

Remembering My Schooling Years at Wolf Creek and Beaver Schools

by Janella Jones Flatt , 2001

Typed and later reformatted by Dean Bones

The first school I went to was Wolf Creek School. In those days there weren't any kindergartens. I went there in my 1st and 2nd grades. There were two of us in the 1st grade, Marvin Measor and me.

We never had any school buses, so I walked two miles each way with my sister. She was six years older.

The school didn't have running water. It was brought over each morning by a neighbor, Mr. Ed Egger, for the kids to drink during the day. There was no indoor plumbing. We also had girls' and boys' outhouses.

My 1st and 2nd grade teacher was Mrs. Lydia Alvord. I don't have a picture when I went to school there. I wouldn't have gotten one anyway. It was in the depression days; we couldn't afford a picture.

Then at the end of my 2nd grade, Wolf Creek School closed, and I finished my grade school years at Beaver Grade School. Now it is known as Nestucca Valley Middle School.

Beaver Grade School only had two rooms, 1st through 4th grade and 5th through 8th grade. My 3rd and 4th grade teacher was my aunt, Mrs. Ella Harris. I sure wasn't her favorite pupil. I always got shakings from her. The kids got along with her because if they didn't they knew what would happen. They would have to stand in the corner with their face to the wall. She wasn't mean. She just wanted them to behave. She taught school in Oregon fifty two years.

The school had a drinking fountain in the hall, and that is where we hung our coats and put our lunches on the shelves. Again, this school had no indoor plumbing, just outhouses for boys and girls. The heating system was like a big furnace stove in each of the rooms. There was sheet metal all around the stoves, supposedly to keep us from getting burned if we ever touched it. That wasn't the truth at all. The teachers would bring in the first load of wood for the day. After that the oldest boys from each room would go out to the woodshed and bring in the

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wood to keep the fires burning. If our clothes, coats, or shoes were wet when we got to school we could put them around the stove to dry.

We had only two teachers, no principal.

When school started at nine. All the pupils stood up from their desks and said the Pledge of Allegiance to the Flag. A big flag hung on the wall over the chalkboard. Then we sang *God Bless America* and other songs.

After we set back down we had to do penmanship. We used a quill pen to write with.

Our studies were reading, writing, arithmetic, health, geography, history, English, and spelling. I have a history book like we studied in the 6th grade. We had a spelling test at least once a month. We either got blue, yellow, or white certificates. That depended on how many words we missed. Mine were mostly blue with a few yellow ones. I still have all my certificates as well as some of my report cards.

Our desk tops were kinda on a slant. We lifted the tops up and put all our books, paper, pencils underneath. An ink well was on the right hand side of our desks filled with ink. If any girl had long hair, the person who sat in back of her would dip her hair in the ink well. It always made such a mess. If they were caught they would be in trouble. And in those days there was no sassing back to the teacher.

We had 15 minute recesses both morning and afternoon and a 45 minute lunch break. If it was raining we ate lunch in the gym. Then we would play tag or drop the handkerchief. Some kids played basketball, but if it was nice we had to eat outdoors and also play outside. We never had a cafeteria at our school. We brought our lunches in lunch pails. If we were lucky enough to have a penny or two, we could go across the road to the grocery store and buy some candy. You could get quite a few pieces for two pennies. It was run by Mrs. Viola Sappinton. I think now it is a service station.

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I had Mrs. Lydia Alvord again as teacher in the 5th grade. Then she left school, got married, and her name then was Mrs. Lydia Partch. In the 6th, 7th, and 8th grades, I had Mrs. Erma MYERS Gilbert. She was so nice. Everyone liked her.

If you were absent more than five days for being sick, a truant officer, Mr. J. E. O'Neil, would come to your house and see if you really were sick enough to not attend school.

There was a business here in Portland called Sheckters Egg Distributors. My two aunts knew the people that ran the business, so the people at the distributors gave their two girls' clothing to me except underclothing and underskirts. My parents got coffee, tea, butter, flour, and sugar on credit from the Tillamook County Creamery Assn. The flour and sugar came in painted sacks; so my mom made my undergarments out of them. Those were the depression days. You would be glad to get anything. Everyone was very poor, but somehow everyone managed to survive.

At 4:00 PM school let out for the day. The school bus picked us up (Really it was just a van.), and it let me off about a mile from my house. So I had to walk the rest of the way home. But in the 6th, 7th, and 8th grades the school bus brought me right up to my home.

Then it was time to graduate from the 8th grade. We graduated at the church. There were four graduates in my class, Betty Harpole, Edwin Woods, Joe Haines, and me. The church was decorated with light pink rhodies that were collected down Sandlake way.