

The School On Scroggy Road

DON GOCHENOUR

A board meeting had been called in the parlor of Tom Livingston's home. A representative had come from each farm for miles around, for this was the much talked of meeting out of which would arise the answer everyone was waiting for — whether the farmers in the surrounding area would continue to bundle up their children each morning and ship them off to the nearest school at the county seat via a dilapidated school bus or whether something could be done to start the planning and erection of a school in their own district.

The hours dragged on; a hot discussion continued. Finally it was decided that the school would be built. Ed Jenkins proposed a site on Scroggy road; Bill Maish on state road forty-one, old Hank Jeffries down by Sugar Creek—and so on into the night. Finally, when it seemed that another meeting would be inevitable, the air cleared long enough for a motion to be made and seconded, and that was it. The school would be built on Scroggy road, and construction would begin within the next three weeks.

The next two months were filled with interest and excitement for the residents of Scroggy Township. Each day some neighbor could be seen watching the construction with a critical eye. After all, he was helping to pay for this erection with his taxes, and it was to his interest to see that things were done right. He watched the framework rising out of the once vacant lot, the hardwood floors being laid in the auditorium and the gymnasium; and he saw the genuine marble steps built up to the second floor. Yes, it was to be a two-story

building; nothing was too good for the Scroggians.

The days became weeks and the weeks months. Finally the great day of completion was only one week away. Plans were being rapidly made for the christening and all the accompanying social events. Scroggy Township had at last reached its ultimate goal. No more would the children stand for almost an hour, shivering on wintry mornings, waiting for the bus which always managed to be late.

The Church on Scroggy Road

Again the lights were burning late into the night in the parlor of the old Livingston house. This home had been selected as the meeting place for the board because it was here in the same parlor two generations before that another board had met. It had consisted of the ancestors of the present committee members who met to discuss plans for building the first Scroggy school-house.

Now another important meeting was in progress; this time the plans were for a larger and more modern school. Agreements had been made for a three-story brick structure, but it was still undecided as to what should be done with the present school. No one wanted to see the old white building scrapped because to them it stood for many hours of planning and labor by the ancestors and for their benefit. No one here could think of the old Scroggy school without recalling some pleasant memories.

Several inspirations were quickly disposed of, but the argument stretched on. Finally, it was Ezra Thompson who "reckoned as how, since Scroggy Township had no church, they sure could use one." Since

this was the most sensible idea to come out of the meeting, it was thoroughly considered. It seemed a good idea to all, in fact it seemed a wonderful idea. They would do it.

Before many months had passed, the weatherbeaten schoolhouse had taken on the appearance of the place of worship. First, a new coat of paint was applied, then the muchworn and carved desks were replaced by pews; the teacher's platform gave way to a new mahogany pulpit, and the plain window panes were soon transformed into beautiful colored works of art. Yes, Scroggy Township was growing with the rest of the county.

The Hillcrest on Scroggy Road

The citizens of Scroggy Township were feeling very dejected. It had all started with the rumor that the old white church, which had been deserted for a better building and more convenient location, had been purchased with the intention of transforming it into a dance hall. Investigations proved that it no longer could be considered a rumor; it was now a certainty. Several business men from the nearby county seat were in control of the building and were already making the necessary arrangements

to convert it into a roadhouse dance hall.

To the God-fearing, simple-living farmers in the area a dance hall could mean only one thing. It would mean a boisterous, rowdy, drunken mob night after night, and they certainly did not want that. Petitions, complains and letters were rapidly filed in the office of the mayor, but to no avail. The realization slowly came to them that there was no way to combat this new menace. They would have to stand by and watch it grow.

Then came the day the construction was to begin. Only a few stragglers turned out to watch the remodeling. As they watched they thought of the ones before them who had stood in the same spot, proudly watching the first school of Scroggy rising out of the wilderness, and now this. They watched the new booths and tables being moved in and the pews and pulpit going out. The dingy white color of the building soon gave way to brighter and more elaborate colors. Blazing neon lights over the door, where once the symbolic cross of the church had stood announced the Hillcrest Dancehall. Yes, everyone present agreed that Scroggy Township could never be the same again.

LITERARY CONTEST

The literary contest sponsored by the English department of the University closes April 19. Short stories, essays or one-act plays, or groups of poems must be placed on Mrs. Alice B. Wesenberg's desk in Room 312 by 6 p. m. Manuscripts must be typed, double spaced and in triplicate with a nom de plume. The real name, address and telephone number of the author must accompany the entry in a sealed envelope. A twenty-five dollar prize is offered in each of the three divisions.