

## SISTER GROVE SCHOOL # 138

Sister Grove School was located approximately six miles west of Farmersville and two miles south of the Climax community. The land for the school was given by a Mr. Strickland. The school house was built and school opened the Fall of 1870 with 50  $\frac{1}{2}$  students enrolled. It was a one-teacher school from the beginning until it closed in the late 1930's. At that time the district consolidated with the Farmersville Independent School District.

The enrollment of the school ranged from 40 to 100 $\frac{1}{2}$  pupils in grades 1 through high school during the early years and 1 through 8th the last several years.

The school building was a typical one-teacher structure with one long room, black boards on one side, a large pot-bellied stove in the center and a built in wood box in the back. The split log benches had been replaced with regular double desks in the early 1900's.

The above information was furnished by Mrs. Geneva (Lokey) Bowman who is 87 years old now and who attended Sister Grove School from age 7 to 15. (1906-1914) She remembers carrying water from the "Judge Place" well for the children to drink. The well was some  $\frac{1}{2}$  mile from the school.

By the 1930's when Mrs. Naomi Press taught at Sister Grove things had changed. There was a well on the school yard with a pulley, a rope and a bucket. All the children were supposed to have drinking cups and all drank from the same bucket. The stove had been converted to coal which was kept inside the house in the wood box - still the same pot belly stove in the center of the room. There were two rather new "out houses" (toilets) and some new bats and balls for playground activities.

The pupils and parents were like one big family in Sister Grove Community. They all took care of each other. In school the older pupils taught the younger ones. When the fifth grade math was being presented from the black board, all the pupils listened and many times the little third or fourth graders would give the correct answer. This was true in all subjects. One advantage of the one teacher school was that children did not learn at their grade-level only but much of all grade levels if the mental ability was present.

This community was made up of about fifteen to twenty families with school age children. Some of the trustees and leaders were: The Lokeys, Bowmans, Comptons, Rickmans, Halls, Jacksons, Whitwells, Houses, Spruills, Wyatts, Durhams, Renns, Wrights, etc.

These families had a wonderful community social life. Some of these activities were squirrel stew suppers, chicken roasts (in the creek bottom), musicals, forty-two parties, home made candy parties and a few dances. The "teacher" was always included in these parties.

Everyone at school and in the community called the instructor "Teacher", never by her or his name. Each year at the end of school there was a big "dinner on the ground" and an outsider three-act play presented by adults of the community. "Teacher" was the director of the program, the stage builder and decorator, the purchase of all needed materials, etc. Most of those involved could say, "And a good time was had by all."

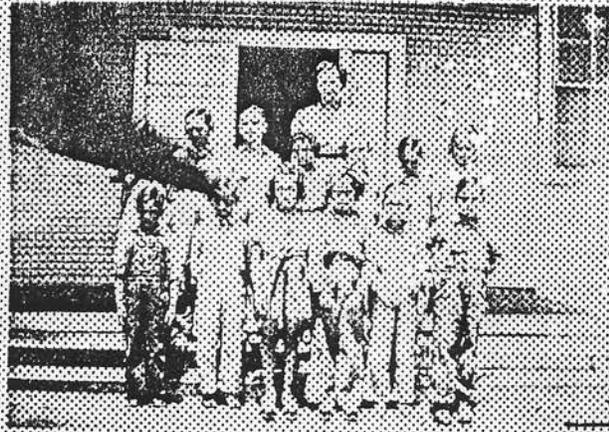
Some of the early teachers of Sister Grove School were: Mr. Clarence Horton, Mr. Edward Burnett, Charlsie Morrow, Wilma McDonald, Ruby Miller, and Mae Warmick.

A few of the 1920-1930s teachers are still remembering the good times we had at the beginning of our teaching careers. Some of these are: Weldon (Parker) Johnson, Robbie Parker, Marie Andrews, Naomi Press, Mrs. Bill Wolf, Mrs. Ira McCormick, Mrs. Irene Hawkins.

By the late 1930s the enrollment was down, the roads were paved, and the Farmersville school bus came by the Sister Grove School to pick up the high school pupils. The leaders of the Community and the school trustees decided to consolidate and send the elementary grades to Farmersville also.

This never to be forgotten little one teacher school had served its purpose for more than fifty years!

*Written by -  
Mrs. A. J. Press, (Naomi)  
1986*



1931-1932 NAOMI PRESS - TEACHER