

## Sargent School by Don Brownlee

In 1885, a school building was built two miles west and one and one half miles south of Sylvia. A Mr. Sargent donated the site for the school; thus the school was called Sargent.

It had 30-40 pupils in the eight grades. At that time there was a family on almost every quarter section, and the families were often large.

Mattie Balantyne was the first teacher. She sacrificially taught many years for a salary of \$20 a month.

The Shepherd timber claim was just across the road from the school. It proved to be a good place to keep the pupils' horses. It also was an excellent place to play hide-and-seek.

Just inside the door sat a water bucket with a long-handled dipper. In 1908, the law required each pupil to have his own drinking cup. They could no longer drink out of the dipper; so the school furnished collapsible metal cups, which were kept in the pupils' desks.

Later, however, the cups were replaced with a pipe extending out from the pump. It had holes drilled along the top; so when one kid pumped, a half dozen could drink. This system lasted all through the years.

For many years there was no playground equipment. The children in those days were very good at thinking up things to do. They played "shinny," "antiover," and marbles. It was also said that on bad days boys played mumble peg on the floor with their pocket knives.

Sargent, like most country schools, served as a social center for the community. There were school programs, box suppers, spelling bees, and ciphering matches. On the last day of school there was always a community dinner, and everyone turned out.

When the school closed and the district joined Sylvia, there was a big reunion and dinner. A large tent was rented for the dinner. Marian Shepherd was the chief chef and cooked the wieners and made the coffee.

The building was sold and moved one mile north where it was used as a barn. It still stands to this day.

Pupils of Sargent have fond memories of their profitable and happy times. We proudly salute Sargent School.

--Submitted by Don Brownlee (*Sylvia, Kansas 1887-1987: Pride in the Past, Faith in the Future*, p 40)

## Looking For Old Photographs

I'm searching for a photograph of the one-room schoolhouse, Sargent School (1885-1945). Of course it would be a bonus to find a photograph of the children and a teacher. Please contact Jim Potter by mail at PO Box 1172, Hutchinson, KS, 67504, or phone 620-899-3144, or by email: [jim@copintheclassroom.com](mailto:jim@copintheclassroom.com), or on Facebook. Thanks!