

OAK HILL ONE-ROOM SCHOOL (Sand Hill District)

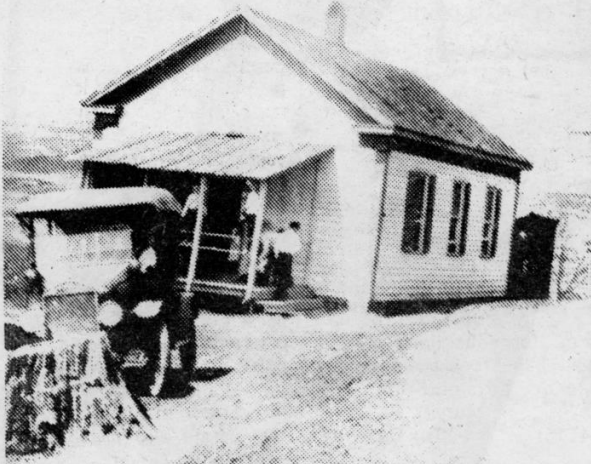
Submitted by Donald J. Armstrong

Oak Hill School was located somewhere between what was at one time the Wilson Farm (located along Big Wheeling Creek at the bottom of Pine Hill Road) and what was originally the Norman Dague farm (located upstream, and uphill, at the top and end of a long Marshall County ridge). Students from both directions had a fairly long hike (by modern standards) to reach the school.. It appears to have been possible to access the school by car, but where that road originated is uncertain to this author. Among the various teachers, Ethel Margaret Junkins (Later married name: Ethel Armstrong) taught there sometime in the 1920's. Marjorie Dague, one of her students, (Later married name: Marjorie Steadman) taught there sometime in the 1930's. The school was still functioning in 1942-43, when Clara Wilson Folmer was the First Grade teacher of Don Armstrong.



Golden Ridge Review

by Sandy Livingood Phone 304-547-5021



Oak Hill School

This week I am featuring a picture taken at the Oak Hill one room school. The year was 1906. The teacher was Elmer Merinar and it was his first school. This school was one of the 12 schools in the Sand Hill District and was built on land donated by the Sheets Family.

This school was known as Oak Hill because it was located on a hill with oak trees which surrounded it at one time. Marjorie Dague Steadman was the last teacher to teach at the school. Some of the other teachers were Sherman Welch, Alice Dague, Blanche Merinar, Louise Dague Hall, Clara Pearl Wilson Folmar, Mabel Gray, and Ethel Armstrong.

WANT CORRECT

In 1938 Oak Hill School closed and students went to Britt Run. The old school later was torn down. Teachers then were not generally so well educated as they are at the present day, although there were many fine scholars among the pioneer teachers and much good work was done by them. Spelling was carefully studied and good spelling was a popular accomplishment. Many lessons were taught by the Hickory stick of a school master.

The first school houses were the ordinary log cabin of the day with a great fireplace in one end, a puncheon floor, seats made by splitting small trees into two parts, hewing the flat side smooth, at least the large splinters were hewn off, boring four holes and putting in legs, making a bench without a back. A puncheon hewn very smooth and set on pins in the wall make a writing desk. The rooms were often lighted by cutting out sections of the logs and covering the openings with greased paper.

The room was heated by an immense wood fire in the fireplace. There was an abundance of fuel. In many instances it was very convenient as the school houses were usually built in the woods at the side of a road and the young men and well grown boys were familiar with the use of the ax. With the abundance of fuel, there was no danger of suffering from cold.

Later a hewed log house with a floor or sawed plank fitted together, a board ceiling, with seats made of boards with backs to them, a board on the wall for a writing desk, a stove for

wood or coal stood in the center of the room for heating. These took the place of the log cabins with their primitive equipments.

The picture of the students of the students in this column was furnished by Luke Merinar, and the picture of the school was furnished by Miss Edna Jones. The teacher was Luke's great-great-uncle Elmer Merinar.

I will name each of these students who attended that year. Back row, left to right, teacher, Elmer Merinar; Rose Sheets, Anna Steinman, Ethel Sheets, Dorothy Steinman, Gertrude Dean, Flora Sheets. Front row: George Merinar, father of the teacher; John Merinar, Elmer Sheets, Oscar Sheets, James Sheets, Lilly Sheets, last girl not identified.

I would like you to meet the 13-year-old girl, second from the right in the back row in the picture and the only student in the picture still living. Her name is Gertrude Wyoming Dean of Sand Hill. She was born on January 27, 1893, a daughter of the late Wesley and Catherine Maple White. Her family moved to Big Wheeling Creek in 1907.

From a family of two children, she is a sister of Hanford White. Gertrude, as she is known by her friends, attended the Oak Hill one room school and her favorite teacher was Tote Merinar.

As a young girl she worked as a correspondent for the Wheeling Intelligencer. She was married on March 24, 1917 to the late William R. Dean. They are the parents of ten children: Catherine McCreary, Gertrude Organ, Lora Bishop, William Jr., Lawrence, Ivan, Moe, Raymond, George and Forest Dean. Sixty-four members make up her immediate family, including seven living children, twenty-three grandchildren and eighteen great-grandchildren.

She and her late husband moved to Sand Hill in 1937 and she has resided there 50 years. Mrs. Dean has lived the past five years in the home of her daughter Catherine McCreary of Sand

Hill.

Mrs. Dean has always loved to raise and work with flowers. She has raised gardens and canned and also dried fruits. Her favorite pastime is playing the harmonica and she loves visitors. She told me her favorite food is pizza and her favorite color is green and said that is the Irish in her.

She enjoys watching TV and her favorite program is Wheel Of Fortune which she watches twice a day. She would like to visit Arizona. When asked what was the happiest time in her life, she replied, It's all been happy.

She recalled when first moving to Sand Hill her close friends were Ethel and Jesse Dougherty of whom she has had many happy memories. She especially likes Blanche and Tib Merinar but says all of her neighbors are fine folks.

She told me all five of her sons and her husband served in the armed forces and saw action in WW1, WW2, and the Korean Wars.

She recalls all good memories of her children and said they are a close family.

Mrs. Dean is very anxious for the weather to get warm so she can get out and sit on her porch. She received her name Gertrude Wyoming from the poem Gertrude Of Wyoming. She is the oldest member of the Sand Hill United Methodist Church.

I really enjoyed my interview with Mrs. Dean. She is a very warm and delightful lady with a remarkable memory and does not look her young age of 94. She named all the students in this 81 year old picture except for the one little girl on the end.

Get well wishes are extended to Lavaughn Clutter who is a patient in Washington Hospital in room 782 and to Alisha Duerr, granddaughter of Charlie Sheets who is a patient in Reynolds Memorial Hospital with double pneumonia.

The Dallas Presbyterian Church is having a Good Friday Service on April 17th at 7:30 p.m. at the church. There will be special music and the speaker will be Rev.

See next page for accompanying picture. Some of the information here is not accurate. The school was still functioning in 1942-43, and the last teacher was probably Clara Wilson Folmer.

BELOW: Picture accompanying newspaper article on previous page.



BELOW: Oak Hill students and relatives on last day of school. Year is unknown.



AT RIGHT: Ethel Junkins (Oak Hill teacher) photographed at Campbell farm where she boarded while teaching at Oak Hill.



OAK HILL SCHOOL
Report of Oak Hill school, Sand Hill district for month beginning Dec. 10, 1923 and ending Jan. 4, 1924. Number pupils enrolled, girls 5, boys 3, total 8. Average daily attendance, girls 4, boys 3, total 7. Percent of attendance, girls 96, boys 94, total 95.
Those on honor roll are Louis Dague and Marjorie Dague. Those not absent more than three days, Mary, Rose, and Emma Deam, Russell Black, James and Edward Black.
ETHYL M. JUNKINS, Teacher.

BELOW: Ethel Junkins (teaching at 18 years of age) and her Oak Hill students on the last day of school.





ABOVE: Ethel Junkins (white blouse) and her Oak Hill students. Marjorie Dague is standing on the stump.

BELOW: Oak Hill students and relatives on last day of school. Year is unknown.





ABOVE: Oak Hill students. Standing in back Marjorie Dague and possibly the teacher Ethel Junkins.

BELOW: Oak Hill students and relatives on last day of school. Year is unknown.





ABOVE: Oak Hill students on last day of school. Year is unknown.

BELOW: Oak Hill students on last day of school. Year is unknown.





Marjorie Dague, Teacher at Oak Hill School sometime in the 1930's.

Picture below taken in 1950's.



**Ethel Junkins Armstrong
and Marjorie Dague Steadman**

(Photo at the right)

This picture of the two former Oak Hill teachers was probably taken about 1950. Ethel Armstrong passed away in 2014 at the age of 108. Her obituary is available from the Kepner Funeral Home web-site linked to the Obituary Section of this website..

