

## **Answering Questions - Comments about Beaver School Taken from Students Notes Interviewing Mary Jane RICHARDS Widenoja**

Typed by Dean Bones in September 2021

Mary Jane's grandparents came from Ohio on a train in 1885 because her mother's brother lived in Beaver. His name was Christopher Mills. (Note that Christopher and Samantha Mills deeded their farm land for the town of Beaver. db) The grandparents' names were Noah and Edith Mills Coulson who are buried in Beaver Cemetery as are others of their family. Mary Jane's mother was one of the 2 daughters that came with the parents. The two daughters' names were Abigail and Myrtle Coulson, Mary Jane's mother, and Linea Rachel Coulson. Mary Jane's mom learned to read at home by learning to read newspapers when she was 8 in Ohio.

Abigail and Myrtle Coulson walked 1/1/2 miles to Beaver for school and Sunday School.

One day R.O Richards, who had lived in a shack, asked Mary Jane's mother to marry her. He was 15 years older. (Note that Robert Orlando Richards much later became a Tillamook County Commissioner. The road to the left before the first bridge on Blaine road is named after him. db)

Mary Jane began school in Tillamook in 1923. She went to school in Tillamook because her dad drove in every day. Her parents rented a house so Mary Jane's mother could fix lunch for the kids. Then she started attending Beaver School in 1924 in the 2nd grade. Her brother Noah was 10 years older than Mary Jane.

Children walked to school but carried their shoes through the mud so their shoes wouldn't get dirty. Also note that there were about 4 or 5 big fir trees in front of the school.

Beaver School had two rooms. One was for grades 1 - 4, and the other was for grades 5 - 8. They had a play-shed that had a roof and dirt floor. Outside they played Annie Over, Fox and Geese, Blind Man's Bluff, etc. Before School they played Pussy in the Corner.

One time the teacher reduced Mary's grade in behavior because she wore makeup.

The students used slates and blackboards because paper was too expensive. They used to march and sing a lot. In every subject they were graded 1 - 100%.

*(There's a note that the high school only was in operation in Beaver for 2 years. (And there is another note that states that "The school was first in the Beaver Schoolhouse and then it moved to another school." Does this mean simply to another building? db)* There were separate teachers for high school and elementary students. She attended High School at Beaver for 2 years and then went to Tillamook High School. She received a scholarship to Whitman College for 2 years. The students would go look at

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teaching tools such as a human liver and kidney. And there were china pieces that fit all together to build a man from the inside out. Mary graduated from high school in 1935.

Mr. and Mrs. Parks, teachers for Beaver High School, stayed with the Richards family boarding with them. Mrs. Parks was expecting a baby. *(Note, the Parks have a baby buried in Beaver Cemetery.db)*

Mary mentioned classmates Eileen or Arleen Reddekopp, Arnold Schroder and Mary Elizabeth Gilbert. *(Were these people who also attended Beaver High School with her or grade school? At this point I'm not sure. db)*