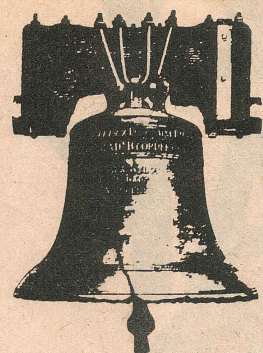
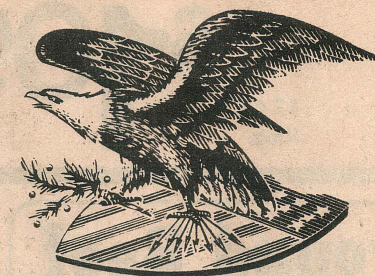


MADRID

AREA



BICENTENNIAL



1776-1976

"Rememberances of Days Gone By"

White Hall School Built on Williams Farm

The country school no longer exists in the Madrid area, but for almost 60 years a tiny country school in Dallas County served as the educational center for many area residents.

White Hall school, as it was known, was located on what is now the Charles Williams farm, about four miles southwest of town.

The one-room wooden schoolhouse was built in the Williams' pasture and then moved by horses to where it originally sat. Today, only a group of rocks marks the spot where it once was.

The school was originally painted white, and that is how it received its name. Dates are unavailable to depict specific events in the life of this Dallas County school, but it is believed that it started around the year 1900. It remained a wooden structure for many years, but eventually, the school was lined with brick, taken from the Albert Snowgren farm, for additional support.

Children in grades K-8 attended classes here nine months with the school year divided into three terms, Fall, Winter and Spring. Each lasted approximately three months. At one time, attendance peaked to 75, but this undoubtedly occurred during the winter term. During this three month term, many of the farm boys received their education. The other two were spent on the farm helping their fathers plant and harvest the crops.

Following six years of education at High Bridge, students at this coal mining camp had to walk to White Hall, if they wanted to further their learning. These youngsters probably also were included in the 75 total.

Classes began at 9 a.m. and ended around 4 p.m. The 3 R's were taught daily, along with history, language and spelling.

Reading was the first subject taught each day. While one class was being taught, they would sit on a bench in front of the room, facing the teacher's desk. The other students then had to study quietly at their double or single desks until it was their turn to recite the lesson.

Recess and arithmetic completed the morning activities, while history, language and spelling were learned each afternoon.

The Lord's Prayer and Pledge of Allegiance was said each day before school began.

Many schools today are structured around the teacher's desks, but this wasn't so in the country school. A potbellied stove was located in the middle of the room, with the desks arranged around it.

As the number of students attending White Hall increased, the need for a larger building became of primary concern. So, when the 2-room High Bridge school closed its doors, it was moved by Martin Sheldahl to the White Hall district, thus becoming the "new" White Hall school.

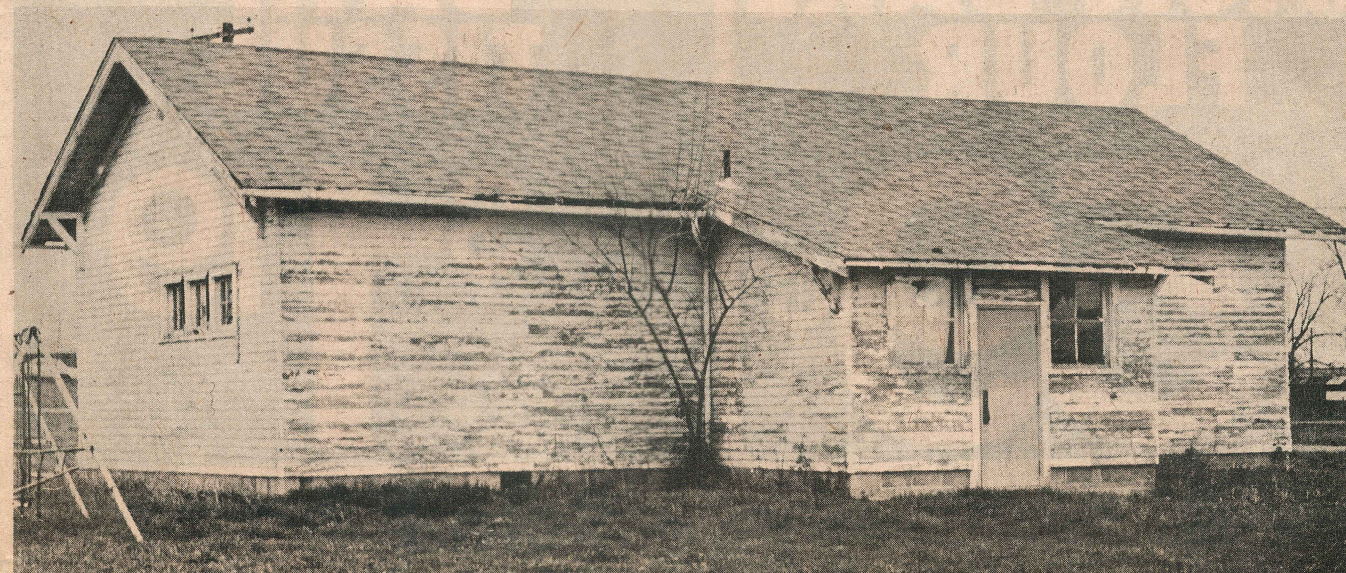
The original building was purchased by Milo Latta Sr.'s father and was moved to the Bill Peterson farm. However, a farm fire destroyed the original building.

Following eight years of education, the passage of a county test was required before advancing to high school. So, each year, the county superintendent from Adel would come out in the spring to administer the exams. These tests covered subjects such as orthography, reading, writing, arithmetic, English grammar, physiology and hygiene, U.S. History, music and civil government.

The second White Hall School continued until 1966, there still were 10 youngsters attending and at this time it became part of the Madrid Community School District. The building was closed and the youngsters were bussed to Madrid.

This building was moved on November 24, 1966, and was placed on a new foundation across the street from the elementary-junior high building.

Many teachers taught at this tiny Dallas County school throughout the years. Some of them included Lela Erickson, Edith Latta, Edith Norris, Ethel (Florence) Polish, Elsie Johnson and Helen Eide.



Madrid Men Ride With Wagon Train



Editors note: Thatcher Johnson, his son, Shane and DeWayne Tweedt and his son, Richard, were among the riders with the wagon train. Mr. Johnson reported the following on their experience.

A large fire crackled within the wagon train encirclement. Several men lounged close to the burning logs in deep conversation about the twenty-six miles traveled that day. Their voices revealed stress and, simultaneously, appreciation of the distance covered.

The conversation was about horses, wagons, and men and their families. There were questions about the Nebraska and North Dakota wagons, and then someone wondered about the family from Louisiana.

One told of a wagon wheel replacement. Fortunately, a spare was available and short work was made of the problem. Noticing the trouble, a half a dozen horsemen reigned their mounts and quickly made the repair. None too soon for a middle aged woman, for a middle aged woman who necessarily held a tight rein on the spirited team, during the change.

The outcome of another incident was not so pleasant. One outsider was moving at a slow cantor alongside the wagons, keeping his senses alert to the unusual when his horse stepped on a sharp object. The animal immediately went lame and the rider jumped from the saddle to inspect the wound. Blood literally spurted from a 2 inch long cut just above the hoof, below the fetlock. He

squeezed the laceration for two or three minutes, hoping the pouring blood would cleanse the wound; then he removed a large red handkerchief from his pocket and firmly bound the cut. Then he gathered the reins into a strong hand and followed the wagons with his limping stud, only hoping the time for night encampment was near and that nothing vital was severed in his horse's foot.

Now the conversation drifted to tomorrow. Would the sorrel team with ugly collar sores be able to continue much longer? As smoke curled up and rapidly dissipated with the crisp breeze the dialogue about this unconscionable treatment reached a loud emotional pitch until a young man suddenly sauntered up and changed the topic of con-

versation to food. The wagon train cooks had a knack for reaching the heart of a man through his belly. It was easy to imagine the mornings hot cereal, flapjacks and bacon and eggs. A great tasting meal in any man's train.

All this sounds like a tale from yesteryear, but it's not. This was simply a typical scene enjoyed by four Madrid men as they rode 100 miles, from Des Moines to Gladbrook, on the first leg of the Iowa Bicentennial Wagon Train journey to Valley Forge, Pa. Duane and Richard Tweedt along with Thatcher and Shanne Johnson rode their horses on their trial of nostalgia last week covering the 100 miles in a four day ride. A ride embracing a brand of companionship and fellowship they will never forget.