

## REMINISCENT TEACHER ESSAY

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Growing up on a farm northwest of Newell with my parents, Byron and Donna Schipke, and my four sisters was a wonderful time! My mother and two of my dad's sisters were teachers. At an early age I decided to become a teacher. I loved my 1st and 2<sup>nd</sup> grade teacher at Horse Creek Country School, Mrs. Middlebrook. I kept in touch with her until she passed away.

When I was in Newell High School, Mother and I decided Home Economics was something I could use my entire life. In the fall of 1959 I headed to Brookings, SD to major in Home Economics. I had never been away from home before so I got really homesick. It helped that there were several students from Newell at SDSU. I usually went home for Christmas but did spend other holidays with friends who lived closer to Brookings.

I graduated in 1963, and in the fall, went to Spearfish, SD to teach. I was also in charge of the Prom Banquet and concessions at games. One day when I was teaching in Spearfish, I answered the door and a salesman asked to see the teacher. The students really enjoyed that. The first year I had a State Future Homemaker of America officer! I learned a lot that year as Newell did not offer Home Economics at the time, so I was unfamiliar with the FHA organization. For all the years I taught in Spearfish and then Sturgis I had an incoming or outgoing State FHA Officer. When I attended the many state officer meetings, I remember the State Advisor always thought I was one of the officers instead of the advisor! The year Sturgis had the State FHA President Candy Bracewell, I was one of the chaperones for our state officers when we attended the National FHA Convention in New York City. What a wonderful experience! I was honored with local, regional and state FHA advisor awards.

Larry Snoozy and I were married in 1965 and that was the year I started teaching in Sturgis. I followed a couple of boys down the hallway as they laughed about having "Snoozy" for study hall. I keep in touch with many of the girls I taught and had in FHA. The year Sturgis had a National FHA Officer, Laura Johnson, I became pregnant. The new teacher who took over my job at semester time traveled with Laura to all the national events.

Larry and I moved to Newell where Larry was teaching. I stayed home with our daughter Melanie and our son Mark until they were in school. I then went to Black Hills State and got my elementary teaching degree. Even though I had taught seven years in high school I had to teach in elementary for a semester. I went to Nisland and was in the 3<sup>rd</sup> and 4<sup>th</sup> grade with a young teacher who I must have intimidated (even though I don't know how I did that). She put me down in front of the students a few times but I didn't let on that it bothered me. The other semester that year I taught pre-school at Newell City Hall which was a fun time!

After I earned my elementary degree I taught 1<sup>st</sup>, 2<sup>nd</sup>, and 3<sup>rd</sup> grades in Vale, SD. I enjoyed my year there with Gwenn Vallery who taught the upper grades. The next year I went to Nisland and taught the 5<sup>th</sup> and 6<sup>th</sup> graders. I remember three 6<sup>th</sup> grade boys and one 5<sup>th</sup> grade boy who were quite challenging! I arranged to eat lunch with each of my students individually in a small room off the lunchroom. This one-on-one time with each of my students was very insightful. My four troublemakers were so nice when they didn't have the other boys around!

The next year I taught a first grade class in Newell and then I taught third grade for several years there. I taught Home Ec. in Sturgis to the mother of one of my first graders and had also taught her aunt in Vale. When I first started teaching in Newell, I knew most of the parents of my students, but later on, there were a lot of transient students.

The Moreau Country School 30 miles north of Newell had two teachers. In the 1989-90 school year, the school board decided only one teacher was needed. They wanted a more experienced teacher there so they sent me. I had loved my 8 years as a student at the Horse Creek Country School so I enjoyed my time teaching at Moreau. The parents were so much more involved than anywhere else I had taught. At the time I taught at Moreau, there was a teacherage with an indoor bathroom but there was still an outhouse. There was an old sheep wagon where shepherders used to live. The students enjoyed playing in it on chilly days. We ate our lunch downstairs where there was a microwave oven. From time to time, we had to deal with snakes getting in the downstairs basement. The country students seemed to be more responsible and they all had duties to help keep the school and playground in order. We had a Christmas program at the community meeting place – Moreau Hall. A neighbor lady came and played the piano for the songs we sang at the program. It was a wonderful community celebration! The Moreau School was closed shortly after I left there and the students were bussed into Newell.

I then went back to Newell and taught 4<sup>th</sup> grade, which I really enjoyed. While I taught there, the 4<sup>th</sup>, 5<sup>th</sup>, and 6<sup>th</sup> graders moved into a wing of the new middle school that also housed the 7<sup>th</sup> and 8<sup>th</sup> graders in the other wing. By this time, both Vale and Nisland students were being bussed to Newell. The rooms in the new building had high ceilings, lots of windows, and bad acoustics. There were no cabinets, counters, storage or white boards. One teacher and her husband built cabinets and countertop for our rooms and each teacher purchased a storage cupboard. Our husbands built bulletin boards and white boards and the students moved the desks into the new classrooms. We had two classrooms of each grade. I remember the year I had a class with all the troublemakers. It was the class all the teachers talked about. I had a reputation for being a strict but fair teacher. One mother tried to get her son moved into the other classroom but she was not successful. By the end of the year she was singing my praises. Go figure!

I retired in 2000 after 30 years of teaching. I missed the students and my fellow teachers but not the politics and the computers. I am an old fashioned gal! I did do some substitute teaching after my retirement. I subbed in Family and Consumer Science (Home Ec.) By this time, boys were in the classes. One day they made pies that were quite messy looking but they were so proud of them and they tasted good. Some of the

sweet girls I had taught as 5<sup>th</sup> graders in Nisland were very difficult freshman when I subbed. They were no longer respectful so I was sad to see that change. I decided it was good that I had retired and can spend lots of time with my grandchildren.