

According to the Rutherford County Historical Society publications and other records, the first known Rockvale School was a subscription school\*, held in a two-story frame building believed to have been near the old telephone office. School quarters were on the lower floor and the upper floor was used as the Masonic Hall. This building was destroyed by fire.

Subscription schools\* were usually organized by area parents who wanted a better education for their children. A tuition fee, paid for each student attending, was used to pay for the operation of the school. Several subscription schools were located in the Rockvale-Eagleville area. At this time, the public school system provided only approximately 4-month school term per year for students.

In July, 1874 Kinion Carlton signed a deed, donating one and one-fourth acres of land to School Directors Thomas H. Carlton, R. W. Farris, Trustees J. M. Smith, L. L. Whitehead, J. M. Baugh, J. N. Carlton, B. B. Williams and a Building Committee for a school house, in Rutherford County, State of Tennessee, Civil District, No. 10, for the purpose of building a school house and a place of worship for all religious denominations when a school is not going on. Also stated in the deed, this land was donated for the benefit of the white race and not for the colored race to have anything to do with said land or the house that may be put on the same. The location of this property is on the west side of highway 99 in front of the old Rockvale Cumberland Presbyterian Church. The site is on the Beers Map of 1878.

The old schoolhouse was originally a one-room, frame building for one teacher. In the early 1900's this school was a two-teacher institution with upper classmen as assistants. The building had a front gable and two front doors, which were sheltered by a canopy roof. There were three windows on each side. A fireplace between

the two rooms, front and back, was used for heat.

Known principals and teachers were: Robert L. Hayes, principal in 1896, John Woodfin, Sr., Miss Tommy Reynolds, Mr. George Craynor, Rev. J. M. Robinson, a Presbyterian preacher, Ella Henry, Alice Fain, Mr. M. W. Charles, Jinnie Hooper, Lockie Webb, Fannie Robinson, Cora Bain, and Jennie Love. Among the last teachers were Arzo Batts and Francis Batey.

Frank M. Carlton, B. Frank Christopher and Frank Hale Jackson were members of the Board of Education for the school for several years.

In 1907-1909 the Public School Law provided revenue for all levels of public education, elementary through college. In the 10th district, J. P. Leathers and others worked for a consolidated school building.

Competition was very strong between the towns of Rockvale and Eagleville for the county-built school. To make the final decision on the location of a consolidated school, the school board decided that the students from both towns would march through the courthouse and be counted. The town with the greater number would get the schoolhouse. Rockvale won; Eagleville then built its own new school.

On June 18, 1910 five and one-sixth acres of land halfway between Concord and Rockvale was purchased from J. S. "Joe" Manning and wife, Bettie for \$235, for the location of the new consolidated Concord and Rockvale school. Later another acre was purchased for \$100.

## A Step Back in Time

By Bobbie Sue Shelton-Lonas

On September 3, 1910, the Rutherford County Board of Education signed a deed to Bettie Carlton for the one and one-fourth acres of the old school property for \$535. The school building became a home for Jeff Covington, who drove a school wagon, and later for Blake Giles.

The new schoolhouse on the property purchased from the Manning's, was a white frame, one-story building with five classrooms and three long porches. A large room with a stage across one end was used as a classroom, study hall, and principal's office. The total cost was \$1,117.30. Later an L shaped row of stables was built for horses used for the student's transportation to school. Also many students walked to school or they may have been lucky enough to ride in a school wagon. Rockvale has claimed the first county transportation system. In 1911 Mr. Lem Lamb drove a two-horse wagon, at first without a top and then with cover with chairs as seats. He drove from Puckett Store to the Rockvale School. Students paid two dollars per month per child. After the first trip, it is said, Professor Bowling patted one of the horses and remarked, "This has come to stay."

The Rockvale Consolidated High School opened on Sept 12, 1910 and finished the first school year on May 5, 1911. The students of one-teacher schools in the area ultimately went to the consolidated school. Such schools were Little Rock, Garretts, Mt. Pleasant and Taylor. These vacated schools generally stood vacant for two years and then reverted to their original owners.

Professor F. M. Bowling, a former principal at Eagleville Public School, was the first principal of the new school and served as principal for three years. He was known as one of the best educators in the State. According to reports, he was one of the hardest workers in Rutherford County in the Normal School and High School campaign and his influence was great in the securing of the bond issued asked of the County Court. He was elected a member of the Executive Committee of the Middle Tennessee Educational Association in April 1909. He resigned from Eagleville to accept a Principal's position in the school in Christiana. Evidently, with the new school being built, he decided on accepting the job at Rockvale instead.

Other principals in this building were Mr. Flint Speers, who followed F. M. Bowling, Mr. Elmer Downman, E. O. Coffman, Neal Elrod, John Zumbro, Raymond McElroy, R. C. Landis, 1920-21; J. E. McCrary, 1921-1924; T. S. Givans, 1924-1929.

The first faculty included Margaret Holt Owen, Ida Holt Jackson, Lula Whitehead, and Irene Hudson. Jim Webb was the janitor.

Some of the teachers were: Bessie Jackson Buchanan and Effie Haynes Arendale, about 1913, Bess Maxwell, Mrs. R. C. Landis, Lillie Mae Harding, Cora Lowe, Maud Dabbs, Margaret Lakenan,

and Magness Puckett. Among the last teachers were Arzo Betts and Frances Batey. The first graduating class was composed of Eula Lamb and Lillard Martin.

In 1911, the state and county took charge of the school, under the name of Rockvale Public School. The school included eight grades of grammar school and two years of high school and later was re-named as the Rockvale High School. Also in 1911 on Arbor Day, maple trees were set out on campus. Thereupon, Margaret Lakenan composed the Alma Mater song, "In the Shadow of the Maples." Two literary societies, the Tennyson Society and the Lowell Society, furnished such intra-scholastic competition that their colors, blue and white, became the school colors.

In 1923-1924, due to Rockvale School not having a gymnasium, Coach Marvin Scales made a deal with Dr. John Garrett to floor the loft of Garrett's barn to be used for basketball games. Some of the spectators sat on bales of hay. Others stood behind the wire that kept the ball from going out the end of the barn.

As Rockvale School's enrollment increased, due to the school becoming a three-year, then a four-year high school, more space was needed, the old white frame building was torn down and was replaced in the summer of 1927 by a brick building on the same site.

### INTERESTING NEWS ARTICLES ON THE OLD ROCKVALE SCHOOL ROCKVALE HIGH SCHOOL OPENING 1910

On Monday, September 12th, the new High School situated midway

## Old Rockvale School

between Concord and Rockvale, opened with Prof. Bowling as principal. He is ably assisted by Misses Margaret and Ida Holt.

The opening was splendidly attended by patrons from the several neighborhoods, who have so loyally supported the new school movement, and the presence of such members of school children was most encouraging to those who had worked and planned for the school. There has been some debate about naming the new school.

### \* \* \* \* \* ROCKVALE HIGH SCHOOL - 1910

The Rockvale High School opened Monday, September 12th with an enrollment of over one hundred and fifty pupils. A large number of the patrons attended the opening and spent the entire morning listening to the interesting and instructive speeches made by visitors and friends. The building, which has just been completed, is one of the most convenient in Rutherford County. It was unanimously decided that a vote of thanks be extended the High School Board and people of the surrounding communities, and we as a committee offer the following resolutions:

Be it resolved, That the people of the tenth district of Rutherford County extend their thanks to the members of the County High School Board for placing a High School in their midst.

Be it further resolved, That they also extend their thanks to the people of the surrounding communities who so faithfully labored for the interests of said school.

Be it also resolved, That a copy of

these resolutions be presented to the County High School Board and published in the county papers.

Signed:  
J. E. Maxwell  
Margaret R. Holt  
Mary Smotherman  
Committee on Resolutions

### \* \* \* \* \* ROCKVALE HIGH SCHOOL November - 1910

A Thanksgiving service was held at the Rockvale High School on Thursday morning at ten o'clock. Very interesting talks were made by Prof. Bowling, Rev. Seay and others. Miss Hudson favored the audience with a very excellent reading, "The Lost Word", after which the pupils brought forward their offerings, which consisted of various articles, greatly appreciated by the needy to whom they were given. At 7 p.m., a short program was delightfully rendered by Miss Hudson and a few of her pupils. The readings by Miss Hudson were especially enjoyed, she being a reader of great ability, having graduated from the Academy of Dramatic Arts, Cincinnati, Ohio. The next feature of the evening was a basket supper. The auction of baskets by Mr. J. P. Leathers furnished a great deal of amusement for the audience. The proceeds, which amounted to \$50, are to be used for the benefit of the school.

Arbor Day was observed on the following Friday. Great interest is being manifested by the people for the improvement of the grounds.

### \* \* \* \* \* ROCKVALE HIGH SCHOOL - 1912

This school, under the wise supervision of Prof. F. M. Bowling and able assistants, Misses Margaret and Ida Holt, and Lula Whitehead, with Miss Hudson in charge of department of Music and Reading, closed its term on April 26, 1912.

Too much can scarcely be said in praise of the very satisfying results gained through the efforts of these very efficient teachers.

Since the High School is made from a consolidation of district schools, and this only the second year of its existence, one would naturally anticipate difficulties to surmount, but, not withstanding this fact, difficulties have been harmoniously adjusted and the work, seemingly moved on like a song.

Continue on page 16.....**ROCKVALE**

### Rockvale School Picture - 1920

(The Principal - Floyd Frazier and a few of the students are not showing on the left side of the picture. The following names are as listed on the original picture.)

Top Row (L to R): Principal - Floyd Frazier, Fannie May Ralston, Pearl Woodson, Hazel Farris, Una Comer, Rubye Whitus, Willie Jackson, Elizabeth Lamb, Vera Looney, Rubye Turner (Wagon - John Epperson, Ada West, Beatrice Hayes, Veshti Manier, Ovella Ralston, Lula May Ralston, Edna Lester, Esther Manier, Etta Heath, Lavada Talbert, \_\_\_\_\_, Katherine Jackson, Sally Taylor, \_\_\_\_\_, Womack, Mamie Heath, Pearl Ralston, Sally Daniel, \_\_\_\_\_, Teacher Bertha Ruben, Thelma Powers, Teacher Katherine Lowe, Mary Carlton, Lorene Osteen, Mimmie Jackson, Robert Garrett (Little Doc), Harry Puckett, Ruth Smotherman, Tom Ralston, William Steagall, Cecil Holden, Tinnie Manning, Fred Puckett, M. B. Carlton, Jesse Puckett, Howard Scott, Christine Lamb, Ailene Osteen, Thomas Holden. Rollie Holden, \_\_\_\_\_, John Henry Daniel, \_\_\_\_\_, Holtons, \_\_\_\_\_, \_\_\_\_\_, Covington, \_\_\_\_\_, \_\_\_\_\_, Owen Scott, \_\_\_\_\_, \_\_\_\_\_, Cecil Taylor, Teacher Miss Landis

Bottom Row (L to R): Willie Brannon, Woods Garrett, Fred Nance, Irving Lamb, Jak Scott, Felix Redmon, Alf Taylor, \_\_\_\_\_, \_\_\_\_\_, Grady Ralston, \_\_\_\_\_, \_\_\_\_\_, Francis McClain, \_\_\_\_\_, Manier, \_\_\_\_\_, \_\_\_\_\_, \_\_\_\_\_, Mary Lee Comer, Mary Steagall, \_\_\_\_\_, \_\_\_\_\_, Ralston, Harry Steagall, \_\_\_\_\_, Louise Prader, Modene Ralston, \_\_\_\_\_, \_\_\_\_\_, \_\_\_\_\_, Manning, \_\_\_\_\_, \_\_\_\_\_, \_\_\_\_\_, John Garrett, Marie Scott, \_\_\_\_\_, \_\_\_\_\_, \_\_\_\_\_, \_\_\_\_\_, \_\_\_\_\_.

