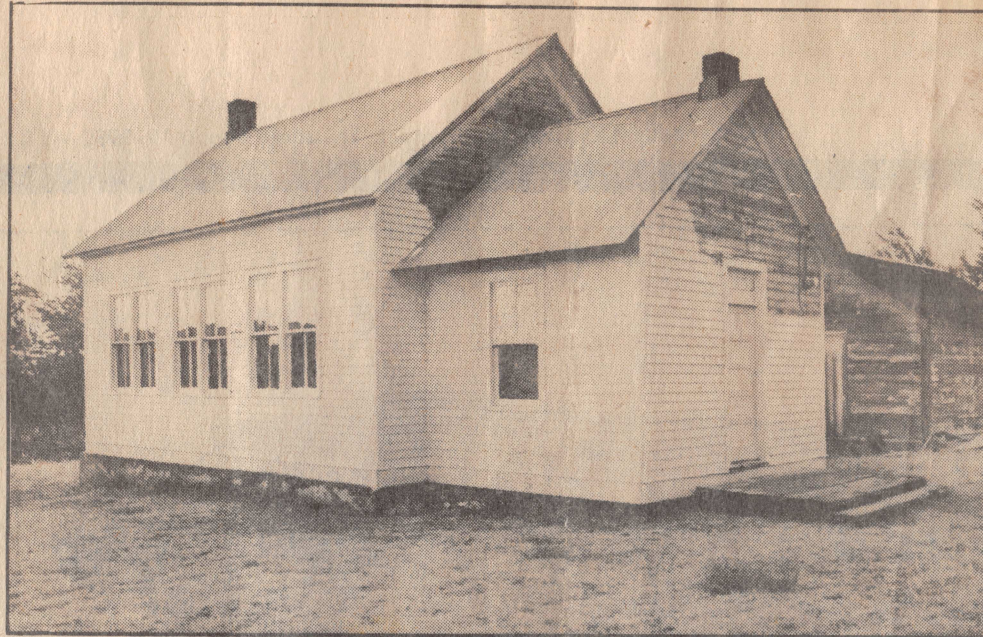


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The old Johnson School between Helena and Townsend.

Ex-students won't let old school die

By FRANK UPTON
IR Townsend Correspondent

It has 36 years since the last class was held in the Johnson School northeast of Townsend, but its former students aren't about to let its memories fade.

On Saturday and Sunday there will be a reunion for the school's former pupils and their spouses, teachers and parents. It should set some kind of record for reunions: 45 classes, from 1901 to the last class in 1946, will be honored.

Around 50 people will be at the reunion with the oldest in their 80s and the youngest in their 50s. There was a reunion last year but it was for the class of 1936, not for the 45 years this reunion will cover.

The planning committee — Ray Goodwin, Bob Kenney and Rose Flynn — said that on Saturday from 3-5 p.m. there

will be registration at the Broadwater County Museum followed by tours around Townsend. At 6:30 p.m. there will be tardy registration at the Masonic Temple followed at 7 p.m. with a roast beef dinner.

On Sunday at 1 p.m. there will be a picnic at Flynn's Clear Creek Cabin which is one mile east of the old Johnson School. The school building itself has become a family residence.

Rose Flynn and May Sweeney of Townsend recalled some of the early days of the school which was built in 1872. They noted that the school was in Meagher County until Broadwater County was created in the early 1900s and was located at Johnson City — 14 miles northeast of Townsend — where there was a post office and a few homes.

Mrs. Sweeney said that in the winter the students' ink would freeze in the inkwells

after the heat was turned off during the night. When the ink was heated up in the morning, the inkwell corks would often pop, spraying the students and classroom with ink.

Mrs. Flynn's 1935 eighth-grade class even had a newspaper, complete with national and county news.

The biggest graduating class at the Johnson school was in 1935, said Flynn, and it only consisted of eight students. They were Bob Matthews and Ray Goodwin, now of Helena; Mrs. Flynn, Robert Kenney, and Frank Kenney, of Townsend; Ross Bigler, now of California; Helen Marker Gurran, now of Washington state; and the late Rose Broderick of Townsend. Their teacher, Miss Suttan, is now Evelyn Thompson of Helena.

Most of the class will be at the reunion, Mrs. Flynn said.