

## Hermit Lake School

by Alice Scorgie

The teachers who taught while I was at Hermit Lake School, were Dorothy Donaldson, Grace Wishart, Wilma Robinson, Fred Howlett and Eileen Murray.

We had several student teachers over the years-two of which were Rene Lewis and Christina Fisher-who taught us to dance 'Hands Knees & Booms-a-Daisy.

I especially remember the Enterprise about Japan taught by Grace Wishart. We drank green tea from tiny cups (our doll tea sets), ate rice-and even tried to use chopsticks, had a festival of dolls and made cherry blossoms with twigs and pink crepe paper.

We made booklets in the shape of the map of Canada in which we put stories and pictures of the explorers such as Jacques Cartier.

I remember (I was probably in Grade 1) what a good runner Ray Ferguson was. He was always the last one caught in Prisoner's Base, and led the others a merry chase to the far end of the playground.

Those who rode horses to school, put them in the school barn- a small brame building with no insulation, and gave them a feed of oats at noon which had been carried to school in a bag. By 3:30 the horses were cold and anxious to be off home. It was quite an achievement to get the little kids boosted on behind big brothers or sisters while the horses pranced and side-stepped.

Dorothy Dunfield, with her beautiful red hair, used to ride her pony, Dolly, to school. Dolly had a mind of her own - but so did Dorothy!

Charles Gillespie rode his racehorse, Lue, who would race the whole mile down the hill home.

Francis and June Ramsden drove a one horse cart and gave a ride to anyone going their way.

Many times, of course, the horses were busy working in the fields, so everyone walked.

I think everyone looked forward to the community picnic at the end of the year when parents came bringing lunch and homemade ice-cream as a special treat.

Community dances were held in the little school for a few year, with a local 'orchestra' often comprised of Mrs. Wood on the piano and mouth organ, and Eddie Tofer or Mr. Prentiss on the violin.

The Gillespie kids were usually the 'fire lighters' I think, and can probably remember the many cold mornings they went early to school to have a fire going before the rest of us arrived.



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The water supply was carried ay the pailful each day, from Cranstons' well- probably twice a day if the weather was hot.

Mrs. Cranston used to invite the school children over to watch her take the newly hatched chicks from her incubator. The whole school- probably 16 or 20 kids- crowded into the Cranston living room to hear the abdication speech of King Edward VIII on the radio. Probably many homes had no radio at that time.

During the winter months, the little jar of milk from each family was poured into an enamel kettle to heat - and often boil over - for noon soup or cocoa. The Community Dlub supplied the school with several cases of corn, tomatoes or assorted soups, and cocoa and sugar each winter. It was good to the last drop after a cold horseback ride - or a long cold walk - each day. Occasionally Mrs. Cranston sent over a steaming pot of chicken broth - a welcome change. Everyone took turns preparing the lunch and washing the cups.

The Christmas concert was the highlight of the year and practising began early. I can remember Fred Howlett arriving late one morning because of drifted roads, and being pleased to find us all practising our parts as usual. When the night finally arrived, how good it was to set aside our moccasins and wear shoes again for the occasion!

Alice (Wood) Scorgie