

Grasston school to celebrate 50th year; al

by Julia Bates

A reunion does not mean much to everybody. But for the people who are involved it is a way of invoking memories which strengthen ties to people, places and events.

The continued life of Grasston school is in question. As class sizes dwindle, the need for two elementary buildings in the Braham school system also dwindle. Not wanting to wait until the school closes down, Grasston graduates have organized a reunion par excellence.

All classes that attended Grasston High School from 1924 to 1945 are meeting in the school on Saturday, June 15, to "remember when."

Six people graduated in the first class, 1924, including Paul Carlson of Minneapolis, Beryl Martin, Margaret Dugan of Paynesville, Helen Cote and Lucille Swenson, who is now deceased. Classes grew to close to 40 by the 1940's. In 1945, Grasston consolidated with Braham and the high school was trans-

ferred.

The Grasston building itself was erected in 1903. At that time, it was only an elementary school. Those who wished a secondary education had to leave home and travel as far as Mora for a diploma. In 1919, an extension was added to the building and in 1920, Grasston accepted its first high school class.

Myrtle Telstad, a 1936 graduate who remained in the area, remembers the school as having the standard four courses, English, history, science and math. There were four high school teachers with a class size of 12. For classes like physics and chemistry, the junior and senior classes were combined.

Some of the good times Mrs. Telstad remembers were the experiences in the small classes and the closeness of the students. At one point, superintendent Harold Gustafson taught a science course. Most high school teachers were required to have a four year

B.A. Many came from Minnesota colleges such as Gustavus Adolphus. Elementary teachers had to hold at least a two year certificate from "normal" training.

There was a tremendous dropout rate. The class of 36 decreased from 36 students to 12. Perhaps, Mrs. Telstad speculated, this was because of a lack of vocational classes. Typing didn't appear until 1936 and there were no shop or home economics courses. Lack of family support may also have played a part. Secondary levels of education were still new to the parents.

Of those who graduated, many of the women went on to teaching in the "one-roomers" that sent their students on to Grasston. Other graduates left for the Twin Cities for job training. Farms were becoming larger and automated, so there were fewer jobs for young sons. Graduates now are widely scattered and are as far away as Alaska and California.

But all was not work in Grasston. The community was thriving, a railroad town on the line between the Twin Cities and Duluth. It was at Grasston that people got off to reach Pine City or Mora, both county seats.

The old Rundquist building held the bank, a dry goods store and a confectionary. But upstairs was the magic room that might hold a class play rehearsal Tuesday afternoon and a basketball game Friday night. The upstairs was just big enough for an official size court. Spectators stood elbow to elbow around the edge and occasionally fended off players as they raced towards a loose ball.

A stage took up one end and each year junior and senior class plays performed here. The elementary school often put on short operettas. Even graduation was held there since the school had no auditorium. The building burned after the consolidation with Braham.

There was no football. Basketball and baseball were enough. Grasston always played larger schools and seldom had a championship year. But the kids, many from large families, loved the competition.

The committee which is organizing the reunion is headed by Bennie Anderson, '29, of Des Moines, Iowa. He and the other members ask that those wishing to attend send their letters of reservation to Mrs. Helmer Carlson, Rt. 1, Grasston.

Each person should enclose \$6.00 per person or \$12.00 per couple. This is necessary to cover the catering of the meal by a church group, correspondence postage, and janitor services, etc. If a graduate is not able to attend, he or she is encouraged to send a message and a snapshot of his or her family. Others who attended Grasston, but who did not graduate are invited to attend.

A response of 160 reservations has already been received.

gym before it goes ahead

Perhaps by subtracting the plans, the voters would have issued that many were asking. There is little doubt that the physical facilities, especially emphasis on girls athletics, the proposal is a solution.



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