

History of Mona School

By: Rhoda Newell & Florence Orgill

In 1970, Florence and I were asked by the D.U.P to do a history of the Mona Schools. In searching for material to do this history we found very little on Mona School in any of the early history books, so we visited some of our senior citizens and longtime residents, and we gathered this interesting information. Most of this information is from the memory of Sarah Molyneux, Kate Shepherd, Earl Vest, Alton Ellertson, and Katie Rogerson who shared their memories with us. Some of these dear people have since passed away.

When Mona was known as clover Creek, and later as Willow Creek, The pioneers who settled this community, were members of the Mormon Church. A place of worship was their first consideration, followed by a one room school building which was built in 1866, and located in the northwest part of the town. The buildings were built of logs from the nearby canyons and had log walls and earth roofs, very few doors or windows, and were heated with fireplaces.

It was here that the rudiments of reading, writing and arithmetic were taught to the children by William Palmer who was the first School teacher in Mona.

This one room log school house served a dual purpose. During the early years, there was considerable trouble with the Indians, and the school was chosen as a suitable site on which to place a watch-tower. In this box, one man was constantly stationed with two additional men on the ground. These men had orders to keep an ever watchful eye on any movement of the Indians and to keep alert for actions that told of possible attacks on the village or of a raid on the animals which grazed nearby.

This one room log school house served its purpose very well until it was destroyed by fire. After the fire, school was held in private homes until the next school, which was one of the first substantial buildings of the community, was erected on the southeast corner of the old school property (where the park is now located). This building was built of blue clay adobe and consisted of two rooms.

Fond memories were recalled by the students who huddled around an old pot-bellied stove in winter, as they tried to keep warm and comfortable. Wood had to be brought in for the stove each day. Kerosene lamps, which had to be cleaned, trimmed and filled, each day provided light on dark, dismal days.

As the years passed and the population of Mona increased, these rooms became overcrowded. The overflow of students held classes in the old square court house which stood nearby (where the present courthouse now stands). Mona, as the town was known by now, had a population of over 500 residents and was outgrowing its small adobe school. It became necessary for its people to plan again for a new and larger building.

Funds were raised by taxes and donations and the townspeople once again worked together to build a new school. This time the school was built from brick, on the same location and was completed in 1907, with four classrooms and two grades in each room. There were four teachers and each teacher taught two grades.

The first graduating class of Mona was in 1905, one year after the completion of the new school, and those who graduated in that first class were: Alton Ellertson, Zella Roberts, Roy Ellertson, Flossie Ellertson, Della Yates and John Yates.

In 1971, the schools of Mona, Levan and Nephi were consolidated, and all the children were transported to Nephi by bus. Mona's Brick school building and grounds were sold to Mona City for the sum of \$1.00. The city later sold the building to Carl Craig and Allen Kay. They tore down the building, and Carl Craig has built his present home with some of the brick and lumber from the school.

The last graduating class from Mona was in May 1966. It was the 6th grade class and students were: Nancy Nielsen, Wayne Fowkes, Shirlene Keyte, LaMont Dansie, Mary Lou Ewell, Scott Christensen, Connie Newton, Billy Newell, Patty Young, Lisa Newton and Paula Newell.

Through the efforts of the D.U.P the old school bell remains in Mona and now stands enshrined and alone. It is a proud reminder of the old Mona brick school and is located by the corner of the court house.

Memories

The first school lunch consisted of a bowl of soup and or chili beans, which was prepared by Kate shepherd or Patra Warner in the old square court house. The students often brought their own sandwich from home to go with the hot dish. Complete meals were later served in the school. The food was prepared in Nephi school kitchens then transported to Mona. School lunch ladies were Anna Broadhead, Erma Keyte, Bernice Royce, Sadie Gobel, and Zella Sutherland.

School Custodians remembered are John Yates, Hyrum Vest, Reuben carter, Vern Carter and Earl Fowkes.

The first school bus was a covered wagon drawn by a team of horses which were driven by Ephraim Shepherd and later his son Edward tool this job, after which his son Raymond Shepherd drove for some years.

Heber J. Fowkes then bought the first regular school bus and drive until he retired. LaMar Searle was then hired by the school board to drive and he was followed by Earl Fowkes.

Kindergarten was held through the summer months. Summer kindergarten continued for fifteen years. Those who taught were Elena Stanley, Anita Gadd Oliver, Nyra Stanley Nelson,

Rosalie Belliston, Mrs. Johnson and Leila Wilkey. Kindergarten students were transferred to Nephi in 1968.

P.T.A was organized in Mona in 1948, and Erma Keyte was elected as the first president. Following presidents were: Almina Kay 1950, Milton Nielsen 1952, Florence Orgill 1954, Agnes Myers 1956, Madge Newton 1958, Beth Yates 1960, Betty Ellertson 1962, Alice Newton 1964, Gaye Kay 1966 and Darlene Fowkes 1968.

Principals of the Mona schools were A.H. Anderson, Ray Newton who served and taught for 43 years, Calvin Nielsen, Maurice Jones and Sherl Ferre. Accomplishments of these principals and presidents of the P.T.A are as Follows:

Calvin Neilsen and Florence Orgill – Leveling of the School Grounds.

Calvin Neilsen and Florence Agnes Myers – Promoted school lunch program, Thanked the Lions Club for Building a tennis court, enlarged the supply of library books, received donations for library books.

Maurice Jones and Madge Newton – Instrumental in getting Lions Club to plant grass on the school yard. Formed a committee to set up a curfew for 9 p.m. for all children under 14 years of age.

Sherl Ferre and Beth Yates – Instrumental in getting black topping on grounds and no dating at school affairs.

Sherl Ferre and Betty Ellertson – Caution lights installed for children's safety during school hours.

Sherl Ferre and Alice Newton = plans finalized to send 7th and 8th grades to Nephi.

Sherl Ferre and Gaye Kay – Purchased playground equipment. Started clean-up campaign with the help of Lynn Esplin who was the county agent.

Sherl Ferre and Darlene Fowkes – Kindergarten students sent to Nephi for a full year of preparation before entering first grade.

All P.T.A officers participated in and carried forward the Immunization program.

Some of the school board members were Edward Kay, Norman W. Ellertson, Ephraim Kay, James Vest, Raphael Garfield, John Ellertson, and Alton Ellertson who served on this board for 33 years.

Some of the teachers who have taught in Mona are:

William Palmer, William Newton, Daniel F. Tibbs, Henry I. Young, O.M. Sanderson, Heber Olson, William Shimmins, A.H. Anderson, Miss Larson, Lily Dubois, Ray Anderson, Thomas Lervell, George Anderson, Mr. Monson, Jessie Tucker, May Sidwell, Helen Cowan, William Newton (who taught night school

without any salary), Eliza Williams, Joseph Noble, Thomas Vickers, Ella Ellertson, Alonzo Ingram, Reta Kay, Miss Powell, Vernon Davies, Mr. Gardner, Mabel Ritchie, Katie Garfield, Christie Clark, Effie Young, Mr. Greenwood, Maggie Frandsen, Zelma young, Ruby Smith, Nora Clyde, Alfred Keyte, Mr. Crumley, Maudie Felton, Mrs. Stowell, S.O. Lowe, Irene Jorgensen, Ellen Wilson, Lucille Forrest, Charlotte Warner, Millis Whitaker, DeLynn Farnsworth, Veloy Vest, Verda Keyte Hanson, Beatrice Samuelson, Nancy Morgan, Jenny Openshaw, Lela Newell Bryan, Lona Newell Gannon, Zelda Kay McPherson, Alberta Cowan Warner, Lael Ellertson Sorensen, Anita Gadd Oliver, Earl Bowles, LaRae Liddiard, Calvin Neilsen, Maurice Jones, Sherl Ferre, Verda Oliver (who taught 37 years, 9 years in Mona), Elena Stanley (who taught 30 years, 22 years in Mona), Ray Newton (who taught 43 years in the Mona school), Melvin McArthur, Clark Newell, Kate Mathews, Vivian Hoyte, Lila Newell, Mrs. Sidwell, Mrs. Smith, Almina Kay, Agnes Myers.