

**A hill is not too hard to climb,
Taken one step at a time.
One step is not too much to take,
One try is not too much to make.
One step, one try, one song, one smile,
Will shortly stretch into a mile.
And everything worthwhile was done
By small steps taken one by one.
To reach the goal you started for,
Take one step more, take one step more!**

By J.D. Freeman

Quoted from the 1957 annual

Nevis Public School has changed over the years. However, the mission of the school has always been to provide the students with the best education possible.



Nevis School History

Nevis was named by the Great Northern Railroad after Mount Ben Nevis, the highest mountain in Scotland. Originally the city was a switching off point for the railroad serving the lumber mills in Akeley, the largest in the world at one time. Nevis grew as a center for agriculture and lumber. Main crops then were alfalfa and clover, for both hay and seed, and then beans and potatoes. At one time there were three potato warehouses along the railroad line and there was a bean house, which at a later date housed the school for a short time. Nevis prospered before the depression years. Besides the grain door manufacturing operation and bean house, Nevis boasted the following businesses at one time: barbershop owned by W.D. Cary, a bowling alley owned by Mr. Wangan, a photography studio owned by J.H. Nixon, a Star Theater owned by Fred Giese, a clothing store owned by A.K. Lewis, a millinery owned by Lean Giese, the Hub Café owned by the Gieses, a meat market owned by John Bender, a land agency owned by Halvorson and Thompson, the State Bank of Nevis owned by Justin Halvorson, a blacksmith shop owned by Bill Pritchett, a shoe repair shop owned by Carl Rusten, the Nevis Drug Co. owned by F.M. Butler, the Nevis Mercantile Co. owned by Peter Kavanagh, the General Merchandise Store owned by A.B. Bordsen, the Nevis Garage owned by C.O. Nieland, an undertaking, hardware, furniture, and jewelry establishment owned by Oli and August Erickson, the Dower Lumber Co. operated by Ed Erickson, a well-driller Sievert Olson, a wood-dealer Tom Fallihee, a potato ranch and warehouse owned by Rosander Brothers, a dairy owned by Trygve Hanson (milk was 6 cents per quart delivered), a telephone exchange operated by Mrs. Fairchild, an apple rower James Arrowood, and a painter Ed Gyllin. From the Park Rapids Enterprise July 9, 1977 and Centennial Edition by LuAnn Hurd

1849

- Congress reserved the 16th and 36th sections of each township for use as public schools.

1858

- Minnesota became a state on May 11, 1858. It was the 32nd state admitted to the Union.
- The Minnesota Constitution made it the duty of the legislature to establish a general and uniform system of public schools and established permanent school funding.

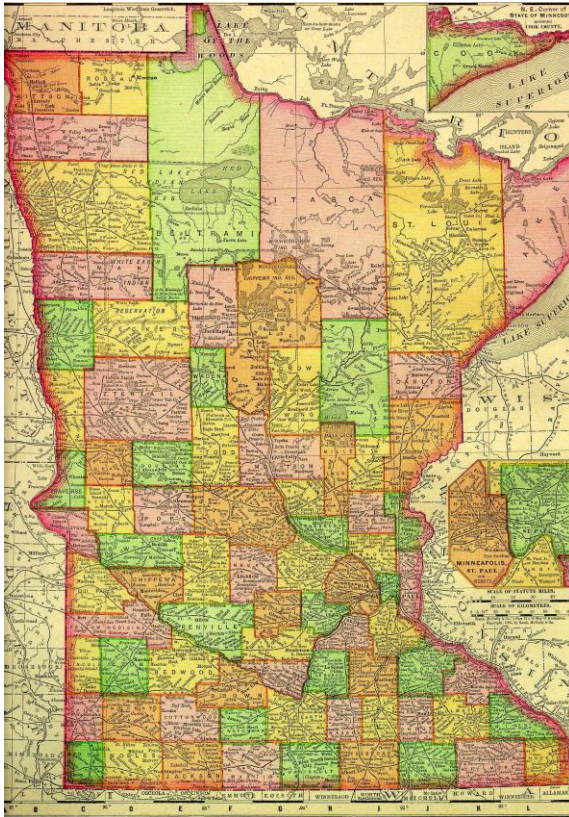
Roman Numerals						
I	V	X	L	C	D	M
1	5	10	50	100	500	1000
I Value Xylophones. Lucy Can't Drink Milk.						

1862

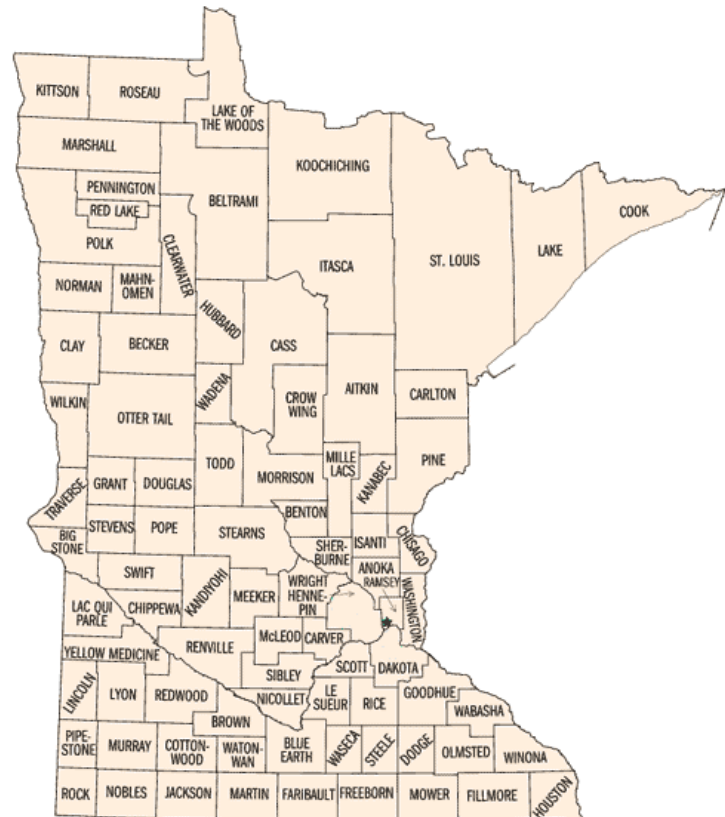
- School districts were prohibited from charging tuition.

May 27, 1883

- Hubbard County was organized. The county was named after Lucius Frederick Hubbard, Governor of Minnesota from 1882-1887.



Minnesota in 1895



Minnesota Today

1885

- The first compulsory attendance law was established; children from families too poor to provide school clothes, children with disabilities, and children living more than 2 miles from school were exempted.

1887

- The State property tax levy to support schools was initiated.

1891

- Itasca State Park became Minnesota's first state park. The park contains Lake Itasca, the source of the Mississippi River. Henry Schoolcraft determined that Itasca is the river's source in 1832. Groves of virgin red and eastern white pine are also found in the park. On April 20, 1891, the legislature passed an act entitled, "An act to establish and create a public park, to be known and designated as the Itasca State Park, and authorizing the condemnation of lands for park purposes." This act sets apart for park purposes 19,702 acres of land, and dedicates them to the perpetual use of the people. The act passed by one legislative vote at the height of the power of the lumber industry, when the area was worth a literal fortune in timber to the lumber barons.

1893

- Article by J.H. Nixon: When the panic of 1893 came, it hit many farmers in southern Minnesota and Iowa, who had small real estate loans on their farms. The loan company refused to renew them, but foreclosed, leaving the farmers only a small amount of money that their personal property would bring. Most of them had children and were forced to look for homesteads. They moved north in covered wagons. Many of them came to southeastern Hubbard County, arriving with very little money. There were houses to build, food to grow, and roads to build. Also, schools were needed for the children. The only taxable property was the timber lands so the school districts had to have some timber land to support a school. The first land cultivated was for potatoes, rutabagas, etc. with brush pastures for the livestock.

1898

- Nevis School was organized on July 19, 1898, per the front of the school board minute books for the years of 1934-1946. School District 36 was organized and a school house built ½ mile east of town on the Neilson farm. Joseph H. Nixon was the first teacher with nine pupils (per article written by him and printed in the Enterprise March 15, 1956. For the year prior to teaching in Nevis, he taught in Hubbard County District #20 - Akeley). Classes were held in a one room building. The next schoolhouse was used until the fall of 1913 when the students moved into the new building. That building became part of the Bethany Lutheran Parish Hall before it was torn down in 2008.
- The Great Northern Railroad came to Nevis. The railroad had reached Park Rapids in 1893, but with the financial panic of that year it delayed further building for five years.
- The last Indian outbreak near here was at Walker in 1898 when Major Wilkenson was killed and Ed Harris, his interpreter, was shot in the arm. The government set up a cannon at the west end of Lake Belle Taine and kept a company of cavalry at Hellkamp's to keep White Earth Indians from coming to Walker to help the ones there, but they did not come per article March 15, 1956.
- Daniel Petrie opened a sawmill on the east end of Elbow Lake (from about 1919 to present, the lake was known as Lake Belle Taine) per information from Kavanagh.

In 1919, Mr. Grover Conzet, a former resident of Nevis and later director of the State Forest Service, was going through old survey notes and came across the name Belle Taine, used in reference to the lake. The records were from Mahlon Black, deputy surveyor, who surveyed Nevis township in the fall of 1870. At the time Mr. Conzet was reading the notes, the lake was called Elbow Lake and there were so many Elbow Lakes in the state that it was very confusing. Mr. Conzet was enthusiastic over his discovery and wrote to his father about it asking him to get the new name started. His father misread Grover's handwriting and the name was first published as Belle Tam; however, on seeing this mistake Mr. Conzet had it immediately corrected. The word "Belle" in French means "beautiful" and "Taine" means "tin". In the early days of the French fur traders, tin mirrors were a common article of trade with the Indians, so naturally these traders on seeing the lake thought of it as a beautiful mirror. Lake Belle Taine was also called "Lake of the Isles" on an 1836 map by J.I. Nicollet. It was later in the 1880's that Belle Taine received the name Elbow Lake because of its shape. The information by Wallace Schutz, Minnesota Historical Society member, was pulled from "Lest We Forget".

Mr. Conzet attended the University of Minnesota in the fall of 1909 per annual online at google.books. There is a Conzet Island on the north side of Belle Taine Lake. His parents, John and Clara Conzet, are buried in the Nevis Lakeview Cemetery in 1926 and 1932 respectively.

July 30, 1898

- The Town of Nevis was organized at the last session of the county board, and Saturday evening residents of the township held their first town election, from August 5, 1898 issue of Hubbard County Enterprise.

April 1899

- Walter and Patty Pearson moved to Nevis. Walter platted the original town site of Nevis and opened the first store in the village, which was a dry goods store and grocery store. He was the first postmaster, opening a contract post office in the store. In 1934, Walter retired after serving as Postmaster for 35 years.

Walter Webster Pearson was born in Amherst, Wisconsin on March 26, 1872. He attended Amherst schools and graduated from Stevens Point (Wisconsin Normal School) and taught school in Sisseton, South Dakota. He enlisted in the army during the Spanish-American War, serving as quartermaster in Company E, Fifteenth Minnesota regiment. While serving in the army he lost the sight in one eye.

He was discharged from the army in Atlanta, Georgia on March 27, 1899. In April of that year, he and his wife moved to Nevis, Minnesota.

Mr. Pearson sold 5 acres of land to the Nevis School District #36 for the purpose of building a new school on September 11, 1912 (the current school is sitting on approximately 13-acre lot) at a cost of \$500. He also donated the land for a park just west of the school.

Mrs. Patty Pearson was a substitute teacher occasionally at Nevis School.

The Pearsons moved to Everett, Washington in 1934. He passed away at his home in Everett on August 31, 1936. Information from Terry Lindow file.

October 20, 1899

- Hubbard County Enterprise in the Spider Lake section states: School began at Nevis October 9 with Mrs. Pearson as teacher.



Original school building. Nevis School sold the building to Bethany Lutheran Church where they used it as a parish hall until they built a new church in 2007. Photo Courtesy of Northwoods Press.

1900

- Peter Kavanagh was elected as the first Hubbard County Superintendent of Schools. He was a Republican.
- The first school house was built in January 1900 and taught by J.H. Nixon. There were nine boys and no girls. He was paid \$30 per month and \$12 per month for board and had to attend two weeks summer school and taught a five month school year (there were no roads so there was a winter vacation) per Hubbard County Enterprise article March 15, 1956 written by J.H. Nixon.
- 10 men bought land from Frank Kennedy for the Nevis Lakeside Cemetery – Joseph H. Nixon, Justin Halvorson, Oliver Erickson, and 7 others.

ABCs
a-b-c-d-e-f-g
h-i-j-k-l-m-n-o-p
q-r-s-t-u-v
w-x-y and z
Now I know my ABCs
next time won't you sing with me?

Joseph H. Nixon biography written by Charles and Sara Ellen Scheers and appeared in the February 1950 Park Rapids Enterprise: "Mr. Nixon has been awarded more first prizes at the Minnesota State Fair, the Shell Prairie Fair at Park Rapids, the Hubbard County Fair at Nevis, and the Akeley Street Fair than any person in northern Minnesota. When he was awarded first prize at the International Corn Show at Omaha, Nebraska in 1909 for corn and clover, he attracted the personal attention of James J. Hill, "The Empire Builder" and president of the Great Northern Railway Co. Mr. Hill came to Nevis in his special car, and inspected an exhibit at the old Nevis Town Hall. All of the products of that display were grown on the Nixon farm. Mr. Nixon spent the day with Mr. Hill showing him the land in which the products were grown, and also the area adjoining Nevis and Akeley. Mr. Hill also paid a high tribute to Mr. Nixon in the presence of several hundred people. At that time the Red River Lumber Co., operating a sawmill at Akeley was the largest individual shipper on the Great Northern system. Mr. Hill made his only personal visit to the sawmill on this trip.

"After finishing high school and one year at Iowa Agriculture College in Ames, Iowa, Joseph Nixon taught school for two years in Iowa. Then, in 1896, the yearn for the lake country with its forests and game brought him to northern Minnesota where he took up a homestead in White Oak Township, 6 miles south of Akeley. He taught school for a year at Chamberlain and then 2 years at Akeley. He had developed an interest in photography and in 1900, after a year's work in Park Rapids, he opened a studio in Akeley on the upper floor of the Akeley Herald-Tribune Building, which he operated during the life of the sawmill. Many of the hundreds of pictures he took at that time are of real historical value to Hubbard County depicting as they do the lumber industry, the country and forest life, and old settlers, their customs and costumes of this area.

"Outdoor work lured him, and he broke up 20 acres on his homestead, putting it into corn, potatoes, and vegetables for the Akeley market. On that homestead claim he grew the first alfalfa raised in Hubbard County.

"About 1902, Mr. Nixon turned his attention to fairs. He helped James Arrowood start the Nevis Street Fair, which ran until 1910 when he with Swan Rodin organized the Hubbard County Fair at Nevis...In 1909 Rep. JH O'Neil, Com'r Harry Day and Joe Nixon took the first Hubbard County exhibit to the Minnesota State Fair and Nixon went down every year after for 10 years with the county exhibit...Farm exhibits from the Nixon farm were exhibited for many years at the Hubbard County Fair, also Mantrap Township Farm Bureau Exhibit.

"Since moving from Akeley to Nevis, Mr. Nixon has continued his civic duties for that village, having been a school board member for 30 years (1923-1947) and secretary-treasurer of Nevis Federal Land Bank for 8 years. He also was Mantrap town clerk for 17 years...He also worked two years on the state ditches for the county and made the first road drag at Nevis, and used it without pay a dozen years around Nevis and Mantrap roads. He also built the first permanent roads north of Nevis and in Mantrap Township."

1903

- The Nevis Telephone Exchange was formed. The exchange was in the Culver's house and was operated by Mrs. Fred Fuller and daughter per Hubbard County Enterprise article March 15, 1956, written by J.H. Nixon.

May 24, 1906

- From the Hubbard County Enterprise: The Sunday Pioneer Press reports that the attempt to drain Mantrap-Elbow Lake system (now Belle Taine) has been the cause of an appeal being made to Governor Johnson and Attorney General Young for aid to stop such action. James Ingram, who is interested in a mill at Nevis, has taken steps looking to securing a permanent injunction that will prevent the lakes from being drained and the matter will probably be taken to the courts. (James Ingram was listed as living in Todd Township, Hubbard County on the 1885 and 1895 census records. Per Hubbard County Bios on the Hubbard County Website, James was to have moved to Todd Township in the spring 1881).

July 28, 1906

- From August 2, 1906 issue of the Hubbard County Enterprise: James Ingram Mill is Total Loss and there is No Insurance. Saturday morning the residents of Nevis were awakened by the cry of fire, and upon turning out found that the Nevis Mill owned by James Ingram was all ablaze.

October 26, 1906

- The Articles of Incorporation are signed for the Corporation of Nevis Mercantile Company. The officers were: D.C. Fuller of Park Rapids as President, James Ingram from Sauk Center as Vice-President, and Peter Kavanagh from Nevis as Secretary/Treasurer.

January 12, 1907

- The Articles of Incorporation are signed for the Corporation of Nevis Lumber Company. The officers were James Ingram of Sauk Center as President, Frank B. Cannada of Ambrose, North Dakota as Vice President, and Carl Mahlum of Nevis as Secretary.

October 10, 1907

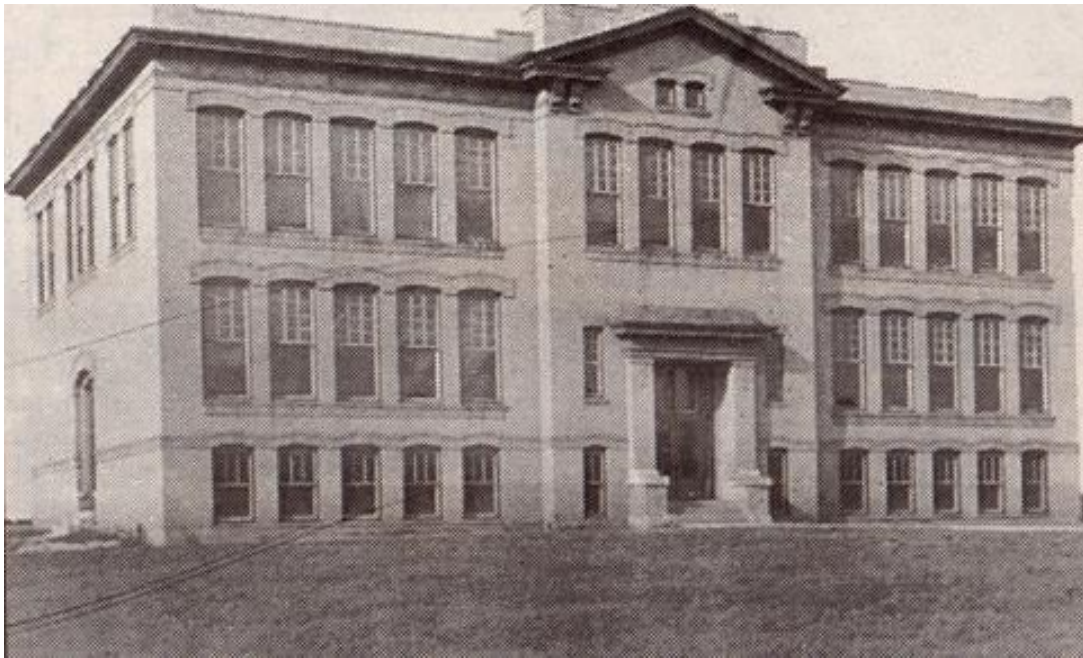
- State Bank of Nevis with a capital of \$10,000 opened on November 7 with Harold L. Halverson of New London as the cashier. Senator Thorpe of Willmar and John Estran of New London were the principal stockholders.

1908

- Olai, August, and Ed Erickson moved to Nevis. Olai and Ed opened a hardware store and August started a blacksmith shop.

1912 School District #36

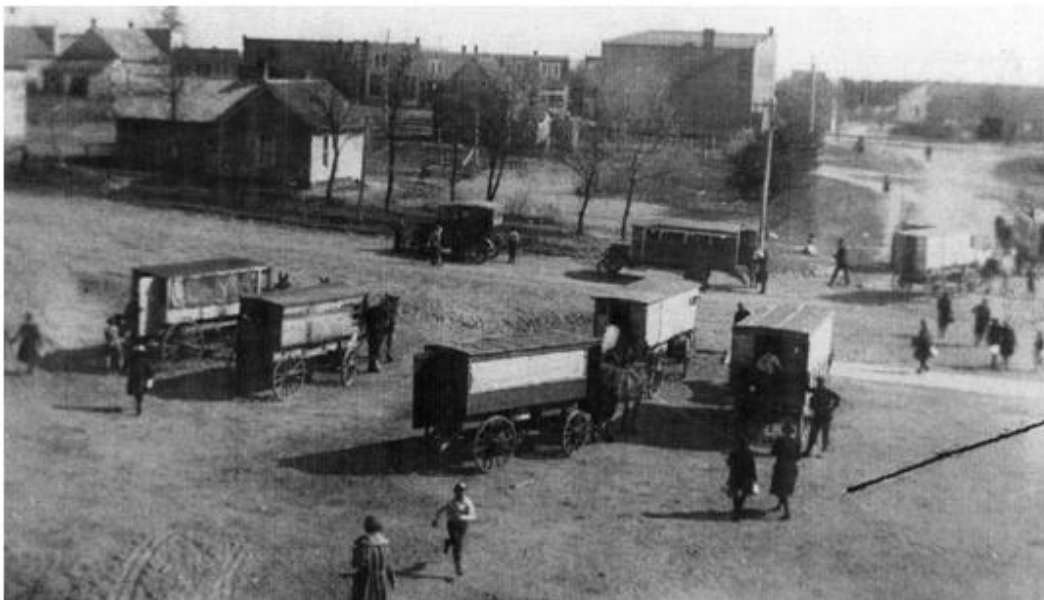
- September 11, Mr. Pearson sold a 5 acre lot of land to the Consolidated School District #36 for the purpose of building a school. The cost of the land was \$500.
- Original Nevis School started to be built on site.
- There were approximately 8,000 school districts in Minnesota.



1912 School building. Picture taken sometime before 1922. Photo courtesy of Northwoods Press.

September 1912

- First state primary election was held



Horse rigs once served as school buses. This picture was taken from the roof of the school building looking south/southwest toward town.
Picture from Terry Lindow and caption from Northwoods Press.

1913

- Original school building was completed. The building was open the fall of 1913 for the first class (this was the freshman class of 1917), per Grace Fairchild Gregerson page 9, 1981 "The Nevis Classmate".
- Federal income tax was enacted as the 16th Amendment.

1914

- Early in 1914, Olai Erickson ventured into the funeral business. He became known as the “Casket Seller.” He and his wife established a funeral parlor on the 2nd floor of the hardware store. His first funeral charge was \$38.50.

September 1914

- In an advertisement in the Enterprise Newspaper for D. R. Bradford County Superintendent, it states that there were 2 high schools (Park Rapids and Akeley), 2 graded schools (Laporte and Nevis), 4 semi-graded schools and 59 rural schools in the county.

December 1914

- The first mercantile store of Nevis, a wooden structure, burned to the ground.

1915

- Five men comprised the Nevis High School basketball team. Until the gym was built in 1922, the team played in the Nevis Town Hall, later called the Hobby House. According to Terry Lindow, two men stood at either doorway at the ends of the court. When team members went up for a layup, they were likely to fly out the door unless restrained by the doormen.



A cooking class in Nevis School, approximate year of 1916. Students left to right: Grace Fletcher, Lorna Arrowood, Frannie Johnson, Mary Kellner (class of 1917), Mayme McCoy, Grace Fairchild, Cleo Butler, Minnie Michel, Stella Carr, Maude Moore, teacher Miss Ruth Hilton as reported in the Northwoods Press.

April 6, 1917

- The United States declared war on Germany. World War I started June 28, 1914, with the assassination of Archduke Francis Ferdinand, heir to the throne of Austria-Hungary, and ended when Germany signed the Armistice on November 11, 1918.

May 31, 1917

- 1st graduating class of Nevis with 4 students: Ida Esther Waller, Richard (Dick) Alfred Reynolds, Mary Sophia (Baldwin) Kellner, and Mary Evangeline (Martin) McCoy. The ceremonies were held in the school auditorium on Wednesday evening. This was one year after the first graduating class of Laporte which had four students and eleven years after the first graduating class of Akeley which had four students.

1917

- A July 27, 1917 advertisement in "The Village of Nevis" in the Park Rapids Enterprise states: "The town has a \$35,000 consolidated school building, a new \$20,000 fireproof hotel, modern in every respect, two new brick store buildings, Christian, Catholic and Lutheran churches, M.W.A. and B.A.Y. lodges, rural and long distance telephone systems, two rural free delivery mail routes, a first class restaurant, two doctors, two general stores, grocery store, hardware, furniture, an undertaking store, drug store, millinery store, farmers' cooperative feed store, meat market, barber shop, two land agencies, State Bank, live newspaper, up-to-date garage, elective light, heat, and power plant, auto livery, livery, potato warehouse, wholesale shipper of cordwood, livestock shipper, sawmill and planing mill with lumber yard in connection, bean house equipped with modern machinery, blacksmith shop, Hubbard County Agricultural Association Fair held at Nevis."

1918

- Year of the epidemic per memory of Edna Hanson. This was the year of war, flu, and diphtheria.

1919

- 18th Amendment to the Constitution was passed - the prohibition of liquor. This amendment was repealed in 1933.



This photo was taken October 31, 1919 inside the Nevis High School classroom. Note the tall windows and clock in the background. Those photographed are from left to right, front to back:

- Hulda Torvick (class of 1923), Margaret Farnum (class of 1923), John Renner
- Lillian Borg (class of 1922), Marie Paulson, Margaret Kavanagh (class of 1923), Bob Kellner, and Amanda Jacobson
- Dan McCoy (class of 1922), Margaret Newman (class of 1922), Thyra Pearson (class of 1920), Desma Ells (class of 1922), Myrtle Halverson, and Lydia Bjur
- Lester Bordsen, Bill Pearson (class of 1920), Alton Thompson (class of 1922), Beryl Fuller (class of 1920), George Pearson (class of 1923), Phyllis Fuller (class of 1922), and Beatrice Fuller
- Annabelle Mattson, Emmet Potter (class of 1922), Florence Fuller (class of 1920), Bertha Kellner (class of 1920), Agnes Bordsen, Frithjof Logeland, and Myrtle Engstad (class of 1922)
- Staff – Superintendent Alvin E. Carlson, Miss Ryeberg, Miss Klug

Photo courtesy of Terry Lindow

Calendar

Thirty days hath September
 April, June and November;
 All the rest have thirty-one
 Excepting February alone,
 And that has twenty-eight days clear,
 With twenty-nine in each leap year.