

1953: Goshen Plans a New Community Building

Planning Committee Minutes show spirit of cooperation and harmony

The town and community of Goshen is located just east of the confluence of White River and Richland Creek in eastern Washington County. Many of the earliest settlers arrived around 1830 and came from Tennessee, North Carolina, Alabama, and other southern states. Lesser numbers arrived from Indiana, Illinois, and other northern states.¹

In 1851 President Millard Fillmore deeded the area of Goshen and Mayfield as a land grant to Rev. James A. Mayfield after he had homesteaded it for seven years.²

Both communities had acreage set aside for campgrounds shared by worshipers of the Methodist—Episcopal (South), Baptists, and other protestant religions. During the summer months, revivals were held at these campgrounds.³

Somewhere between 1851 and 1853, James A. Mayfield deeded 40 acres of land to James M. Burk and wife Sally, and they in turn apparently sold 11 acres of that portion to the Methodist—Episcopal (South) for campgrounds of which Moses Dutton, Joshua Caldwell, James Caldwell, Stephen D. Enyart and James Mayfield were trustees.⁴

The Methodist campground, as it became known, also hosted secular activities and other events. Lawrence Gayer, born 1909, recalled

attending all-day festivals which included a picnic, baseball games, and a roped off arena for boxing matches.⁵

Residents relied on agriculture and the timber industry as their primary source of income. They also formed a strong sense of community, with neighbor helping neighbor, and working together for the common good.

After the closing of the Goshen School in 1948, the property reverted back to the Methodist Church. The church allowed the community to use the building for a variety of events including a series of regular musical performances which became known as “The Ozark Mountain Jamboree from the Land of Goshen.”⁶

The show became quite popular with both musicians and fans traveling from around the region to be part of the festivities. Speculation has it that at one or more of these events some unruly behavior occurred that was deemed inappropriate conduct on church property. Dallas Hale recalls an incident where a ruffian known as Blackie Batag picked a fight with a mild-mannered citizen, who promptly whipped Blackie.⁷

It's unclear whether the church withdrew their offer for use of the building, or if community leaders decided they needed a larger, more modern facility to host events. In either case, their actions led to the creation of a community center owned and operated by the citizens of Goshen.

The following is a transcript of the original handwritten minutes of the group's meetings in 1953 as recorded by Wilma Guinn, Secretary.

Minutes of the Goshen Community Meetings, 1953

As recorded by Wilma Guinn, Secretary

January 9, 1953

Residents of the Goshen community met on Friday night, January 9, 1953 in Goshen to discuss plans for building a new community building.

The meeting was called to order by L.B. Langley. Three plats of land was offered for the building by Clifford Dutton, Ben Clark, and Oren Stroud. It was voted upon, and the site selected for the building was on Ben Clark's farm at the corner of old Hi-way 45 and the Richland View Road.

A 5 man building committee was elected. They were Homer Bragg, Horace Langham, L.B. Langley, C.L. Guinn, and Clifford Dutton, as Chairman.

It was voted to build a 30' x 60' cement-block house.

The finance committee elected were W.C. Ledbetter, Roy McDonald, Jeff Dutton, Bud Gayer, and Ardeth Guinn.

Wilma Guinn was elected Secretary and Treasurer.

The work is to start immediately.

A weekly program called The Ozark Mountain Jamboree from the Land of Goshen is presented each Thursday evening. The program consists of any local talent that may be present and is tape recorded and played over station KBRS in Springdale each Saturday.

The women of the community serve in the kitchen and the proceeds goes to the up keep of the building. This averages approx. \$20 a month.

February 27, 1953

Friends and residents of the Goshen Community met on Friday night, February 27, 1953 and celebrated the opening of the new Community Building with a cooperative dinner. Approx. 150 persons attended. Special guests were Mrs. Margaret Brownfield, H.D. Agent; Carl Rose, County Agent and J.D. Ford, Assitant County Agent. Each spoke briefly and Mr. Rose explained the Community Improvement Program and urged Goshen to enter. Mr. Ford showed pictures on fire prevention.

It was agreed upon to hold regular meetings on the 4th Friday night of each month for our family night. We would have a cooperative dinner and attend to any business that might come up.

March 10, 1953

The board met on March 10, 1953. Elections for new board members to serve five-year terms will be held the first of each year, and a secretary.

It was discussed and agreed to buy a piano and a butane tank. Mr. Langley volunteered the use of a heater for the remainder of the spring.

March 27, 1953

On March 27, 1953, our regular family night, we held an old-fashioned pie supper, which netted \$139.25.

L.B. Langley served as auctioneer. Arvilla Gayer received the "Pretty Girl Cake." The couple receiving the pickles for being the most love sick were Roy McDonald and

Miss Gertrude Flynn. Jimmy Dutton was the quickest to guess what was in the guess cake, and Ben Clark received a bar of Lava Soap for having the “dirtiest” feet.

The proceeds will go to the further completion of the building.

April 24, 1953

On Friday night, April 24, 1953, we met for our regular monthly meeting. After dinner we were entertained with a program led by Mrs. Roy McDonald.

The History of the Progress of Goshen written by Mrs. McDonald was read by Mrs. Thurman Hale. A poem, “How to get and preserve Husbands,” was read by Mrs. McDonald.

A quilt donated by Mrs. Ben Clark was given away, going to Mrs. John Guinn. It netted \$54.50. This was followed by group singing. Everyone had an enjoyable evening.

May 1953

Following the dinner Friday evening, the Rural Improvement Program was discussed. Ben Clark was elected Chairman, Linnie Langham, Vice Chairman, and Ruth Langley, Publicity Chairman of the project.

The following committees were appointed:

Farm Improvement – Jiggs Crowder, L.B. Langley, and C.H. Bragg

Home Improvement – Ardeth Guinn, Minnie Gayer, and Mrs. Crowder.

Community Improvement – Pauline Clark, Horace Langham, and Roy Bragg.

The following goals were set to be accomplished:

1. To have our building debt free by the end of the year.
2. To build a kitchen in the building.

3. To furnish the kitchen with a stove, refrigerator, cabinets, coffee maker (48 cup), cups, and silverware.
4. To have a kitchen shower.
5. To get some banquet tables.
6. To landscape the Community ground
7. To have Community Fair
8. Collect soil samples to be analyzed
9. Have water tested.
10. Have rat control program
11. Purchase a piano
12. Install butane gas

June 1953

Family night again in Goshen. Everyone picking up well filled baskets, headed for the community building for another enjoyable evening.

Admiring the work we had accomplished thus far, we realized we could not have done so if it had not been for the cooperation we received from everyone. We decided that next month we would have an appreciation dinner and invite everyone that had donated to the building in any way.

Mrs. Horace Langham, Mrs. L.B. Langley, Mrs. Clifford Dutton, Mrs. Ben Clark, and Mrs. C.L. Guinn were appointed to work on the committee.

Joe McKim, Manager of L & P Gas & Equipment Co. of Springdale donated a gas range for the kitchen.

July 15, 1953

The "appreciation dinner" committee got together and contacted as many persons as they could and invited them to come and help with the dinner. Written invitations were sent to all others.

Four-dozen stainless steel forks and spoons were ordered for the building.

Some of the men in the Community donated their time, labor, and materials and started on the cabinets in the kitchen.

July 24, 1953

The appreciation dinner, for those who had donated to the new building, was given the night of July 24, 1953.

It was given potluck style. The dinner was spread on banquet table, the length of the building. Smaller tables were set through out the building, so everyone could be seated.

Following the dinner a musical program was presented.

Joe McKim expressed his desire to bring the Chamber of Commerce from Springdale out for dinner at a later date.

August 14, 1953

A kitchen shower was given to the Community Building on Aug. 14, 1953. Which was attended by a large crowd. Gifts were opened by Omer Guinn and Ben Clark. Gifts included potholders, towels, tea-towels, dishes, pots & pans, a tea kettle, and many other items.

Plans were made to serve a fair booster dinner on Aug. 21, 1953 sponsored by the Chamber of Commerce in Fayetteville.

A work day was set for August 20th.

Aug. 20, 1953

A group gathered together to do some work at the Community Building. Some men bringing their tractors and blades for landscaping, moving some rocks & dirt and leveling the ground.

A water pump, donated by Ruby Hughes, was installed. And the kitchen cabinets were completed. The women brought lunch and did some cleaning inside the building.

August 21, 1953

The first Fair Booster Dinner for 1953 was held in the community building on Aug. 21. An estimate of 250 person were present, according to John I. Smith, toastmaster.

Three tables, spread the length of the building, and other smaller tables, were set with seasonal garden flowers placed at intervals. Mrs. Horace Langham was Chairman of the committee of dinner.

On the menu was baked ham, mashed potatoes, gravy, sliced tomatoes, green beans, salad, and hot rolls. Desert was homemade pies and coffee.

Following the dinner, Bill Blair of Springdale led the group in singing. Those appearing on the program included Joe McKim, Shorty Parsons, & Mayor Bob Sharp of Springdale; Clint Walden, Austin Parrish, Kirk Hale, Ben Clark, and County Agent,

Carl Rose & Ben Clark of our community. Each 4-Her present told what he was planning to enter in the fair.

Reports were given by the Superintendents of the Swine & Sheep building.

September 5, 1953

The Goshen Community Fair got under way the morning of September 5, 1953, with all the exhibits in place by 10am. These included exhibits of; dairy & beef cattle, sheep, hogs, poultry & rabbits, field crops, horticulture, flower arrangements, canning, cooking, sewing, handicrafts, crochet & knitting, foods, clothing, & other items.

The boys and girls of the 4-H Club each had a booth.

A 4-H Club fitting & showing school was held in the morning from 10 to 11 o'clock. Glen Pursley, Extension dairyman, demonstrated how to fit and show an animal in a Jr. fitting & showing contest.

The judging of the Women's Division was finished by noon.

In the afternoon, showing and judging of the beef cattle began at 2 o'clock, followed by the dairy, sheep, & other animals.

Appropriate ribbons were awarded to the 1st, 2nd, and 3rd place winners in each of the classes.

The fair closed that night with a variety program arranged by Mrs. Ardeth Guinn.

Food and drinks were served on the grounds.

More than 300 people attended.

Judges for the Women's division were Miss Lorraine Williams and Mrs. W. Thompson. For the cattle & hogs, Mr. Ray judged, and Polk Bookout judged the sheep.

The monthly meeting for September was postponed until October because of a conflicting date with the Washington County Fair.

October 23, 1953

On Community night Oct. 23, 1953 approx. 50 persons met to gether.

After dinner in the business meeting, it was decided to order some folding table legs & make banquet tables. A committee of three men, Horace Langham, John, Guinn, and C.H. Bragg were appointed to see that the tables were completed.

A committee was appointed to help with the Community Improvement Contest, to help with the blanks & etc. They were Linnie Langham, Lola Eubanks, Ruth Langley, Omer Guinn, Ben Clark, & Jiggs Crowder.

In case there be any prize money won it will go into the Community fund.

October 26, 1953

Mr. Rose was called and met with a group on October 26, 1953 to discuss the contest in further details.

November 16, 1953

A dinner was served Monday evening Nov. 16, 1953 by the women of the community sponsored by the Springdale Chamber of Commerce.

Approx. 125 people were served. Joe McKim, pres of the C. of C. was master of ceremonies. The invocation was given by Rev. Kenneth Sanders.

The group joined together in singing chorus' led by Bill Blair. Roy Bragg of Goshen gave the welcome address and Joe Robinson of Springdale gave the response. D.D. Deaver gave some interesting folklore of Goshen. He told us that yrs. ago Goshen was called College Grove. The first postmaster of the community was Mose Dutton.

A musical program was presented by the Girls quartet and a Male quintet from Springdale. The program was concluded by the group singing together, "Blest Be the Tie That Binds."

November 27, 1953

Following the cooperative dinner on Fri night Nov 27, 1953, a business meeting was held.

Committee reports were given by different chairmen and Wed. was set for Rat-Poison day.

Horace Langham reported the banquet tables had been completed and light fixtures had been bought and put up.

A call meeting was scheduled for Tues. night Dec. 1, 1953 to discuss further plans for the program.

December 1, 1953

Members of the Goshen community met Tues. night, Dec. 1, 1953, at the Community building to work on the Rural Community Improvement Program. Ben Clark, Chairman presided.

Reports were given by different committee chairmen. The drawing of the map has been started.

Mr. H. Bragg gave a report on the soil samples he had received. Horace Langham, Omer Guinn, & Roy McDonald were appointed to help on that committee.

Linnie Langham, Mildred Hale, and Ardeth Guinn were appointed to take pictures of some of the improvements in the community.

Pauline Clark reported she had sent a drawing of the Community ground to Mr. Burton for his advice on landscaping.

Wayne Milsap resigned from Health & Safety because of illness. Clifford Dutton was appointed to take his place.

Fire Prevention was voted as a project for next year.

Tues. night, December 15, was the night chosen for the 4-H achievement banquet. Scheduled for Sat. night, Dec. 19 is to be the community supper and Christmas tree. Everyone is to bring a gift to be exchanged.

A letter was read from Mr. Rose & Mr. Brownfield announcing the meeting at the fair ground to plan work for 1954. Everyone was urged to attend.

December 8, 1953

The Goshen 4-H members entertained the community on the evening of Dec. 8, 1953.

After their business meeting, Mary Jo Bragg demonstrated on making sequin earrings. A demonstration on covering an ironing board with aluminum foil was given

by Shirley Dutton. A contest was held between the girls on ironing gingham blouses with 1st place going to Patty Gray, with Arvilla Gayer placing second.

At the business meeting following, Linnie Langham read a poem, "Neighboring Builds Faith."

Mr. L.B. Langley reported on the different ones he had contacted about soil samples. Some interesting reports were given different ones on new or outstanding crops they had tried this year.

Thurman Hale gave a report on the Millet & Arkwin oats he had sowed this year. Mr. Langley told about Sargo and its use.

Mildred Hale told us about a vegetable she had planted this yr. A Butter Pea, a butter bean & pea cross.

Hens were brought to the meeting to be sold to help pay for the light fixtures. Mildred Hale volunteered to take them to town the following day.

A donation was taken up to buy candy for the children at the Christmas Party to be held Dec. 19.

Roy McDonald was to see to getting the Xmas tree and Mrs. Ruth Langley was to see to the decorating.

Linnie Langham gave a report on the trip to Little Rock to the Farm Bureau Meeting, which a group from here attended.

December 15, 1953

The achievement banquet for the Goshen 4-H Club was held at the Community house Tuesday with approximately 75 parents, friends & club members attending.

J.D. Ford, Jr., Assistant County Agent, was master of ceremonies. Christmas carols were sung, led by the Rev. Martin, after which a marionette show was given under the direction of Miss McHugh(sp?). Girls from the University High School gave the presentation.

Dallas Hale & Billy Charles Phillips told of their trip to Chicago and Merit Awards & gifts were distributed to all club members who had turned in their reports. Boys received 4-H belt buckles & girls, 4-H bracelets.

Mrs. Ruth Langley told the history of the club, preceding the commendation to Mr. & Mrs. Clifford Dutton, local 4-H leaders.

December 19, 1953

The Christmas Party and dinner was held Dec. 19, 1953 at the Community house. After the dinner, Christmas carols were sung by the group, followed by the exchanging of gifts.

Pauline Clark reported on the landscaping sketch she had received from Mr. Burton, and different ones were asked to bring the different kinds of trees & shrubs to the grounds Dec. 29, the day set to work.

December 29. 1953

Tuesday, Dec. 29 was the day set to work at the Community grounds. Different ones bringing trees & shrubs to be set.

Joe McKim donated & delivered a refrigerator to the building to be used in the kitchen and the 48-cup coffee maker has been received.

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In the years that followed, the Goshen Community Building became the meeting place for various local organizations including The Goshen Rural Community Improvement Club, The Goshen Home Extension Club, The Goshen Riding Club, The Goshen 4H Club, and others. The building was also available for use by members of the community to host family reunions and fund-raising events.

The Goshen Community Building is the polling site for Goshen City and Goshen Township.

In April 2008, the City of Goshen took over responsibility for the care and upkeep of the building. It is still available for use by members of the community for a fee of \$50 per event.

End Notes

¹From document written by Mrs. E.C. Dutton, granddaughter of Stephen Enyart

²Filed for record May 27, 1918. Recorded in volume 178, page 25.

³From document entitled History of the Goshen Methodist church by Dolores Cook

⁴Filed and recorded September 22, 1853. Recorded Conveyance Record "H" page 600.

⁵Gayer, Lawrence, Interview, June 21, 1988, Goshen, Arkansas.

⁶*Northwest Arkansas Times*, September 6, 1952, p. 5. This program was also referred to as the *Land O' Goshen Show*.

⁷Hale, Dallas, Interview, January 31, 2021 Goshen, Arkansas.