



The Bolton Scholarship Fund

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Hazel McLaughlin Memorial Scholarship

Established 2001

This scholarship is given by Dr. John Hambrook in loving memory of his grandmother.

My grandmother was both a student and a teacher in several small grammar schools from 1901-1919. I interviewed her in her home from 2 PM-4 PM on Monday May 9, 1977. The night before our interview, I told my grandmother that I would like to know about her education for a sociology paper. She said she would be glad to tell me anything but was slightly worried lest further research conflict with her recollection. She wasn't sure she'd get all the times and dates just right. We sat in the kitchen and were not interrupted by either sound or person. The purpose of this research was to gain an understanding of some of her experiences.

My grandmother celebrated her 80th birthday on Dec 14, 1976. She was born in Harmony NJ and lived there until she married whereupon she stopped teaching and moved to Philipsburg NJ, then Easton PA just across the Delaware River. She was the (eighth) of ten children. Until she was married, she either lived at home, or with her maternal grandmother in Philipsburg. During high school, she lived with her grandmother. When she was teaching, she lived at home and paid board. I found out this information during the interview. The day of the interview, I asked her when she started school.

"When I was five, I guess," she said. "When it was time, I went. I never failed, and went right ahead. For grade school, I went to Roxbury. I had to walk six and a half miles.

I was 13 when I went to high school, 14 that December. I went to high school in Philipsburg. They had just built a new high school. My class was the largest Philipsburg H.S. had ever had. This was because the people in the outlying regions had had to wait till the new school was built.

I don't think I learned much in high school. I learned most of what I needed to teach by going to summer school after I graduated. You see, I graduated in 1913 when I was 17 and I had to lie saying I was 18 so I could teach that fall. I taught for six and a half years. One fall I couldn't teach because they changed the requirements and I hadn't finished the required courses. I took the courses at Philipsburg H.S. in the fall and taught in the spring.

Some of the courses I took in summer school were: History of Education, Child Psychology, Botany, and Palmer Method of Writing. I got a lot out of these courses. Child Psychology, especially, taught you not only why kids did certain things, but why you did certain things. I remember it said that if you had a bad habit for seven years, it would take just as long, seven years, before you could completely lose that habit. Now I don't know whether it would actually take that long but what they meant was that you couldn't just break habits right away. This applied to good habits too.

When I started teaching in the fall of 1913, I got paid \$39.50 a month. That was pretty good then. I taught at Harmony Station. It was a small schoolhouse. There were about 20 students, I guess, from first to eighth grades. I taught them all in the same room. There were advantages and disadvantages to teaching everybody in the same room. Everybody heard what everybody else was being taught. Every one of my children could read. I don't understand how kids today can graduate from high school and not be able to read. We taught reading by learning the family word such as '_ack', for back, rack, sack, pack, lack, jack, and quack.

My father was president of the School Board at that time. I guess he was responsible for my getting my job, although it was never said like that exactly. My father was my boss, so there was never any being late. I was up and out early, with my lunch, so I could get to school early to light the fire. School ran from 9:00 -4:00 with time off for lunch.

After teaching in Harmony I taught at Roxburg. This was a larger school, maybe 30, with more supervision. I was more aware of being a teacher at Roxburg. When I went to Roxburg to teach it was a little strange because I ended up teaching some kids that I went to school with because I'd only been gone about 5 years. Now here's something that might be important. In the winter when there was not much work on the farm, I taught a couple Indians. They must have been let off the reservation to work on the farms. They were big boys. I never had any trouble with them. I don't know that they got paid or anything. They probably got bored or something.

When I worked at Roxburg there was a man named Filhower who was head of education in Warren County. He thought enough of me as a teacher that he offered me a job as a teacher at Chatham where he was going. He said I could teach and go to Columbia University. This was a chance to go on with my education, but my mother said, 'No!' She thought it sinful for me to move away by myself and board somewhere so I didn't go. This is one thing that I regret sometimes, not going on with my education.

I went from Roxburg to Belvidere to teach. I only taught there for a year because we didn't like the principal. She was rotten. There were a couple teachers that left. While I was there though I taught writing to the whole school because I had taken Palmer Method during summer school.

When I left Belvidere, I taught in Harmony, just up the road from where we lived. Now, this was different than Harmony Station. It was smaller than the schools at Roxburg or Belvidere. This was 1-8 grade also and I taught there till I got married. When your Grandfather came back from the War I thought we would get married but he decided that he wanted to have some money first so we waited a year.

One of the most rewarding things I ever did was while I was teaching was at Roxburg. There was a state test that the children in eighth grade had to take to get into high school. I worked very hard to get them so they could take the test, and every one of them passed it. Every now and again I see one of their names as head of the Grange up there or something.”

My grandmother's educational experience became more meaningful to her once she got out of High School and began teaching. The courses she took in Summer School in order to teach were very important as tools. Her own formal education ended when her mother wouldn't let her leave home by herself, and her formal teaching ended when she got married. Her husband, Robert McLaughlin was an oral surgeon and she had two children. Her son became a physician and her daughter, my mother went to college and became a hearing officer in the Domestic Relations Court.