

Chapter 2 Cisco School: 1st through 8th Grade.

Cisco School was just across the railroad from our house, maybe 1/4 of a mile away. I started school when I was 5 years old, the fall of 1931. My teacher was Miss Eureka Fralser. The teacher said I visited every day the year before so she might as well enroll me. I did not remember her first name, it was in the book "Memories of Harrison County Rural Schools". Two other teachers I had were Edna Starmer and LaVaugh Tripp.

What was to be my first day of school was a disaster at home. Most of us kids were sitting on the floor around the cook stove. It must have been a cool day. Marvin picked up the tea kettle from the stove and started to pour the hot water into the wash pan. Mom told him she wanted the water to make oatmeal for breakfast. Marvin turned around to put the kettle back on the stove, but the wooden handle rolled out of his hand and the tea kettle fell, hitting Don on his back. The hot water splashed on Don and Kathleen, scalding them. Dad and Mom took them both to the Doctor. They were not too seriously burned. So I missed my first day of school.

Don skipped his first day of school! Don went to school on time with Randall, Marvin and Virginia. Shortly thereafter Dad started the car up to go to town. Don heard the car start. He ran out the door of the school and to our house to go with Dad. (Don always went with Dad where ever he went). This time Dad let Don go with him but told him he could never leave school again, and he didn't.

Cisco was a one room school, with children attending from the 1st grade through the 8th grade. There was a coat room and library; a well for water and two outhouses, one for boys and one for girls. The first year I went to school, five of us Fowlers went there: Randall, Marvin, Virginia, Don and myself. Kathleen was a baby and Carol had not been born yet. Dad had attended Cisco School going through the 6th Reader as he would say. Mom taught there in 1914-15. All seven of us finished the 8th grade there before going on to High School in Blythedale. Our school year started in September and ended the middle of April. All the country children had work to do on the farm.

I always liked school and was quite often the Teacher's Pet or so I thought!

My first grade teacher gave me a ring for Christmas. I still have the ring. In the fall of 1932 the Boothe family children came to school bragging they had a baby sister. Then later the Lane children started bragging they had a baby sister. Then in February we Fowler kids could all brag we had a baby sister too. Carol was born February 16, 1933. We kids got to help name the new baby. Mom wanted to name her Caroline, after her mother, but she let us have our way and we named her Carol. I'm not sure where Louise came from but Caroline's sister was named Louisa.

I can remember the day Carol was born. Mom had a back ache when we got home from school and Dad took some of us kids to the neighbors, Verle and Mary Boothe, to spend the night. We had to sleep several kids in the same bed.

To get back to my story about school; Each morning our teacher would usually read to us such books as "Tom Sawyer" and "Huckleberry Finn". Some years we had a Rhythm Band. One teacher, I do remember which one, Roberta McCoy, taught Don and I her version of the "Jig". We would Jig at most of the school functions after that. Another teacher taught us some craft skills using a Coping Saw. We made several items from wood. I have the Tle Rack and the String Holder I made. Another year we learned to use Plaster of Paris. I still have some of the Wall Plaques I made. Our school had Spelling Contests for parents and students. Mom usually won those contests. Dad won the Arithmetic Contests. One year at the Halloween Party a strange lady came all dressed up. It was our dad and he sure fooled us!

On Valentines Day we exchanged valentines. We saved them from one year to the next, erased the names on the back and used them again the following year. Some of the games we played during recess were: Farmer In The Dell, Drop the Handkerchief, and Hide and Seek. We jumped rope and played softball. On days when we had to stay inside, the only game I can think of is Button, Button Who Has The Button. Another thing the teacher would have us do is to put our heads on our desks and shut our eyes. She'd walk around the room and pat someone on their shoulder. That person would pick up any paper or trash on the floor. Then we'd have to guess who it was. Sounds dumb now, but we enjoyed it.

Don was held back in the third grade, I think it was. The only other person in his grade, Wanda Barth, moved away. Roscoe Lane and I were in the grade below Don, so Mom had Don repeat the grade and be in the class with Roscoe and me.

On cold, snowy days Mom would make a big pot of soup and bring it to school for us all to eat. We usually went home for lunch most days. Some days we Fowler kids would race to see who could get home for lunch first. I was the youngest and always the last to reach the house. Sometimes Randall would carry me on his back so I wouldn't be last. To tell how very poor some of the folks were, one family's kids brought gravy sandwiches for lunch. During the Depression the Government furnished ingredients for the teacher to make soup for the students for lunch.

One year a new family moved across the creek from us. The kids had head lice. I sat behind one of the new girls at school and I could see the lice run up and down her braids. I told Mom and next thing I knew we were having our hair washed with kerosene. Terrible, it makes my head itch to even think about it now after all these years.

Kenneth Bush was the bully at our school. One day Kenneth picked a fight with Marvin. The teacher spanked Kenneth in front of the entire school. The next day his mother came to school and demanded the teacher spank Marvin, but the teacher refused to. That was one mad mother.

I never missed a day of school until I was in the 4th Grade, I think it was.

Randall was in high school and he brought home to us kids Chicken Pox and two kinds of Measles. Virginia brought the itch to us when she was in high school. The dictionary states, "The Itch is a contagious disease of the skin caused by a tiny mite". All I know is we had terrible sores between our fingers. Mom said it was caused by not keeping clean. She would say, "It's no sin to wear patched clothes but it was a sin to be dirty".

We had Pinworms one Spring. The Home Remedy was a spoon full of kerosene. I refused to take it. Dad even tried his trick of putting sugar on the tip of the spoon, waking us up at night and saying, "Don't you want some candy", and when we opened our mouths he would put the sugar kerosene in our mouths. Well, I didn't fall for that trick that time.

Some time later I woke up one morning and thought I had grown a tail. Something was growing out of my rear! I cried to Mom, "I'm growing a tail". Mom looked and I had a big worm coming out my ass. (That was one cuss work we could say and get away with). Needless to say I got a double dose of treatment then.

One day at school I needed to go to the toilet. I waited as long as I could as I knew it was about lunch time. Finally I could wait no longer and told the teacher I needed to go to the toilet. The teacher told me to wait as it was nearly lunch time. Well, I shit my pants! I ran home and told Mom but she wouldn't go talk to the teacher.

Speaking of toilets, I'll write another good story on myself: The School District had newer outhouses put in. The new ones used chemicals and were only "one holers". At lunch time we girls would line up outside to use the toilet. When it finally came my time I would try to hurry so the rest wouldn't need to wait so long. One night I dreamed I was waiting in line at school to use the toilet and when it came my time I really "let go" and, guess what, I wet the bed.

One day our Mom and Aunt Dean were in Aunt Dean's car crossing the railroad track that ran between the school house and our house. Aunt Dean looked up and saw a freight train coming. She panicked and slammed her foot too hard on the footpedal and killed the engine. Mom jumped out of the car and pushed it off the tracks. We kids were watching out the windows of the school. The teacher tried to get us to sit down and not watch but we said, "That's our Mom", and kept watching. I had a fear of trains for years.

One day everyone in our neighborhood thought the world was coming to an end or so someone on the radio said. That particular day, while we were in school, we watched the clock for the hour the world was to end. As we waited we talked about what might happen to us all, but as it turned out - nothing happened.

Friday evenings, during the winter, all the parents and kids would go to the school house and have "Socials". Families came riding in wagons, or sleds, depending on the weather. Often the parents would hold card parties and make Chili or Oyster Stew for everyone. I have no idea where they got the oysters. The parents played a card game called "Pitch" while us kids ran around and played. On Valentine's Day we had Box Suppers. Each girl would decorate a box and put lunch in it for two. These boxes were raffled off and the girl had to share her box of food with whatever boy bought the box.

One evening everyone went to Audrey and Edna Grant's house instead of to the school house. Sometime during the evening I was standing in a doorway and when Roscoe Lane walked through I leaned over and kissed him on the cheek! His Dad saw me kiss him and he teased me about it the rest of his life. I have no idea why I kissed Roscoe, I just did.

The Government furnished cotton fabric and batting for families to make comforters. Everyone gathered at the school house to make and tie the comforters. Each family received so many comforters depending on the size of their family, I guess.

At the end of the 8th Grade we had to take a County Test. If you passed the test you could go on to the 9th Grade which was held at the High School in Blythedale. By law your schooling could stop when you completed the 8th Grade or became 16 years old. All seven of us Fowlers completed Grade School at Cisco and graduated from Blythedale High School.

While I was in grade school, the following happened to my older brothers and sister: Randall and Loren Baker rode horses to high school. They graduated from Blythedale High School in the Spring of 1936. I went with Mom to their Graduation Services. I'm not sure why I got to go, maybe Dad stayed home with the kids and just Randall, Mom and I went. Before Randall went to his Senior Banquet, Mom had us all practice how to eat and behave correctly. She set the table using her good linen tablecloth, napkins and all the correct silverware, including extra forks and spoons for salad and dessert. We would all sit at the table, eat and act like ladies and gentlemen. After Randall graduated he joined the CCC, Civilian Conservation Corps, and was sent to Idaho.

Marvin walked or ran (now it's called jogging) the four miles down the railroad tracks to Blythedale. On very cold days he would come into the house looking like a snowman and say, "Are we having chili for dinner?". Before Marvin graduated from High School in 1938, he stayed with Mom's cousin, Cecil and Walter Stanley. Their son, Wayne, had cancer and had his arm removed.

Marvin was the only one he would let help him. Marvin was Salutatorian of his high school class and after Wayne's death, he attended college in Maryville, Mo.

Virginia and two other country girls (Marjorie Pierce and Leora Jones) stayed in a rented room in Blythedale. Virginia walked to town on Sunday and back home Friday evenings for the four years she attended high school. She graduated in 1939. Virginia stayed that winter with Mom's Uncle Ted and Aunt Nell Hill in Lamoni, Iowa.

Carol received a doll for Christmas that year. Virginia made that doll several items of clothing: A velvet coat, crocheted dress and other cute outfits. I wonder if Carol still has that doll (Carol said, "Yes, I do have the doll"). Off and on Virginia stayed with different families that needed extra help. Later she attended Chillicothe Business College.

Chapter 3 Mount Pleasant II Church

Mt. Pleasant Church is located about one mile east of our house. The present church building was built in 1877, according to a history of the church, written in 1973, our great-grandfather, Billy Fowler was one of the men that made long trips to Princeton, Mo. by team and wagon, going one day and returning the next, for lumber to build the new church. The history also stated our grandmother, Carrie Hill, was Superintendent. Mom said Grandma Hill was Superintendent for many years. In January 1913, Carrie Hill was the first president of the Ladies Aid Society. This group of women made a quilt for Augusta Lindrose as a gift when she moved away. My Grandmother Caroline Shepherd Hill and my mother, Maude Hill, each made a block for the quilt. I now have that quilt. I had Randall buy it for me when it was sold by Madalyn Hutton, Augusta's granddaughter, at an Auction in 1989, for \$200.00. I helped the Ladies Aid Society when I was a teenager. The Society would do spring cleaning for some of the ladies in the community. I helped clean Hattie Richardson's house. We took everything out of the house and really cleaned it all before moving things back into the house. A big job.

We kids walked to the Mt. Pleasant Church to attend Sunday School each Sunday. Once in awhile we would catch a ride with Albert and Hattie Richardson and their son, Wayne. Harvey Richardson was the Sunday School Superintendent for 40 years, all the years we attended as kids. He gave Bibles to children who had perfect attendance. I did not receive a Bible. I got material to make a new dress. Church service was only held once a month, if that, for several years. Dad would give us each two or three pennies for the Offering Plate. Mom and Dad often went to Church when they had preachin'.