

Editor's Note:

As a child Dorothy E. Swanson attended Baldwin school district No. 50. It was a brick one-room country school. She attended there for 8 years.

After graduating from Princeton High School, she was hired by Baldwin school district No. 50 and taught there from 1928 – 1932.

The school was located at the corner of County Road 9 and County Road 48 next to the railroad tracks. The school was being used to store hay when it burned down in the 1980's.

Dorothy E. Swanson Lambert Lindquist

Dorothy graduated with honors from Princeton High School. During one year of Normal Training for Teachers Dorothy worked in fields, at 25 cents a day, to earn money to pay for school. Following graduation, Dorothy was hired, for \$45 per month, to teach in the one room school District 50, the same school she had attended for eight years. People like the teach Dorothy replaced but were skeptical of an 18-year old. Dorothy was determined to become a good teacher. At School District 50, during the years 1928 – 1933, I earned \$45 per month; and at District 53, during the years 1933 – 1935, I earned \$75 per month. During 1935 – 1937, Dorothy taught lower grades in old school in Zimmerman. Married in 1937, was not allowed to teach, moved to California, raised two boys, teachers needed in California, taught school on an emergency credential, taught school during the day and attended school at night, graduated with a B.A. Dorothy moved back to Minnesota and taught at the new school in Zimmerman from 1960 to 1976; first grade with 35 children.

Dorothy E. Swanson Lindquist, 1930

The inside walls of the school were cream colored tin; the ceiling brown tin; there were no shades; the sun was bright, we hung up torn cloth. We had 12 kerosene bracket lamps; two children to a desk; 38 children in 10 grades – kindergarten, grades 1 – 8, and a post-graduate class for those who didn't have money to go to high school. The school hours were 8:00 a.m. to 4:00 p.m. The older children would help with the younger ones. We were like on big family. In the fall, when it was time to dig potatoes, we closed school for two weeks. The children could earn money for clothing.

Oh yes, we had a large jacketed stove so the children wouldn't get burned; we kept the lunch pails next to the stove in the winter, there was often frost on the sandwiches made of coarse wheat bread. Some mothers used wheat grinders to make flour. I remember the Indians pounding corn and wheat between stones.

Water fountain – sometimes the older boys helped carry water and wood. On Sunday afternoon, I would walk to school (1 ½ miles), start the fire, fill up the stove with chucks of wood, and put lessons on one chalkboard. We used a hectograph, a jell-like mass which we put in a flat pan, used a special ink on one copy of paper, pressed it in the hectograph, we could get 10 copies from this hectograph; then start over again.

We had a small bookcase and an organ. I taught the children very simple songs. The School Board expected two large school programs a year, one at Christmas, the other in March. The children did wonderfully, putting on plays and singing songs (group and solo). The parents were so proud, their faces just sparkled. Of course, I was very excited. But when I think of the danger with only one door which was the entrance and exit and at Christmas burning candles on real trees.

One little boy was paralyzed from the waist down, in winter he wore three pairs of long knitted stockings, feet on a bench. His sister would walk ½ mile every recess and every noon, to haul him in a wagon to take him to outside toilet. I still feel for that little six-year old. The other children were very kind to him. He went to heaven at age 10; it was such a sad day for everyone.

During the depression we all had very simple lunches of coarse bread with lard or sorghum, vegetables from our school garden, apples from fruit trees. School started at 8:00 a.m. and finished at 4:00 p.m. The children didn't have homework because everyone had chores. During severe dust storms, the school room was so dusty we put hankies or rags over our noses and mouths, lit the kerosene lamps and still we could hardly see; there would be an inch of dust on the window sills. The children worried about the animals and crops. Many parents sold livestock. Then came the rains, and we were all happy! We closed the school when we all became sick: "flu", scarlet fever, measles or whooping cough.

In the spring the students studied at home for State Board Examinations. Extra work in school. Being an unaccredited school, students must pass these examinations to enter high school: Geography in the 7th grade; History, Arithmetic, English, Spelling, Reading, and Penmanship (Palmer Method) in the 8th grade. These exams were given during a certain month, day and time on Saturday. This is true, the night before Arithmetic test, I dreamed we were having a certain example – so I told the children and before we started the exam we studied that problem; we had it in our exam and it counted 30 pints.

Oh my, I almost lost my job – after a rain storm we would have an outside Geography lesson – making islands, peninsulas, oceans, rivers and hills. In spring, for science, we watched birds build nests, put out colored strings (rainbow nests, the children called them), watched the mother birds feed their young. We

watch our vegetable garden grow. One school board member told me, "You study out of books"; the other three thought it was OK.

The children learned from one another. There were no discipline problems. Parents checked on their children's behavior – some parents used the woodshed method. The school was a community center, many meetings were held there. Fred Williams was our County Superintendent; he was a very kind person. He would come unannounced, look around and quietly leave.

During one year, I had six children to teach; it snowed so much we stayed in, painted, drew pictures, sculptured with clay. Jig Saw puzzles first appeared in stores. We left unfinished puzzles on desk. I had a lot of time to help each individual child. When snow started to melt, we had science classes outside. One little boy's parents were very, very poor. So I bought him a pair of 4-buckle galoshes for 67 cents. He put them on, with a big grin on his face, jumping into the highest snowdrift.

I moved back to Minnesota and taught at the new school in Zimmerman from 1960 to 1976; first grade with 35 children. One year, I had 38 children in first grade; the school hired an aide to help. The parents were very kind. Melrose Perman (Kindergarten teacher) and I exchanged many ideas for science projects, outside garden harvest for soup. Our two classes hatched chickens in a small electric incubator, also, wild duck eggs and Sand Piper eggs. The children were really thrilled. Maypole dancing. Oh, yes, put pieces of bread dough in different temperatures – affect yeast. Charles Solheim, Director of Elementary Education, and Jim Berg, Principal, were wonderful, great people.

Dorothy's Advice: 1) I feel a teacher should be lovable, kind, a good listener (every day take a few seconds or more to talk to each child), praise them, it doesn't always have to be good work – if they look nice, hair combed. Be respectful to each child. Never scold a child in front of a group. You, yourself, be respectful. Learn to laugh with them. 2) Ask the students to describe the qualifications of a good teacher (one can learn many new ideas). 3) Talk about respect – everyone, any age. 4) Ask them for own ideas – creative thinking – what they would do in a certain situation – rules for a learning atmosphere. 5) Children like to help others, if they understand the problem – let them be the teacher. 6) Praise! Praise! Show your love. 7) If a child gets into trouble, take the one aside. Talk quietly. 8) Think positive, try not to use the word 'No'. 9) Ask about their feelings, emotions – do they want to talk about it? 10) Are they a good listener? No talking when someone else is speaking – eye-to-eye contact with speaker. Learn to study and how to study.

Games we played: Hide and Seek, Pump Pump Pullaway, Softball, races, Crack the Whip, Last Couple Out – some in small groups did their own thing.

Nature Study: Study and talk about birds and animals, their tracks in the snow, children could identify them by tracks. In winter, tied pieces of brad on trees, decorate outside trees with paper, hand drawn pictures; hatched frog eggs, gave them meat, they grew big, watched moths and butterflies. In Zimmerman, we made ice cream, cookies for grandparents, shut-ins. We hung May Baskets at doors of friends and relatives. We made soup out of vegetables grown in school garden and invited the Kindergarten class. In the fall we had Harvest Festival, admission 1 cent; bough a bird for classroom with proceeds.

Found at Mille Lacs County Historical Society – Princeton Railroad Depot – 1930.