

Schools I Have Attended

My family was living at 3249 Orchard Avenue in Ogden, Utah when I was old enough to attend the first grade. My family had only been at this address for about a year.

I don't remember the name of my teacher, but I do remember that I thought she was wonderful, and I'm sure that it was because of her that I loved school that first year.

My mother probably took me to school the first time, but I'm certain I did not cling to her skirts and cry, as some of the other children probably did, because I had looked forward to going to school, like my three sisters, who would have been at that time 12 years and 10 years old. Irma may have progressed to the south part of Washington School, because she had turned 12 years of age that July, but the twins would have been still in elementary school, so it would have been easy for me to go to school each day with them.

The name of the school was Washington Elementary School, and it was located on Washington Boulevard, at approximately 35th South in Ogden, Utah. I went to the same school through the tenth grade, so I had many friends by the time I went to high school.

I realize now that Washington Elementary School was a very forward-looking elementary school. Generally speaking, the first graders would pretty much stay with one teacher in the same classroom for a half-day and then go home. But after that first year, the schedule for the day was much like the one that our children had when they were in elementary school. We had a homeroom teacher, who taught reading and writing and arithmetic, but we had special classrooms and teachers for music, speech, art, and geography, which were subjects our children did not have.

Writing was taught by the so-called "Palmer Method." We were taught to hold our pens a certain way, and our pens were the old-fashioned kind, with a metal point that we dipped in ink that was embedded in the right hand corner of our desks in a well. The Palmer Method of learning penmanship included exercises designed to slant our writing direction.

When I see the way that some of our children grip their pens when they write, I wince for them. I think the penmanship of my generation is superior to the penmanship our children's elementary schools turned out. One of my children never did learn cursive and prints to this day. As a result of the Palmer Method of teaching, some of my classmates had beautiful cursive writing. The typewriter had improved my own immensely.

We were taught to sing by the do-re-mi method. This resulted in many students being able to somewhat read music by the time they advanced to the seventh grade, and many could sing parts. But I never learned to recognize the alphabet designation of notes of the scale such as A, B, C, etc., until I learned them while helping my children with their music lessons.

When we advanced to the seventh grade, we had to choose between art and music for an elective. I chose music because my art was not all that good, but it must have been frustrating for my sisters who were equally good in both art *and* music. All of the Langford (my maiden name) girls sang alto, probably because we could read music quite well, and I remember my sister Lola commenting once after we were grown that she thought we might have been sopranos or at least mezzo-sopranos if we had not always been assigned to the alto section.

I was warned when I got to the seventh grade to try *not* to get into Mrs. Nielson's class for English, but I am forever grateful that I *did* get into her class. I had her for English for four years. She was strict, but if you were a diligent student, and didn't mess around, you

had no problem with Mrs. Nielson. I loved her. She was strong on grammar, and I doubt if I learned anything about grammar after leaving Washington Junior High School.

I remember an embarrassing experience when I was in junior high school. My homeroom teacher's name was Mrs. Dobb—I think. She was also my algebra teacher and a very good one. One day just as she was about to open our class, she said, “We are not doing one thing this morning until Ida-Rose cleans up that messy desk.” So I, with a very red face I am sure, cleaned out my desk while the rest of the class watched and snickered! I'm sure that I wasn't the only one in the class with a messy desk—mine was just the most consistently messy.

I participated in music and drama during my junior high school years, having minor roles in several of the school plays and some of the operettas. Most of the music we learned in our choruses I had no difficulty learning. But in the tenth grade our music teacher had us learn Messiah for our Christmas concert, and at first I had a hard time singing the alto part for that. I ended up loving the music of Messiah, and I still do. Our football and basketball games were played with the city's other two junior high schools, namely Lewis Jr. and Central Jr. Our facilities for the games were much the best of all the schools.

The junior high schools ran through the 10th grade. Then all students in the district attended Ogden High School for their 11th and 12th grades. My own class was fortunate to be the first to go the whole two years at the *new* Ogden High School, a beautiful new building on Harrison Avenue and about 35th Street. The building was built by the Works Project Administration (WPA), one of the make-work projects of the Roosevelt Administration—designed to make-work for unemployed men during the Depression.

It was a beautiful building with all the amenities. A music room, a gymnasium—the best in the city—a beautiful auditorium with a large stage that was well equipped for drama and music productions. It was the most beautiful school building in Ogden by far.

There was no school bus system. Everyone walked or rode the city transportation system. Since there was no direct route from my home by city transportation without transferring, my friends and I from Washington Junior High walked to school. It was probably about a mile away and was uphill all the way to the school. The walk was pleasant when the weather was good, but in cold weather it was miserable. Looking back, I realize it was good exercise for us.

I managed to get good grades in high school, but I was not as serious a student as I had been in junior high school. I took typing and short hand in high school, but I took no prizes in either, although I did quite well at typing. I also took Spanish, but when I registered for Spanish in my senior year, I soon realized I had goofed off so much in my junior year that I dropped the class in a hurry. I am sorry to say that I required a somewhat strict teacher in order to do my best in any class. My husband's brothers all took Spanish from the same teacher as I did, and they all became quite proficient in the language. Mr. Hancock was just too nice and gave me better grades than I deserved.

At the high school I was first introduced to social clubs. These were supposed to have been eliminated, because they divided the student body socially. But while they were not recognized as official school organizations and therefore did not appear in the yearbook as such, they were alive and well. I joined one of these, and I also joined one of the official clubs of the school, which had a teacher as advisor. The official one I joined was the “International Friendship Club,” designed to acquaint American students with foreign students through correspondence.

I do not remember how we got the names of the foreign students we corresponded with, but I remember that I corresponded with a boy in Czechoslovakia. I can't remember his name, but we corresponded through high school and my year at Weber College, and through his correspondence I became interested in the history of Czechoslovakia and spent many hours in the library studying about the country. Our letters were infrequent—maybe three or four times a year.

During my year at Weber, I did not hear from him at all, and I wondered if he had been drafted into the German army. I received one letter after Tracy and I married, but he didn't tell me anything about what he was doing and how he felt about the German occupation. I imagine that he had to worry about censorship. All I can remember about that last letter is that he said he "had no excuse for not writing." I thought that the occupation of his country was ample excuse for not writing to anyone. I wonder what happened to him? His poor country has a long history of being taken over and occupied.

I look back fondly on my school days in Washington and also in Ogden High School. During those years I made many lifelong friends.