

Buffalo Valley School

Putnam Co., TN

Notes of Walter Shanks

References:

1. Interview with Bob Lee Maddux and Judge Luke Medley
2. Private acts for Putnam County
3. Minutes of meetings of the Putnam County Board of Education
4. School Register for Buffalo Valley School from 1925-1967

The first Buffalo Valley School was constructed in 1890 or 1891. This building was a two-story frame building with several classrooms. It was located on a site which is now part of the super



highway which runs through Buffalo Valley. Earlier schools in this area were located at Denny Seminary and a school building in Buffalo Valley at a place which we know as the Henry Jones place.

(Pictured: Buffalo Valley Schoolhouse in the early 1900's).

According to Mr. Bob Lee Maddux, who was a student at the Buffalo Valley School from 1895 to 1902, the school was noted for its quality educational programs. Unlike many schools of that period, the Buffalo Valley School had a broad curriculum. There were classrooms for music and art and special teachers were employed for these courses, in addition to the traditional 3 R's. The school program at Buffalo Valley was so prestigious that people came to this school from other communities in this area; notably Lancaster, Wolf Creek, Rock Springs, and Big Indian Creek.

I don't have a list of all the teachers of the earlier school at Buffalo Valley, but two which are remembered are Sally Franklin, who was the teacher of music, and Ella Donelson who was the art teacher.

The first school had 3 months of free school. Any school time scheduled for the rest of the year was called a subscription school, which apparently meant that students would pay tuition to go to school.

In 1921 the state legislative passed a Private Act for the establishment of a Buffalo Valley Special School District. The first Board was to consist of C.B. Maddux, R.L. Alcorn, H.C. McKinley, W.G. Travis, and another to be appointed. This special school district was to consist of the 9th and 11th civil district, and a tax of 10 cents per \$100 could be assessed to property for financial support.

We have no record of the function of the Buffalo Valley School District, and Judge Luke Medley says that this Private Act was never implemented.

The oldest record that we can find in the office of the Board of Education regarding the Buffalo Valley School is a 1924 register which lists Mattie Bush as the teacher. We have registers for each year after that until the closing of the Buffalo Valley School.

This structure which we occupy today was construed in 1929, largely by efforts of citizens in the Buffalo Valley Community. However, it appears that Putnam County did pay some of the cost of construction of the school. School Board minutes of October 26, 1929 list a proposed bond issue of \$200,000 to construct several schools in Putnam Count and to complete the Buffalo Valley School plant. Representative W. G. Anderson and Senator W. A. Hensley were present at this meeting and pledged themselves to pass the proposed bill in the extraordinary Session of the sixty-sixth General Assembly.

Available records from 1924 to 1967 show that Buffalo Valley School was a two and three teacher school at various times through this period. In the early forties Buffalo Valley had dropped to a two teacher school, but in 1944 regained a 3 teacher status and remained this way until 1955 when it dropped once more to a two teacher school. Buffalo Valley School dropped to a one teacher school in the 1966-67 school years and did not re-open in the fall of 1967 due to an insufficient number of students.

*Read more about the Buffalo Valley School and Community Center at:
<http://www.ajlambert.com>

