

## Reminiscent Teacher Essay

My name is Eileen Wagner Moes and this is my life story as a rural schoolteacher in Codrington County. I was born on February 6, 1929 so I am now 84 years old. I was born and raised on a farm 7 miles southeast of Watertown. Our family lived 1 ½ miles from our rural school. I attended a one-room schoolhouse that did not have an in-door bathroom. I started school there when I was 5 years old. Three years later we got a new school. I feel that I was very lucky to have had the same exceptional teacher for 7 of my 8 grades. She was very well liked.

For the next part of my education, I went to IC school for 1 year, and then to the old Watertown Senior High. I graduated from WHS in 1946, and that fall I went to Notre Dame Junior Academy in Mitchell for 1 year.

My first teaching job was in a school 2 ½ miles from my home. I walked both ways to and from school almost every day. My salary was \$180 dollars a month so I couldn't afford a car.

One week we had snow about 8 feet deep on the roads so I put on my brother's army flight pants and parka. As I turned to go east, the wind was so strong that it took my breath away. I turned around and walked 1 ½ miles back home since we had no cell phones or way to get help in those days. The weather caused me to miss one day of school that week. It was just my luck that one of the school board members who had a son in the 8<sup>th</sup> grade, lived ¾ of a mile from school. He walked up to get his mail on that stormy day, even though he knew there wasn't any mail. Since he knew I wasn't at school on that day, we made up the missing day by coming to school 1 hour earlier for 1 week.

We always had prayers before recess and before we went home. One time a 6<sup>th</sup> grader spit in the cold air register. For his punishment I made him stay after school until the kids he walked home with were a good ½ mile ahead of him. Also I had a 1st grader who didn't want to come to school. To disrupt our school, he would kick his shoes off and irritate us because his feet smelled so bad of Lifeboy soap we could hardly stand to be in the same room with him.

Other differences that I remember were that we always had a Christmas program and one year with the program we even had a basket social that was fun. Another memory was one day I came to school and it had rained and had frozen the schoolhouse door shut. I had to walk about ¼ of a mile to get hot water to thaw it out. Also many times at noon we brought sack lunches to eat. Sometimes we would bring potatoes and put them around the jacket of the stove. When it was dinnertime, the potatoes would be done and they were delicious with butter, salt and pepper. Also I remember that we played a lot of games at recess, and sometimes we would even drown gophers. One problem that I remember was that we did not always have toilet paper so we improvised by using the good old Sears Roebuck catalogue. However, one of the girls went out to the bathroom and got so involved

**in looking for a new snowsuit in the catalogue, that she missed a class. One duty that is no longer required of teachers is that I always banked the fire in the stove at night so it didn't completely go out. I had to put coal and wood in the stove and carry out the ashes, and then sweep the floor with a sweeping compound.**

**I taught at the same school for 2 years and then I got married. I had a wonderful 2-year teaching experience. I still see some of my pupils and, of course, some of them have already passed away.**