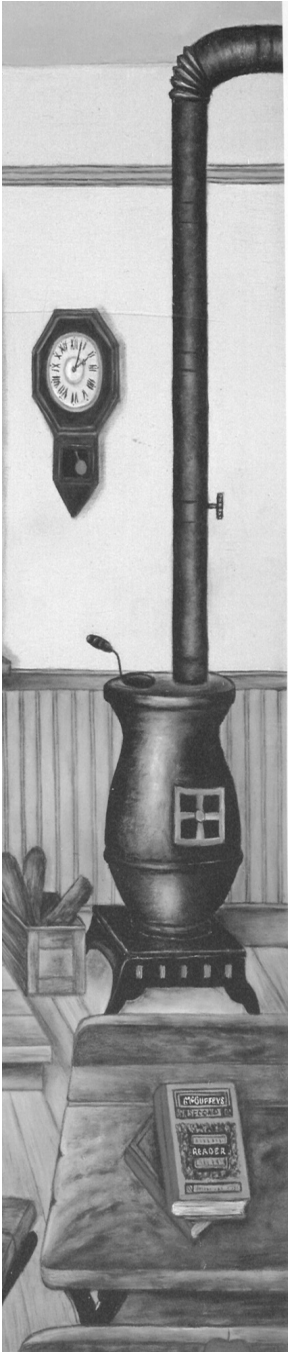


DEDICATION

(I have written a “found” poem - using only words from the teachers’ stories - with it I express deep gratitude to the 1938 teachers who have shared their experiences and an invitation to reflect on education during the Progressive Era)

The Best of Times



A one-room building out on the prairie, thirty degrees below zero
How did the students get an education?
All sitting ‘round the pot bellied stove
Coats and mitts on ‘til pot-belly turned red
Cold blasts each time the door opens
Relax and visit
A mother provided homemade soup on top of the pot-bellied stove!

How did the students get an education?
Thirty-one children from grades 1 through 9
We taught everything - reading, writing, arithmetic, spelling, language, history, geography, science
A climate of helping each other
Often the younger ones would listen to lessons of the older ones.

The children appreciated the opportunity to learn
Isolated from town – with no electricity, just a barb-wire telephone which didn’t work in wet weather.
No up-to-date books, no equipment
A blackboard, a globe and a pointer, one softball
One basketball, stuffed with mitts, good for tossing not bouncing.

How did the students get an education?

Maps made of different colors of mud (no money for salt and flour),
oral stories, local songs, sticks for the rhythm band, bed sheets for
curtains at concerts

We composed our own plays and songs, had seed planting
contests, school newspapers made on the hectograph pan.

Hikes in the spring and horses to pasture behind the school barn
Ukrainian, Romanian and Polish

We learned each others' languages

Health cards filled out every day

Current events each morning - events of WWII

The Enterprise system of learning - projects and more.

How did the students get an education?

I involved myself in recess and noon hour activities

A lot of soft-ball, they loved to see me hit the ball

And loved to "put me out!"

The children cared for each other – carried each other's
books, helped with boots, scarves, coats and mittens.

They helped hitch or saddle the horses they rode to school.

Older children helped the teacher by checking work of

The younger students or by dictating spelling.

This was not time wasted.

An experience of learning and responsibility

How did the students get an education?

My students made crib quilts for the Junior Red Cross

Scraps of cloth from Eaton's

Ironed and cut the desired size – then pieced together on mother's
sewing machine.

Then at school during noons and recesses we quilted.

Everyone had a hand in it, even the boys!

How did the students get an education? I really don't know!

But, we lived in the best of times!!