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WEST LINCOLN SCHOOL

My earliest recollections of the school are from even before the time that I started school. I think it was probably some type of a program that my folks attended and of course took me along. I remember the teacher was named Varney. I know that my cousin, Bryce and my next-door neighbor, Don Kelly, did not speak too highly of him. They still talk about him in that way to this day. Recently, Don's mother, Frances, died, and at her funeral I overheard those two talking about school days, and they still referred to Varney as a mean man.

I began my schooling in the fall of 1937 at the West Lincoln School, District #42. My first teacher was Mrs. Stevenson. She was unable to complete the entire year for reasons unknown to me, and my aunt, Bernice Roberts, finished teaching the term, a time of about a month. My cousin, Marian Squires started the first grade at the same time, and we were very close. We were the youngest kids in school of course, as there were no others in our grade.



Don Kelly was a sixth grader that year and sometimes he would take me to school on his horse. I loved that, I used to daydream for hours how things would be when I got my own horse, and of course I would ride him to school every day. There was a barn at the school that had three stalls in it and then a larger area on the west side of the building where horses could be tied. There was no partition there and sometimes the horses kicked one another and otherwise misbehaved. I knew that I would be early every day so that my horse would have a single stall and would not have to share with another and run the risk of being hurt. Well, I never did get that horse to ride to school, and as time went on it seemed less important, but that year it was the stuff my dreams were made of.

Grade 2 and a new teacher, her name was Mrs. Hill. Mrs. Hill lived with my Grandpa and Grandma Gresham. I don't remember a lot about this year, only that it was the year that I got my diphtheria vaccination. The Cooks lived in the house across the road south of us. Clarence, Buck, and Dale and I walked together most of this year. It was just about a mile if we walked across the fields and pastures.

Then the 3rd grade. That wonderful year that I fell in love, I mean in Love. Margaret was her name, Margaret Burns, and she was my teacher. I shared this feeling with most of the other boys in school as well as some of them already out of school. My dear friend, Dave Pottenger, was there nearly every morning to visit – or so it seemed to me. He was a high school graduate and drove a really neat 1937 Ford 4-door sedan. I really thought he was nice, but I sure wished he would leave the teacher alone. It seemed no matter how early I got to school he would be there ahead of me.

The next year my brother, Allen started to school, and our teacher was Mrs. Kennedy. She seemed old to me, I suspect she was probably 24 at the time, but at 9 this seems old. I don't think it would have made much difference what she looked like as no one could replace my lost love of the year before. The Cooks moved to Elbert, so it was Allen and I that walked this year. We stopped most of the time at Grandma's place for refreshments after school. I remember the freshly baked bread with butter and a little sugar on it. Boy!



now that was something after a day in school. Allen liked it so well at Grandma's that he had trouble going to school all the time. If he got sick, he would always go there and leave school. He figured out that it wasn't so bad to be a little sick if you got out of school. I remember one time that he got "sick" and Dad kind of paddled him down the road for about 100 yards on the way back to school. His health improved after that, and so did his attendance record.

1941, 5th grade, Mrs. Argle was the teacher. The first day of school it snowed about 5 inches. I missed quite a lot of school this year. I was sick and no one knew why, many thought it was the same sickness that Allen had the year before, but I knew better. I had terrible dreams and general feeling of anxiety, along with convulsions, and anemia. Doctors couldn't figure it out, but that dear teacher, Mrs. Argle, did. She suggested that my mother give me some tea made from Quasha bark, which she did. While this was not an immediate cure, it proved to be the right medicine, as it destroyed the intestinal parasites, and I regained my health.

In the sixth grade I had my first male teacher, Ralph Garrison was his name. He lived on the ranch known locally as the North Bend Ranch. The name of the ranch came from the bend in the railroad track that was on the place. He had three children who attended school that year, Warren, Vivian, and Ralph Lincoln. Warren was a grade ahead of me, Vivian was in the same grade with me, and Ralph was a 2nd or 3rd grader. I was afraid of Mr. Garrison, but I think he was a fairly good teacher. I can't remember having trouble academically that year. He also accounts for the teacher the next year too. The only teacher I ever had who stayed for more than one year. Some trouble within the district occurred this year or more correctly just prior to this year. Some of the people felt that the

quality of education was not as good as it could be. Some of the kids transferred into Elbert and attended school there.

My last year of school at West Lincoln was also the last year that school was held there. My teacher was my aunt, Bernice Roberts, I think that this is particularly significant as she was also my teacher in the first year of school. She helped me to start as well as complete my elementary education. Her students that year were Allen Gresham, Elizabeth Ann Gresham, Mary Alice Roberts, Virginia Roberts, Harriet Pottenger, and me. When school closed at the end of the year, the district was consolidated with the Elbert School District. Truly an end of an era.

I don't think that I lacked anything in the way of education in attending this little one room school for my entire elementary education. The memories of that time are much a part of me. I can still hear the ticking of the old wall clock and smell the chalk and eraser dust. I still feel the chalk on my hands and see it on my bib overalls where I attempted to wipe it off. I see the bust of Lincoln and the old map case that introduced me to geography. I don't know if I enjoyed the mechanics of the case more than the maps themselves. I can still taste the water from that well. We had a bucket of water in the cloak room and a



common dipper that we used for drinking. Yes, and I can still smell the cloakroom when one of the girls got sick and threw up on the door. We used to set our lunches on the floor in a row under the coats, and I remember the little dog that followed me to school once and ate everyone's lunch who used a sack to carry it in. (those of us who used lunch boxes were not considered cool, but we still had our lunch.) Of course. I had to give my lunch to someone who had lost theirs and I went to Grandma's for a bite that day.

The old building holds many memories. It was at one time the center and most vital part of the Lincoln Community. While it can never attain that status again, it seems that it is a part of our heritage that should be preserved. My mother and father both received their grade school education there and passed it on to their children so that they too might be educated. Maybe those children can preserve a memory and a heritage for this little community west of Elbert Colorado, the little green and white schoolhouse known as West Lincoln School District #42.