

The Boomer Township School #4

© 2016 by Robert A. "Bob" Christiansen, updated 1 May '16.

This report has but one photograph with identifications.

The one-room rural Boomer #4 school served the west central portion of Boomer Township in Pottawattamie County, Iowa, north of Council Bluffs. It was located several miles northeast of Honey Creek in the northwest corner of Section 20. The district occupied Sections 17, 18, 19 and 20 of Boomer Township and originally consisted of primarily wooded land, with North Pigeon Creek running near the eastern end of the subdistrict.

The Boomer #4 school was probably closed in the late 1950s.

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For general information about Boomer Township schools, including a diagram of school locations in Boomer Township, see my report *Boomer and Hazel Schools*.

For an 1875 map and a current map of Boomer Township, see my report *Boomer and Hazel Dell Townships Overview*.

I would appreciate hearing from you if you have further photos with identifications. My contact information is in the *Acknowledgments and Sources* section of *Boomer and Hazel Dell Schools*.

Students on the c. 1931 Boomer #4 Photo



Front: Kenneth Bertelsen, Max Ryan, Richard Riddle, Junior Bertelsen, Kenneth Plummer, Darrel Bertelsen and Harvey Ferris.

Middle: Kathryn Riddle, Hazel Ann Axtell, Rosalie Ryan, Fern Verpoorten, Florence Driver, Vernelle Plummer, Mildred Driver and Beulah Wohlers.

Back: Charles Ferris, Orville Jacobsen, Eleanor Kermeen, Edna Ferris, Rita Ryan, Miss Margret Rommel (the teacher), Agnes Axtell, Ruth Ryan, Eileen Ryan, Horace Bertelsen and Leslie Bertelsen.

Known Boomer #4 Teachers

c. 1931	Margaret Rommel
1943-44	Ethel Bertelsen, Missouri Valley, Rt. 3, d/o Nels Bertelsen & Nora Pedersen, m. Donald Ward.
1956-57	Mrs. Esther Bolliger, d/o Nels Bertelsen & Nora Pedersen, w/o Jack Bolliger

In Memory - Kenneth Plummer, Max Rommel and Ralph Paulson

All those pictured in the c. 1931 photo on the following page survived the Great Depression but World War II took its toll.

- In December 1944 Kenneth Plummer, fifth from the left in the front row, was serving in the 424th Infantry Regiment of the 106th Infantry Division in Belgium. The Battle of the Bulge began on December 16th when a German surprise attack punched through the thin forward positions held by the 106th Division's other two regiments, both of which surrendered on the 19th. Kenneth Plummer's 424th Regiment participated in the defense of St. Vith. Kenneth Plummer was killed on December 28th.
- Miss Margaret Rommel, the teacher in the photo on the following page, had one brother, Max. Max served in the South Pacific with E Company, 2nd Battalion, 6th Marine Regiment, 2nd Marine Division. On November 27th, the last day of organized opposition after the Tarawa invasion, Max's battalion killed 175 elite Japanese troops on Buariki Island. Two of the 32 marines killed on Buariki were Max Rommel and Ralph Paulson of Ames, also a member of Company E. Ralph Paulson was the cousin of my cousins, Alvin, Donald and Phyllis Petersen.

About Margaret Rommel

My great-uncle Hans Peter Hansen, a bachelor farmer in Hazel Dell Township, was infatuated with Margaret Rommel, a young teacher in the area. Unfortunately there were a number of impediments, one being that H. P. Hansen was 30 years older than Margaret Rommel. Another was that Margaret was a rather desirable young woman. It is said that Ted Wohlers and Ed Bertelsen fought over her at threshing time.

Edwin Bertelsen won out and he and Margaret married and had one child, Freeman. By 1942 Ed and Margaret were divorced and Margaret was living in Tabor, Iowa where she worked as a teacher.

In 1949 Margaret married Leonard Winkler at the Congregational Church in Tabor. Margaret lived a long life, dying in Omaha in 2013 at the age of 100.

Incidentally, a fictionalized 1956 Tabor, Iowa is the setting for Marilynne Robinson's 2004 novel *Gilead*, winner of the 2005 Pulitzer Prize for fiction. And the novel's protagonist is the pastor of the Congregational Church in Gilead.

The above Named Children Organized into Families

Children of Clifford Axtell & Jennie Hanson:

Agnes Axtell (22 Nov 1918 – 5 Feb 2009) m. Clyde Peters

Hazel Axtell (3 Jul 1925 -) m. Richard J. Kruse

Children of Emil Bertelsen & Edna Axtell:

Horace Bertelsen (23 Feb 1921 – 20 Sep 2005) m. Miriam Elizabeth "Betty" Moore

Leslie Bertelsen (15 Dec 1922 – 21 Jun 1994) m. Ila Kelso

Emil "Junior" Bertelsen (29 Mar 1926 – 4 Jul 2008) m. Betty Jean Wright

Children of James Bertelsen & Emma Thompson:

Kenneth Bertelsen (15 Nov 1924 – 23 Apr 1981) m. Doris Christoffersen

Children of John Bertelsen & Mabel Boren:

Darrel Bertelsen (28 Apr 1926 -) m. Clara Marie Mace

Children of Thomas Driver & Anna Reese:

Florence Driver (15 Mar 1922 – 4 Nov 2005) m. Richard Luschen

Mildred Driver (abt 1923 -) m. Robert R. Carlson

Children of Everett Ferris & Jane Dennin:

Edna Ferris (2 Nov 1920 – 24 May 2002) m. Paul Hedegaard

Charles Ferris (2 Dec 1921 – 25 Oct 2009) m. Rosalia Marie "Rose" Ives; divorced

Harvey Ferris (29 Sep 1923 – 8 Apr 1991) m. Dorothy Feekin

Children of Charley Jacobsen & Anna Wohlers:

Orville Jacobsen (10 Jan 1923 – 27 Aug 1996) m. Helen Moffatt

Children of Joseph Kermeen & Blanche Hagie:

Eleanor Kermeen (7 Jul 1921 – 30 Jun 1997) married Mr. Nellis and Mr. Ulrickson.

Children of Frank Plummer & Hazel Jacobsen:

Vernelle Plummer m. Wayne Jackson "Jack" Fritz

Kenneth W. Plummer (25 Jan 1925 – 28 Dec 1944) died in World War II.

Children of Edson Riddle & Mildred Burns:

Richard Edson Riddle (15 Oct 1923 – 13 Oct 1999)

Kathryn Riddle

Children of Leo Ryan & Ruth Welbourn:

Rita Ryan (14 Apr 1918 – 3 May 2012) was a Society of the Sacred Heart (R.S.C.J.) sister

Ruth Ryan (10 Mar 1921 – 1 May 1967) probably never married

Eileen Ryan (13 Aug 1922 – 6 Feb 1971) probably never married

Max Ryan (16 Dec 1923 – 17 Oct 1999) m. Mary Elizabeth Curtis

Rosalie Ryan (22 Jan 1926 – 6 Feb 2003) m. Ernest T. Hobza

Children of William Verpoorten & Christena Nielsen:

Ferne Verpoorten (26 Mar 1923 – 6 May 2012) m. Leroy Matthiesen

Children of Alfred Wohlers & Mary Jensen Burkhead:

Beulah Wohlers (c. 1925 -)

Where the Boomer #4 Families Lived

Clifford Axtell & Jennie Hanson, married 1915, buried Grange Cemetery:

The Clifford Axtell family lived on a farm his parents, C. M. Axtell & Clara Driver, owned just to the north and west of the school, where Harvey Ferris lived in 1967.

Emil Bertelsen & Edna Axtell, married 1919, buried Grange Cemetery:

The Emil Bertelsen family lived just north of Boomer #4.

James Bertelsen & Emma Thompson, married 1923, buried Grange Cemetery:

I believe the James Bertelsen family lived on the Bertelsen home place, about 1 ¼ miles northwest of Boomer #4.

John Bertelsen & Mabel Boren, married 1920, buried Grange Cemetery:

Thomas Driver & Anna Reese, married 1909, buried Grange Cemetery:

The Thomas Driver family lived ¾ miles south of Boomer #4, on the east side of the road, where Derald & Gladys Blois were living in 1967.

Everett Ferris & Jane Dennin, married 1920, buried Grange Cemetery:

Charley Jacobsen & Anna Wohlers, married 1920, buried Calhoun Cemetery, Harrison County:

The Charley Jacobsen farm was in Section 17 northeast of Boomer #4. By 1940 the Charley Jacobsen family was living in Lagrange Township, Harrison County.

Joseph Kermeen & Blanche Hagie, married 1900, buried Walnut Hill, Council Bluffs:

The Joseph Kermeen farm was just east of the William Verpoorten farm.

Frank Plummer & Hazel Jacobsen, married 1923, burial location unknown:

The Frank Plummer family may have lived near his parents, in Section 19 southwest of Boomer #4. By 1940 they were living in Council Bluffs, where Frank was a truck driver.

Edson Riddle & Mildred Burns, married 1922, burial location unknown:

Moved from Hazel Dell Twp. in early 1930s to Mary Andersen farm south of road in Sec. 20. By 1940 living in Council Bluffs where Edson was a construction laborer.

Leo Ryan & Ruth Welbourn, married 1916, burial location unknown:

Moved from Neola Twp., perhaps from father's farm in Section 7, in early 1930s.

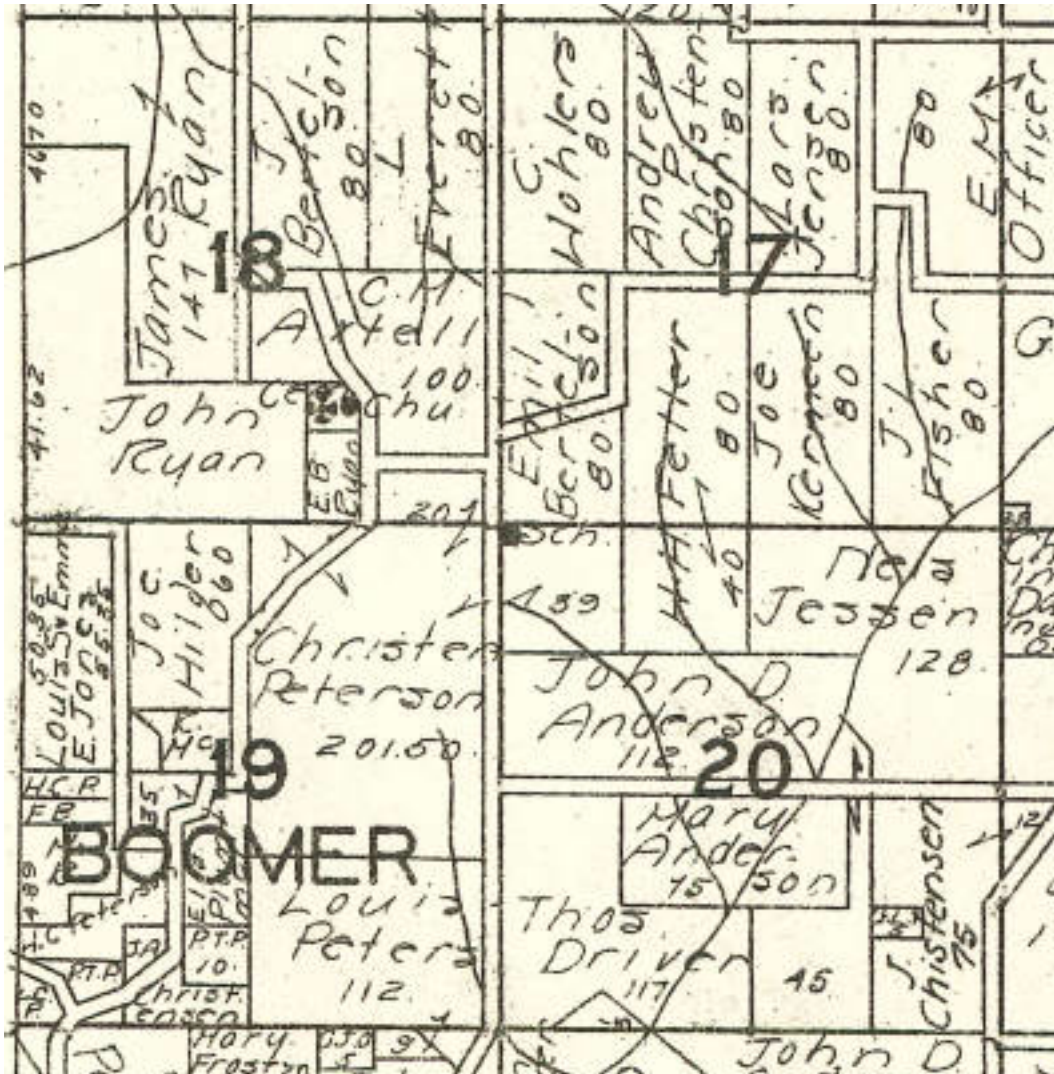
Probably renting Ryan land in west part of Section 18. By 1940 living in Council Bluffs where Leo was a laborer for the WPA.

William Verpoorten & Christena Nielsen, married 1910, buried St. Paul's Boomer:

The William Verpoorten farm was just east of Boomer #4, on what had earlier been the Sophus Bruns farm and later owned by Hans Feller. In 1967 Harold Ewing owned this farm.

Alfred Wohlers & Mary Jensen Burkhead, married 1924, Alfred & 2nd wife Ruby buried Grange Cemetery:

The Alfred Wohlers family lived on the farm of his late father, Claus Wohlers, about a mile north of Boomer #4 on the east side of the road. By 1940 Alfred had moved to Council Bluffs and was listed as a widower who was a cement finisher for the WPA. A few years later Alfred married Ruby Montgomery.



Boomer #4 Subdistrict from the 1930 Hixson Pottawattamie County Atlas
(plats may date to 1919)