The Ruste School c. 1910, Olin Ruste, teacher

Ruste School children c. 1950, Helene Espeseth, teacher
Chapter 12: The Ruste School District

The history of the Ruste School District dates back to April 7, 1855, when the Town of Blue Mounds Superintendent of Schools established District #6. The residents of this large district met at the home of Ole A. Ruste (10) on April 21, 1855, to organize.

The members elected to the first school board were: Ferdeman Steyer, Treasurer, Joen Halstenson, Director, and Hans Hanson, Clerk.

They built the first schoolhouse quite a distance west of the present school site. Farmers living in the area contributed logs to build the school. The school furniture was very crude. The desks were thick, rough pieces of board nailed along the walls. The seats were benches of the same kind of material. This schoolhouse was valued at $84.

The first teacher in this school was Eunice K. Corbin. Her wages were $10 per month. She taught a three-month term. Ms. Corbin stayed with the district from 1855 until February 1857 when Edward Dale, Town Superintendent of Schools of the Town of Blue Mounds, divided School District #6, renaming the part which eventually became known as the Ruste School Distriect, District #3.

On February 8, 1868, the district held a special meeting to consider the question of a new school site and a new schoolhouse. It was resolved that the schoolhouse be moved to the center of the district. Ferdeman Steyer promised to give one acre of land from farm 14 for the schoolhouse site. This schoolhouse, another log building, was ready for use by November 1, 1868.

Between 1874 and 1881 the boundaries of Blue Mounds School District #3 changed three times. A part of Blue Mounds District #2 was added to District #3 in 1874. Part of this enlarged District #3 was removed and attached to District #7 in April 1877. Then, in December 1877, another part was taken from District #3 and added to Town of Blue Mounds and Perry Joint District #7, that is the Moen School District.

The resulting District #3 was so different from its 1868 predecessor that at the Annual Meeting on July 5, 1897, the question of dividing the school district or choosing a new site was discussed. It was unanimously agreed that a new schoolhouse was needed, but the question of where to build it remained open. At a special meeting on July 19, 1897, C.O. Ruste of farm 10 presented a diagram of the present school district which showed that the center came in such a place that it would be necessary to move the schoolhouse in order to accommodate two-thirds of the pupils. After discussing the matter, it was evident that no satisfactory agreement could be reached on a new site so the meeting decided that all should remain as it was for another year.

At the regular July 3, 1899, Annual Meeting the voters decided that the new schoolhouse should be located on Steyer’s land, the same farm that the old one was on. The meeting then authorized the board to dispose of real estate and old buildings to best possible advantage.

All board members were present at the next meeting which was held July 18, 1899. They looked over the schoolhouse site and measured out one-half acre. This schoolhouse was completed in 1900. The lumber was bought from Thompson, Mickelson, and Halferdahl at Mt. Horeb for $467.

This school was called the Steyer School until it was moved across what is now West Blue Mounds Road to site 8. It was then known as the Bruflat School until about the year 1916 when it was changed to the Ruste School.

The last class to attend Ruste School was the Class of 1963. Rose Klar, who served from 1957 to 1960, was the last teacher.

Sixty-four teachers, including at least seven who had themselves attended school in this district, taught the Ruste School in between Eunice Corbin and Rose Klar. The seven local teachers were Allen O. Ruste (1875-76) from farm 10; Albert Bruflat (1910-11) from farm 9;  Olin Ruste (1911-12) of the next generation from farm 10; Edwin Ruste (1912-14), Olin’s brother; Mildred Thoosand (1923-25) from farm 1; Sylvanus Aavang (1925-27) whose family lived at both farm 4 and 16; and Catherine Thousand (1930-31), Mildred’s younger sister.

The Ruste School building was moved to German Valley and combined with the German Valley School to form a "new" house, 17. Today, the former Ruste School yard has a large growth of trees on it.
1. Henry Thousand
Christian W. and Melinda (Sonstebo) Thousand
Mildred, Catherine, Lucille

(L to R) Mildred, Melinda, Lucille, Chris, and Catherine Thousand

Matt and Barbara Endres

Clarence and Esther (Michelson) Lehnherr

Bert and Dorothy Rolstad
Donna, Delores

LeRoy and Gladys Collins
Mike, Jim, Charlie, Todd, Carey, Cathy

George and Helen Moyer

2. Andrew Cliffgard
Bart and Maggie (Olson) Baumgartner
Marjorie, Harold, Arlene

(L to R) Bart, Marjorie, Arlene, Harold, and Maggie Baumgartner

Harold and Geraldine Baumgartner
David, Janice, Marsha, Barbara

King and Sharon Mahoney
John, Melinda, Audra, Louis

3. Bennett and Bertha Komplin

Joseph and Esther (Stenseth) Oimoen
Ralph, Vernon, Anita

Henry and Gladys (Topper) Oimoen
Harlan

(L to R) Gladys, Harlan and Henry Oimoen

Harlan and Marilyn Oimoen
Bruce, Pamela

4. Gunnar and Lena Aavang
Alvin, Sylvanus, Idena, Gilmore

(L to R) Alvin, Gunnar, Idena, Lena, Sylvanus, and Gilmore Aavang at Gunnar and Lena’s 50th Wedding Anniversary in 1947.

Alvin and Ruth (Berg) Aavang
Arlene, Rubelle
Henry and Crystal Thompson

Sigvart and Hanna (Andresen-Forsmo) Nygaard
The Nygaard family also lived at site 16.
    Esther, Clara, Signe, Ruth, Mae

Dean and Emma Collins
    Francis

Dale and Joyce Bonness
    Michelle, Polly

5. Henry and Emeliea (Kubly) Kahl
    Carl, Pearl, Freda

Carl and Julia (Helgeson) Kahl
Carl was Director of the Ruste School Board in 1928.
    Beulah, Almira

Hendrick Anderson

John S. and Marie (Valstad) Johnson

John and Bertha (Abegglen) Amacher
    John, Bertha, Leny, Ruth, Linda, Samuel

Amos and Irene Bruflat
    Linda, Lorie

7. John Thousand

Christian J. and Lydia (Lewis) Thousand
Christ was Treasurer of the Ruste School Board in 1928.
    Doris, Joyce, Betty, Caryl

Christ and Lydia Thousand with their daughters: (in front) Doris, (L to R in back) Betty, Joyce, Carol

King and Sharon Mahoney
Moved here from farm 2.
    John, Melinda, Audra, Louis

8. Ruste School Site
Located at the corner of Co. Trunk Z and W. Blue Mound Road. Building was moved to German Valley (17).

9. Andrew and Carrie (Tvedten) Bruflat
    Carl, Selmer, Bennett, Christian, Anton, Albert, Erick

    Carl, Selmer, and Bennet Bruflat

10. Ole A. and Anna (Slimsa) Ruste
Although both were 1840s immigrants, Ole A. Ruste should not be confused with Ole E. Ruste, the parochial school teacher, who was probably his uncle. Ole Arneson and Anna lived in a log cabin here, on land adjoining the place his parents home-steaded (farm 6 in the Moen School District), from 1851 to 1896. They enlarged and improved it as their family grew. In about 1865, they put on a frame addition. In 1872, they added a rock addition to that.

On April 21, 1855, the meeting to organize the first public, English language school in what became the Ruste School District was also held in this house. Ole is traditionally credited with being one of the


Then, at the November 5, 1854, meeting at which the State Church faction organized itself as a separate congregation, Ole A. Ruste and O.B. Dahle were selected to conduct the election of Trustees for the new church. Ole, unlike O.B., was elected a Trustee of what became Perry Lutheran Church at that meeting -- a position he held from then until 1882 (except the year 1861) and from 1889 through 1894. He was simultaneously Secretary of the Congregation from 1854 through 1882 (except for 1861). In 1861 and 1870 Ole represented Perry at the "Synodemode" national convention. From 1885-8, Ole was a Deacon of the church.

Anton, Inger, Erik, Allan, Siri, Arne, Anne, Sarah, Christian, Anne
Anton was baptised in 1851 at the first Norwegian religious service in the Town of Perry. On Christmas Day 1858, Siri was the first child baptized in the stone Perry Lutheran Church building. Erick became a minister in 1879, serving in Idaho, South Dakota, and North Dakota. Allan was the teacher in this school district in 1875-76, but then moved to Iowa.

Christian (C.O.) and Betsy (Anderson) Ruste
C.O. wrote Sixty Years of Perry Congregation here at "Rippling Rill Farm" in 1915. As his father, C.O. was a Trustee and Secretary of the Perry Congregation and represented it at the 1908 annual meeting.

Edwin, Anton, George, Olin, Anna, Viola, Luella, Victor

Edwin and Rose Ruste
Vincent

Ray and Ruth Enloe
Betty, Clarence, Donald, Joyce, Mary, Charlotte

Ruth, Ray, Mary and Charlotte Enloe

Emory Pope

Clifford and Idellis (Disch) Fjelstad
Debra, Diane, Gregory, Jean, Julie, George, Gelaine, Shirley

11. William and Emma (Erickson) Keily
Wallace, Merl, Florence, Daniel, Harold, Edward, Ruby, Ethel, Mary, Dorothy, Virginia

Melvin and Tina (Strommen) Framstad
Mildred, LaVern, Ardell, Lela, Orpha, Marie


Front row: (L to R) Mildred, Melvin, Tina, and Orpha Framstad. Back: Lela, LaVern, Ardell, and Marie Framstad.
Don and Rose Marie Frisch
Bruce, Gary, Randy

Rod and Jacki Sale
Karsten, Aaron

Steve and Karri Gadow
Andrew

12. Hans and Annie Brusveen
Adolph and Amanda (Halvorson) Thronson
Stanley, Edwin, Milo, Mabel, Clarence, Reuben, Ann, Evelyn

Back row: (L to R) Edwin, Mila, Stanley, Reuben and Clarence Thronson. Front: Amanda, Mabel, Evelyn, Anne, and Adolph Thronson

Milo and Mildred (Framstad) Thronson
Ruth Ann, Donna Jean

Edwin and Myrtle Thronson
Russell, Elaine

Stanley and Emma (Lehnheer) Thronson
Glenn, Paul, Beverly

Paul and Alona (Humphreys) Thronson
Tammy, Tracy, Therese

13. Christian and Karen (Carlson) Moen
James, Clara, Mabel, Isaac, Selmer

Buildings have been razed.

14. Ferdemant Steyer
John Steyer
Walter Tschanz
Heidi, Walter, Herman, Werner, Magdalena

Carl and Corrine Vills
William Bennett

Fred and Bertha Schweitzer
Fred Jr., Ida, Ricky

LeRoy and Gladys Collins
The Collins family moved here from farm 1.
Mike, Jim, Charlie, Carey, Todd, Cathy,

15. Tollef Komplien
Ole and Inger Komplien
Alma, Isaac, Selmer, Clarence, Tena, Milo, Ilet, Melvin

Milo and Lillie Komplien
Melba

Milo and Lillie Komplin in 1969

Victor and Irene (Knudtson) Valstad
Diane, Dennis, Delores

Kenneth and Melba (Komplin) Huset
Lyle, Douglas, Luann

16. Arne Cliffgard
Gunner and Lena Aavang
Alvin, Sylvanus, Idena, Gilmore
Sigvart and Hanna Nygaard

Sigvart and Hanna (Andresen-Korsmo) Nygaard
Sigvart was Clerk of the Ruste School Board in 1928.
Esther, Clara, Signe, Ruth, Mae

(L to R) Mae, Ruth, Signe, Clara, and Esther Nygaard

Alvin and Ruth Aavang
The couple also lived at 4, the farm he grew up on.
Arlene, Rubelle

Alvin and Ruth Aavang, Rubelle and Arlene

Ernie Gilbertson

17. Ruste School was moved to this location and combined with the German Valley School to form this house. We did not research the residents of this "new" building, as it is out of the district.
The churches in the historic Perry Norwegian Settlement always provided opportunities for fellowship and benevolence. Here members of the Hauge Evangelical Lutheran Congregation are packing candy and peanuts for their Christmas Church Service. (L to R) ? Sanders, unknown man, Nora Homme, Gilbert Hageseth, and ? Sanders.

The Daleville Mission Forening organized in 1892 kept a missionary in Madagascar, helped the Homme’s orphan home, and did other charitable activities. Shown here sometime between 1906 and 1912 are from back (L to R) Miss Anne Hill, Mrs. Carl Sanders, Mrs. Carl Paulson, Mrs. Simon Aarhus, Mrs. Halvor Anderson, Mrs. Berit Mickelson, Miss Lanna Jacobson, Mrs. Jul Hovrud, Mrs. Ole Johnson, Miss Lisa Kittleson, Mrs. Oscar Daley, Mrs. Magnuson, Mrs. Mathea Grinder, Mrs Caroline Grimstad, Mrs. Haser, Mrs. Ole Paulson, Mrs. Hans Larson, Mrs. Olaus Thompson, Mrs. O.T. Savre, Mrs. S.A. Sanders, Mrs. Erik Goli, Mrs. John Stuckey, Mrs. Ben Daley, Mrs. Magnus Johnson, Mrs. Agnes Lockrem, Miss Annie Jelle, Mrs. Ellen Goli, Miss Jenson, and Mrs. Oscar Olson.

The "Little Helpers" organized in 1905, but shown here in c. 1910, included young girls living near Daleville. Its members raised money for charitable causes, such as the Homme’s orphan home, had a good chance to socialize, learned domestic arts, read Christian literature and sing. Picture in the back are Lily Ronnold, Louise Larson, Clara Grinder and Clara Ronnold. From the back row to the front, in the light tops are unknown, Mable Johnson, Ruth Grimstad, unknown, Nora Hovrud, Clara Aarhus, Anna Johnson, Agnes Daley, Myrtle Johnson, Delia Peterson, Hazel Severson, Mildred Stensby, Hazel Paulson, Beulah Goli, Celia Sanders, Lulu Paulson, Agnes Sanders, Grace Sanders, Gladys Sanders, Bernadine Stenseth, Ruth Daley, Edna Goli, Luella Johnson, Annie Bale, Jennie Iverson, and unknown.