



The Glade Community Historical Society, Inc.

including Garfield & Pine Log, Arkansas, a 501 (c)(3) Charity

www.gladehistorynwa.org

Glade Newsletter # 3, 2025

The work of the society is to preserve history of Garfield, Pine Log and Glade by researching and gathering stories, documents & artifacts to connect with the community

Riding the School Bus to Rogers

Education reform of rural Arkansas schools began in 1909. Again, in 1929 a law passed that allowed a county's votes to approve the consolidation of local schools. 1500 school districts closed. In 1946 an attempt failed, but in 1948, the consolidation measure passed by popular vote. Eleven hundred school districts closed. (Encyclopedia of Arkansas).

Before consolidation, rural schools had little money from the state for many years. "Funding came from local ad valorem taxes, mostly, and the only state aid was the income tax—what little amounted to the income tax.....we had no state aid other than that until 1935 when the sales tax was passed. ...It was mostly local taxation and there wasn't enough of it," J Wesley Sampier, Garfield Superintendent 1934-1936. He continued. "Now, the schools that had industries—Rogers had the railroad and had plenty of money, but Garfield...didn't have any assets."

Garfield School originated as a frame building with a Masonic Hall above. (Goodspeed's History of Benton County). In 1889 three general stores, a jewelry store with Post Office, a candy store, hotels, a bank, lumber yard, and fruit evaporator existed in Garfield. In 1921-1923, additions allowed for a two -year high school. And in 1932 there were twelve grades.

The existing stone building was erected in 1942 by the National Youth Organization and many community members. The building was heated with wood until 1950. Coal and diesel fuel followed and then resumed with wood heat in 1985.

The Rural Electrification Administration was created in 1935 by Clyde Ellis, a former Garfield student, teacher, and superintendent (1929-1933) before he became a US congressman. Water was piped inside in the 1940s. Hot lunches began in 1942. The first school bus was an old enclosed truck. Some students rode horses or buggy. Picnics, field trips, debate teams, basketball, and spelling bees were school activities. The local school was the community center.

In the 1920s, one room schools were annexed. Liberty was the first to attend Garfield in 1928. Fairview # 73 was annexed when Garfield was a three- year high school in 1929. Providence-Taylor Branch School # 125 annexed to Garfield in 1931, followed by Walnut Hill School # 101 in 1943, Pine Log School in 1944, Clantonville-Fairview School # 1 in 1945, Ozark School # 15 (or Ruddick # 15) in 1947, Corinth School in 1947, and Coal Gap School in 1949. (Garfield and her Ten Schools).

On January 20, 1949, upon petition of both Coal Gap and Garfield patrons, the Benton County Board of Education agreed to dissolve Coal Gap School District No. 105 and annex it to the Garfield District No. 114. But, seven weeks later, on March 5, 1949, Garfield School District 114 was dissolved and annexed to Rogers School District No. 30. Then children of both the old Coal Gap and the old Garfield districts attended the Garfield School through the sixth grade, while junior and senior high students were bused into Rogers.” (Billie Jines, Vol 1-5)).

At first, high school students from Glade rode the Rogers School bus on rough roads up Gravel hill and into Prairie Creek in 1950 and half way through 1952. The road past Coal Gap School headed straight west. The bus did not turn right at the current sharp 15 miles an hour corner toward Whitney Mountain. Herbert Williams was the first bus driver from Glade to Rogers. Later, Ralph Snoderly drove the bus from Glade to Garfield.

Going through Prairie Creek, the bus stopped at the top of Gravel Hill and picked up Barbara and Jerry Burlingame. Farther up the road waited Johnny Agnew, and the Guyll kids. At the mysterious cave, the bus stopped for the Mackenzie children before crossing a creek and a sharp right turn to pick up Patsy and Ramona Head. Their farm was about a mile from Prairie Creek store. From there, the bus continued on unpaved state highway 12 into Rogers. Designated state Highway 12 in 1926, the road from Prairie Creek to Rogers was not paved until the new White River Bridge at Prairie Creek opened in 1963.

Travel time increased with changes in consolidation. The bus picked up Glade students in 1952 and traveled the rugged Lost Bridge Road to Garfield. Not until November 23, 1966, was this road designated Highway 127 and paved. Elementary students remained in the Garfield School while older students traveled to Rogers High School. The school day was longer traveling from Glade through Garfield.

In the winter months, the sky was dark both morning and evening as Glade students left and returned home. Participation in organizations was limited in high school. Students had to leave Rogers an hour early because of the distance which affected assimilation. No Garfield resident ever served on the Rogers School Board of Education from 1950-2024.

In May 2024 the Garfield Elementary School closed but had the distinction of being the oldest operating elementary school in the state. It opened in 1888 and closed in May 2024 after 136 years educating youngsters. Older students continued to ride the bus to Rogers.

After Rogers closed the elementary school, the Garfield First Baptist Church offered the use of their building at 17784 Marshall Street to the Garfield Scholars' Academy (GSA). A tuition-free, public charter school served elementary students in 2024-2025, but the state fire marshal did not approve the building's fire safety code for students in 2025-2026.

History connects us. A few years after Coal Gap school closed, eminent domain called for Glade farmers to sell and move and make way for Beaver Lake. One Glade resident, Liss Williams, widower, purchased a farm at Pea Ridge, Arkansas. He moved the old post office building and it remained at the farm over fifty years. It was returned to Glade in 2015 and refurbished as the Glade Museum. The farm in Pea Ridge passed to his heirs and was sold by son, Stanley and his wife Dorothy Williams this summer. They purchased the old Garfield school building from Rogers Public Schools in July 2025 and immediately signed it over to Garfield Scholars Academy to ensure educational opportunity in the community. Students will be able to attend school at the Garfield Scholars' Academy in this historic building in the fall of 2025.

Black Oak Band!

Join us for our third general meeting of 2025 on July 27, at 2:00 pm at Coal Gap School on Slate Gap Road. Free hot dogs and root beer floats will be available.

GCHS: President, Patricia Heck; Secretary, Judi Walter; Treasurer, Ruth Billingsley and board members Gary Blackburn, Darcie Heinrich and Dorothy Williams.