The Balentine children first started going to school at the Worcester Academy. This was the first of the school to be started in this Indian Nation town of Vinita, enrolling the first students in the fall of 1882. Appropriately it was named for Rev. Samuel Worcester who worked with Sequoyah in getting the Cherokee alphabet into type for the beginning of printing in the Cherokee language. Worcester came to the Cherokee Nation in 1835 to work at Dwight Mission. Before that he had spent many years with the Cherokees in Georgia. Later in the Cherokee Nation he lived at Parkhill and spent most of his life tending to the spiritual needs of the Cherokees. He died at Parkhill in 1959.

Shortly, the Willie Halsell College was built and provided higher education to many of the children limited to the country grade schools. Of the students there who became famous were Will Rogers and John M. Oskison, both of Cherokee blood. Oskison was a writer who wrote for newspapers and magazines and also wrote several books, including "Brothers Three" and "Wild Harvest" which dealt with life on the prairies of Indian Territory days.

Early day country schools of pre-statehood days included Timpson Chapel, Sycamore, Slate Bed, Rogers, Carselowey, Blue Jacket, Pheasant Hill, and Timber Hill. Came Statehood and the county was organized into 60 school districts. Reflecting the changes time has wrought, there are less than half a dozen of the country schools remaining in use now.

Nearby the town of Vinita shortly after statehood many new schools were built. Among them were Falling, Kelly, Blue Hawk, Shanahan, Dupree, Nelson, Estella, and Sequoyah. Most of the older schools continued to operate. Booker was the school for colored children down south. Miss Balentine's first job as a teacher was at Pheasant Hill in 1910. Her next school teaching job was at Falling which was attended by children from Indian families. In its beginning Whiteoak was attended by nearly all Cherokee children. Kelly school farther southwest in the Shawnee Hills was an all-Shawnee school at its beginning.

Little is known of the Wolfe Orphanage which was operated privately by a Rev. and Mrs. Wolfe. It was located about five miles due west of Vinita on a hill. Miss Balentine remembers going with her mother there to visit when a little girl. She described it as a large two-story building housing up to 30 or 40 children. She recalls that Rev. Wolfe was a whiteman, and his wife was Kate Timberlake, a Cherokee. She recalls visiting there shortly after her father died in 1901, and tells that it was a beautiful place with large shade trees, well kept farm buildings, and a nice lawn. She recalls also that just east of the place there was a little cemetery of some 25 or 30 graves. Still early in the 1900s the orphanage closed down and the Wolfe couple moved away, xxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxx xxxx. Nothing remains to-day of this place which must have contributed much good in its time. Even the little cemetery is completely removed, cattlemen having gotten hold of the land and removed everything that might stand in the way of their greed. A visit to the site confirmed this. It is believed that Rev. Wolfe died shortly after the closing of his refuge for orphans, and Mrs. Wolfe lived in Vinita with her people, the Timberlakes.