

Learning Center at 15525 NE Caples Road Brush Prairie, WA

Is this where your great grandparents learned to read?



If they came to Clark County before 1865, the answer is probably Yes. And many of them weathered the storms of World War I and World War II in this building as well!

The rich history of the little red schoolhouse with landscaped grounds, mature trees, and paved parking is documented in detail in Clark County school district records, readily available in Vancouver public libraries.

The book **7 Bells Did Ring** describes how the development of brush Prairie community began with this school/church built by the Clark Brothers in the 1800s.

It seems this building is one of the few schools in Clark County which has been continuously in use, maintained and upgraded since the school was consolidated with battleground in 1918.

According to these documents, the designation of a school district (BRUSH PRAIRIE SCHOOL DISTRICT No. 23) was followed and coordinated with the building of a Store, a post office, and a railroad depot which supported the livelihood of the homesteaders during World War I. All these establishments are still in roughly the same locations and walking distances today!

They tell the story of the teachers and students tilling and planting fields and gardens and managing canning clubs to share the skills needed to feed the area's families during wartime.

The names of pupils and teachers will likely be familiar to some of today's readers, and even the few memories they've shared in this record provide a hint of colorful characters who are still around to tell more tales of the early days.

They indicate that although 1917 was the last year the school district for Brush Prairie maintained records, the classes may have continued there for some time after consolidation.

The book includes class photos for the following school years: 1902, 1908, 1909, 1913, 1914, 1915, 1919, 1920, 1921, 1923, and 1931.



Seven Bells Did Ring



SEVEN BELLS DID RING

CHAPTER III

BRUSH PRAIRIE SCHOOL DISTRICT No. 23

HOW BRUSH PRAIRIE RECEIVED IT'S NAME

Brush Prairie dates back to 1850 when Merritt Bowman moved there and took a claim. In 1863 the Gearsham Van Attas, J. J. Clarks and Alvin Clarks came here. The Van Attas crossed the plains in 1854. They took up a claim on Union Corner. The Brush Prairie Cemetery was donated by Gearsham Van Atta who donated the land. The Clarks homestead was now the Koski place being bought by William Koski in 1900.

A stranger came to the community and was looking for a homestead. A man by the name of James Rambo was looking around by horseback and as they rode through the brush, Rambo got a bit confused on direction and said, "Let me take the lead and get you out of the brush prairie." Thus the name.

FIRST SCHOOL IN AREA ABOUT 1865

There were other firsts to be considered. In August, 1863 J. J. Clark and his brother, Alvin Clark, organized the Salmon Creek Baptist Church. There was no suitable building so they cleared a small place in the dense forest a short distance from our house and built a log cabin which would do for a church building until they could provide something better. It would also do for a school for the few children who were there, two, possibly three families only being there before us. The building, as I remember it, faced south. As you entered the boys sat on the left and the girls on the right on benches facing each other.

A long desk was fastened to the wall on each side with a long bench in front of each desk. Other shorter benches were placed in between those with a stove in the center of the room. The teacher's desk and a blackboard were at the back and a bench for a water bucket was placed near the front door. School was held three months in the year, usually during the winter. Often in the afternoon when school was in session a hand would be raised and you'd hear a boy's voice, "Teacher, may I pass the water?" Then everything was stopped while the water bucket went around. As the water bench was on the boys' side, it began there, each child using the dipper and putting it back in the bucket. Germs were not known then. Uncle Alvin and father taught the first two terms before I was old enough to go to school. My sister Irene, Charles Rambo, The Reverend Mr. Stearns, Libbie Whipple, Lettie Lyons and James Anderson were the teachers during my school days there.

One day the little schoolhouse was rocked by an earthquake. It came from the north and seemed just as if a heavy animal had suddenly jumped onto the roof, made a leap towards the front, alighted again, then bounded off. The children gave one glance at the teacher and ran for the door, she following. There was no more school that afternoon. I have often wondered what became of the little schoolhouse in which I spent many pleasant and profitable hours. I believe it was still there in 1882.

Written by Marth Clark Lyman and published in Fort Vancouver Historical Society of 1961.

CENTER SCHOOL
BRUSH PRAIRIE, WASHINGTON
1903-1904

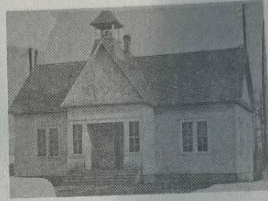


TEACHERS
W. WALTER SMITH
IDA E. MATSON



SCHOOL OFFICERS
I. C. Morris John Hastings
Grant Morgan

SOUVENIR



Pupils

Minerva Roberts	Hazel Morris
Ruby Morris	Daisy Goodnight
Ruby Goodnight	Mathilda Beckmann
Annie Beckmann	Lillie Quigley
Callista Horats	Eva Horats
Jessie Mitchell	Fay Morgan
Dora Morgan	Ethel Morgan
Lettie Robinson	Bianche Stenger
Grace Stenger	Mildred Stenger
Beth Stenger	Orva Farley
Altie Hastings	Myrtle Hastings
Florence Bills	Eunice Edner
Gertie Edner	Rose Edner
Alice Banard	Hazel Banard
Grace Banard	Hilma Corpella
Hilda Corpella	Helen Corpella
Elsie Sawyer	Minnie Sawyer
Opal Sawyer	Mollie Woody
Emma Roloff	Rose Roloff
Zelda Payne	Maude Payne

Pupils

Arlie Vanatta	Burr Sawyer
Roy Sawyer	Ray Sawyer
Paul Sawyer	Cecil Sawyer
Frank Robinson	Frank Daly
William Horats	Ira Bills
Evert Hastings	Maurice Morgan
Coy Morgan	Cleavy Ward
Arthur Ward	Archie Edner
Melvin Turnbull	Claud Morris
George Beckmann	John Beckmann
Charlie Barkkinen	Alfred Barkkinen
Ross Bodey	Paul Watson
Bell Goodnight	Roy Goodnight
Ben Woody	William Woody
Hobert Woody	Archie Banard
Fred Payne	Nelson Payne
Edwin Payne	George Steelman
David Roloff	Lewis Stenger
Albert Stenger	Roy Mitchell
Dewey Roberts	Willie Altizer
Arnold Altizer	Walter Quigley
Orvel Quigley	Lewis Quigley

FIGURE 4 - SOUVENIR, CENTER SCHOOL, 1903-04.



FIGURE 3 — BRUSH PRAIRIE SCHOOL, 1902. Front row: Dewey Roberts, Ben Woody, unknown, Mildred Stenger, Johnny Beckman, Arthur Ward, Albert Stenger, Daisy Goodnight, Minerva Roberts, unknown, two Korpela girls, Melvin Turnbull. Second row: two unknown, Coy Morgan, Minerva Morgan, two unknown, Sally Payne, unknown, Grace Stenger, Bell Goodnight, Archie Edner, Thomas Morgan, George Beckman, Ruby Goodnight, Hazel Morris, Anna Beckman, Blanche Stenger, Florence Bills, Ethel Morgan, unknown, Claude Morris, Roy Goodnight, Paul Watson. Fourth row: Frank Robison, Ira Bills, Dora Morgan, Ross Bodey, Beth Stenger, Frank Robison. Teachers were Mrs. Mattson (now Mrs. Sheldon C. Brown) and Walter Smith.

CENTER: SCH
BRUSH PRAIRIE, WASH
1903 - 1904

TEACHER
W. WALTER SM
IDA E. MATS

SCHOOL OF
I. C. Morris Grant Merg

Pupil

- Minerva Roberts
- Ruby Morris
- Ruby Goodnight
- Annie Beckmann
- Calistia Horats
- Jessie Mitchell
- Dora Morgan
- Lettie Robinson
- Grace Stenger
- Beth Stenger
- Altie Hastings
- Florence Bills
- Gertie Edner
- Alice Banard
- Grace Banard
- Hulda Corpella
- Elsie Sawyer
- Opal Sawyer
- Emma Roloff
- Zelda Payne

STUDENT AND TEACHER

Mrs. Isabelle Staley Lawrence had the unique experience of both attending and teaching at the Brush Prairie School.

She remembers that they had to pack water from the spring at the bottom of the hill on the other side of the road from the school. During World War I the children had plots on the west side of the schoolhouse and they planted gardens there. They had to take care of them all during the summer, watering and weeding. They also had a canning club. She taught at the school for five years. While there the children would come to school with wet and muddy feet. She put blocks of wood around the stove and the blocks of wood while she washed the stockings and dried the shoes. One of the first things she did in the mornings was to start something hot for the children. She made soup, potato soup, cocoa and beans. One day just as she took the soup off the stove, the stove fell apart, leaving a big mess. She charged 3 cents a cup for soup. This school was incorporated into the Battle Ground School District in 1918 but the building was used for more than 10 years after incorporating.

DISTRICT CLERK'S ANNUAL REPORT

To the Superintendent of Common School of Clark County, Washington;

Sir: I herewith transmit to you, as required by law, the Annual Report of School District No. 29 in your County, for the school year ending June 30, 1890.

GENERAL STATISTICS.			
	MALE	FEMALE	TOTAL
1. No. of children between five and twenty-one years of age, residing in the District June 1, 1890.	31	32	63
2. No. of different pupils enrolled in public school of District during year.	28	26	54
3. (A) Average daily attendance of pupils in public school.			25.2
4. No. of resident pupils attending school outside the District during year.			
5. No. of pupils not attending any school during the year.	11		
6. No. of teachers employed in public school (at one time) during the year.	1		
7. No. of teachers employed in private schools in the District during the year.			

GENERAL STATISTICS—CONTINUED.		DOLLARS	CENTS
8. Estimated value of school house, including grounds.		170	
9. Estimated value of school furniture.		20	
10. Estimated value of apparatus, including maps, globes, charts, etc.			
11. Amount of insurance on school house, furniture, etc.		400	
12. Amount monthly salary paid male teachers during year.		36	75
13. Average monthly salary paid female teachers during year.			30
14. Average cost per month of each pupil enrolled.		1	21
15. Average cost per month of each pupil enrolled, based on average daily attendance.			
16. Amount of bonds issued during the year.			
17. Amount of bonds now outstanding.			
18. Rate of interest paid on outstanding bonds—per cent.			

GENERAL STATISTICS—CONTINUED.		NUMBER
19. No. of months public school was taught during year.		6 1/2
20. Actual number of days school was taught during year.		105
21. No. of departments or schools maintained during year.		1
22. No. of private schools taught in District during year.		
23. No. of months private school was taught during year.		
24. No. of teachers employed in private schools.		
25. No. of school houses built during year.	Log Frame Brick Stone	1
26. No. of school houses now in District.	Log Frame Brick Stone	
27. No. of mills special tax levied during year, and for what purpose.		
28. No. of unbridged dictionaries belonging to the District.		0/0
29. Is the school well supplied with apparatus?		

(a) This report should be made not later than July 1.
 (b) Take from teachers' reports.

FIGURE 2 — DISTRICT CLERK'S REPORT, 1890.