



Glen Elder, KS -- Heritage & History

~ Memoir Lane ~

A Brief History of Glen Elder Schools

-- From: Weaving Common Threads...

The following excerpt was taken from "*Weaving the Common Threads of the Solomon Valley, Fabric*" ...a history book projected promoted by the Solomon Valley / Highway 24 Heritage Alliance and compiled by: Von Rothenberger, (Project Facilitator) -- The specific information for the following was gathered and written by Erma Luckey, Phyllis Porter, and Bernita Eberle. --- This wonderful 112 page history book of the Solomon Valley, which contains much history of Glen Elder and the surrounding vicinity, can be purchased by for \$10.

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The Grellet Academy was organized in 1878 by members of the Glen Elder Friends Church that had settled in what was then known as "Pleasant Valley." Grellet Academy was built in 1881 and chartered by the state in 1883. Located three miles southwest of Glen Elder, the Academy was open to all denominations; however, the requirement to enter the academy was a good moral character and cheerful obedience to the rules of the institution. To accommodate the students, a boarding hall was built. By 1887 students were coming from Nebraska and six counties in Kansas. By 1884 the Academy had an enrollment of over sixty. In 1895 the Academy was destroyed by fire, supposedly caused by some chemicals left in the laboratory. Since there was now a high school in town, the Academy was not rebuilt.

Education was a major concern of the early pioneers. Schools were started in dugouts and homes then, later, one room country schools dotted the prairie in large numbers. The first frame school in Glen Elder was located across the street south of the Christian Church. This building was also used for many other town activities. Another frame school was located east of where the lumber yard now stands.

A modern two-story structure was built on the hill above Glen Elder in 1887 as a public school, for attendance by both grade and high school students. It was known as one of the grandest buildings in the country and from the top of the building could be seen both Cawker City and Beloit. Then in 1917 a new building for the high school was constructed across the street east of the Christian Church.

The Glen Elder "Bearcats" served their school and town well, as they not only had a full education schedule, but were active in sports, speech, drama, music, woodworking, and many other activities, leading their school on to victory. The grade school continued in the building on the hill until 1938 when a new building was constructed a block north of the high school.

In May 1971 consolidation of the Glen Elder and Cawker City schools dissolved the Glen Elder high school but not their spirit, as students were now attending in Cawker City and the two formed to become the "Waconda East Vikings." Glen Elder continues to have classes for the older grade school and junior high students of both Glen Elder and Cawker City with the activity field in back being used for sporting events for both grade and high school.

Much can be said about the love of sports in the Glen Elder community. Teams as well as individuals, both girls and boys, have excelled in helping to put Glen Elder on the map with athletic abilities. Glen Elder's first boys basketball team began in 1920 and the girls basketball in 1921. Many teams, both grade school and high school, have been recognized as competing in state tournaments. In the earlier years only basketball, football, and track were offered in school but at present kids can participate in volleyball and golf as well.

Glen Elder has long been known for its summer baseball and softball teams and persons from age 5 through 60 were known to play on these teams and as recent as 2001 teams have participated in state baseball playoffs.

The community is always proud of our girl and boy athletes who have been varsity players on area college teams. The interest of sports is evident by the crowds that gather at all the area sports events, be it

individual effort or team effort, still the crowd is there to cheer their team on to victory. Other teams have been heard to comment they "dreaded to play a game against Glen Elder" as they had such good teams and good athletes. And the conversation at the local coffee shop the morning after a game the night before, is proof enough to recognize everyone attended the game.