

Cherry Grove School

The fall of 1933 the Cherry Spring School was organized and first opened with Joe Stonehocker as teacher. The district had just been organized with Cliff Hillaby and Leonard (Slim) Wooldridge as two of the trustees. The reason it was called Cherry Spring was because there was another Cherry Grove in another area of Alberta. The name stayed until the schools were centralized. The school was held in the newly built Baptist Church as the Board didn't have a building until the next year.

Salary was \$500 a year for the first two years, paid when the term grants came in February, May and August. There were 44 pupils in Grades 1 to 8, with 24 Grade 1 pupils, ages up to ten years as some had never had a chance to go to school since their families moved to the homestead areas.

In 1934 the Woodbine built their school and the enrolment at Cherry Spring School dropped. Cherry Spring built their first school in 1934, a 24 x 40 building of six inch squared timbers with a jackpine shingled roof. They got the huge sum of \$150 to build the school, the sum covered shingles, bricks for the chimney, windows and four inch tongue and groove flooring, along with nails and hardware. All the rest of the material and labour was worked out on a tax basis.

Blackboards were made of eight inch spruce boards, planed smooth, and coated with blackboard slating but they shrank so there was a quarter inch crack at every joint to keep the writing going in a straight line. The seats were also built of local lumber on a plan supplied by the Department of Education, in two double rows of four seats to accommodate eight students. The backs were at a stiff right angle and most uncomfortable for a student to sit for very long, not to mention that it was almost impossible to use ink or paints because one or other of the eight occupants was sure to jiggle and cause spills.

Inter school sports were strictly limited at this time as any school had to travel by team or else walk to the next school for a ball game. However the Cold Lake School did sponsor a softball tournament for the surrounding one room schools some time in this period, and this continued until centralization came into effect in the early 1950's. George Burgess was the main instigator in pushing for centralizing of schools and school busses began busing the children to centralized areas.

The timber for the old school came from the area that is known now as Cherry Ridge Estates. It was sawed into 6"x6"square timber. It was built directly north of where the next school was built where Jane Barr lives today. When the new school was built the community bought the old school, tore it down and had the timber sawed into boards which went to build the first community hall.

Sorry we have been unable to find any exact dates when the old school was torn down and the new one built. As near as can be remember the pupils went back to the Baptist church for two months during the interval. So if any one can help us out please do so - contact Alvin Hatch at info@cherrygrove.ca