

Teaching Duties Changed . . . At One Time Teachers Even Built The Fires

By SUE LOWE

The Bratton Branch Schoolhouse is only one of the 57 rural schools that were in the county prior to consolidation which ended in 1964.

Mrs. Nelson (Katherine) Caudill, who resides on West Sun Street, began her teaching career 38 years ago in the one-room Bratton Branch School, receiving a salary of \$67 per month.

In 1958, Mrs. Caudill completed her college training, after having taught at six different rural schools over the span of 18 years.

After the rural schools consolidated she began teaching sixth grade at Farmers Elementary. She stayed there for 10 years.

Presently, Mrs. Caudill is completing

10 years of teaching third grade at Morehead Grade School.

Bratton Branch

At 19, and with two years' college training at Morehead College, Mrs. Caudill began teaching at Bratton Branch. The school had an enrollment of 48.

"In the mornings I had to go early to build a fire. Sometimes I paid an older child to do it for me," Mrs. Caudill said.

Mrs. Caudill never remembers having school called off because of the weather. "Most of the children walked to school, so it didn't matter if it snowed."

Daily Routine

Mrs. Caudill began everyday by

reading a Bible lesson to the students. The children repeated the 'Lord's Prayer'.

"As soon as we finished calling the roll, we chose up for baseball teams. We played during our two recesses and our noon period," she said.

Mrs. Caudill said she taught reading, writing, arithmetic, history and geography. "I also taught them health in practical ways since we didn't have a textbook."

Her students would be divided into groups. "I always started with the first grade since they were the freshest in the morning."

"While I was teaching one grade, the other grades would be doing an assignment," she said.

"I believe that students got a lot more basic work and a lot more drills in one-room schools," she stated.

Non-Conforming

"They had a program back then that allowed the child to skip the seventh grade and go on to the eighth. The next year the child would have to go back to the seventh grade."

"The following year the children would skip the sixth grade and go on to the seventh."

"I never liked the program. I didn't do it that way. I taught the child on the grade level that he needed," Mrs. Caudill recalled.

According to Mrs. Caudill, the program was designed to help the teacher with her work, since it would eliminate one grade each year.

Cold Lunch

Mrs. Caudill recalled that everyone took their lunch, unless they lived close enough to the school to walk home.

"The Cold Lunch Program was the first lunch program. The schools received canned tomatoes, canned soup beans, and peanut butter, all in gallon containers."

"The teacher was supposed to open up the canned goods and serve them cold to the children. Since I had a big cast iron stove, I brought a kettle and warmed the lunch," she said.

Mrs. Caudill believed that many of the children ate more at school than they did at home.

Recreation

"All we had for recreation was a ball and a bat. I was chosen for teams along with the children," she said.

Mrs. Caudill said that each day they would have a "Team for the Day." "If a student got mad or quit, I didn't let him

play the next day."

"All ages played together back then. It's not like it is now. All the children seemed to play well with each other, despite their age differences," she recalled.

Mrs. Caudill believes that it was good for the teacher to get out at noon and recesses to play with the children. She said it helped "to keep a finger on them."

Discipline

"I really liked rural schools. The children were usually well behaved," she said.

"The parents wanted their children to behave," Mrs. Caudill added.

"My worst experience concerning discipline was while I was teaching at Island Fork. A boy told me that he'd kick me so high that the bluebirds would build a nest in me!"

"He meant it too. He started toward me and I hit him with my fist and knocked him down. He never gave me any more trouble," she recalled.

"When a child got a whipping at school, he probably got another one at home," she said.

"Nowadays when a child misbehaves there's not much a teacher can do except send him to the principal. You were on your own in the rural schools," she recalled.

Mrs. Caudill believes that there has been a dramatic shift of attitudes among parents concerning discipline. "Taking a privilege away from a child is a long way from taking a switch to the child," she said.

Transportation

"Usually I walked to school just like the children. One year I rode a horse, and sometimes I drove a car. But I walked more than anything."

"Sometimes the mud was so deep on the road that I had to walk through the fields," she recalled.

Small Classes

Mrs. Caudill said that her largest class was at Bratton Branch School. "But they were usually smaller than what I have now."

She recalled that her most boring year was when she had only nine children at Rock Fork. "There were two Burtons, six Drakes and one Cox. When the creek got up, only the Burtons could come. Sometimes the Drakes couldn't come."

"A lot of the time only one or two

students winded up coming. I went ahead and taught as if they were all there," she said.

Barefoot

"I remember children would come to school barefoot in the summertime. They would even come barefoot in the fall."

"Sometimes it would snow while at school and they had to walk home barefoot in the snow," she said.

Years of Service

Mrs. Murl Gregory, who teaches at Clearfield, has taught 44 years. This is longer than any other presently active teacher.

Mrs. Caudill comes second, teaching 38 years.

Consolidation

From 1934 to 1946 Roy Cornette was superintendent of Rowan Schools. It was during this time that the first consolidation of schools in the county

occured. Help was obtained from WPA.

The following one-room or two-room schools consolidated into Elliotville — Ditney, Minor, New Home, Oak Grove, Old House Creek, Poplar Grove, Rosedale, Seas Branch, and Tabor Hill. (It was not known whether Open Fork consolidated with Haldeman or Elliottville).

Farmers — Bluestone, Freestone, Bull Fork, Gearheart, Moore, Three Lick, and Carey.

Clearfield — Alfrey, Charity, Craney, Dry Creek, Lower Lick Fork, Mt. Hope, McKenzie, Ramey, Slab Camp, Upper Lick Fork, and Wes Cox.

Haldeman — Gates, Little Perry, and Sand Gap.

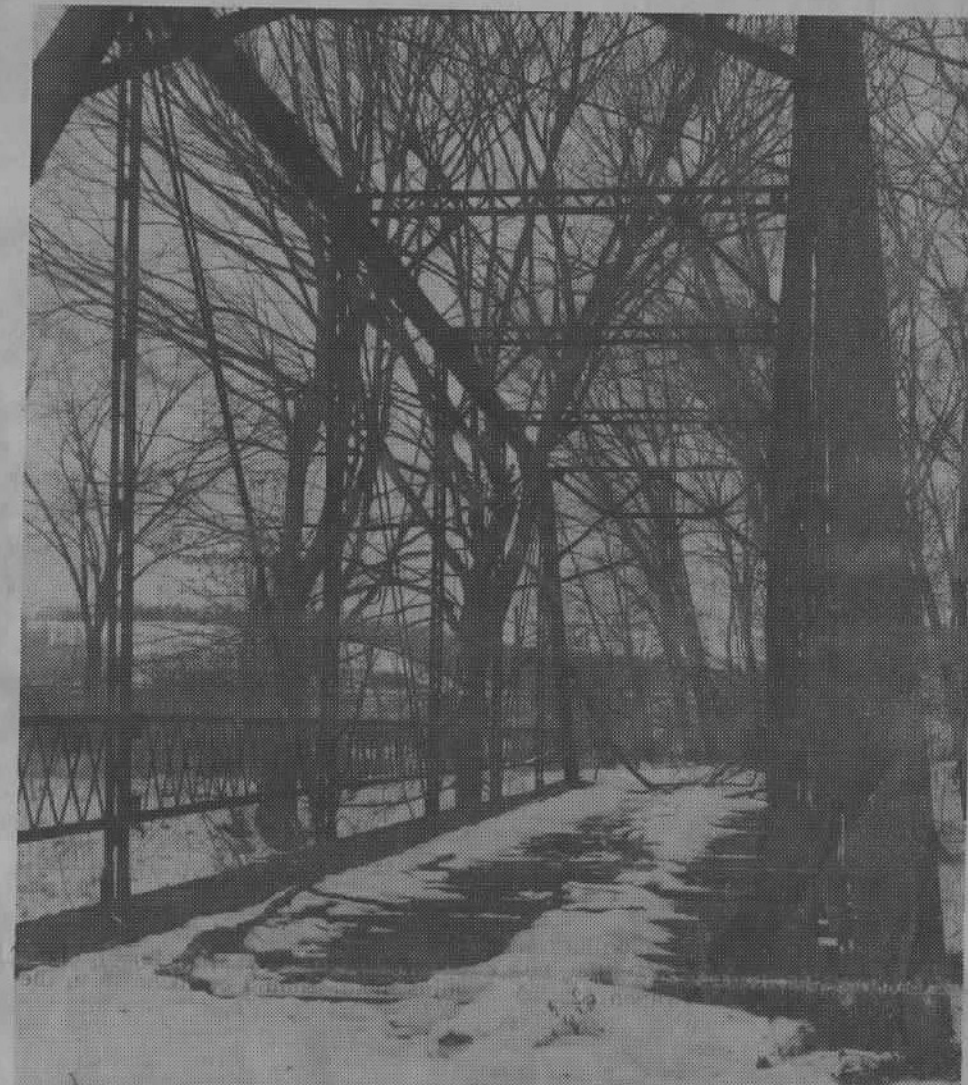
Morehead — Bratton Branch, and Rodburn.

Tildon Hogge — Adams Davis, Big Brushy, Clark, Clearfork, Cranston, Holly, Island Fork, Johnson, Little Brushy, Waltz, Sharkey, Rock Fork, Pond Lick, and Pine Grove.

It was not known at the Rowan superintendent's office exactly where the following schools consolidated — Bradley, Broston, Glenwood, Hardeman, Tackett and Razor.



Bratton Branch School
As It Looks Today



Chaney Will Head
Easter Seal Drive

Cut Your Own
Firewood In

Bloodmobile . . .

1 Community Eff