was due to the fact that two years of high school work was now offered. By 1904 a four-year high school course had been permanently established. The year 1905 saw the realization of the hopes of the entire community, for this year marked the completion of the first brick school building. (This is the building which was destroyed by fire on March 4, 1933.) The high school faculty was increased to three who taught botany, mathematics, English, drawing, music and Latin. The following

year, 1906, saw the first class graduating from the high school. All four of the graduates had completed all 12 years of their education in Enderlin schools.”

Sue’s comments: There are many artifacts from the early schools and school days on display in our Museum. Perhaps you have an interesting artifact from one of our country schools or from the old Enderlin School which you would like to donate to the Museum along with the history about the article. If so, please feel free to contact me.

Watch for more history next week!