

TEACHING SCHOOL, 1916-1917

(Taken from Anecdotes file, MCSL)

After graduation, I continued through the summer working in the Selectmen's office and with my parents enjoying a ride with the Chairman, Clyde H. Smith. He was twenty-two years older than I was and seemed quite unlike a boy friend. He continued to take Mr. and Mrs. Clarence Hayden and their daughter, Mamie, to ride and he was often seen as Mamie's escort at places. She and I were classmates and were often mistaken for each other. Also, during my senior year, I had been friendly with a young man, a junior, Ralph (Bob) M. Merrow. Well do I remember one late afternoon when Bob was to come to the house for supper. He arrived just before I got home from work being driven by Clyde Smith. As I greeted Bob, he said, "I guess I have lost my girl." My response was, "Don't be ridiculous, he only took me home."

I knew that the job in the selectmen's office was only a temporary one and that I was lucky to have it at \$12 a week as long as I had, also that I had to find something permanent. I had hoped to work long enough to save money to continue my education. My choice of schools was Sargent's in Boston. I wanted to be a physical education teacher.

Not finding anything, I drifted along until one day Clyde Smith asked me if I would like to teach school, saying he thought it might be a good start at least until I found a permanent position. He didn't think much of my interest in Sargent's. He once spoke of me going to a business school. I had taken the commercial course my last two years in high school.

***"I was as plain as was
the living."***

He talked with the Superintendent of Schools, a Mr. Gerrish, who later talked with me and offered me a job teaching at a country school, five miles south of town, on the back road to Waterville, known as the Pitts School. The pay would be \$8.50 a week and I could be at home weekends. I accepted.

This was a valuable experience for me. I soon found that one couldn't teach if he did not know. In other works, I had gone through

high school more because my mother wanted me to graduate and receive my diploma. I was never taught why I should take Latin, Algebra, and English, etc.

I went to the area, found a place to room and board with the Albert E. Jewitts, one mile up a steep hill south of the school. Mr. and Mrs. Jewitt were fine people. The home was immaculate and she was a good cook. They were older people, their daughter, Lucy, having gone away to school and later to work. They lived very simply. The food was good but plain. Mrs. Jewitt gave me my breakfast and fixed a lunch to take to school, five days a week, a thinly spread peanut butter sandwich and cookies. I walked to and from school, wore flat heels shoes and a sailor suit type of dress. My hair was combed back with a knot at the neck. I was a plain as was the living. The evenings were spent in front of a burning wood fire in the fireplace listening to Mr. Jewitt recite "Dangerous Dan McGraw" and much other poetry while Mrs. Jewitt and I crocheted. I did a number of fine pieces that winter, some I still have as I usually put the finished pieces in my "Hope Chest"—something most girls had in those days.

We went to bed early because we got up early—Mr. Jewitt to do the chores and Mrs. Jewitt to get me off to school. There were no toilet facilities, the "watercloset" being at the end of a long shed to the barn. There was not central heat, but my room had a small wood stove in the middle of the room. Mrs. Jewitt lighted a fire just before I got up, hardly long enough to take the chill out of the air and it was more than a chill—it was very cold. I paid the Jewitts five dollars a week for my board and room and my mother \$1.50 per week for the weekend which left me two dollars—not much to start a school fund with but it was good pay in those days. I usually went to the farm Sunday evenings, lonely as could be until Wednesday when I found cheer in the thought of getting back home Friday night. Often Mr. Smith, as I called him, drove me back and forth—sometimes with a horse and sleigh when the snow was over deep.

My school was a one-room building with a large wood stove for heat, and there were nine pupils—the oldest two at fourteen years old, the youngest twins who were four years old and could understand and speak no English. Fortunately, their brothers and sisters were among the children so helped me with them. Often I could spend only two minutes a pupil on any given subject as there was one in each class level. It was frustrating because I wanted so much to help them. One boy could not seem to learn anything and if he did, could not retain it. I found he was getting up in the mornings, doing chores until night. I worked very hard with him but did not make too much progress. I taught one girl from a large family, the only one in the school who was not clean, how to wash her hands

MRS. SMITH GOES TO WASHINGTON

Life of Margaret Chase Smith is category on JEOPARDY!

Alex Trebek we are not—but Margaret Chase Smith shared the spotlight during Jeopardy's November 19, 1997 show when Senator Smith's life became an entire category! In years past, her name has been a question many times but this was the first time the entire category featured Maine's own Senator. On that particular show, the contestants were "Washington Power Players," Pat Schroeder, Jack Ford, and Al Franken. Unfortunately, they seemed to have little knowledge of our Lady from Maine. How would you have done?

In 1950 Sen. Margaret Chase Smith condemned this man for turning the Senate into a "Forum of Hate."

In 1989 she was awarded the Presidential Medal of this.

The first woman elected to both Houses, she represented this state for 32 years.

In 1961 this world leader called pro-nuclear Margaret "The Devil in the Disguise of a Woman,"

Jiminy Cricket! Her 1972 Book was "Declaration of" this.

For correct questions in response to the above answers, see p. 5.....

***LEAGUE OF WOMEN VOTERS
MEET AT LIBRARY***

***UPCOMING MAINE
TOWN MEETING***

Focusing on role of...

***GETTING TO KNOW YOU FAIR
IS USUAL HIT***

and face and how to comb her hair. Again, this was of immense experience and one of great value to me in better understanding the needs both in welfare and educational programs.

At Christmastime, we enjoyed getting a Christmas tree, decorating it and arranging a Christmas program. In the middle of it that Friday afternoon, I looked out of the window and saw coming into the schoolyard a four seated sleigh drawn by a horse carrying five or more former classmates, all coming to visit school. They took over the party, entertained the children and while I was pleased to see them, embarrassed to no end. At the end of 28 weeks teaching school, I was offered a position at the telephone office and decided that would be more to my liking as well as the fact that I would be better fitted for it than teaching.

HISTORICAL PACKETS AVAILABLE TO SCHOOLS

Assistant Director, Dr. David Richards, has assembled historically significant pieces of material relative to major issues during the time of Senator Smith's service in Washington. As teaching aids to history teachers throughout Maine, these packets deal with such issues as the Vietnam War and campus unrest during the 70's; the Hoover Commission; McCarthy Censure during the 50s; House Naval Affairs Committee on Congested Areas during WWII; A bill to outlaw the Communist Party; Senator Smith's article on "The Day They Took The Vote Away;" Civil Rights; Supreme Court nominations; Absenteeism in Congress; and Watergate. By studying the material contained within, students are able to understand the tumultuous times our nation has experienced. If you are a teacher of history or simply find history fascinating, please feel free to request one of these packets by contacting Dr. Richards by phone, e-mail, or mail at the address shown on the final page of this newsletter.

**"The past interprets the present
and forecasts the future, for
history repeats itself."**

***LIBRARY HAS NEW COMPUTERS
WE'RE NOW HAVE A HOME PAGE AND NEW E-MAIL ADDRESS***

“MCS PINS” ARE AVAILABLE

ESSAY CONTEST WINNERS ARE ANNOUNCED

Winners of the Margaret Chase Smith Public Service and Citizenship Award contest are:

JEOPARDY QUESTIONS

(from p. 2)

Who was Joseph McCarthy?

What is Freedom?

What is Maine?

Who was Nikita S. Khrushchev?

What is Conscience?

MARGARET CHASE SMITH: A CENTENNIAL REMEMBRANCE

You may remember in the January issue, the 100th anniversary celebration was highlighted. At that time, the "Centennial Remembrance" booklets were first viewed by those attending and the library is pleased to make these available to anyone wishing a copy. This charming tribute to Senator Smith is not only lovely to look at with its many photos but tells the story of a woman who touched the lives of many through her dedication to Maine and the nation.

If you would like a

write, or e-mail the library at the address below.

copy, please call,

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Friends of the Library Newsletter

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