

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 taken from the *1891 - 1941 Official Souvenir Program* for the 50th anniversary of Enderlin.

The Beginning of our School District

From 1883 to 1893, children of school age living within Maple River (now Liberty) Township attended one of the four rural schools then established. The school houses were considered spacious and served the communities both as places of worship and as social centers. The proverbial red school house served well. Daily trudging along dusty roads and across fields, over hills and prairies, village students and country pupils alike, made their way to their institution of learning with bags of books in one hand and dinner buckets in the other.

It was not until the winter of 1893 that the village folks put forth a united effort and provided school accommodations within the village of Enderlin. However, finances at the time were insufficient for the erection of a new school house, so school quarters shifted from building to building, the first being in the Oeder building on Third Avenue. The first term opened January 2 and continued until March 31 with one teacher and 25 students. Unfortunately that building burned so the rest of the session was held in the basement of a home belonging to the roundhouse foreman on the corner of Sixth Avenue and Center Street. The next year 35 students attended school in the second story of Oscar Power's hall on Fourth Avenue, later occupied by C.A. Wallner. There was one teacher and four grades. The following year, the school occupied the second story of the Rustad building on Third Avenue. The ever-growing student population needed immediate attention and definite plans were made for the construction of a new structure but financial resources were at a low ebb so the construction took several years to complete. The first actual school building in Enderlin was completed in the fall of 1897, still under the supervision of Liberty Township. The four-room structure was fully adequate to serve the community, but Enderlin was not destined to grow by steady strides. The influx of settlers, mechanics, artisans, and laborers, swelled the village population. Soon all four rooms were pressed into service since the school attendance had risen to one hundred twenty-five during the winter term.

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.

Sue's comments: I found it interesting that Liberty Township was once Maple River Township and that students from the village went to the country schools! Perhaps someone has an early map of Liberty Township that we could copy for the Museum showing the location of those first four schools.

Watch for more history next week when we learn more about our first village school!

