

## Remembrances of Meda School

by Wilma Dunn Hagerty Rowland

typed by Dean Bones in 2022

Meda Grade School was located on about 1 acre of land on the Little Nestucca River Road just east of the junction with Meda Loop Road. The land was donated by my great-grandfather, John Dunn, and with the help of his neighbors and family he built a one-room school. My aunts and uncles on the Dunn side all attended Meda as well as my brothers and sister and the Cravens who are cousins.

Clem Hurliman's house is built on the road side of the old school house. After the school's consolidated into the Cloverdale School District, Clem obtained the old school house and yard. He and Liz lived in the schoolhouse many years before building their big home.

The school I attended was larger than the original. It was L shaped with a storage area in the attic. Blackboards were across the end of the classroom towards the road, and windows were down both sides.

The classroom itself was probably 20' X 30". There was about 6' of raised platform across the front by the blackboards where the teacher's desk was located. In the early grades we had double desks with bench seats. Roby and I shared a desk.

There were pictures of George Washington and Abraham Lincoln, a globe of the world and a big dictionary that I became fascinated with at about the third grade. I still love reading a dictionary. A few shelves by the door contained our meager library. I had read all the books before I finished the 7th grade and also many books ordered from Salem State Library.

Except for my third grade we had marvelous teachers, and school was great fun especially in the sixth grade. Until I graduated I was "teacher's helper". I loved tutoring Leo and Joe Ducham, Pete and Leo Hurliman and Billy, Johnny and Elsie Buckbee.

An entry hall included a wooden sink with cold running water, pegs for coats and shelves for lunch boxes. The second room was combination playroom and woodshed. There was a large pot-bellied wood stove in the back. The playroom grew in the spring after most of the wood had been used. Toilets were two-holers located in the back yard.

When I was in the third grade the toilet pits were full, and the toilets were moved to the front yard so the teacher could "monitor" them. The windows on the back wall were closed over to make additional blackboard space and library shelves.

Our only hot lunches consisted of a big kettle of soup atop the heater stove when the weather was very cold and snowy. Large old-growth fir trees and underbrush covered about 1/2 of the school year. There was a very large fallen log that was fun to climb and play on. We never lacked for a place to hide while playing Hide and Seek.

Hurliman's barnyard was just across the school yard and provided us with first-hand sex education which, looking back, sounds really funny. Even though we watched the whole cycle from breeding to birth, we still weren't quite sure where human babies came out - it just seemed so impossible!

Aside from card parties and dances at the Oretown Grange Hall the school was the center of activities. We had programs for every holiday with skits, poems and songs and lots of memory work. Every student had a part in every program.

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Basket socials were the big Halloween event. Weeks of secret planning and work went into decorating and filling the baskets. They were always beautiful and original - usually made from shoe boxes or hat boxes to look like houses, chapels, ships, covered wagons, barns, bouquets or whatever the lady could dream up. They were filled with delicious sandwiches and desserts. The high bidder shared the lunch with the owner. It was so much fun and climaxed an evening of the school program and community singing.

Apple bobbing, a fishpond and a spooky house were usually set up in the play room. Oil lamps and lanterns really helped convey the Halloween feeling.

We had no trick or treating, but always there were toilets tipped over and windows soaped. Actual vandalism was very rare.