

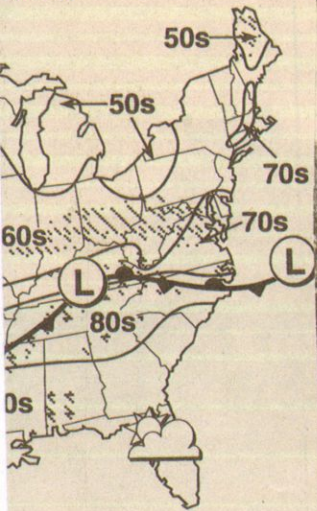
District says goodbye

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At left is what Hyland Prairie looks today at N6680 High Point Road in Juneau. The country school will be closing for business at the end of this year. The new Prairie View Elementary is scheduled to open in the fall

History of Hyland Prairie traces back to one-room country school houses throughout Dodge County

In the early 1930s, a little one-room school house was built on the intersection of Highway A and Highway 33. It was small, but large enough where students of all ages could converge for lessons about reading, writing and arithmetic. That school house, the original Hyland Prairie, now serves as a home to Leonard Machkovech.

Machkovech purchased the building in 1959 from Mrs. Virgil Jackson who had the building — a school at the time of purchase in the mid — 1950s renovated into living quarters. Machkovech moved into the former Hyland Prairie school in 1959, but the outside was, and still is, much the same as it was when youngsters called the building school. In fact, the basement still has the original blackboards used when students were learning their multiplication tables.

During the 1930s, Dodge County boasted several one-room country schools in addition to the original one-room Hyland Prairie. Some of the schools which were present in the county included Crystal Creek School, Clason Prairie School and Spring Valley School, according to Wayne Propst, a former Clason Prairie student. These school houses eventually began to disappear, and the students who attended them later attended classes in the multi-classroom Hyland Prairie School.

All grade levels — one through eight — were taught together, sharing the same desks and the same teacher. When the teacher became occupied with one student, older students would step in and help the younger set with their lessons.

That aspect of education is not all that different to today's thinking, according to current Hyland Prairie School principal Claryn Glewen. In many of today's schools, older students are paired with younger children in mentoring programs.

Propst recalls the simplicity of the Clason Prairie school which he attended in the mid 1940s.

"It was quite a pleasant experience," said Propst, who remembers carrying water to school to add to the water cooler. "You got to be with the older kids. They'd help out when the teacher got busy." Propst's sons, and now his grandsons attend the current Hyland Prairie.

Unlike today, when students are transported via school bus to their learning center, many students walked to school. Propst and his sisters were given rides by their parents because the 1 1/2 mile trek to Clason Prairie was a little too long to walk.

Jean Graff Hamman attended the one-room

Hyland Prairie School in the late 1930s to early 1940s. She and her siblings had to walk to school, but for them, it was only a short jaunt.

"Most of the kids at the school then had to walk. For us, it was about 10 minutes. It didn't take long. Sometimes it took longer depending on how much you poked around," said Hamman. Hamman's brother Richard Graff, also attended the one-room Hyland Prairie. He works at the current Hyland Prairie in maintenance, as does his wife, Jean.

Hamman also has fond memories of the one-room school and remembers the

thoughtfulness of the teachers.

"The teachers had more time to spend with you and it was so nice they spent the time with you," she said.

Although simple, she remembers the outside of the school being well maintained. "When you walked into the school one room was it," Hamman said, but she remembers the entryway and the furnace in the basement, where she and other students would place their wet mittens to dry during winter. A lot of pictures adorned the walls and the atmosphere of the school was welcoming.

IN 1956 THE current Hyland Prairie School, which actually is located in Juneau, was built. The school replaced the original 1930's one-room Hyland Prairie. Then, in 1962 the school joined to become a part of the Beaver Dam Unified School District.

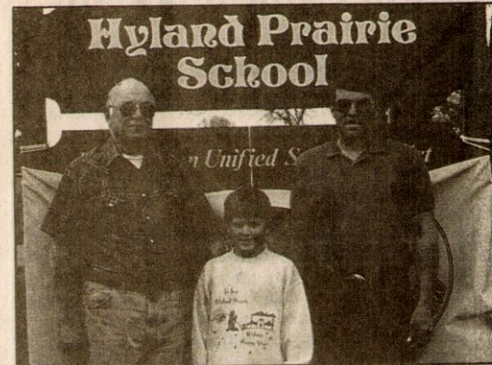
Glewen said the school served the students in the rural part of the county. Hyland Prairie maintained that status for some time, but as the years moved ahead, the student makeup changed.

Janet Gehl, who began her teaching career at Hyland Prairie and now teaches at Washington School, remembers those changes.

"When I started, it was all rural farms, now it's all subdivisions," she said. But throughout the changes, the school maintained strong support from parents; and the teachers, a dedication to their students.

"The teachers had to wear many hats, and take on many roles," she said, because the school was smaller than others in the district.

She remembers some of the things that made Hyland Prairie individual, like the children bringing their animals to school.



Pictured above are three generations of the Propst family who have ties to Hyland Prairie. From left, are Wayne Propst, who attended Clason Prairie, a one-room school that eventually fed into Hyland Prairie; Steven Propst, who currently attends Hyland Prairie, and Robert Propst, who attended Hyland Prairie.

"It's unique because kids brought pets to school — goats pigs, baby calves, and a lot of other animals" she said.

Ann Peck, who worked at Hyland Prairie and now is a library aide and playground aide at Jefferson School, said the size of the school and the closeness of the teachers is what made Hyland Prairie what it is today.

"To me it, seemed like such a close school; like a family. The people make the difference," she said.

Glewen said he doesn't think the school building itself will be missed, but the experiences are what the students will remember as they head into their brand new, state-of-the-art Prairie View Elementary this fall.

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-Claryn Glewen,
-Hyland Prairie Principal

--By Shelly Most