

# Early Day Norman Teacher

By Mary Lewis

Education came to Norman with the settlers in 1889.

That very year, two years before the establishment of the University of Oklahoma, and even before a public school system was organized for the new territory, Mrs. Mattie E. DOLLARHIDE opened a subscription school in Norman.

The school was housed in the largest building in town, the old Methodist Episcopal church, South, which was then located at Tonhawa and Crawford. Enrollment that first year was 65 students in grades one through eight. Students came from Norman and the surrounding territory.

Mrs. DOLLARHIDE had been a public school teacher in Missouri before she came to Norman. She graduated from LaGrange college, LaGrange, Missouri in 1875.

Mrs. DOLLARHIDE and her husband, John R. Dollarhide, arrived in Norman with the earliest settlers in 1889. They lived at 319 East Frank street before, in 1920 moving to McAlester. They moved to Oklahoma City about 1925.



Mrs. Mattie E. DOLLARHIDE  
Photo taken in 1908. Courtesy of Julia Dollarhide Simler of Bristow, Oklahoma.

A circa 1930 newspaper article records Norman's first teacher's recollections of the early days. Mrs. DOLLARHIDE recalled an excursion to Oklahoma City on May 11, 1889, less than a month after the Run. The town that was destined to become Oklahoma's capital metropolis then was composed of tents and box houses, 8 by 10 feet in size.

Mrs. DOLLARHIDE told the reporter that "teams of oxen were common in those early days of Norman. Settlers drove ox teams in from their claims to get supplies."



First public-owned school building, 200 block West Daws Street.  
Sketch by Susan FRITCH from an old print.