

MY DAYS AT SHOOK SCHOOL

By Barbara Mooney Myers

Growing up in the 1940's, I started to Shook School in 1943. Mrs. Franklin Abernathy was my teacher in the first grade of school. We all called her Mrs. Franklin. We lived back as far as the last home on Lankford Town Road. Our neighbors on one side were the Noah Smith family. Behind us was the Conrys: Eugene and Mrs. Willie Mae (Anderson) Conry, his wife. Don was the oldest Conry son; Carl the youngest, and Mary was the youngest child of the family. Over from them were Willie Mae's parents, Martha and Bill Anderson, and their children: Madge, June, Doris, Claude, and another son, Alvin, I think. The people up the road were Lish and Dorothy Anderson and their children Robert, Tony, Gene, Betty, Herbert and others born later on in years. There was the Chester and Carrie Burgess family, their two children, Billy and Charlotte. We'd all walk to school - no bus or car to take us to school. If Dad had a car in later years, he drove it to work.

There'd be kids at every house up the road from us and in between toward town where Shook School was. I remember Robert, Tony, & Betty Anderson; Price, Caroline, and Francis "Beatty" Thorp; Patsy Jo & Tommy Lewis Sanders; the McCormick sisters (Verna & Betty); Bud and Betty Ruth Guyar; Charlie & Ernestine Dove; Theodore and Jo Meeks; Billy Ray Wiley; and Don & Ned Arbuckle. There'd be days Kat Owens, Shirley Smith, Imogene Sanders, me and some other girls who walked, walked even in the rain. Our only umbrella was the open sky above us. We walked to school in winter, even when it was snowing or when the snow was deep. Our feet got soaked and cold, but when we got to school, we'd take off our socks, lay them on the radiator in our classroom to dry. Our shoes were all wet too, so we left them near the radiator to dry. Mom made me a small knitted hand-cut, blocked thin wrap to carry in my book bag to wrap my feet in. The weather would get rough many times, but most of us kids were tough, and this weather was no problem for us. We took it, rain, sleet, snow or sunshine, whatever the outdoor weather was. We spent more time out in the snow at home than indoors, playing, throwing snow balls, making snowmen and just making tracks where no one had walked. The snow was beautiful in the wooded areas and on the pine trees. At school we'd get out and have fun on the playgrounds if the teachers would let us play in the snow. I loved summertime the most of all. We'd wade the creek on our way home every day we could. There was something about these creeks we kids liked, and we just had an urge, I guess, to get into places we didn't really need to be.

I was always glad when school started back in the fall, for I loved school. We had good classes. I had at least 30 or 35 kids in my room. Over half of these classmates lived out where I lived on Lankford Town Road. Most of these I still remember. The basketball games and spelling bees stand out in my mind. I loved spelling bees, for I was a good speller.

Our 8th grade basketball team was made up of (top-bottom; left to right) Leona Sanders, Peggy Joyce Worley Gipson, Ernestine Dove Kirkendoll, Imogene Sanders Stephens, Shirley Smith Brookman, Henrietta Brazile, Charlene Cox, Donna Kay Henley, Helen Partin, Gail Henley, and Fay Crisp.

Those Shook School days were good times for many of us. We learned quite a bit, yet we'd rather choose the long walks and pick at each other on our way to and from school. We had such good times together walking those two miles to school. My choice was seeing who could collect the most rocks or most leaves from different trees. Once I had over thirty leaves pressed in the pages of an old catalogue I kept in my bedroom. My bookshelf, Dad made me, was full of arrowhead, rocks shaped like fish or trees, and driftwood that I'd found along the creek banks. I was a tomboy! Back then we had to find some kind of hobby we liked.

Many times we wore holes in our shoes walking. I didn't count the steps from my home to Shook School, but every day we walked two miles to school and two miles back home. There were lots of steps. I did know that there were 5,280 feet in a mile and we walked 4 miles a day.

Our lunches at school were the best ones anywhere. The soup was delicious, and I don't even like peanut butter, but their peanut butter sandwiches were divine. I still haven't figured out what they did to them to make them taste so good.

Shook School had teachers for each of the 8 grades even back then. My friends were Helen Thornberry and Gail Anderson.

My teachers were Mrs. Franklin Abernathy, Mrs. Nellie Josi Anderson, Mrs. Parmley, Mrs. Ophelia Walker, Mrs. Oma Lee Garthwaite, Mrs. Sallie Cheek, Mrs. Emma Nunley, and Mrs. Ethel Dykes, and our principal was Douglas Goforth. Louise Holmes was our music teacher at Shook School. Each of these had a great influence in my life and will be long remembered and cherished. When Shook School burned, it was a heart break for me and for those of us who attended there.