

## **School Photos from the Past**

**by**

**Bonnie Stahl**

A few years ago my graduating class at Mifflinburg high school started a website to share information about our school years. One section of the website entitled Memory Lane had group photos from our respective elementary years. The elementary schools at Mifflinburg, New Berlin, and Hartley all had at least one photo. No one had shared a single picture for Buffalo Cross Roads. Even though I had attended this school I also did not have a photo.

I decided I would make an effort to find a photo of the classes at Buffalo Cross Roads for all of my six years there. Thus began a journey that, to my surprise, has been not only interesting, but has turned into an avid interest in seeking the school photos from as many Union County schools as possible. First, I reached out to school friends. Much to my surprise and delight I found a classmate who had the Buffalo Cross Roads class photos of third, fifth, and sixth grades. To add interest in my search, the students at Buffalo Cross Roads who lived east of the school could choose either the Lewisburg or the Mifflinburg High School to attend. Since I attended Mifflinburg High School, a number of them had not been seen since we parted in sixth grade.

I contacted numerous classmates who, like me, either never had the photos or had lost them. Some had even been destroyed in house fires. At this point I decided to try to find my first, second and fourth grade teachers or a relative of theirs. I found the daughters of my first and fourth grade teachers. Mrs. Danosky's daughter, Helen, shared not only my first grade photo, but since her father was the sixth grade teacher, she shared a photo that included cousins in it.

Mrs. Johnson's daughter, Beth Hackenburg, shared her mother's photo album, which had all the individual photos from my fourth grade. Her mother's album was really chuck full of photos from one-room schools in which she had taught in addition to all the individual pictures for my fourth grade class. It was

interesting to note that she followed her students and snipped newspaper photos of graduation pictures. What a find! I'm currently working to obtain identification of all the students in as many of her pictures as possible.

I contacted Janet Zimmerman, daughter of Mrs. Swartz, who completed teaching my first year of school, and asked if her mother had any photos from Buffalo Cross Roads. She had a photo album with all the photos from Mrs. Swartz's teaching career. She had taught at many one-room schools before finishing teaching at Buffalo Cross Roads Elementary. What a treasure this was, with nearly all the student names. With help of family and friends I have nearly a hundred percent of the students identified. Still, I have some one-room school house photos that need more people identified.



### Black Run One-Room School

Front Row: (left to right) Kathryn Shaffer, Florence Reitenbach, Martha Aikey, Ethel Miller, Ethel Gates, Velma Aikey, Doris Erb, Esther Mook, Dorothy Reitenbach, Marlin Liley, Raymond Miller, Albert Mook, Lee Shaffer. Middle Row: Merlyn Reitenbach, Harold Lilley, Harold Aikey, Elmer Erb, Merrill Aikey, Lloyd Gates, Weldon Swartz, Roger Reitenbach. Back Row: Miriam Lohr, Burnice Erb, Lucinda Swartz, Margaret Reitenbach, Ruth Miller, Vivian Gates, Rachael Swartz. Teacher, Sarah Heiser Reigle. Taken about 1936-37. Identified by Merlyn Reitenbach

This reminded me of a friend, Cherry Will, whose mother taught my mother at Black Run School. The Black Run School is located on Black Run Road

about two miles from Mazeppa. She was kind enough to not only share photos from Black Run's one-room school, but from other schools where her mother had taught over her teaching career. The Black Run picture had no student names, but this was the school that many of my relatives had attended. I touched base with my great uncle, Merlyn Reitenbach. He may be in his eighties but his memory was really great and he identified all the children.

Currently I am attempting to have the children identified at the Cowan One Room School. Having lived in this area all my life I have many contacts and find it is a matter of showing the pictures to different people, and in doing this I have found other wonderful pictures.

Mary Alice Dietrich shared photos from Cowan. Her family did butchering



Cowan Grammar School Orchestra, Union County, PA 1900

Bottom left to right: Blanche Paige, Mary Dieffenderfer, Laura Koch, Rhoda Cromley, Dora Yoder, Eva Mussina, Edna Reish, Annie Dietrich, Herbert Cromley, John Boyer. 2nd Row: Clarence Reedy, Ethel Irwin, Annie Spotts, Jennie Cromley, Annie Miller, Annie Boyer, Laird Irwin, Paul Shirk, Newton Reedy. 3rd Row: Bill Prutzman, Harry Schnure, Homer Klecknor, Daniel Fetter, Cleve Rowe, Jim Paige, Claire Reish. Top: Clyde Shirk, Mr. Best (teacher), Carl Hassenplug.

and had a barn raising. She had all the people identified and readily agreed to have the scanned photos shared with the Historical Society.

I never realized that Cowan had two school buildings. The front building, which has been taken down, was used for grades first through sixth. There was a coal shed between it and the existing school that was used for grades seven and eight. One photo that was a surprise was of the Cowan Grammar School and Orchestra.

It is such a wonderful privilege to have people share their photos from the past with me and to permit me to copy and make them a part of the Historical Society, making them available to future generations. Next year will be my 50th class reunion and it really would bring me back full circle to have my second grade class photo with Miss Young. So my search continues, hopefully, with success in finding that missing photo. It would be a bonus to find other school photos. As all those who work on family genealogy will know, a photo of a great grandparent, uncle, or aunt makes the people become more than a name.

I have given a copy of my school pictures to the Historical Society, which makes them available for consultation at the Society's Union County Court House. If any reader can identify other people in the photos for whom I do not yet have names, please contact me at [pafolkartist@hotmail.com](mailto:pafolkartist@hotmail.com), .or leave a message with the staff at the Society's office.

### **Photos in the Historical Society's collection**

Buffalo Cross Roads Elementary 1954-1955, Mrs. Danosky, teacher

Buffalo Cross Roads Elementary 1954-1955, Mr. Danosky, teacher

Buffalo Cross Roads Elementary 1956-1957, Mrs. Criswell, teacher

Buffalo Cross Roads Elementary 1958-1959, Mr. Manotti, teacher

Buffalo Cross Roads Elementary 1959-1960, Mr. Danosky, teacher

Sara Heiser Reigle photos

Black Run One Room School 1937-1938

Mifflinburg Elementary 1964-1968

### Myrtle Wagner Swartz's photo album

Cornelius One Room School 1947-1948, Jimmy Hanselman, teacher  
 Cornelius One Room School 1947-1948, Mrs. Myrtle Swartz, teacher  
 Forest Hill One Room School 1945-1946, W. H. Warburton, teacher  
 Forest Hill One Room School 1941, Mrs. Myrtle Swartz, teacher  
 Forest Hill One Room School 1937-1938, Mrs. Myrtle Swartz, teacher  
 Mifflinburg Elementary 1953-1954, Mrs. Myrtle Swartz, teacher  
 Mifflinburg Elementary 1964-1955, Mrs. Myrtle Swartz, teacher  
 Millmont One Room School Oct. 31, 1950, Mrs. Myrtle Swartz, teacher  
 Buffalo Cross Roads One Room School Apr. 15, 1948, Mrs. Myrtle Swartz, teacher  
 Buffalo Cross Roads One Room School April 1950, Mrs. Myrtle Swartz, teacher  
 Buffalo Cross Roads Elementary years 1956 -1968, Mrs. Myrtle Swartz, teacher

### Mary Alice Dietrich photos

Cowan One Room School 1898, Mrs. Strickler, teacher  
 Cowan One Room School 1904-1905, Mr. Ridge, teacher  
 Cowan One Room School 1935-1936, Mr. Warburton, teacher  
 Cowan One Room School 1934-1938, Mr. Blackburn, teacher  
 Cowan One Room School 1939-1940, Mr. Baker, teacher  
 Cowan One Room School around turn of century, Mrs. Strickler, teacher  
 Cowan Grammar School and Orchestra 1900  
 Cowan Cornets  
 Dietrich butchering at Cowan  
 Barn Raising

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