

Glimpses of Timberline History

Oct. 13, 2012

Daily Herald Article

by Diana Mills

Timberline Middle School celebrated its 10th birthday this year with a special assembly featuring a video production recounting the history of Alpine's school building for all the students.

Moana Burgess, whose in-laws previously owned the land that Timberline is on, made the presentation. She also was the first PTSA president for the school and is one of the secretaries in the front office.

In a subsequent telephone interview, Burgess shared the story of how her husband James Burgess's family was dedicated to education. Building Timberline on land they had owned was appropriate.

"James's father, Reid, was the oldest of four children and had lost his father (Clarence) when he was young." She said. "Reid's mother (Jessie) had died from burns received in an accident. One of her dreams was to have her 4 children graduate from college.

"After Reid graduated from high school he left on his LDS mission. When he returned, he and his youngest brother worked together to run the family's farm, earning the money for all of the children to graduate from college.

The importance of education carried on to the next generation as well. James's mother Marjorie had recorded in her will that none of the family land could be divided between her 6 children until they also had all graduated from college."

"Education was obviously of great importance in the lives of the Burgess family, and that focus continues with the building of Timberline on what was previously Burgess land."

Using history from "Alpine Yesterdays" by Jenny Adams Wild, Burgess told of the first school in Alpine, which was a one-room cabin that was constructed north of the cemetery hill in 1852. There was only one teacher and about 85 students all in one room.

Two years later the school was then moved inside the fort on North Main Street into a building that had a fireplace to keep the school and students warm. Light was provided by hand-dipped candles.

In 1872 a new rock church was built in town, which temporarily housed the school, but the first through fourth grades were taught in the old city hall. There were 200 school children in town then.

In 1899 work was begun on a red brick schoolhouse. That building was completed in 1901, and it was two stories tall with two classrooms on each level plus a cloakroom, a supply room, and an office. Two small outhouses (painted different colors so the students would tell them apart) stood outside the large building.

In 1924 a gymnasium with indoor toilets was added to the property. This building was also used by the community for dances and plays.

From this point on students were bused, first by wagon then by trucks, to schools in American Fork.

August 20, 2003, was the first day of school for Timberline Middle School, which now houses 1,277 students along with administration, staff, and faculty.

An additional presentation at the assembly featured a video of the first student body president at Timberline, Katie Mower, who is now Katie Mower Peacock. She spoke to the students from Florida where she is preparing to enter medical school.

She counseled the students to enjoy their time at Timberline, but also to think about the future and what they want to do with their education and careers.

The current student body president for Timberline, Jayden Crowther, then spoke to the students about making this school year a good one. He introduced a group of four students who presented a tricky balancing act that promoted the idea of every student working together well to make it a great school year.

Edited version corrections made Nov. 2013