

## Finding Aid to the Pleasant Valley School District No. 26 Records

### Pleasant Valley School District No. 26, 1900-1958

Pleasant Valley School District No. 26 Records, 1902-1992

1 linear foot

Collection number: Mss 3035

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### OVERVIEW

**Access:** The collection is open under the rules and regulations of the Institute.

**Provenance:** Donated by Jane Nissen in 2016 and 2018 (Acc. 2016-035irs and 2018-011irs).

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**Citation:** [Identification of item]. Pleasant Valley School District No. 26 Records (Mss 3035), NDSU Archives, North Dakota State University, Fargo.

### HISTORY

In 1896, William A. Preuss and Reuben Heath came to North Dakota in search of homestead land. They built their claim shacks in 1897 from lumber they brought in from Oberon, ND which was the nearest town at the time. Some of the early settlers were Robert and David Hunter, Sam Griffin, Robert Rowland, David Brown, Herman Reichelt, James Stevens, R. McMillen, Ed Butts, and Charles Huyck. The area where the school district was established was known to early settlers as Goa, North Dakota, then it changed to the township of Rich Valley on November 13, 1906. With families homesteading and establishing homes, a school was needed. Prior to the school building, two homes were used as a location for schooling.

Pleasant Valley School District No. 26 was established on April 23, 1900 with 30 pupils registered for the school. County Commissioners appointed George Tilton, David Hunter, David Brown, E.H. Brooks, William Preuss, Robert Rowland, C.A. Huyck, and A.L. Burdick to organize the district. The first \$30 check issued to a teacher, was to Susan Armitage for one month of school in 1900. Some other teachers were Cora Branum, K. Kurz, Lavina Sime, Dorothy Paterson, Hannah Holmland, and Isabel Duffy.

The school was built in 1902 in the middle of Rich Valley Township on two acres of land. It had an upper floor for grades 5-8 and the lower level for grades 1-4. Mr. Walker taught upper grades and whoever taught the upper grades was the principle of the school. Since the school was located in the middle of the township, there was a need for transporting students to school. Canvas covered, horse-drawn buses brought students to the school from different areas of the township until the Works Progress Administration (WPA), under President Franklin Roosevelt, built a wooden, box-like structure with benches on each side and a small stove near the front, still pulled by horse.

The petition to organize the district was formally approved on April 1, 1907. The first election was held April 23, 1907. Thirty-two farmers signed the petition. W.A. Preuss was the Clerk of School District, David Arnold was the Treasurer, Alfred Brown was the District Clerk, N.P. Hetler was the President, and Peter Anderson was the County Superintendent of Schools in Benson County.

In 1918, Pleasant Valley School District changed the name to Rich Valley School District to reflect the same name as the township.

Approximately 677 students attended the Rich Valley School from 1900 until it closed in 1958. Esmond and Maddock absorbed the remains of the district. The school was demolished in 2001.

## **SCOPE AND CONTENT**

The Pleasant Valley School District No. 26 records are organized into eight different series: Benson County Documents, Faculty Documentation, Curriculum, School Supplies, Correspondence, Blank Forms, Pleasant Valley Reunion, and Artifacts.

The **Benson County Documents Series** consists of official county records, school census records, and clerk's record books. The clerk was responsible for accurately organizing, filing, and retrieving information regarding the school's records and accounts. The clerk's records contain the financial and administrative records, including board meeting minutes.

The **Faculty Documentation Series** consists of teacher's contracts, driver's contracts, information regarding teacher salaries, training certificates, and insurance booklets.

The **Curriculum Series** consists of teacher's register books and ND State Board of Education question envelopes related to geography, physiology and hygiene, and arithmetic curriculum. The teacher of the

school used the teacher register books to record the daily activities or functions of the school. Attendance was taken along with the daily routine of the children and events happening throughout the day.

The **School Supplies Series** consists of invoices from various companies supplying books and miscellaneous items to the school. The invoices include the titles of books that were used in the school around 1915. A 1923 price list from Northern School Supply is also included.

The **Correspondence Series** consists of both handwritten letters and typed correspondence from various companies. The handwritten letters are to the clerk of the school, Herman Preuss, from teachers inquiring about vacancies within the Pleasant Valley School District.

The **Blank Forms Series** contains various forms that have not been filled out as well as a few envelopes.

The **Pleasant Valley Reunion Series** contains a VHS recording of the all school reunion that took place at the old school building in 1992 with footage of the interior. The series also consists of a “Rich Valley School Memories” and “Rich Valley School Reunion” booklet, questionnaires for the reunion book, planning info, and letters in response to the reunion, newspaper articles, agenda, and church service program.

The **Artifacts Series** consists of a book and a wooden piece removed from a filing box that lists names and dates of individuals associated with the school district.

## **SEPARATIONS RECORD**

The following non-manuscript items have been removed from the Pleasant Valley School District Records and sent to the section indicated:

### **Photographs** (Institute Photographs)

- Four photographs of groups of students, 1936-1941 (Photos 509.1.1 - 509.1.4)

## **BOX AND FOLDER LIST**

### **Box/Folder      Content**

#### **Box 1**

1/1                  Finding aid

#### **Benson County Documents Series**

1/2                  Warrants, 1900-1905

1/3                  Warrants and Payment Coupons, 1906-1911

1/4                  Warrants and Stub Booklet, 1913-1918

- 1/5 Tax levy postcards, 1911-1913; receipt from Office of Treasurer of Benson County for teacher's pension, 1917; Assessor's Notice of Valuation to Clerk, 1916; Treasurer's statements, 1917, 1925; Statements from County Superintendent of Schools, 1924-1925
- 1/6 Clerk's Record Book, 1908-1910
- 1/7 Clerk's Record Book, 1922-1925
- 1/8 Clerk's Reports, 1915, 1921. Treasurer's Report, 1915; Receipt for School Treasurer's Vouchers, 1917 and undated
- 1/9 Notice of Election, and Official Oath of Director Forms, 1912-1915; Certification of Qualification of School Officers, undated
- 1/10 Warranty Deed, 1902; Surety Bonds, 1910-1913
- 1/11 Poll Book, Tally List, and Official Returns forms, 1911-1918
- 1/12 School Census forms, 1912-1927, undated

**Faculty Documentation Series**

- 1/13 Drivers' Contracts, 1914
- 1/14 Teacher's Contracts, 1913-1924
- 1/15 Teacher's Salary documents, 1914-1923
- 1/16 Certificate of Attendance at Institute or Training School, 1915-1917
- 1/17 Teacher's Insurance and Retirement Fund booklets, 1913; State of ND Regulations Governing the Certification of Teachers booklet, 1924; State Fire and Tornado Fund Law booklet and forms, 1925

**Curriculum Series**

- 1/18 Teacher's Register, 1900-1909
- 1/19 Teacher's Register, 1910-1911
- 1/20 Teacher's Reports, 1912-1926
- 1/21 ND State Board of Education Question Envelopes, 1916
- 1/22 Contents of binder - student coursework, 1943
- 1/23 Binder 1
- 1/24 Contents of binder - student school and Future Homemakers of America coursework, 1947
- 1/25 Binder 2

**School Supplies Series**

- 1/26 Invoices, 1915-1923; Northern School Supply price list, 1923

**Correspondence Series**

- 1/27 Handwritten correspondence to the Clerk of Rich Valley, 1924
- 1/28 Typed correspondence, 1912-1924

**Blank Forms Series**

1/29 Misc. blank forms and envelopes, undated

**Pleasant Valley Reunion Series**

1/30 *Rich Valley School Memories* and *Rich Valley School Reunion* booklets, 1992  
1/31 Questionnaires for reunion book, planning info, letters in response to the reunion,  
newspaper articles, agenda, church service program for reunion, 1992  
1/32 VHS tape of reunion and interior of school, 1992  
1/33 *Benson County Press* newspaper clipping of school demolition, 2001

**Artifacts Series**

1/34 *Our State North Dakota* by Conrad W. Leifur, 1945  
1/35 Wood piece with handwritten names and dates