

HISTORY OF KEYSTONE SCHOOL

(From the 1948 Keystone Ranger Yearbook)

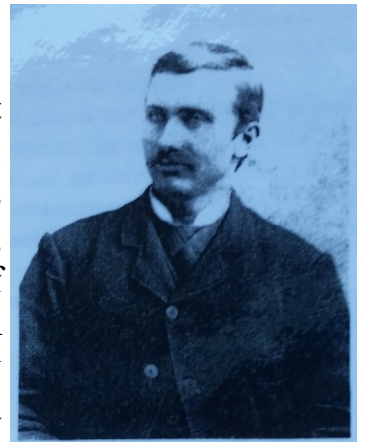


In the southeast corner of Pawnee County, on April 22, 1903, Appalachia, Oklahoma was established. A drawing for lots was held and by July of that same year, 3,120 people owned property in the new little city. Across the Cimarron River from Appalachia, Keystone was settled but was then considered as a part of the first town. As there was no bridge across the Cimarron, the only means of travel was boat or ferry. According to the Appalachia News of July 24, 1903, the location for the town had been chosen only after many sites had been rejected. The people realized that their greatest need was for bridges across the Cimarron and Arkansas Rivers. In the first edition of the newspaper, a proposal was made to tax each lot \$3.00. With the help of the county and surrounding farmland owners, a fund of \$20,000 could be raised. This was considered more than sufficient to build the two bridges, "that would accommodate the heaviest wagon traffic for the next twenty

years."



The history of schools for this locality is closely associated with the bridge question. As early as 1896 a log school had been built on the Appalachia town site. The first teacher, according to available information, was Charlie Zickefoose. For several years,



children from Keystone on the south side of the river were taken to Appalachia to school by boat and ferry. A charge of five cents per child per trip made the crossing not only expensive for most families but during part of the winter season, a hazard as well. On many occasions when high water or ice was to be crossed, the bank was lined with anxious parents. Under such conditions, it is easy to understand that a desire for a school on the south side of the river should began to grow and many new settlers on the Keystone side added their voices to the demand.

At a mass meeting in the Appalachia school in 1911, an adroit maneuver by the south side people cut them loose from the north side and opened the way for them to establish a school of their own. No suitable building was available, but not to be daunted, they rented the Frisco Saloon Building, located on the present site of the Kurtz Garage.

Tax money from the south side was held by the north side until a court decision released it. The first school board for the new district was C.D. Hubbard, Charlie Robert and Jim Hildreth. Some districts in Tulsa County on the south were annexed and the plans for the new

building got under way in 1912. It was deemed expedient to locate the new building in Tulsa County to avoid any future entanglement with Appalachia in Pawnee County. Accordingly, the present site of the Keystone School was chosen.

The district voted \$15,000 in bonds for the construction of the new building. On the first floor the building contained the present two classrooms located on the south side and the north side contained the office and entrance. A basement was to accommodate the heating system and was reached from the main hall. A large auditorium on the second floor was used for school entertainment and as a Masonic & Eastern Star Lodge Hall. This entire building program was accomplished for a total of \$11,000. The building was ready by 1913 and two teachers given the first eight grades.



During the next twenty years, the area around Keystone was found to be oil producing. Population increased and there were periods of boom and occasional slumps as beset most small towns. By popular demand, the district began offering high school work and the building was divided into additional rooms to accommodate the classes. In 1926, the first graduating class had five members. They were Ray Veteto, Robert Cox, Leo Elliott, Lloyd Avers and Mrs. Leonta Ackley. Some of the high school work of these students had been obtained in other towns as the high school here had been intermittently offered. Eventually, the Appalachia School was abandoned and pupils brought to the Keystone School. A second bus made a large circuit to the south and the enrollment was near the two hundred mark.

A combination gymnasium and auditorium of brick construction was built to the east of the original building. This encouraged the development of an athletic program and many fine teams have added trophies to the trophy case. A modern building of native stone was erected in 1942. It has one grade school class room, home economics department and modern restrooms. The superintendents have been E.C. Dickenson, A.C. Brodell, Guy Robberson and Wiley White.

Due to the untiring efforts of Mr. White, the present superintendent, a building program has gone forward this year that will substantially increase the existing facilities. An addition to the center building on the south side will house a greatly expanded shop that offers training in welding, painting, general shop work and manual training. Tools and equipment for these courses have been obtained from war surplus at a fraction of normal cost. Garage space for both busses is included in this building. An additional building, twenty-six feet wide and extending seventy-two feet north of the gymnasium, will be started in the later part of this year. This will accommodate a modern kitchen and cafeteria and the gas heating system, of the blower type, for both this building and the gymnasium to the value of the school by offering at nominal cost, a nutritious and well planned lunch to all students.



Mr. White has secured material and equipment for these buildings from war surplus on a basis of 95% off their declared value. This represents a saving of most commendable size. According to L.G. Ferguson, County Superintendent, of Tulsa County, the addition this year built for approximately \$4,500, would have cost \$10,000 in normal trade channels. Mr. White has personally supervised the dismantling and moving of this material from site of purchase. This affected a considering saving in both material and equipment through careful handling. He has been capably assisted in this program by the present board of education - Zay Shaffer- President, J.W. Studebaker-Clerk, and Ira Stephens, Member.

Note: The above was transcribed word for word and retyped from "hard to read and inconsistent typeset" from a copied 1948 yearbook. Slight changes were made such as changing the spelling of Applachia to Appalachia and also illustrations were added from our archived Keystone images. Otherwise, this is exactly from the printed text.