



Plainview Academy, Redfield, South Dakota, c. 2010.

Photo courtesy of Jacqueline Biloff.

# Plainview Academy

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Plainview Academy opened in 1902 near Sioux City, Iowa, in the southeast part of the state of South Dakota on land donated in 1901 by the Elk Point (now Hurley) church. Originally it was an intermediate school variously known as South Dakota Intermediate School, Elk Point Intermediate School, and Elk Point Industrial School. It was established as Elk Point Academy in 1909. J. W. Beach, Bert Rhoads, and E. J. Hayes were principals prior to

1909.<sup>1</sup>

In 1910, the academy was moved to Redfield, South Dakota, due to the continual flooding of the Missouri River at Elk Point and the desire for a more central location for the church membership in the state.<sup>2</sup> The land for the new academy was donated by the “town fathers” of Redfield. The site, located about a mile and a half south of town, had been a fair grounds and racetrack situated on a slope, which provided a “plain view” of the city and adjacent country, hence, the name Plainview. The academy farm consisted of 120 acres of land.<sup>3</sup>

The school provided means for students to earn part of their school expenses by working on the farm, and in the dairy, broom factory, print shop, laundry, and kitchen (including canning). Even a pecan-shelling business was started during the 1920s under the leadership of Harvey C. Hartman. He raised money to build a chicken house and purchased Leghorn chickens, and soon “put the poultry industry on a paying basis.” Hartman built a new wing on the barn and modernized the dairy. Processed and bottled milk was then sold door to door. With the help of student James Chase, he made that venture profitable as well.<sup>4</sup>

Another influential staff member was Elder C. M. Babcock, who was president of the South Dakota Conference from 1910 to 1914. He taught Bible at the academy from 1921 to 1925 and again from 1932 to 1935. He traveled with school principals during the summer months, recruiting students for the school.<sup>5</sup>

Despite the success of the 1920s, the economic depression of 1929 and 1930 brought serious financial problems to the school. Hartman allowed parents to pay tuition with corn, tomatoes, potatoes, and cows.<sup>6</sup>

By 1964, due to a steady decline of enrolled students, proceeds were insufficient to pay the academy’s operating expenses.<sup>7</sup> In addition, a large portion of accounts receivable remained unpaid.<sup>8</sup> These two situations prompted the closure of Plainview Academy in 1965,<sup>9</sup> after which some students transferring to Sheyenne River Academy.<sup>10</sup>

The fulfillment of the ideals and purposes of Plainview Academy are exemplified in the following partial list of denominational career achievements by its students: twenty-five missionaries, twenty-one ministers, ten conference administrators, forty educational personnel; and thirty-nine health personnel.<sup>11</sup>

## Principals

Elk Point Academy: J. B. Clymer (1909-1910), F. R. Isaac (1910-1911)

Plainview Academy: F. R. Isaac (1911-1912), G. G. George (1912-1915), H. J. Sheldon (1915-1920), W. F. Hahn (1920-1928), H. C. Hartman (1928-1934), E. E. Bietz (1934-1937), A. L. Watt (1937-1941), J. V. Peters (1941-1945), F. P. Gilbert (1945-1948), W. S. Sanders (1948-1949), O. F. Lenz (1949-1951), Adam Rudy (1951-1952), G. G. Davenport, (1952-1955), B. D. Beck (1955-1958), J. J. Williamson (1958-1960), K. M. Nelson (1960-1963), E. W. Kier (1963-1965).

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## SOURCES

Bieber, F. W. "Plainview Academy." *Northern Union Outlook*, February 7, 1964.

DuPuy, Robert K. *Nothing to Fear*. Boise, ID: Pacific Press Publishing Association, 1983.

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## NOTES

1. Robert K. DuPuy, *Nothing to Fear* (Boise, ID: Pacific Press Publishing Association, 1983), Appendix E.
2. *Ibid.*, Appendix D1.
3. *Ibid.*, Appendix D2.
4. *Ibid.*, Appendix D3.
5. *Ibid.*, Appendix D4.
6. *Ibid.*, Appendix D4.
7. Lloyd Binder, former executive board member and Plainview alumnus, personal conversations
8. F. W. Bieber, "Plainview Academy," *Northern Union Outlook*, February 7, 1964, 9, 11.
9. Beverly Binder, former executive board member and wife of a Plainview Academy alumnus, interview by author.
10. Neil Biloff, Sheyenne River Academy alumnus, interview by author.
11. DuPuy, Appendix D6.

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