

“SCHOOL DAYS” REMEMBER WHEN?

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Acme Academy - later renamed Cowan Academy

To most everyone, school memories are ones to treasure, as fond and dear. We have attempted to gather information that was given us by those who “remember”. The contents are believed to be factual. We thought those reading this article would travel again down the sentimental path of “school day” memories.

Our search of our first institution of learning begins at **Acme Academy**. It is believed that this was once a private school, which later was made a public school. The name was changed to Cowan school and was located where the Cowan Cumberland Presbyterian manse now stands. The “T” shaped, three room building is believed to be the first school to serve our community. After looking at pictures taken at this school, it is obvious the walls were “full and running over with children”.

In 1892, Mrs. Daisy Sargent entered first grade with Miss Elle Hereford as her teacher. Mr. John Ross remembers entering first grade at the age of eight in 1897, being taught by Miss Mittie Bean.

Being a first and only in our community a principal at Cowan School, Emmons Hudson, told three students that he would teach the required high school subjects. Mrs. Daisy Sargent, Mr. Roy Rose and Pearl Moore Thrower received their diplomas in 1902 and are believed to be the only students to earn a high school diploma from Cowan School.

Teachers and principals remembered at Cowan School were Mr. Birch Tucker, Mr. Whitelock, Mr. Gaylor Crownover, Mr. John Bennett, Mr. Coleman Finny, Miss Betty Hearn, Miss Grace Looney, Emma West, Fannie West, Era Hill Looney, Beluah Snoddy, Jeannie Stewart, Mrs. Lena Davis and Mr. Roy Hickerson.

The people of Cowan saw a need for a new school, because of overcrowded conditions and the dilapidation of the building, thus action was taken. “The School Board of the Cowan Academy Special School District agreed to assume as this date and pay bonds issued by the Town of Cowan on July 3, 1922, in the sum of twenty thousand dollars as set out in Ordinance No 54 of said Town of Cowan.”

Board members included J.W. Hill, Jr., George P. Cooper, Thomas Cowan, George Garner, and B. B. Looney with Mayor G. M. Thorogood and City Recorder, George P. Cooper signing the document.

So, in the beginning our present school, which was made possible through the people of Cowan, was a city school beginning in 1922 with Gaylor Crownover being the last principle from the old school and the first at the new school. Chairman of the School Board was Mr. J.C. Sargent the first year. The school was completed in 1922 and operated as a city school with free textbooks. Ninth and tenth grades were private with tuition being paid for by students to receive a partial high school education. Miss Elizabeth Clark taught in what is now Miss Sargent's room. In 1934, for reasons unknown, the school, the property, furniture, furnishings, fixtures and equipment were deeded to the County Board of Education of Franklin County on September 29, 1934.

Another well-known school in our area was the Big Springs School in which Mr. C. J. Miller and wife deeded an acre of land to be used only for school or church purposes in September 21, 1880. Miss Cletus Garner, who taught for many years at our present school, vividly recalls attending Big Springs School the first eight years of her education. The school, which was located very near Miss Garner's home, was torn down and rebuilt as a granary (that still stands on her property) by her father. I might add, Mr. Roy Ross, a graduate of Yale University, became a teacher at Big Springs.

In the "Historical Review", June 1973, Mrs. Chester C. Chattin remembers the first bus being built on the bed of a Ford truck. This bus, referred to as the "Cowan Zoo" was driven by Mr. John Hawkins, or "Pa Johnny", as he was called. This bus transported children from Cowan to Central High School in Winchester. Some students remember waiting at the "Franklin House" to catch the train to Decherd and attend Franklin County High School. The "Goose", a mule drawn, canvas covered wagon, driven by John Haddon, was used to transport children in the Keith's Cove area to Cowan Public School. Mr. Hadden blew a "fox horn" to announce his arrival. Some remember this as a luxury, since they had walked or ridden a mule to school in Cowan before the "Goose".

Between 1922 to 1975, principles remembered at Cowan Public School were: Gaylor Crownover, E.A. Bell, H. J. Priestley, under who Miss Agnes Sargent began her teaching career. Next came J.J. Dugger, Albert Hobenrich, George Thorogood, under whom Mrs. Treva Smith began teaching. Mrs. Allen Shook, Mr. Richmond, Mr. Gordon Sanders, Mr. Fred Holmes and Mr. John Butler.

Through the continuous efforts of the people of our community and the educator (past and present) Cowan's school has provided a high quality of education for our children.

Hope you enjoy remembering!

Those who contributed information: Misses Agnes and Ruth Sargent, Mr. John Ross, Mr. and Mrs. W.W. Wilkinson, Mrs. Treva Smith, Mrs. Oattie Shook, Miss Cletus Garner.