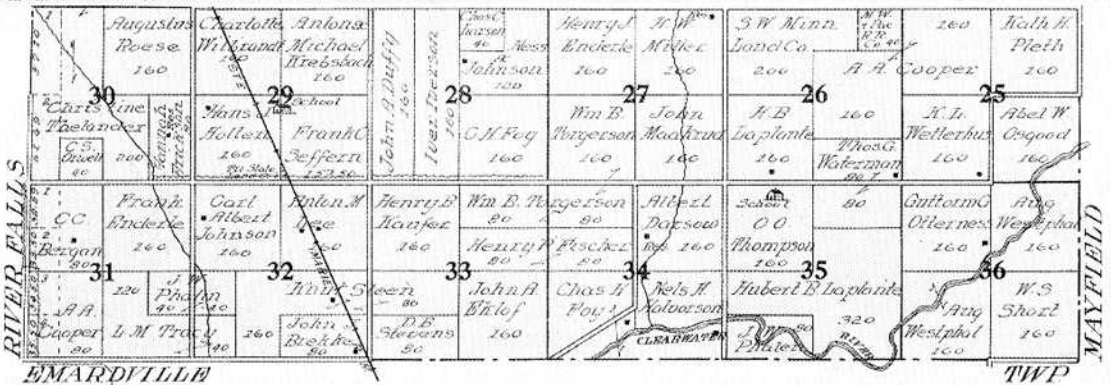
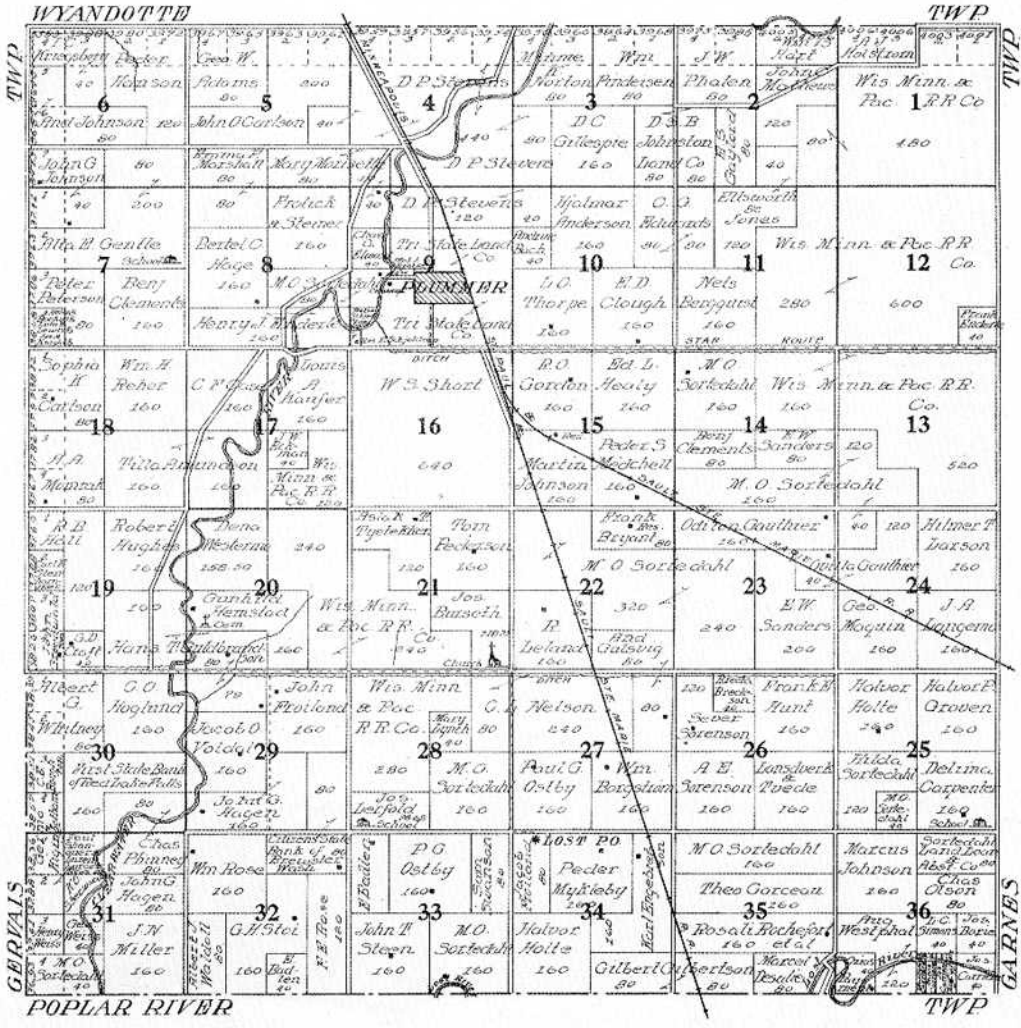




MAP OF
TOWNSHIP 151 N., RANGE 42 W.
 of the 5th P. M.
 Scale 1 1/2 inches to 1 mile

EMARDVILLE TOWNSHIP





In the early days of Emardville Township, there was one social event that was eagerly anticipated by farm families. One night each month the Cloverland Farmer's Club met in School District 214 for basket socials, picnics and bazaars. During the growing season, each family tended and cared for some product for an exhibit at the annual county fair, and in 1918 won the Enderlie Cup for the best farmers' club exhibit. A big picnic was the highlight event for the people that settled and developed the farming land of Red Lake County.

EMARDVILLE TWP.

Emardville Township no doubt got its name from the man who called together a meeting of men in the area on the 18th day of July in 1883. This first organizational town board meeting was held at Pierre Emard's home with John C. Mattanes as moderator. The following people were elected: M. W. Wolfe, Thad Meilleur, and Andre Lemieux as chairmen supervisors; Louis Piche and Pierre Emard as Justice of the Peace; Louis Piche, Town Clerk; Pierre Emard, Treasurer; Louis Piche, Assessor and Henry Bobear, Raphael Robideaus and Louis Heta as constables. At this meeting a by-law was adopted that it was unlawful for horses, mules and asses to run at large in the town of Emardville until further ordered.

One of the prime purposes of an organized town board in the late 1800's was to have an elected group of people oversee the building of roads and bridges. The decision at their first meeting was that each man was to work one or two days each month on roads.

In 1887 the board voted to have C. Gosline purchase two scrapers and a 16" breaking plow at Red Lake Falls. The two road scrapers cost \$10.00. In 1888 they explicitly designated three road districts and the following year, the overseer of highways, Peter Anderson, assessed every male inhabitant two days a year to work on roads. Records of work were kept with a fine to be imposed if a man didn't contribute his time.

On July 8, 1889 the lowest bidder, Louis Hetu, received the contract to make a ditch from the county road to the coulee on the south side of Henry Bobear land for the sum of \$49.00 and to have it done by September 8. Specifications for the ditches were to be two feet deep on each side, 49 rods long and to scrape the dirt in center and level it down. The supervisor was to review work before payment would be made.

In March of 1890 the town board voted to raise \$10,000 for town revenue, \$25.00

for the road and bridge fund and to assess two days labor for each liable for poll tax. The following year an additional amount of \$10.00 was added to their budget for the "poor fund", and in 1891 the town board voted to assess 100¢ for every \$100.00 worth of real estate and personal property liable for taxation.

Cattle were allowed to run loose but some felt it was time to take a vote to restrain them. However at the March meeting in 1894, ten voted against restraining and only five for, so cattle were not restrained.

Early in 1897 it was decided to build a new bridge across Lost River between Section 35 and Section 36, but they couldn't agree on the location so they met three days later at the location to make their decision. They decided the new bridge should be 5 rods further down the river from the old one and to build the piers and bridge of sound pine logs. A list was passed to ascertain the number of days labor that would be donated. Lorentz Lee was appointed overseer and he ordered some of the volunteers to appear at the site on February 1st.

On March 30, 1895 a hearing was held for deciding on which new roads should be built according to public benefit and interest. After this was voted on bids were called for and reviewed. The bids accepted ranged from 16¢ to 25¢ a rod for a road and ditch. All ground from ditches was to be put in the center of the road and all ditches were to be 2½ feet wide and 15 inches deep unless otherwise stated and to be completed by November 1, 1896. If a culvert was involved 28¢ a rod was paid. Men who were enterprising worked long and hard to earn money this way to launch themselves as land and property owners in Emardville Township.

The poor and unfortunate folk were called paupers and it was the obligation of the township in which they resided to pay their bills. On January 2, 1896 bills were presented by Dr. N. M. Watson, Dr. H. J.

Lemieux and Attorney Chas. E. Boughton, Sr. They were paid and settled for only after cutting each one down sufficiently to keep within their funds. It was also this year that the annual town meeting began to be held at the school house in Dist. #214, Section 28. Their budget was increased to \$400.00 for general fund, \$100.00 for roads and bridges and \$150.00 for the poor fund. The following year the road overseers were B. C. Hagan, Ole Anderson, Harvey Wolfe, Odiloux Gauthier, Gustaf Svenby and P. Oslund. Jacob Waldal was chairman and Ole G. Hagan, Town Clerk.

On May 17, 1897 with Chas. E. Asp still the town clerk, a meeting was held to let out work to be completed by May 31, 1897. The work was clearing and cutting away brush and timber on the county road for a width of 1½ rods in line with section corners. The average pay was \$10.00 a mile. The town board met on June 5, 1897 to personally examine work done before payment would be made.

In 1902 the supervisors on the town board heard all the reasons for and against laying out a road from the south east corner of section 34 along the line north to the



Township Officers: Standing: Melvin Eskeli, Clayton Larson (chairman) Eldon Vigstpl. Seated: Pete Gerardy, clerk, and Joe Fallon, treasurer.

EARLY SCHOOLS



Nick Eskeli with his unusual team.

north east corner of section 27 as petitioned for. Upon examining said petition the board found it illegal on the reason that some of the signees were not legal voters because of not having their full citizenship papers as called for in the petition. However, it was decided to lay out said road upon a new legal petition.

It was common to find in the disbursement ledger in the early 1900's items such as \$8.60 for flour for the poor, \$1.00 for cleaning the schoolhouse, 50¢ for liniment for the poor to Norsk Handel Co. and \$1.20 for 10 cedar posts.

At the May 11th meeting in 1908 the Clearwater Farmers Telephone Company was granted the right to erect telephone posts in Emardville Township with the stipulation that they not obstruct roads or road work. This year the board authorized payment of 40¢ an hour for a team of horses and a man for road work. A. J. Hemstad was town clerk.

In 1911 Emardville Township was changed in physical appearance. Pennington County divided from Red Lake County and Emardville township added a strip on the north 2 x 6 miles, or 12 sections of land, from Wyandotte township. The town boards' office equipment as such, and road equipment such as log drags and scrapers, was either divided or sold.

Perhaps the biggest change in town boards in the county came about in 1914. In a brochure issued by the State Highway Commission of Minnesota and to be read at the annual town meeting on March 10, 1914, regulations concerning approval and overseeing of road and bridge construction was to be changed from township to county authority. Town Boards were to be charged with a misdemeanor if a road contract exceeded \$200.00 without having the approval of an assistant engineer of the State Highway Commission or the county auditor who was to be located at the county seat.

In 1918 it was interesting to note that 13¢ per yard was paid for "digging up new roads". A. J. Waldal, Anton Lee and John Greenwald were supervisors and A. J. Hemstad was Clerk. There was still a poor fund maintained but the Town Board also employed the people in need of financial assistance to do brushing in preparation to road and ditch making and any kind of work they had. They were paid very well for their services as the Town Board felt it was better to give them help in this way rather than an outright aid.

This history of Emardville township skims the highlights of the first 30 years, and it can be likened to the birth and growth of an individual. This period could well compare to the tremendous pace an infant goes through in development in the first year of its life. The following 58 years in the township history settled down to a more or less even keel with a consistent dedication and devotion to duties that is still evident to this day.

Hail to the writers of history! They present to us a colorful panorama of events in the building of our nation. Along with the events, they give us a taste of what the builders went through — their ambitions and frustrations; their triumphs and failures.

In the early days of American settlement, illiteracy was common throughout the world. With the flush of immigrants to the new land, the idea of "education for all" took strong hold. Horace Mann and Emma Willard were among the leaders in this cause.

Step by step, through legislation, public, tax-supported schools replaced the private and church schools.

In the year 1918, Red Lake County's rural schools numbered about fifty. These one-room schools were heated by a wood stove in the center or corner of the room. The teacher would start the fire, though in some cases, a close neighbor would do this during the cold season. There was a well and a hand pump on the grounds.

Fortified with a half hour walk in the morning, the children were eager to set down their lunch buckets and run out to play until the bell called them in. In severe weather, parents brought the children to school with horses and sleigh.

As I remember, we got through our day of ten minute classes quite well, but there were days when the minutes wouldn't stretch, so we borrowed time from other classes or from free time.

Lacking the modern supplements to education and to daily life, I was often asked by parents to send home work with the children so they would settle down in the evening.

Teaching is an all time job. Aims and plans are with you always. It is also rewarding. Having chosen to serve, a teacher will try to reap as much profit as possible, not in money of course, but in knowledge and efficiency.

Every school offers the challenges which provide this opportunity. Some problems in children are serious and deep seated. It is these that have been the highlights of my career.

Recently I have been asked, "Where are you teaching now?" I say, "I'm not." An emphatic retort, "You're not quitting!" For a moment convictions weaken, but a silent voice cuts in, "Frieda, a teacher doesn't quit! She changes avenues."

A person who has taught in a one-room school has been nurse, counselor, helper and psychiatrist. The experiences are rich, and their values will never diminish. In my avenues, I meet lots of happy surprises. A "Hey, there! You don't know me. You were my teacher once." Or someone steps up smilingly with, "You used to be my teacher." From me: "You are . . . ?" I get it right at times. But forty years on top of a twelve-year boy? No, I can't guess. Then we reminisce with bits of humor mixed in.

Of special interest to my pupils and me have been the participation in three centennial celebrations; the Minnesota Territorial Centennial in 1949 in School District No. 232 east of Plummer; the Minnesota State Centennial in 1958 in the Eldred School; The 100th year celebration of the San Juan Islands as part of the United States in 1971.

In preparing for the Minnesota events, we delved deeply into the history of our

state. The study brought out understandings and appreciations of our culture. The culminating activities, pageants, folk music and square dancing were fun for all.

The San Juan Centennial was observed by presenting in art and action, the perilous journey of the Whitmans and Spaldings, missionaries to the West. The finale found us in the potato patch where an American shot a pig that belonged to the English. The threatening omen which grew out of this incident had national significance. Who owned the San Juan Islands? The British? Or the United States? We came near to fighting an open Pig War with Great Britain. Thanks to both nations, they agreed to have it settled by arbitration. Kaiser Wilhelm of Germany was chosen arbitrator. He decided that the Islands should belong to the United States. The story is intriguing. So is all history.

Resolve now to preserve the incidents in your family's life. Listen. Write. Somebody will be glad you did.

by Frieda Bredeson

AUTOBIOGRAPHY OF THE AUTHOR:

Life began for me in the rural area where nature and homework provided my first learning. On the farm there is something useful to do for every member of the family. Sometimes the load is heavy, but that, too, is learning — that endurance makes us strong in muscle and in character.

My formal education started in the two-room school in Plummer where it continued through grade seven. Then came the colorful climax — a beautiful, new, three-story brick building! Enjoyment of the new facilities was reflected in various interesting activities throughout the year. Later I enrolled at Bemidji State College in the program which combined high school completion with teacher training, and received my Bachelor of Science degree with a major in elementary education with concentration in music. I also took graduate work at Bemidji and the University of Washington.

For the last five years, I have been teaching grades one through eight in the Little Red School House at Shaw Island, one of the scenic San Juan Islands off the coast of Washington. This school was made a state historical site in 1974.

Note: (Miss Bredeson has also researched and written all the school histories for Plummer and Emardville Township.)



Green Meadow School District 148J

STRICT 148J — GREEN MEADOW SCHOOL

It was known as the Lee School, established around 1895, located in section 29, Wyandotte Township, Polk County.

In 1897, a teacher named Page taught during the winter months.

Otto E. Olson taught in 1903, and Anton Lee was director of the School Board.

1907 records show Anton Lee, Clerk; John Brekke, director; Fred Anderson, Treasurer.

The school became 148J after Pennington County was organized. It was moved about a half mile farther south, but in the same section.

1909 records show Josephine Constant as teacher; in 1911, Stella Olson.

In 1923 a new Green Meadow School was built on the same location. Bernice Orr was the first teacher in the new school. Other teachers were Jessie Joyce, Alyce Ford, Flora Zins, Esther Purath (Mrs. Herb Walters) — the last teacher. They merged with Plummer District 16 in 1947.

SCHOOL DISTRICT 5 — PLEASANT OAK SCHOOL

It was known as the Fehr School, located in section 35. It was organized in 1898 in Wyandotte Township, Polk County.

The first records show Louis Halvorson, Paul Bray, and H. B. LaPlant as officials. 1907 records show Osgood, clerk; Ole Hagg and H. B. LaPlant, officers.

A bill found when the school was moved, showed that the lumber for the school was from a St. Hilaire sawmill and the price was less than \$100.00.

Teachers were Mabel Peterson, Ruth Lee, Annie Henderson, Elida Orr, Annie Wedul and Daisy Abbott.

Consolidation occurred in 1947.

The building was moved to a farmstead west of Plummer.

SCHOOL DISTRICT 228 — CARPENTER SCHOOL

Originally in Polk County and located first on the northwest corner of section 25, it was built around 1895 and measured about 12' x 12'. Laura Priesse was teacher and had six to eight pupils, namely: Emil Gauthier, Phil Riendeau, Zepherin Gauthier, Airmie Riendeau, Nick



and Sarah Thoreson.

1897 records show A. E. Sorenson, Odilon Gauthier and A. F. Larson as school officers. Victorine Patnode was the teacher. Teachers' wages averaged \$75.00 for men and \$42.00 for women.

In 1906 the school was moved to the southwest corner of the same section and an addition was built to make it three times larger. Other teachers were S. J. Melcer, 1901; Bertha Hastad, Edith Demann (Mrs. Paul Schoenauer), and Stella Olson.

In 1927 Esther Colbank taught 44 pupils. It was the duty of the teachers to sweep and keep the school in order. 1907 records show Joseph Carrier, clerk; Adolph Carpenter, director; John Westlake, treasurer.

Consolidation with Plummer took place in 1947.

In 1897, Red Lake County was organized and these three preceding schools were functioning at that time.

SCHOOL DISTRICT 214 — CLOVERLAND SCHOOL

Originally in Polk County, it was located in section 28.

On April 24, 1894 a meeting was held at Ole Hagen's home in Emardville Township for the purpose of organizing School District No. 214. A. O. Lee, director; Charles Asp, clerk; and B. M. Johnson, moderator.

A November, 1894 meeting called for two more months of school. Originally there were five. The vote didn't carry.

Anyone in the district over 21 years of age wishing to attend school may do so by paying the treasurer one dollar per month of attendance, the money to go toward paying the teachers' wages. It was agreed that all legal voters and residents do equal amount of work building the school house. Charlie Asp was chosen foreman. It was agreed that taxes be levied for teachers wages, purchase school material and to raise bonds.

On April 24, 1896 it was decided to clear the school house site and lay a stone foundation under; to build a brick chimney 16" square. Bids were given and Lorenz Lee was to build the chimney for \$3.00 and a \$4.00 bid to paint the school went to Gustav Hanson.

Four bonds were issued, the amount of \$25.00 to be due on the 1st of July, 1897 for the first bond and each succeeding July 1st until 1900.

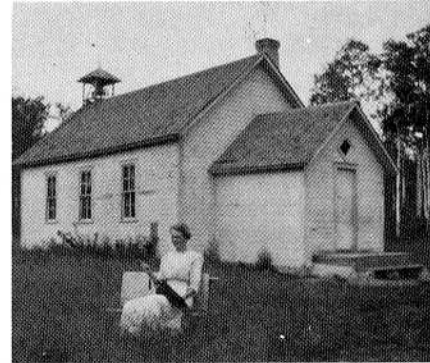
Minnie Swanson was hired as teacher on December, 1894 for three months starting January 2, 1895 at \$33.00 a month. Ada LaBlane hired in 1895 as teacher. It was decided on July 18, 1896 an effort should be made to hire a man teacher.

The first teachers and the years they taught are as follows: 1896-97, Olivina Patnode; 1897-98, Tilda Anderson and Gertie Gjerberg; 1898-99, Martin Villars; 1899-1900, Ed Granger; 1900-1901, Effie Hamry; 1901-1902, Tillie Mathias; 1902-03, Kate Wilson; 1903-1905, S. J. Melces; 1905-1906, A. L. Irvin; 1906-1909, Ina Matz.

There were 50 pupils enrolled in 1902. School was in session for five months.

In 1915-1916, Laura Vandervaal taught, school now being held for eight months. 1916-19, Izora Vandervaal; 1919-20, Mina Hagen; 1920-21, Rose Hance; 1921-23, Rose Tarum; 1923-24, Adeline Nyland; 1924-25, Ivy Zimble; 1925-26, Ada Peterson.

On February 27, 1924 a special meeting and election was held for the purpose of voting for bonds of \$2500 to build a new



Cloverland School District 214

school house. Fifteen votes were cast, all in favor.

The original school was sold at open sale and sold to Brennan for \$130.00. J. B. Jones and Bennie Johnson bought the storm windows. Erickson Folvig built the new school and it was ready for the spring opening of 1926. It was regarded as a modern school with water fountain and two indoor chemical toilets.

The first teacher in the new school was Anna Strande, (Mrs. George Beito). She taught from 1926 to 1929. From 1929-30, Elida Orr (Mrs. Clifford Christenson) taught. Later teachers were: Marie Pinsonneault, Ella Casuin, Clara Breivold, Clara Berg (Mrs. Florian Hesse), Gladys Lafayette, and Francis Froiland was the last teacher.

Church suppers, bazaars, school carnivals, basket socials, farmers clubs and meetings were held there. It was a center of community life. Kerosene lamps were used for lighting during evening events.

The school consolidated with District 16 in 1947. The building was moved to Plummer and used as an extra school room for a time.

SCHOOL DISTRICT 234 — FINN SCHOOL

On November 12, 1913, a special school meeting was held at the Matt Pokela home at 2:00 p.m. Mr. Pokela was chosen moderator and Peter Kakkonen, clerk. Officers elected were: Ben Hoole, treasurer; Hjalmer Hill, director; Matt Pokela, clerk.

It was decided to build a new school with \$1500.00 raised. A two acre plot was purchased from John Holappa for \$31.00 in section 12. Bids were called for and Franz Freunk bid \$1770.00 which was accepted.

Irene Lanager (Mrs. Lars Haga) was the first teacher. The term was seven months. It was voted in 1914 to have an eight month school year; three months in the fall, three in the winter and two in the spring.

On August 1, 1915 a basket social raised \$23.00 to buy a new lamp.

In 1921, through the insistence of Mrs. Kauppila, a barn was built. Gust Kangas built it for \$15.00. This sheltered the horses the pupils rode to and from school and as storage space for fire wood.

A June 1940 vote made the school term run nine months. Other teachers were Laura Lanager, Klara Kolstoe, Myrtle Demann, Esther Widger, Elida Orr, Bertha Hastad, Esther Kuoppala, Rachelle Toulouse, Frieda Bredeson, Hazel Zaiser, and Cecyl Bemis.

After consolidation, the building was sold and moved to St. Hilaire.



Haga School District 115

HAGA SCHOOL DISTRICT 115 HISTORY

This was the first school in Emardville township and the first district to join district 16.

In July 1882, Emardville township, then in Polk county was organized and named. Present at the meeting were Pierre Emard, Isaac Morrisette and A. Lemieux, appointed judges, and Alfred Doutré and Leon Marsonette as clerks of the election.

An 1884 petition was drawn up by Louis Pische and others for school organization for sections 4, 5, 6, 7, 8, 9, 16, 17 and 18 and to be known as School District 115.

An April 24, 1889 meeting extended District 115 to include sections 19, 20, 21, 22, 10, 15 and 3.

This school is believed to have been built in 1885-1886. It was of log construction, measuring about 22 feet by 25 feet and located in the middle of section 8 near the old river road that followed the Clearwater River from Terrebonne through the Isaac Morrisette farmstead and on. It was north of the H. H. Finroe Store and was known as the Scotland Log House School, later known as the Plummer Dam Log House School. It is believed to be the first established school in Emardville.

Around 1898, a new frame school was built in the district, about three-fourths mile northwest of this log structure in section 7. This became known as the Haga School.

Records from 1897 show B. C. Haga, Ole Anderson, and Andrew Johnson as

school officers. Ida Poeshell was one of the teachers. A road was marked leading to the school, but it was never completed. Things came to a halt in 1907 when Plummer's first village two-room school was established. District 115 was terminated.

After a decade of dormancy, the little Haga school came to have an adventurous future. The Plummer school was in need of a third room for the increasing enrollment. The Haga school would serve this purpose.

A man was found who had the will and the means to undertake the moving. This was John Norby. He would use his steam engine, part of his threshing rig, and move it on skids across the Clearwater River Dam, by old Plummer.

Skids were fastened under the house. The Greenwald Advance Steam rig stood ready to render extra help. Smoothly it slid over the sod and grass, but the gravel road made greater demands, resulting in a burned out gear on Norby's Nicholson-Shepherd. Mechanism fixed, Pat Greenwald joined with "Noisy Joe", so nicknamed after the fireman, Joe Smith, and the loud noise emitted by the engine. The two machines, in tandem style, brought the school house to the river.

The Plummer Dam and Bridge which supported the school's passage was built by a lumber company in the early years. Logs came floating down the river and collected at the dam. When the water was high enough, the water gates were lifted up by means of cables wound on spools. The sudden gush of water floated the logs

through and over the rapids. This procedure was repeated until all the logs were sent over.

When Pat and Ed Greenwald came here, about 1914, the dam was no longer used for logging. Still intact, except for the missing water gates, its use as a bridge was unhampered.

Following is a sketch of the dam according to Ed and Pat Greenwald.

The dam had been prepared, planks laid level and secured with rocks between.

The weight of the engines and the building would likely be too much for the dam's strength, so they decided to pull it over with cables, the engines going over the creamery bridge. They pulled the building as close as possible, unhitched, and went about gathering cables, chains, and other needed equipment.

The school's period of waiting wasn't all loneliness. The desks were there. So were the books. What resourceful boys wouldn't try the door, walk in, and help themselves to some learning! After all, playing school is fun.

Preparations made, Pat Greenwald and John Norby brought the steam engines over the creamery bridge and to the dam, strung cables across, one to each engine. The Nicholson-Shepherd did the pulling with Noisy Joe on the emergency anchor.

Foot by foot, the slow journey proceeded to a safe landing.

Thrill was sensed in the "Too-oot" of the engines' whistles as the "boys" brought the school house to the Plummer School grounds. It was placed north-east of the two room building, the sidewalk running between the two buildings.

The middle grades occupied the building during the ensuing year.

With the erection of the brick school in 1918, the little building was moved and used temporarily as the Plummer Presbyterian Church.

Its next move was to a lot south of McGrady's. Here it was occupied as a residence by Mrs. Olive Wichterman for about five years.

Again, its role became one of Christian service. For about two years, a minister, Alrick Olson of International Falls, Minnesota came here and held weekly services. It was called Smyrna Mission.

Presently, situated near rows of beautiful evergreens, the old school house continues to offer its hospitality and charm. It is a guest house on the Harold Vatthauer farmstead.



Finroe Store and postal service west of Clearwater River

A LETTER TO MY CHILDHOOD:

Does anyone here remember *The Plummer Pioneer*? It almost sounds like the words of some half-remembered song — a song from the "old days", when I was a child, in Emardville township.

I know that that newspaper existed because I remember seeing the front page. Did I actually read it, or did I just see it pasted on the wall above the wash stand to protect the new calcimine from splashes? Did I perhaps see it over the edge of the dipper as I drank from it at that same dry sink?

Newspapers were more precious in every way then. Not only were the words in them taken for gospel, they were never thrown into the trash, nor tied up in bundles for this or that paper drive. They were put away carefully for many uses, such as, starting fires in the wood stoves, lining dresser drawers, and cupboard shelves, wrapping apples and vegetables for winter storage in the cellar. My mother told me that when she was a child in the late 1890's, newspapers were saved all year and used to paper the walls of the summer kitchen.

Remember those?

Remember the spring day when it was finally warm enough to "take the heater out?" That would be just before we started cooking in the summer kitchen, which was a sort of outer porch attached to the house, where the canning and much of the cooking was done in hot weather. More "progressive" families had so-called "oil" stoves, burning kerosene or gasoline. Some of them worked, more often did not. I remember the smell of them in the church basement at bazaars, mingled with the aroma of fresh coffee and roasting chicken.

I remember Pleasant Oak School . . . Eight grades in one room. Some of the desks were double, seating two people, and the worst punishment I ever got was having my seat changed for whispering in class; I had to sit with a boy! Embarrassment!

The school socials and programs were very important affairs. The "rag ball" social was my favorite. Each girl packed a fancy box lunch, then wrote her name on a slip of paper and wound torn strips of cloth around it to form a ball. The bigger it was, the more fun. The boys bid on each ball as the auctioneer held it up (no one allowed to bid more than ten cents) and would get to eat the box lunch with the girl whose name was inside the ball. Oh! how we hoped the boy we secretly worshipped would get the first bid in.

The Christmas program was another high point at school, and at the little churches in each community. There were plays, pageants, songs and recitations. I remember one year when many of my schoolmates were in bed with flu at Christmas time, and I gradually accumulated most of the roles in the program. Ham, that I was, I thought it would be fun to be the star of the show, but it really wasn't at all; nobody that I wanted to impress was able to come.

There was always a Christmas tree with real candles on it, and the biggest boy in the school was delegated to watch the tree with a pail of water beside him, while the candles were lit. What a beautiful, magical sight to my eyes was the Christmas tree at that little country school!

I remember going barefoot . . .

Most of us "country kids" went barefoot as soon as weather permitted. However, none of us would have been seen "in town" barefoot. Indeed, we were just sure that the "town kids" never went barefoot at all. I think back to those days with a smile, from far away (and far-out!) California, where children and adults of affluence are seen everywhere in bare feet, and signs saying "Shoes Required" need to be posted in good restaurants.

Also, driving down the freeways, I sometimes flash back on the roads of my childhood. If you were lucky, you lived on a "gravel" — or better yet, a "State" road, but most of them were just dirt, running narrowly between steeply sloped ditches. They were rough and dusty when dry, and treacherous in wet weather.

Remember the mud?

We went often to my grandparents' home six miles north of Red Lake Falls. The terror of my life was that we would get stuck in the mud on that narrow black dirt road. I haven't been half that scared on the wildest freeway at 5:30 on Friday afternoon.

I remember horses; working horses —

Every farmer had a favorite team which he was sure could out-run and out-work any other horses around. In winter we drove to church in a sleigh, and there would be good-natured races between neighbors, probably because they knew the children enjoyed it. Of course, it looked to us like we won every time, until we got to

school the next day, when I found out loud and clear that the other kids were just as sure they had won.

I hated dishes and housework, and I knew my mother would always let me out of it if I milked cows, picked berries, or did other outside work. Does anybody milk by hand any more? And are there still Juneberries and wild raspberries by the painful in those woods? And chokecherries to turn your teeth brown and coat your tongue so food tastes "funny"?

In the hayfield my job was to handle the sweep-rake.

Remember those mean things?

I hated that job with a passion, and would cry all the way out to pick up a load of hay, but never would I let my father see my tears. I knew he would expect me to do the job and not be a cry-baby.

This was a fundamental philosophy of the community. The heat of summer, the storms of winter, crop failure, disease and other catastrophies were endured with patience and a basic, over-riding hope that the future would be better. It was an example that has stayed with me through the years, and has sustained me in the worst of times.

Dear Red Lake County, you gave me the greatest of all gifts: a childhood of security, trust and the example of honorable adults; and for this, "— now I return my thanks with heart and lips."

Elaine Wichterman Moran

