

ESTILL COUNTY'S CEDAR GROVE - A Kentucky Community and Its People

The following is the seventh in a series of articles about the community of Cedar Grove and the west-central part of Estill County that have been compiled by Jerry G. Rose and are from information included in his book, "ESTILL COUNTY'S CEDAR GROVE - A Kentucky Community and Its People"

by JERRY G. ROSE
Cedar Grove Schools -- Part 2



Old West Irvine School House

The old West Irvine School was located on a hilltop, about midway between the communities of West Irvine and Cedar Grove off the old Richmond Road. The school site was on almost the exact location of the Mack Drive-In Theater site in the 1950s and 1960s and the New Beginning Fellowship Church site today.

The land for the Old West Irvine School (District # 70) was bought from major land owners John M. Elliott and Mollie Elliott of West Irvine. The Estill County Board of Education paid the sum of \$1,500, of which \$1,000 was donated by the Elliotts, leaving a balance owed of \$500. The tract of land, located on the waters of Clear Creek, contained two acres more or less. The Elliotts were to open up a 40 foot wide road from the Richmond and Irvine Turnpike, to the tract of land, for the traveling public; the school system was to fence tract of land.

The Old Consolidated West Irvine (actually located in Cedar Grove although known as the "West Irvine" School) Four-Classroom School opened in 1925. It was used until it burned in December, 1950.

The Deed was witnessed and signed by John M. Elliott and Mollie E. Elliott on the 28th day of May, 1925.

In July of 1932, the County Board of Education bought an additional tract from the Elliotts, beginning at the school yard gate, extending along the driveway from the Richmond Irvine Pike towards the east, containing about 1 1/2 acres.

Prior to the building of this school, students in the area either attended the old Cedar Grove School located near the Methodist Church, or the old school in West Irvine, known as Clear Creek School, located on the then Station Camp Road, or would now be near the corner of the new Richmond Road and Shady Lane. The West Irvine School was Estill County's first consolidated school, taking in the students from the older West Irvine and Cedar Grove wood-frame School buildings.

The new building had four classrooms downstairs, with an

unfinished room upstairs that was utilized as a classroom for a few years for the seventh and eighth grade classes. In later years, the upstairs was used for storage. The double doors at the front entrance opened into a wide hall. Across the hall more double doors opened into a large auditorium with a stage. The building was heated by a steam furnace located in a small basement area. There was a kitchen, but no cafeteria. The bathrooms were located outside at the rear of the building, one for the boys and one for the girls.

The county's first modern brick elementary school building had been in operation approximately 25 years when on Friday morning, December 23rd, 1950, fire of undetermined origin destroyed the building.

As this was to be the last day of school before the Christmas holidays, the students and teachers gathered in the school yard, while their school continued to burn, and exchanged Christmas gifts. Instead of the joyful occasion everyone had looked forward to on this day, it instead was filled with sorrow at the loss of their beloved school. Everyone left the school grounds that day with no knowledge of where or how the remaining school year would be completed. Edison Joe Estes was one of those students, and he well remembers the feeling of sadness everyone felt.



Three long-time West Irvine teachers, all were unmarried, known as "old maids". Myrtle and Maggie Broddus lived with their sister on the family farm at Millers Creek. Zula Wagers lived with her parents at Rice Station where they operated a country store.



West Irvine School Group 1929-30, Identified from left to right.

Top row -- Emma Sams, Walter Baker, Gladys White, Opal Henderson, Harrison Sloan, Maude Henderson, Clarence Hall, Helen Stevens.

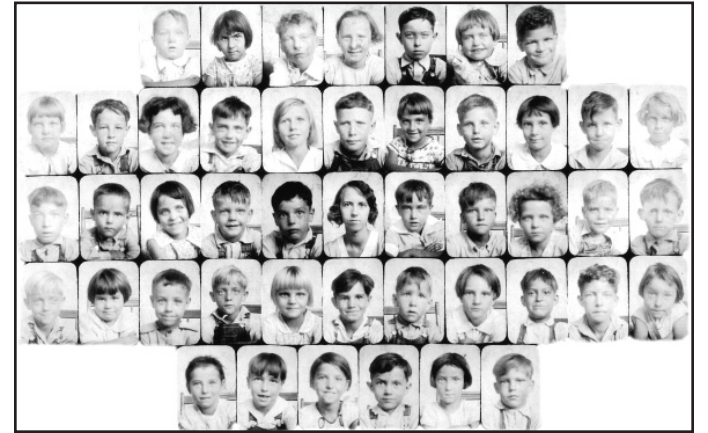
Second row -- Bernice Tuttle, Farris Tuttle, Goldie Howard, Marvin Hawkins, Catherine Palmer, Elbert Webb, Anna Ruth Faulconer,

Otis (Tobb) Henderson, Helen Hawkins.

Third row -- Buford Harris, Myrtle Thomas, Mary Ellen Gray, Lyle McDowell, teacher--Virginia Clay Witt, Roscoe Hall, Lillian Wilson, Cathleen Cox, James Akers.

Fourth row -- Hugh Webb, Clarice Tuttle, Rachel Sams, Hugh Gould, Elsie Gamble, Dorothy Dozier, Hugh Reese, Sue Helen Flynn, Viola Gabbard.

Bottom row -- Addie Bell Dean, Robert Lee Davis, Mary Lee Henderson, Harold Burton, Thelma Abshear, Eva Pearl King, Nelson Isaacs, Margaret Louise Witt.



West Irvine School Group, 1929-30, Identified from left to right.

Top row -- James Edward Turpin, Mildred Osborne, Tracy Henderson, Elaine Stamper, Troy Hall, Mary Alice Wilson, Carbus Gray.

Second row -- May Catherine Hill, Paul Isaacs, Maxine Alcorn, unidentified, Retha Carroll, unidentified, Loraine Stevens, Shannon Noland, unidentified, Harold Jay Finney, Elena Tuttle.

Third row -- unidentified, unidentified, Anna Gladys Baker, Albert Curtiss Wilson, G. T. Tipton, Mossie Gould (teacher), Thomas Lee Winkler, Sylvester Gray, Margaret White, Marvin Gamble, Fred Webb.

Fourth row -- Troy French, Thelma Gamble, Donald Isaacs, Roy French, Beulah Howard, Floyd Wolfenbarger, Hubert Henderson, Francea Akers, Robert Sloan, Bill Henderson, Agness Hall.

Bottom row -- Dorothy Hall, unidentified, Laura Eunice Tipton, Cecil Wolfenbarger, Hazel Henderson, Robert Howard.

West Irvine School Goes Up In Flames

Fire of undetermined origin gutted the West Irvine consolidated school building early Friday morning of last week with the loss estimated at thousands of dollars.

Douglas Miller, Estill County school superintendent, who lives in West Irvine, went to the fire immediately after being notified by a phone call, and found the building caving in at the rear.

Christmas programs had been in progress in the building Thursday afternoon, but the janitor, H.E. Edwards, found everything in order when he left the building at 6:00 p.m.

The Baptist Church in West Irvine will be used as a temporary place of school for the four lower grades when school reopens January 1, and the upper grades will attend school at the county high school.

A small amount of insurance was carried on the building but not enough to replace it.

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