

## **Memories of Silver Falls School**

May 21, 2001

*Typed by Dean Bones*

These are some of my memories of a little one-room school built along the Big Nestucca River 13 miles above Beaver. Our school was named Silver Falls, District #62. It was built before I was born, I think around 1921. I was 5 years old when I started the 1st grade in 1931.

Here are some of my memories of walking 1/4 mile to school carrying an orange-colored lunch pail and trying to skip over mud puddles.

My folks thought I walked through every mud puddle as I wore out a pair of shoes about every 3 months. One time I ran out of shoes, and my folks couldn't get to Tillamook right away; so I had to wear my grandma's ankle-topped old lady's shoes! Oh, my! But when I was growing up, no one made fun of you if you were dressed differently. Parents just didn't have lots of money to spend on clothes. Boys wore overalls, and girls wore dresses.

Our school sat on a small piece of land that was donated by Robbie Jones and reverted back to him when the school consolidated with Blaine School District.

The front of the school faced the river. We had a big bell, and it was fun to ring it if the teacher said we could!

There were 5 steps leading up to the front porch and front door. Inside on the left side was a small room called the Boys' Cloakroom. Here they hung their coats and left their boots and lunch pails. On the other side was the Girls Cloakroom. The girls were not supposed to go into the boys' room, and the boys didn't go into the girls' room except that the girls' room had the library in it. So anyone could go in after books. It was a very small library with probably about 30 donated books.

Now as you walked up the middle aisle to the front there was the teacher's desk, and we had great respect for that. It had a small bell she rang to get our attention. To the left of the desk was the water bucket and dipper. We didn't have any running water for some time. We all drank out of one dipper. No one got sick! There was a basin to pour some water into to wash our hands. Don't schools have it handy today! Be thankful!

In the right-hand side of the school was a wood burning stove. It was supposed to heat the whole schoolhouse, but it got rather chilly towards the back. We stood around the stove a lot in the winter, and I think we all took turns bringing in wood from the wood shed.

When our shoes got wet, we hung our socks near the stove and spread the shoes around it.

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My first grade teacher was Mrs. Taylor. Second grade was Miss French. Third and Fourth was Frances Steinback who lived in Tillamook and drove out with her 2 boys. Dr. John Steinback was one of her boys. Later he was a doctor in Tillamook for many years. The youngest boy, Howard, was in my grade, and after school sometimes he came to our house. We rode a little red wagon down a steep hill together. It was fun!

For my 5th, 6th and 7th grades my teacher was Miss Fannie Smith.

There were not enough students to keep the school going, so Silver Falls consolidated with Blaine School District #27. My father transported me to school. Miss Melba Berg was my 8th grade teacher. She later married a local carpenter, Jack Dietrick.

When I graduated, all of the south county's schools got together and had our graduation at Nestucca High School. That was a first!

At Silver Falls School we were allowed to go down to the river to throw rocks. And in the winter there were thousands of big salmon splashing up the river to spawn. Of course we were only kids, so we would try to throw rocks behind them and make them swim faster.

We didn't have indoor restrooms. We had only 2 small wooden houses down by the river, so it was pretty cold in the winter. We ran fast!

We had a merry-go-round. Also, when I started school there was a building called the horseshed. Because some of the children lived too far to walk, and there was no bus for quite a few years, the students' horses were kept in a shed.

We played baseball, and the ball would land in the river. We also played marbles, Pussy Wants a Corner in the horse shed, Beckon! Beckon!, Ante Ante Over, Dare Base, and we played on the swings. We also rolled tires and jumped over them. One winter it got cold, and before we went home one night we carried lots of water and sprinkled it out beside the school house. Oh, boy what fun the next morning! It was ice, and boy it was fun to slide.

We had singing once a week, and we saluted the flag daily. We had a 4-H club. We also had a Christmas program.

The county superintendent was J.E. O'Neil. The health nurse was Bessie Wells. And we sold stamps to raise money to fight TB.

We had Easter egg hunts. Beautiful blue lupine would bloom at Easter time.

And know that I got to go barefoot when the dandelions bloomed.