

Reflections of Our Past – Franklin County Historical Museum – Latimer, Part II

Charles Clock owned the land which was the site of Latimer's first school in 1883. Mr. Clock donated the land with the stipulation that it was to be used for a school. The building was very small and was so crowded, housing sixty students, that two or three pupils sat at each desk. All classes were in one room with no division of the classes. There was one teacher for all students. No student ever graduated and each student left school when he or she felt educated or when they were needed at home. A new school was built in 1897 by E. B. Hill at the cost of \$2,500.00 and an independent school district was established in 1898. The first teachers in the new building were John Hazleton and Mattie Reiersen.

In 1903 Latimer was left in the dark every evening after 8 p.m. when stores closed except on Wednesday and Saturday evening when store hours were extended. In July of 1916 electricity came to Latimer and was celebrated with a band concert, speeches, parade and fireworks.

In early days every family had a well and pump on their property. Each family had a horse and buggy and a barn for the horse and the family cow. The barn later became a garage.

Two passenger trains and 2 freight trains came into Latimer each day. Mail was hauled from the depot to the post office in a wheel barrow. The depot agent in 1889, Frank P. Ross, later went to Chicago to go into a tea wagon business with his brother-in-law. They formed a company called the Jewel Tea Company and became very wealthy.

The first radio in Latimer was owned by Dr. J. F. Martin. When Dr. Martin would try to tune his radio in, nearly the whole town would gather in his waiting room. The old set had eight knobs on it and all had to be turned to tune it and Dr. Martin would make it squeak causing everyone to jump. The best station to be heard was a Kansas City station.

The first phonograph was brought to Latimer by a salesman who charged customers in the Clock Store twenty-five cents to listen to music.

On one McCormick Implement Day festival the city marshall received a telegram (there being no telephones) that he should arrest a negro who was coming down the M and St L. Railroad from the west. The man was suspected of having killed someone in Sioux City. The news spread like wild fire and when the suspect was sighted close to the stockyards townspeople jammed into the empty coal bins to watch the excitement. The Marshall became frozen and Ike Harms said "Give me your gun and I'll arrest him!" Ike jumped out and yelled "Stick'm up!" The crowd came out of the coal bins and the poor man thought he was going to be lynched. He was then taken to the depot and the sheriff at Hampton came and got him. Later it was found he had an alibi and he was turned loose.

H. H. Reynolds came to Franklin County in 1882 and Latimer shortly thereafter where, among other things, he raised an acre of corn which he felt was always far ahead of any in the county. When it matured he would cut a tall stalk and display it in front of some business place. Once Nis Sorensen went into the Reynolds field and found a taller stalk that beat out the Reynolds stalk by several inches and displayed it by the other corn. Squire Reynolds went back to his field and found a taller stalk to beat out

the taller one and then the prankster told him what he had done. Squire quipped “You had to use my patch in order to beat me.”

Squire ran for Justice of the Peace at each election and pranksters would put up other candidates against him, but vote for Squire so he would win by a huge majority. He was considered an expert on legal matters and prided himself on justice being given in his court. Squire Reynolds lived to be 96 years old and is buried in the Lutheran Cemetery of Latimer.

Note: this is just a portion of information on the history of Latimer.