



Class of 1928



Class of '28 still going strong

Five members continue to live here

By MARY LOU OLSON

Things were a lot different during the "Roaring 20s" when members of the Class of 1928 graduated from Decatur Community High School 75 years ago.

Four members of the class still make their home in Oberlin, Vera (Marietta) Lindemann, Erylene (Robinson) Nichols, Genevieve (Pittman) Erickson and Aleen (Vernon) Van Vleet. A classmate, Beverly (Barnes) Higley, lives in Atwood, and the class just lost another member, Eunice (Moore) Petracek, on May 10.

Mrs. Lindemann said that in those days, everyone walked to school, no matter how high the snow was. They attended classes in the old high school, now the site of the Decatur County Good Samaritan Center.

"Superintendent Caleb Smick was my cousin," she said, "but he never played favorites with his relatives. One time, several of us were whispering in the back of the room, and when he caught us, he moved me to the front of the class right in front of the teacher's desk."

She said all the girls took home economics, and when their teacher told them to bring a pair of socks so they could learn how to darn, she decided she didn't want to learn, so she didn't bring any.

"That was bad mistake," she said, "because our teacher took off her own stockings, which looked like they had not been washed for several days, and she made me darn them!"

Prom was a big affair for juniors and seniors back then, just as it is today, she said.

"The girls and boys walked out of separate rooms," she recalled, "and whoever you were matched with was your prom partner. We marched downtown, just as they do today, but at that time all the stores were open late on Saturday night and we promenaded in and out of all the businesses."

Miss Weber was the typing teacher and she said she still remembers how Tommy McKay would swear loudly every time he made a typing error, in spite of Miss Weber's strict reminder that students do not curse in school.

Mrs. Lindemann worked at the telephone office and also taught school after she graduated. She married Elmer Lindemann and their son, Gene, and daughter, Patty, are alumni of Decatur Community High School.

Mrs. Van Vleet said she attended the Addleman and Vallonia rural schools, as well as Oberlin City School.

"We didn't live far from Oberlin," she said, "so we could walk two miles to Addleman School or 2 1/2 miles to Oberlin. If my folks didn't think the teacher was very good, we just went to Oberlin."

"Entertainment when I was in high school was mostly parlor games, including musical chairs and spin-the-bottle; also horseback riding, staying overnight with friends, and for me, playing the piano. My folks didn't allow us to go to dances," she said.

After graduating in normal training, she taught at Decatur School northeast of Oberlin and stayed with Shirley and Bessie Cathcart. After her marriage to Leo Van Vleet, they lived in the Prairie Chapel area before moving to Oberlin. Their children, Leo Jr., Veanna and Eugene, also graduated here.

Mrs. Erickson said she transferred from Plainville to Oberlin as a junior so she could take normal training. She lived with her sister and her family, Marguerite and Elmer Buell and their infant daughter Gloria. Al Dryden, also from Plainville, had purchased Oberlin Motor Co. and he asked Mr. Buell to move here to work for him as a mechanic.

After completing high school and passing the normal examination, she



HIGH SCHOOL GIRLS could enroll in "Ag Culture" in 1928, but only on the occasional field trip were they allowed to wear their brothers' overalls. Otherwise, it was dresses, stockings and black bloomers. Shown from left are Mrs.

taught at Harmony School in Rawlins County for two years. She stayed with Dem and Norma Moore and walked to school.

She said that one day while walking to school, a car came over the hill and the driver, Eloy Erickson, asked her if she'd like a ride.

"That started the ball rolling," she said.

They were married on Jan. 1, 1933, and their three sons, Phillip, Gary and Ron, all are graduates of Decatur Community High School.

Mrs. Nichols was reared in Oberlin, where her father, Charles Robison, operated a repair shop. She said she always walked to school.

She also remembered Miss Weber as a high school teacher who expected the best out of her students. She said that she admired Superintendent Smick, for whom the football field is named.

She took the secretarial course and worked at *The Oberlin Herald* as a bookkeeper after graduating. After her marriage to Ernest Nichols, she kept books for his construction business for over 50 years. Their sons, Harold and David, are both Oberlin graduates.

The 1928 senior class play was "Polly With a Past," starring Mary McMullen as Polly. Other cast members were James Corcoran, as the lovesick young man; Denzil

Howard, a teacher, Letha Kathka, Vera Marietta, Ethel Martin, Florence Wonderly, Helen Cullison, Ruth Traxler, Mary McMullen, Letha Smith and Hazel Tally.

—Vera Lindemann photo

Gill, Oney Hervey, Ilonka Lippelmann, Helen Campbell, Harold Cathcart, Hazel Tally, Dick Leake, Carl Nicodemus, Allen Gillette and Rhobia Anderson.

Scholastic, music, vo-ag and athletic honors were plentiful in 1928. At the music contest at Hays, students brought home five Loving Cups, eight medals and \$110 in cash. The band and boys and girls glee clubs earned I ratings.

Father Duesberg spoke at the baccalaureate services at the Presbyterian Church and commencement exercises were held at the Oberlin City School gymnasium with Millie Marvin, a 1906 graduate, as guest speaker. They were the 40th class to

graduate in Oberlin, but this was the 25th annual commencement. Iva Brown was valedictorian and Letha Smith salutatorian. The alumni banquet was held at the Methodist Church.

Other members of the class included Edith Anderson, Muriel Barratt, Wayne Bone, Nola Brunk, Helen Bystrom, Lucille Coulter, Lucille Eldon, Joe Goodrich, Pearl Henningson, Nora Hess, Edwin Hitchcock, Floyd Laidig, Erma Logan, Ethel Martin, Charles Monroe, Aileen Morrison, Hazel Nelson, Dorothy Paddock, Valeria Page, Margaret Ploussard, LaVelle Sears, Genola Southard, Helen Tucker, Mary Wade and Asa Wood.