

## **FOR THE McCUTCHANVILLE SCHOOL REUNION – 2003**

By Anne Isabel Swope McKeeby (Age 95)

I am probably one of the oldest, if not the oldest (born April 1908), living graduate of the McCutchanville School. Those who have been following the Swope News, published three times a year and edited by Paul Swope, may want to skip what I write as it will be pretty much what I wrote for that (a few months ago).

When I started school in September 1914 at the age of 6, the McCutchanville School house was not quite ready. We started instead in the nearby Church, getting into the new building in January. I was happily impressed. There were, you may remember, two big class rooms separated by a hall with shelves and pegs for our wraps. There was also a large auditorium used for extra classes and for community meetings. During the terrible flu epidemic of 1918 the stage was set up for beds for the sick. I remember lying in one with chills and fever. I just couldn't get warm. Willis Moffett, who lived down the road, was our only fatality.

Underneath was a large recreation room where we played games and practiced drills.

We had all kinds of drills taught by Miss Florence Ensle who came in once a week. She taught us music also. The drills were of all kinds – flag, dumb bells, wands (broom handles). We performed these later for P.T.A. and other meetings for our parents. I was usually the shortest kid there so was stuck at the head of the line. If I made a mistake so did everyone who copied me.

My first and second grade teacher was Miss Margaret McCutchan. I don't remember much about her except she had "Fluttering hands", whether from habit or from Parkinson I don't know. The students with me were Ruth Webb ( killed by lightning in the 9<sup>th</sup> grade), Sam Moffett, Ruth Hornby, Clarence Cooksey, Dellbert Deisinger and Clarence Seib. The last three came from "Kansas", a village down past the church. They rode in the "school bus", a horse drawn wagon with seats on each side. I sometimes road that bus to visit my sister Mayme and her husband Robert Henry who lived on a farm down there.

Alice, Kathryn and I walked to school joined sometimes by Lucille, Geneva and Ruth Hornby. Other kids who joined less often were Martha and Oscar Riggs and Billy and Olivia Effinger. We always listened for the school bell which told us whether we needed to hurry or not.

My third and fourth grade teacher was my sister Elnora Swope. Her future mother-in-law, Mrs. Ora France, was the janitor and kept the rooms cleaner and the furnace going when needed. I often stayed after school to clean the black boards and dust the erasers. Sometime during those grades were joined by Isabel Schlensker and another Isabel from the Kansas area. Elnora was a good teacher and got us ready for the next grades.

Miss Lida Henry was our teacher through grades 5 – 8. She was an excellent teacher and got us ready for the dreaded 8<sup>th</sup> grade county exam. All the community gossiped about her and "boy friend" Asa Coats. It was rumored they'd marry when both their parents died, but they didn't. She finally took him in to care for when he was too old to care for himself.

We had no indoor plumbing or running water. Two outdoor outhouses, one for girls and one for boys met the needs, even in winter when we'd run because of the cold. Water came

from a pump with a tin cup hanging on the side. Some of us carried little folding plastic cups. If we forgot to bring it, there was the tin cup! We didn't worry too much about sanitation!

We carried our lunches from home, and weather permitting would sit together on the bank by the road. Sometimes the boys thought it was fun to slip a little extra into one of the girls lunch box such as a toad or part of a snake! We didn't think it was funny.

The games we played at recess were baseball, hide and seek, rabbit, and witch in the wooded area behind the school. If you were caught you became a "witch" and had to be rescued, hopefully by a favorite boy friend!

During the winter when the snow was deep we'd build two forts, and spend our time happily pelting each other with snow balls.

Sometimes these fun and games would be entered into by the older students, including the Swope sisters, Alice and Kathryn, and the Hornby sisters, Geneva and Lucille.

What fun and what memories! Oh to be young again!

End

Anne Isabel Swope McKeeby passed away in 2011 at 102 years of age.