

In Witness Whereof, We have hereunto subscribed our names this
Thirtieth Day of July, A.D. 1906

Geo S McMullen, Director
Faith Otto Teacher

Approved by A B Quantrell Moderator
E W Barnes Assessor"

It is interesting to recall that the Director and Teacher that year fell in love, and they were married in 1908. Quantrell as the Treasurer was bonded that year for \$1000, signed by the board members. Director George McMullen was also a Notary Public, and this was handy for the board.

By 1903 the school was burning considerable coal, along with wood. Coal gave out more heat, held the heat better, and eliminated some of the work connected with wood for the women teachers. Coal was about \$4.40 a ton then, which probably seemed fairly expensive as compared with wood. A July report mentioned four purchases of coal, one for 2565 lbs. at a cost of \$5.56; a second for 2900 lbs. priced at \$5.80; a third was 2330 lbs. (\$4.95) and the fourth for 2310 lbs. cost \$4.60. Such an amount of coal, a little over a ton, would be slowly freighted out from town by a farmer's horses and wagon. In 1907 two purchases of coal cost \$14.90, and wood purchased came to \$8.40. In the 1920's, wood and coal were still being used together in a similar way.

In the early years of the century, the cost of many items was still very low. The District bought a new stove for \$18.80 in the year 1903-04, and paid 50¢ to have it hauled out from town. The District paid \$2.25 for coal hauling, and 50¢ for wood hauling. The board paid for erasers 15¢ and chalk 50¢ (duplicating this purchase later), \$2 for insurance, \$2.50 for cleaning the schoolhouse, and 50¢ for mowing the yard. In 1907 ten cents was paid for hinges, 15¢ for a door latch, \$3.75 for curtains, \$2.75 for record books, 25¢ for a door panel, and 87¢ for window glass. Chalk cost 25¢, a dust pan 10¢, erasers and blacking 35¢.

By 1910 Eaton County had a County Commissioner of Schools, Cynthia A. Green, whose duty it was to visit all the schools, and make reports and evaluations of the grounds, buildings, and work of the teachers. She visited South Oneida School on Nov. 2 that year. Fern Wilson was the teacher; she was a graduate of County Normal and had taught one year. Her salary was \$45 a month, \$405 for the year, a large increase from 5 years before. It was stated that she took two teacher's journals, that 17 pupils were present of 19 enrolled and their deportment was good, but the teacher was only rated at C+. The property was in bad shape. The grounds were not clean, the house not clean; one outbuilding had been abused and the door was off; the desks were rated as medium. There was no ventilation and no water, but the school had a flag. The school had maps, a globe, a dictionary, charts, and pictures, but no organ. The educational hierarchy at that

time were promoting organs in schools, with no thought for the limited number of teachers who could have played them! The School used the Baldwin Readers, and followed the adopted course of study. The teacher had sent for books to aid her in teaching about communicable diseases. Thus runs the 1910 report.

When the County School Commissioner visited in December 1913, she found one outbuilding "sadly out of repair", and the school had no well. But she had good things to report. The teacher, Marian Dunning, was a "good teacher" and the schoolhouse and grounds were neat. The school was still using the Baldwin Readers, along with Milne's Arithmetic, Morton's Geography, Montgomery's History, Overton's Physiology, Alexander's Speller. The number of books in the library was reported at 77.

By Sept. 22, 1961, our school had a well. There are no reports in existence for 1914 and 1915 in Charlotte, and I am not able to give a precise date for the well. This was surely a step forward.

For ten years, from 1907 to 1917, our school had a heavy preponderance of girls. Nellie Burman Ireland who began her "unforgettable days" at the Strange in 1912, writes that "it seemed we had many more girls than boys in those early days." This was correct. In 1912-13 our school had 5 boys and 15 girls, a ratio of 3 to 1. The next year the score was 7 to 14; in 1916-17 it was 4 to 11.

Zulu Walters was the able teacher here for two years, 1911-13. Her salary of \$360 the first year, was jumped to \$450 the next, as she was well liked. She drove a horse and buggy from her home $2\frac{1}{2}$ miles southwest, leaving the horse and buggy in the church sheds across the road. Nellie remembers playing "Spy" and "May I?" in recess periods in her early years at school. Also that each pupil had his "own cup hanging on a hook in the hall;" but this was after the well was installed.¹ Frances Strange Catey who also started school in 1912, remembers a kind of uniform dress for the girls, dark blue dresses with a big belt and two buckles on either side.² Nellie recalls how the pupils enjoyed the Christmas exercises and party.¹

The author's memory of our school starts with 1917. The teacher in 1917-18 was Lepha M. Bateman, but she went by the name of Mildred. She was well liked, and even our dyspeptic school commissioner rated her at B+. Her salary was \$55 a month, or \$495 for the year. The school had suddenly changed that year. It was large and well balanced with 14 boys and 16 girls, and she had all eight grades to teach. The school had 73 books in its library, a flag, a globe, maps, but no large school dictionary. The school had a pleasant aspect to one small boy. It had new desks; and several pictures on the walls, including portraits of Washington and Lincoln.

1 Letter to the author, April 6, 1979

2 In a discussion of our memories of schooldays, April 6, 1979

The school board at this time and for years thereafter, consisted on Montie Strange Director, Clifford Brunger Moderator, and Ervin Burman Treasurer. The Moderator was elected to the board in 1913, the Treasurer in 1914, and they served for about 20 years. D. M. Strange was elected in 1915, and served at least 10 years. Generally speaking the teachers did not have too much trouble with discipline, for it was talked in school that the board would back the teacher up. It was known that Cliff Brunger had been a champion wrestler in college and the other board members were strong men and farmers too.

Let us glance at the district finances at this time. This year the Treasurer handled over \$1,000 for the first time. In July 1917, the board had \$144.45 in the general fund and \$2.12 in the library fund. The district received from the primary school interest fund \$208.80, from district taxes \$673.92, and from the library fund (penal fines) \$2.03, giving the board \$1,031.33 to handle. The salary was \$495, the district paid \$80 tuition for four graduates in high school, and \$107.18 for general purposes, leaving a fine balance of \$349.20 to start the next year.

Our teacher in 1918-19 was Myandia Shaw. The school was large that year; in the winter I believe attendance soared to well over 30, and seats had to be brought in. The ordinary arrangement then was for two rows of eight seats and desks each on the south side, two shorter rows of six seats and desks each on the north side because the stove was in the northwest corner, and a short row of 3 or 4 seats in the middle at the back, giving a seating of 31 or so. In the front there was a bench to the right of center, the recitation bench, on which a class sat when it was called forward to recite. The teacher's desk was in the middle at the front.

We have the record of the "School Census of District No. three of the township of Oneida..for the school year ending July 8, 1918, as taken by D M Strange in a house to house canvass, during the last fifteen days next preceding June 1. D.M. Strange above named being duly sworn, says that the following is a correct list, as taken by him of the names and ages of all children belonging to District No. 3 aforesaid, five years of age and under twenty years..

Subscribed and sworn to this 24th day of June, 1918 Before me
John B. Strange Justice of the Peace."
The census listed 39 children and youth, with the names and ages, and name of the father or guardian. Of these eight were 15 years old or above, and not in school.'

At the end of the year Miss Shaw reported 28 pupils; the county report in May gives the same figure. But the Holbrook family with three girls, the Phelps family with two children, and Rev. Ogle's family with one daughter, had moved away by May. It was a well-balanced school, with eight grades and no less than 3 in any grade. I believe there were 3 Eighth Graders--Mable Beemer, Margaret Beemer, and Lloyd Dunn who was sweet on Mable; in the spring I remember his singing "K-K-K-Katie", a popular song just then to her. Later they were married.

Miss Shaw had attended the Ypsilanti Normal School and had a life certificate. She was a disciplinarian and kept a razor strap in her desk, as a threat. On one occasion, the why of which I do not remember, Miss Shaw used her strap on several of the big girls in school, a frightening experience to a little boy. On the other hand she gave more parties than other teachers of the time; I remember carrying home in a napkin from one of these, some large pieces of homemade candy, and probably a cookie or two.

Early that year came the climactic event of Armistice Day, the sudden delirious news that the war in Europe was over. On that day, Nov. 11, 1918, all the school bells were kept ringing. Different larger pupils were given the coveted task of keeping our bell ringing. In the afternoon, around 1:45 p.m., our bell ringer turned the bell over. To our chagrin our bell was silent. At afternoon recess we could hear the bells of the Earl and Oneida Center, or perhaps the Doane, but our school was no longer in the celebration. The next morning a school board member came to climb up and restore our bell to a ringable position.

I remember well being in the second grade. The seventh grade that year studied "Snowbound"; I sat and listened to them and learned the opening lines which they went over a lot as the teacher explained that this poem was in iambic tetrameter. In the spring they studied "Evangeline", and ever after I remembered how that poem begins with the "murmuring pines and the hemlocks" and includes a sad love story. We used to listen to other classes a good bit. This was a big advantage of country school; the small children learned from the bigger. The big girls could help the small children put on their wraps in the winter, or sometimes as a treat carry them on their backs at recess, or give other attention that the little children loved.

In the spring of 1919 a fine new chimney was built on the back of the school, and a large new Hero room heater installed. One little boy crawled into the opening at the bottom of the chimney and could hardly be extricated. The school board that year spent the large sum of \$320.06 for general purposes. The County Commission on her visit in May listed for ventilation--"Heater-good".

The Commissioner made an unusually long visit on May 1, of 2 hours and 10 minutes, instead of the usual 30 minutes or so. Evidently there had been some complaints. The deportment of the pupils was listed as "fair to good", and the teacher was given an estimate of C-. The grounds were rated as good, but small. The desks were single and "not old, the outbuildings were fair, and the House was of brick and clean!"

At the end of the year Miss Shaw gave all the pupils a lovely printed School Souvenir, with a colored front cover showing an American eagle and flag over the western hemisphere, and below a picture of the Statue of Liberty. American pride, patriotism, and idealism,

were in evidence. Between the pictures was the verse,

"Rise up! proud eagle, ride up to the clouds
Spread thy broad wings o'er this fair Western World
Fling from thy beak our dear banner of old
Show that it is still for freedom unfurled."

Below was the motto "Knowledge is the only jewell that will not decay."
Inside was a drawing of a country school, with a message.

"Dear Pupil:

This little momento is of slight value now; but if you find it among other keep-sakes in years to come, it will prove to be a treasured possession--reminding you of friends who help to mold your character and career.

I hope that you will look back upon this school-year as a bright spot in your life. My best wishes go with you. Your Teacher."

On the next inside page was a list of the 28 pupils at the close of the year as follows: Mable Beemer, Margaret Beemer, Bernice Shrontz, Erma Burman, Lloyd Dunn, Kale Miner, Frances Strange, Nellie Burman, Mildred Miner, Zenith Whitman, Harold Strange, Arlo Catlin, Donald Shrontz, Dorothy McMullen, Thelma Catlin, Royce Williams, Helen Katherine Strange, Carl Cook, Carrol Shrontz, Vaughn Williams, Joseph Otto, Raymond McMullen, Ronald Brunger, Boyd Burman, John Strange, Earl Brunger, John Catlin, and Orley Phelps.

In 1919-20, our teacher was Helen Ingler. With the prosperity of the farmers at the end of World War I (when the price of wheat jumped to \$2 a bushel) and general inflation, Miss Ingler's salary had risen to \$75 a month. One fall morning in 1919, a neighbor came while our family was at breakfast and protested to my father Cliff Brunger (who had been on the school board for six years) over this outrageously high salary. My father patiently held that this salary was necessary and in line.

The County School Commissioner came by to visit our school on Oct. 22. She would tiptoe quietly through the front door, the entry way, and one of the two doors into the schoolroom; suddenly she was there. Her visits were a cause of nervousness and trepidation for the teacher, and somehow we pupils always felt a bit afraid of her. She made her evaluation in 40 minutes. The desks were single and new. The flag; a new one was needed. The school had maps, a globe, 10 good pictures, and 87 volumes in the library, but no organ. The teacher was a graduate of Ypsilanti Normal, and had one year's experience. The deportment of the school was good, but the commissioner graded the teacher with a 'C'. But an impression gained in one short visit could be wrong.

I have no hesitation in recording that the Commissioner was wrong, and that Miss Ingler was an efficient and creative teacher. She was thin, active, and keen mentally; she had no problems with discipline. As we went into the year, she introduced a geography class in the afternoon for the third grade. She read a book on the life of the Eskimos over a period of time, which fascinated us, and

then moved to a book on the life of natives living in a tropical jungle village. From that time on geography was a most interesting subject to at least one of her pupils. That year the school had one day off for the County Fair in Charlotte, two days off for County Institute for the teachers, Armistice Day, Thanksgiving Day, and the last day of school. Probably that was the first year that the last day was celebrated, with a program and a ball game. The year before we had walked joyfully home after school hours, with our report cards indicating that we had passed to the next grade.

The teachers in those years generally boarded and roomed at the Montie Strange home, the largest in the neighborhood, or on occasion with George McMullens. Cars were undependable then, and often put up during winter months; the roads were poor and at times impassable from snow in the winter, or from mudholes in the spring. Lilah Miles, our next teacher, roomed at the John B. Strange home.

Through my years in this school from 1917 to 1925, we always had a large school and could field baseball games in the spring without difficulty. Recreation was a great advantage of the country school. We always had games on our minds to play. It might be Pom-Pom-Pull-away, or Every Man's Bye, or Tag, or Red Rover, or Prisoner's Goal, or Stealing Sticks. It might be One-Old-Cat if not too large a group wanted to play ball, or Anti-I over the School House, or regular baseball which in later years tended to be softball. Usually we would concentrate on one game for a while, and then turn to another. We had morning recess of 15 minutes, 10:30 to 10:45 usually. The noon hour ran from 12 to 1, minus the time for eating lunch, a precious hour. Then we had a 15 minute afternoon recess at 2:15 or 2:30. Recess always seemed short; all too soon the bell rang for us to go back into the schoolhouse. School always ran from 9 a.m. to 4 p.m. We did not play after school. Soon after 4, we were walking in pairs or groups in one of the four directions out from school, lunch-pail in hand.

I had a red, rectangular tin lunch-pail, with a tray in the top for dessert. Some pupils often had fried-egg sandwiches; I often had hard boiled eggs, with a bit of salt and bit of pepper wrapped in pieces of wax paper. Sandwiches often had jam or jelly, sometimes cheese, occasionally peanut butter (pretty dry stuff in those days) or meat. At times I had a little jar of sauce to moisten the meal, some fruit, or a piece of celery. In the top tray would be a piece of cake, cookies, or maybe a donut.

About 1920 I think, the District bought another half acre to the south doubling the size of the grounds. The County had brought some pressure to this end. Now we had plenty of room for ball games in the spring, or for 'Fox and Geese' in the winter. This favorite winter game was great fun. A double-circular track was made; this circle was cut by two straight perpendicular tracks into quarters. Then