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Tiny community made its own fun

Centerfield, once known as Worth, was established at the junction of Ky. 393 and Ky. 22.

The community became Centerfield in 1850, with the name derived from the fact that it was four miles to Ballardsville, four miles to Buckner and four miles to Crestwood, thus in the center of the field.

It was officially declared a voting precinct by the General Assembly on Feb. 6, 1886. At that time there was a general store, about 11 homes, a school and a blacksmith's shop. A Grange Hall served as a community meeting place and entertainment center.



Center The map pinpoints the small but central community of Centerfield.

(Courtesy of Oldham County History)

The following article was written by May Barnett in 1974 and describes her experience attending the school at Centerfield in the 1920s.

"How well I remember the initial-carved double desks. To have a friend share one with me was great. The temptation to talk often interfered with my need to study. I was often told to take my books and move in with a less talkative tenant.

"The big potbellied stove which stood in the center of the room was a source of comfort to us on cold winter days, when we gathered around it to recite our lessons.

"The coal bucket was watched by the boys. Its refilling offered a means to escape from the monotony of the classroom.

"In those days we never heard the words 'virus,' and we had no fear of drinking from the dipper in the bucket of water that stayed uncovered in the vestibule. We all had colds and runny noses, but that went along with winter.

"Our freedom was shattered when we began to hear more and more about 'germs' and the teacher

demanded that we drink from individual cups. Our parents made us wear asafetida [a pungent herb] bags on a string around our necks. The odor produced by the "wonder drug" overpowered the germs for miles around.

"I don't recall much about the lessons we learned, but I shall never forget the games we played. We had a long recess and an hour at noon. We gulped our lunches, which often consisted of biscuit and fried sausage or rabbit. And we were ready to play.

"We played ball or 'ante-over' on warm days and 'clap-in-clap-out' when it was too cold to play outside. Those cold days offered an opportunity for the noon Chataugua where Rozelle and Estelle Brown delighted their audience by singing 'Go Tell Aunt Rody.'

"When the ice was thick on the nearby ponds, our teacher would extend the noon hour and take us skating.

"If we were not fortunate enough to be the proud owners of ice skates, we could run onto the ice and slide several feet, the distance depending on the smoothness of the ice and our equilibrium.

"School entertainments were looked forward to, for the Christmas program was given by the students at the church. This was the time when we would recite and sing for our proud parents.

"There was always a cedar tree decorated with paper chains [and] strings of popcorn ...

"On Feb. 14th, we always had a valentine box filled with homemade valentines. Bought ones were a waste of money when we could convey our own handwritten love messages. The favorite verse ended with 'Candy is sweet and so are you.'

"During the school year there was always an auction. Boxes and pies were sold to the highest bidder, the boys not knowing which girl's box or pie he was buying. This resulted in delight or disappointment since the owner had to share his purchase with the one who had prepared it.

"We kids looked on with envy, longing for the time when we, too, could participate."

"One of these auctions stands out in my memory. A bouquet of flowers was presented to the girl who was popular enough to receive the most monetary votes. A group of young men pooled their money to make Clarence Oldson pay \$40 to prove that his girl, Martha Sadler, was the 'Belle of Centerfield.'

"This won Martha for Clarence and the wedding bells soon followed.

"I remember some of the teachers: Miss Catherine Cassady, Miss Jessie Turner, Miss Martha Haueter and Mrs. Linsey Smith."

The article above is from "History & Families, Oldham County, The First Century," published by the Oldham County Historical Society. It is for sale in the gift shop at the Oldham County History Center Museum.
