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Haymarket High holds 50-year reunion

By BETTY CURRAN
JM Staff Writer

After 50 years, the Haymarket High School graduating class of 1940 held its first reunion last Saturday. Although 19 graduated, only 14 came to the reunion.

"Two have died and three others said they couldn't come," explained Evelyn Smith Lunsford of Gainesville, who organized much of the event.

At first she said, it was a guessing game until a new arrival put on a nametag or spoke. "I would never have known Nancy Ratcliff until she spoke. Her voice was the same of course. But I was only 17 when I graduated and I guess we weren't fully grown. Nancy had really filled out. But after talking to her, her voice was the same. They all wanted the addresses of one another and I told them I would send the addresses along directly."

Like other such reunions, prizes were given for the one who traveled the farthest and the one with the most grandchildren. Anna Blough Williams who taught this class at Haymarket High, also attended the class reunion. She could not figure out how she had been found but was glad to be here.

Cocktails and dinner ended about 7:30 p.m. and then things went wild with special gifts for special members of the class such as a coffee mug with obscene words.

Ever gracious and full of southern hospitality, Lunsford helped round up the former graduates to pose for an updated class photograph. She included Blough in this picture.

Williams said that she left teaching shortly after this class graduated and went into library science school where she met her husband. They were married in 1940 and will celebrate their 50th wedding anniversary on June 20. The Williamses live in Virginia and have two daughters and two grandchildren.

Another class member distributed copies of the 1940 graduation photograph and a picture of the Haymarket High School. Many of the members of the class could not find themselves on the old photograph but each was sure they were there.

Lunsford said her class was the next to the last class to graduate from Haymarket High. "After the next year the school closed and the students went to Osbourn High in Manassas. Then the building was made into apartments and it burned down soon after that."

Katherine Sinclair and John Wood shared the prize for traveling the farthest. The live about two blocks from each other in Punta Gorda, Fla.

Ralph Robertson was recognized by the Class of 1940 for having the

most children, 6, and the most grandchildren, 15.

The former teacher gratefully received a sawblade and stand with a hand painted replica of Haymarket High School.

When the classmates arrived in Manassas, only one sought a hotel, Lunsford said. The rest of the out-of-towners had relatives here or they lived close by and just drove from home.

Lunsford has revisited the site that use to hold Haymarket High. "I rode up that road yesterday," she said. "It brought back lots of old memories. I spent all of my school life in that building from first grade through high school. There were four rooms inside and a shack out back. We didn't have any indoor plumbing back then. Our basketball court was outside and the boys played soccer and baseball."

The four teachers for the four rooms boarded with a family across the street from the high school.

"It was a good get together we had. Some said they didn't want to wait another 50 years for the next one and suggested we have it in five years...We'll see. Somebody else will have to put this one on, but of course of lot of them helped."

Lunsford said, "Ruby brought old money and wrapped it as individual gifts for each of us. There were half-dollars and silver dollars. That was certainly thoughtful of her but it must have also been very expensive."

Lunsford said she worked for 19 years as a clerk in the Gainesville Post Office until she retired about five years ago. Another graduate, Katharine, worked in the Navy Department, Virginia was in the Post Office in Marshall, so she and Lunsford had kept in touch with one another and with Holly who worked for years for suburban gas in Gainesville.

Gordon was a farmer and Bertha and Margaret were housewives. John had an Army career and Merrill worked for C&P Telephone and Lucy worked in supplies for a couple of different medical companies.

"All in all, we had a great time," Lunsford said. "We sure did have a great time. But I don't know if I'd be ready to do it again in only five years."

Lunsford chuckled when she recalled Ollie Smith's accounting for herself over the past 50 years to the rest of her former classmates, all of whom have been married. "Ollie said, 'I'm not married and I don't have any children and I am not going to get married and I'm still not going to have any children.' Maybe you had to be there but that really struck me as funny."

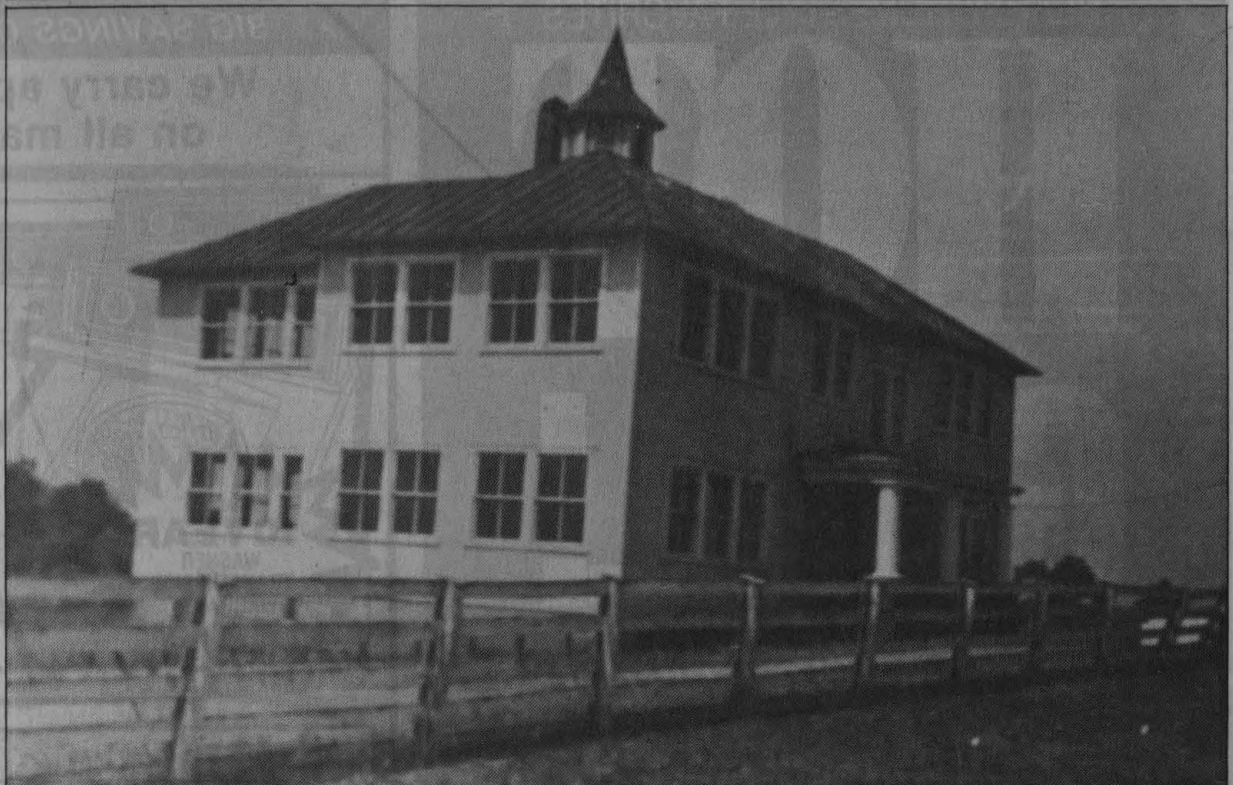


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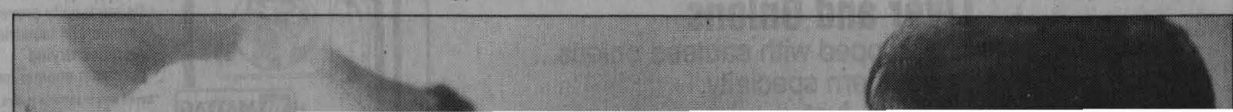
50-year reunion

Front row, from left, Margaret Hurlbut Ratcliffe, Lucy Ellis Richey, Anna Blough Williams (teacher), Maphie Welsh Dunton. Second row, Kathryn Sinclair Daniels, Edna Moore McGrath, Ollie Smith Tomkins, Bertha

Pattie Carpenter, Virginia Wines Edwards, Evelyn Smith Lunsford. Third row Muriel Ellison Webb, Gordon Pattie, Rolfe Robertson, Raymond (John) Wood and Ruby McQuinn Castelli. Below, the same graduates in 1940.



Haymarket High School in 1940. Below, at the reunion former teacher Anna Blough Williams accepts a replica of the building painted on a sawblade.



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