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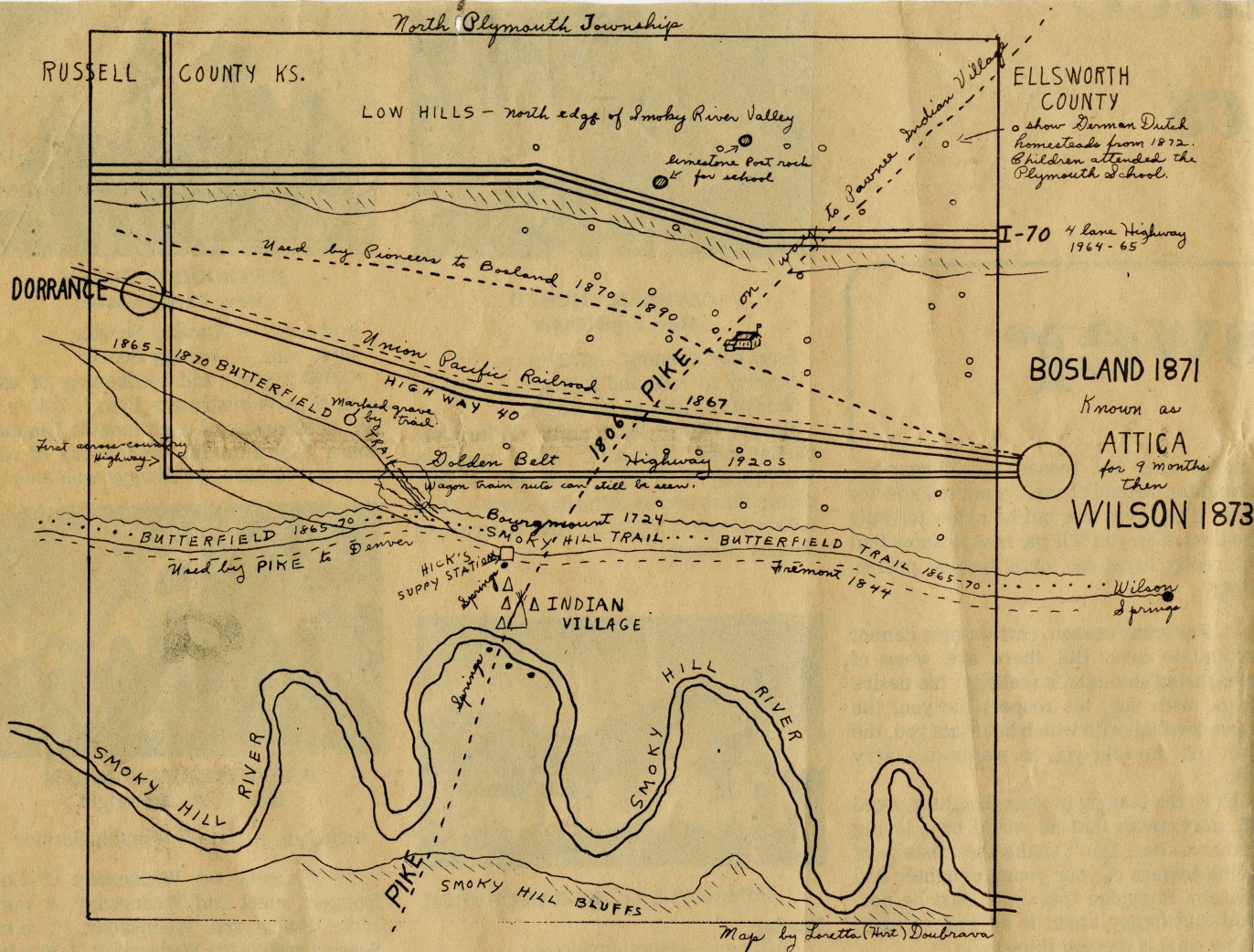
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Plymouth school to find new home

Plymouth School, the country school located two and one-half miles northwest of Wilson in extreme eastern Russell County, will be relocated on the Fort Hays State University (FHSU) campus during the 1977-78 academic term according to announcements made by the university last week.

The schoolhouse relocation has been a project of Phi Delta Kappa (PDK), a professional education fraternity, in celebration of Fort Hays State's 75th anniversary which officially begins June 23.

Plymouth School was one of 32 schoolhouses screened by the special PDK Committee headed by Dr. Allan Miller, associate professor of education at the university.

"Fort Hays State originally functioned to prepare teachers for western Kansas,"

Miller said, "so there is a regional historical link to one-room schoolhouses. We hope this project will preserve that part of our heritage for eternity."

Miller cited several reasons why the committee chose the Plymouth School over the many other possibilities.

"Plymouth School was the right size, had a very rich history, was made from hard, solid post rock limestone native to western Kansas, and is easily accessible to highway 40 and Interstate 70 for convenient moving," Miller explained.

The school will be relocated west of Davis Hall on the Fort Hays campus during the 1977-78 academic year. Labor and much of the funding to move and reconstruct the building will be donated by volunteers. National PDK gave the Fort Hays chapter a special funding grant of \$2,500 to be used toward the project.

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Plymouth School move

Editor's Note: Loretta Hirt Doubrava began compiling a history of Plymouth School in 1972 after she received an 1894 photo of the school from the late Mrs. Joseph Veverka. Both Mrs. Doubrava and her mother, the former Mary Thielen who is pictured on the old photo, attended Plymouth School as students. Twenty-eight pages of the school's history, written by Mrs. Doubrava, and photo were submitted to Fort Hays State University for evaluation and selection of a suitable country school to be moved to the college campus.

A Second Century For Plymouth School

Loretta (Hirt) Doubrava

(See photos on page 6)

The recent news release from the Fort Hays State University with the announcement of Plymouth School having been chosen to be moved to the Fort Hays State campus has created much excitement and renewed interest in the 103-year-old school building. It was selected from 32 post rock limestone schoolhouses submitted with their histories for inspection and consideration.

Plymouth School is located two and one-half miles northwest of Wilson in Plymouth Township in extreme eastern Russell County, between Dorrance and Wilson. It is a monument to the pioneers who built it and an outstanding landmark for over one hundred years. It can be seen for many miles.

Fort Hays State originally functioned to

prepare teachers for western Kansas so there is a regional historical link to one-room schoolhouses. It is the hope of those affiliated with FHS to preserve that part of our heritage for eternity.

The Phi Delta Kappa (PDK) (the professional education fraternity) believe that with the availability to inspect firsthand one of the very first schools, the students studying to be teachers and the general public will obtain a much better understanding and an appreciation of how the pioneers had to believe in and work to avail their children the chance for an education. It will show how the school was built, furnished, and the kinds, or lack of textbooks available to the first teachers and students.

The planned location, on the Fort Hays State campus, will make it readily available to the students or any visitor to see an original sample of our very first schools in Kansas and to see how our educational system has progressed.

Until the time of this news release the old post rock limestone Plymouth School, now reaching its 103-year-old mark, has just been given a mere glance by the people of the Dorrance and Wilson community going by on highway I-70 and old highway 40. To the present generations the

school has always been there and just seems a part of the natural landscape.

Many of the people in the Wilson and Dorrance community have descended from some of the students who attended this school. So it is now viewed with renewed interest and a feeling of pride that the Plymouth School has been given this honor and a new chance of active usefulness. It will now not be left to disintegrate back down to the earth from which it was wrenched by the pioneers over one hundred years ago.

In an 1894 picture of Plymouth School are three school board members. One was Wm. S. Miller who happened to be one of the original school board members, as was John Dellinger. Dellinger was also one of the three stone-masons who helped build the school. The third board member shown was John Hastings.

Local People Helped.

Many local people helped to identify relatives on the picture. The original picture belonged to the late Mrs. Joseph Veverka.

This picture led to several years of writing to many descendants as far as California and Texas to obtain identification of the students on the picture and

leads to look backward

to receive many interesting anecdotes concerning the years that these students were in the school before the turn of the century.

This in turn led to the writing the history of the Plymouth School which also consisted of much research at the Russell county court house, combined with the detailed description of the many steps it took to build the school. Starting with how the limestone post rock was first uncovered from under three or four feet of earth, then sledged and wrenched from the earth, and on to the finished building; how it was furnished, and about the daily routine of the approximately 153 children who attended down through the years until it was closed in 1936. It was used for a few years for wheat storage.

they lived until homes could be built in Plymouth Township. After seeing to their immediate needs, such as shelter for their families and planting the first crops, they directed their thoughts and work toward building a school for the children.

After a few years the German Dutch colonists were joined by Bohemian and a few English families, some of whom came in covered wagons and homesteaded near the Plymouth School. After a short time the school became a potpourri of nationalities.

The first German Dutch families that settled here in the spring of 1872 and who were responsible for the existence of the Plymouth School were; Dellinger, Miller, Bolan, Shipp, Sellers, Skinner, Myers, Slocum and Hastings.

families.

Down through the years other family names to appear on the school census were: Clark, Briggs, Howes, Vancura, Smith, Small, Fisher and Vance.

From 1890 to 1898 the reports show new family names of Pasek, Stopple, Serier, Holderbaum, Hrabick, Kalmert and Whitmer. Although on the report, all of these children did not attend the Plymouth School, being closer to other schools which had been built after 1889.

After the turn of the century, the school was reopened after having been closed a few years. In 1915, the new family names were Herber, Kevan, Urban, Spears, and Hirt, a French name (second generation, children of Mary Thielen-Hirt), also Reitz, White, Killian, Park, Diessroth, and Pasek and Veverka (second generation from both) and a new Miller family, not related to the original Miller.

During the mid 1920s new family names to appear briefly on the census were: Hudson, Bush, Allison and Branda, after 1930 others were Feil, Irish and again Whitmer.

There were 32 teachers listed from 1881 to 1936 with many from Wilson. Six or more were former students of Plymouth School. The salaries ranged from \$30 a

(Continued on page 6)

... from wagon trains to jet planes ...

Research revealed that the Plymouth School was built in the year 1874-75 by the German-Dutch colonists from Pennsylvania, who came to Bosland (Wilson) in the year 1872 in a railroad box car where

They were joined shortly after by families of Walz, Martinek, Zivonik, Brown, Chrudinsky, Novak, Diessroth, Muck, Eslinger, Towle, Thielen, Deges, Veverka, and a few other unknown



THE PLYMOUTH SCHOOLHOUSE, now located northwest of Wilson in Russell County will soon be relocated to the campus of Fort Hays State University. The relocation of the 103-year-old school

has created an interest in the past of the once busy school. Mrs. Loretta Hirt Doubrava, has compiled a history of the old school. (World photo by Mark Shaw)