

## THE SCHOOL HOUSE

When I went to school, it was not like going to the schools of today. I attended a one room schoolhouse called the Daisy D, which was comprised of one large room with eight rows of seats. Each row represented a grade, one through eight, with no kindergarten class. This small school was in a rural area, offering children the opportunity to learn how to read and write, the two most important subjects taught at that time. All work was completed on paper, as the only technology in the building was the teacher's manual typewriter.

The Daisy D's enrollment was no more than fifty students, with siblings attending together. Transportation to school was not included, which meant a long walk, in all kinds of weather. Arriving in the morning, the children had to wait for the teacher to come outside and ring the handbell, announcing school was about to start. Everyone then went to their designated cloak rooms, the girls on one side of the building, the boys on the other. This was where we would take off our coats, sweaters, or boots which were not needed for class. Any time we went into or outside the building, we were expected to use these entrances.

Our teacher was strict, like most one room schoolhouse teachers. She was alone, as there was no other adult to help her, with what were usually active children of various ages, and plenty of sibling rivalry. The teacher had the authority to dish out punishment to any child who misbehaved or broke the rules. One form of punishment was the strap, which was a real beaver's tail. I had the privilege of feeling this strap once, when I kept dragging leaves and debris into the school, making extra work for the teacher to clean up.

When school was in session, the teacher worked with students in each row, which was one grade. She checked homework, projects, and handed out new assignments. She went down each of the rows, working with individual students, answering their questions. In this environment, it was not unusual for children to learn an upper grade's work while in a lower grade. That was how I was promoted from grade one to grade three. Over the course of the day, we were allowed two recesses of fifteen minutes each and one hour for lunch.

My favorite entertainment at school was on Thursday's, when Mr. Fife would bring his fiddle. We would put all the chairs around the edges of the room and have a square dance. An old phonograph player supplied the calling, and Mr. Fife's fiddle provided the music. This also helped with the socialization between the boys and girls, as everyone had to pick a partner.

Our bathrooms were modern for the time, as we had his and hers outhouses with double seats. The teacher never had to worry about the kids spending too much time in the bathroom, especially in the winter. The school was heated by a big, old woodstove, with the eighth grade boys being responsible for keeping the fire burning. Most of the boys were familiar with woodstoves, as they usually had one at home.

A favorite event was show and tell, where each child had the opportunity to bring an item to school. Everyone enjoyed seeing the interesting things brought in to share with the whole class. It was an added bonus if my father were home on these days, as I could get a ride to and from school, not having to carry my item.

Attending the Daisy D was a memorable part of a much simpler life, something that I look back on with happiness and great satisfaction.