

The Past Lives of Collin County Students

Elementary winner of the Collin County Historical Commission's 2023 Essay Contest

By Abby Wilson (age 11)

While there are some similarities in the schooling, the past lives of Collin County students are very different than those of today.

Common schools taught the 3 R's – reading, writing, and arithmetic. Students may not have received numeric grades. All the subjects used the McGuffey Readers.

Jean Young was in the Kelly Community close to 100 years ago. She walked one mile to school because there were no buses. She grew up in the Weston area. Jean began working for the county in 1951. Eventually, she worked up to being the District Clerk, and held that position for 25 years.

Epi Goldstein grew up in Celina. She learned English from her older siblings, and performed well in school. When she got home for the day, she picked cotton. She now raises her two grandchildren with her husband Steve. They own Texas Range Honey and the Blue Door in Weston.

According to Joy Gough, some of the schools were only in session for 5 months because of the picking of cotton and other harvesting. Several families joined together and made their own schools. The schools covered grades 1 through 8.

I like many things about my homeschool life, and a few points are: that I can ask any questions I want so I can understand; I get to spend more time with my family; and we are allowed to learn at our own pace. All the time I spend with my brother, Ryder, has made a strong bond between us. My parents teach us about their interests, such as reading and electronics.

I used the Primer McGuffey Reader to study, and there are up to 6th grade Readers. In the Primer, you learned cursive at a young age, while I learned cursive in 3rd grade. I used the Primer to learn to read, minus the reading cursive part.

We can see that schools have changed in the last 100 years. Here are some examples: travelling to school was a lot different than it is now. You used to walk to school, now we have buses and cars, which means kids can get dropped off or ride the bus.

Absences were treated differently. If you had to miss out on school in the past, the teachers would assume you were helping on the farm, and it wasn't a big deal. Nowadays in public school, if you are absent too much, parents can get punished.

In conclusion, I believe Collin County schools in the past were more like homeschooling today, but a little bit bigger. Alongside of schooling, you farmed. Farming was a much bigger deal than it is now. I wonder how Collin County will look in school in the future.

Works Cited

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