

## Remembering Those Days!

By LuVerne Peterson

Huron Area Retired Teachers Association

Being able to teach children was the fulfillment of a childhood dream. I admired three of my aunts in that profession and I was also influenced during my school days by teachers that I considered role models. In addition, there were not many other occupational opportunities for women at that time.

I had never gone to a “country” school, but after a one-year course at NSTC in 1940-41, I began my career prior to World War II in a rural school with 16 pupils in all grades. It was an interesting year, experiencing all the janitorial duties along with a completely new routine of preparation, classes, and expectations, all for the \$630 annual salary. Nevertheless, it was a pleasant year. I was rewarded with fond memories of both students and parents.

Because I was determined to improve my teaching qualification I attended many summer sessions at Huron College and also numerous night classes in order to achieve my goal of a college degree.

During World War II my profession took me to a rural consolidated school which had formerly been home to a high school also and I thought I was in “heaven on earth”. That school had buses for student transportation, we had a cook and a janitor, I had only the four upper grades, and besides that I had an apartment in one of the unused high school class rooms!

Later, in another consolidated school, I had only two grades! Teaching was getting better and better as years went by! My last 20 years were spent in a relatively new, modern, comfortable school building in a neighboring town where I was privileged to have only the seventh grade. What a joy that was!

I was lucky enough to stay at home most of the time during the years that I taught, but transportation was sometimes a problem. My dad’s horses and sled, his tractor, and the cooperation of students’ parents helped to assure that I could be at the school! Rural roads were often impassable and I appreciated the concern for my safety and the help that I received. During one particularly difficult winter I lived in what had formerly been a “cook shack” for a railroad crew. It was moved to a location near the school where I spent from Sunday evening to Friday afternoon by myself with no electricity, no telephone, no indoor plumbing, no close neighbors! Children would ride horses to school or parents would bring them by tractor or sled. Nevertheless, it was a fulfilling experience with lasting memories.

There have been numerous changes in responsibilities of those in the teaching profession, some good and some not so good. I appreciated the improvement in test preparation - - going from carbon paper, to the hectograph, to a ditto machine, to the mimeograph, and finally to the latest in copy machines! Computers weren’t in use while I was teaching - - wouldn’t that have been a wonderful addition? Changes in curriculum, no more Palmer Method writing classes, none of the so-called “modern math” which we tried to teach, the increase of extra-curricular instructors in athletics, music, health, etc., the demise of the Yong Citizens League which taught students leadership and parliamentary procedure, and the increasing demand of students’ time has certainly changed the educational process.

In spite of the many challenges and times of frustration sometimes associated with my teaching career, I consider it a rewarding experience and it is a joy to see the achievements of former students successful in business, in education, in medical fields, in engineering, in government and military positions, in the farming and ranching enterprises and in other worthwhile occupations as well as noting how so many have assumed leadership roles in their churches and in their own communities. It is my hope and prayer that I may have had just one little bit of influence in their lives.