

OLD TIME SCHOOL DAYS—VIVIAN HANSEN

Homesteaders in western SD have always tried to have good public schools. They had as many months' school as they could pay for. They built their own buildings, hired and paid their own teachers, furnished their own fuel and water. Many pupils brought their own books and these were passed down year after year. (When I was in first grade in West Lincoln #20, Township 3 North, Range 18 Black Hills Meridian, an eighth grader, Merle Hauk, gave me his Aldine Primer.) Rents from Sections 16 and 36 were set aside for school support.

My parents sent us all to school beyond High School. My sister Evalynn attended Spearfish Normal and taught in Milesville and East Lincoln Schools. Cecil, my sister went to Spearfish Normal and to Northern Normal Industrial School at Aberdeen. My brother Richard went to a short term at SDSMT and to SD Ag College in Brookings. He also studied with Beery School of Horsemanship. He learned to break and train horses, do horseshoeing and rodeo, including clowning and trick riding and roping. I went to Cottonwood High School 3 years, sometimes boarding, sometimes "batching" and sometimes staying at a WPA dorm and one year at Philip High School at the WPA dorm. My folks sent me to a year of Business College. All of this education represented much work and frugality to accomplish.

My husband, Virgil W. Hansen, was my choice of all the boys I had known. He was tall, skinny, soft-spoken and artistic. He had been Art Editor on the PHS Scottie Messenger and he could play the violin. And he had been to College! True, it was only a half year at Billings Polytechnic, but it widened his horizons greatly. His major was Stagecraft, which offered him an opportunity to develop his ability at lettering and stage arrangement. He learned to do lighting effects. In 1936, turning the scene from dawn to midday was quite an accomplishment.

We wanted the most and best possible education for our kids. It wasn't easy to pay for a volume of Encyclopedia Britannica every month for two years. Our kids were regular and enthusiastic users of the library on the 4th floor of the Haakon County Court House. The children responded with good school work and several of them have carried their schooling to advanced degrees.

In 1957 after we had all our 10 children, I began to have energy to burn. I worked for 7 years in restaurants, while I worked at extension courses and correspondence courses. In 1962 and '63 I spent the summers at Spearfish and got a teacher's permit and a school to teach! Ohmer Cook, in Jackson County asked if I would teach for \$375 a month, since I only had a permit.

My first school was Highway School 2 miles west of Cottonwood 18 miles from home. I drove our '59 Ford. There were 8 pupils, Roger Fortune, 8th grade, Gerald Cook and Jerry Johannesen, 7th, Norma Brech, 6th, Judy Brech, 5th, John Fortune, 4th, Kent Lurz, 2nd and Kenneth Lurz 1st. I was there two years. I loved teaching school, though the kids tried smoking, smooching and hanging. One pulled out my chair

and I spanked him. This was your usual rural school of the time! We hauled drinking water. We had fuel oil heat. We had outdoor toilets. Then I had an idea that teachers should change schools often, so I asked for Weta School, down in the Badlands, 23 miles from home. There 3 little girls, two of Ted Petersons' and 7th grader Barbara Hagan. It was so lovely there. Of course, I was stuck in the mud, stuck in the snow, and spent 3 days alone in the teacherage during the big blizzard of 1966. I had propane, though no electricity. The next year there I had 3 pupils until St. Patrick's Day, 1967, when Ted Peterson phoned and asked, "Are my girls there?" I replied that they were not. So Ted said, "Well, I guess she has left me!" The rest of the year, my only pupil was Janelle Herber, a first grader. We had good times anyway. Sometimes her little sister Kathleen could come to school. I dearly loved Miss Ruth Solon, Superintendent of Jackson County Schools, who was very helpful. I still owe her a steak! One time I had to take a supervised test to a correspondence course and she kept me at her house and gave me supper!