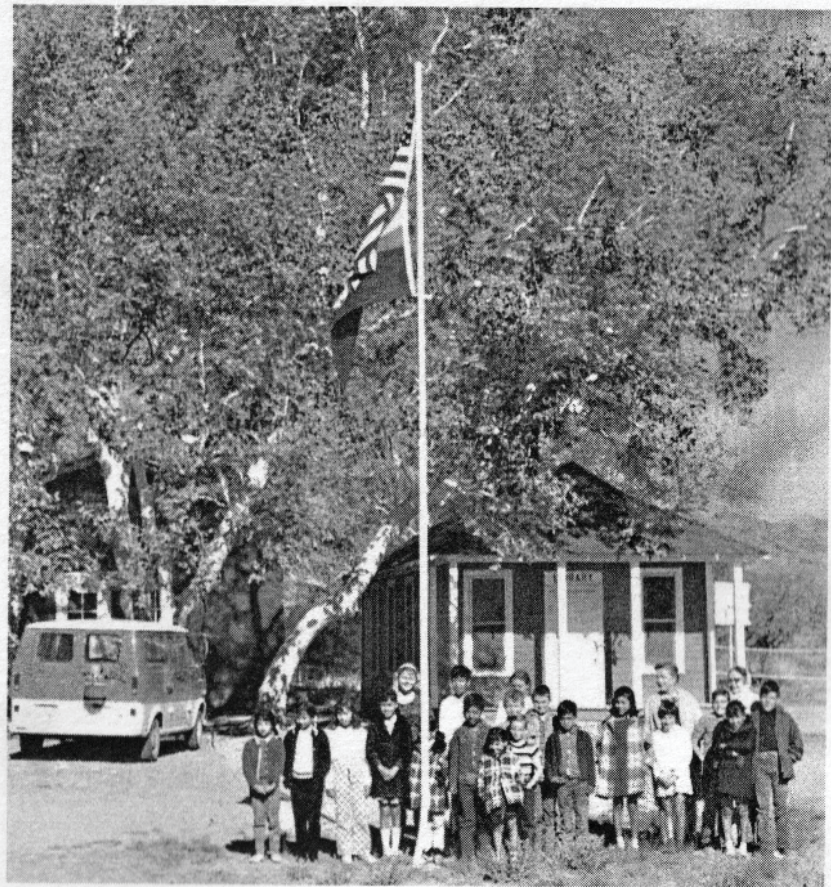


THE COCHISE COUNTY HISTORICAL JOURNAL

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LITTLE SCHOOL IN THE CANYON

With notes on Paradise, Lone Oak and Apache

THE COCHISE COUNTY Historical Journal

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the Past
for
The Future***

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*COVER PHOTO
see text this page*

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Cover photo

courtesy of Virginia Cutler

Portal School circa 1970
Back Row: Sally Rivers, Rosie
Terrazas, Sheila Rivers
far right, Virginia Cutler (substitute),
Mrs. Marshal, teacher
Middle Row: Rachel Terrazas, Patsy
Somoza, Lucia Dominguez,
Dolores Terrazas, Lupe Dominguez,
Michael Richards, Eddie Rivers,
Steven Dominguez, Cruzie Lopez, Judy
Richards, Max Rothpletz,
Mary Somoza, Frankie Terrazas
Front Row: Clarissa Somoza behind
flagpole, Christine Somoza,
Jimmy Hicks in striped shirt.

Dear Reader,

The Editorial Committee for the Cochise County Historical Society is pleased to present this issue of the Journal for your edification and enjoyment.

Our long-time member and former president, Jeanne Williams, honored us by organizing the manuscript. Just researching the school records was a major undertaking, I'm sure you will agree. Jeanne also encouraged a number of the people who attended school at Portal to share their school memories. Then Jeanne's husband, Bob Morse, put the story and pictures together on a disk, so our own efforts were minimal. Thanks, dear friends.

Jonetta Holt, our acting Editor, then put it into the Pagemaker program. Kinko's took it from there.

Please note that some of Jeanne's information came from Alden Hayes' book, "A Portal to Paradise," so Alden is involved in our Journal. He'd be pleased. And what a nice touch to use Myriam Toles story about first coming to Portal. Truly historical, and so different from the way it is now. As a matter of fact, the schoolhouse still serves the community as a library.

We anticipate that the Fall/Winter issue of the Journal will be about Tres Alamos. Harry O'Neil is working on it right now. You may recall that he did the story on Sulphur Springs.

Some of us have been helping Ethel Jackson Price with her fourth "Images of America" book, which will be about Douglas. The other ones to her credit are: Sierra Vista, Fort Huachuca and Bisbee.

It seems that quite a number of our members are in arrears on paying their dues. Please check your records to make sure you are up to date, and if you have a question, please call us at (520) 364-5226.

We are always glad to receive manuscripts or ideas for issues, as there is still a lot of history in the area.
Thanks,
The Editorial Committee

Compiler's Note

by

Jeanne Williams

This little history would not have come into being if Alden Hayes had not left me his chronology of how schools began – and ended – in this region. His *A Portal to Paradise*, University of Arizona Press, 1999, has information on the schools as well as 11,537 years, more or less, on the Northeast slope of the Chiricahua Mountains.

These first-hand accounts of school days and ways in Portal are mostly as written by the contributors: Ralph Wayne Morrow, Elvira Cox Scott, Marilyn Bagwell Hoffman, Rosalie Kennedy Gilliland, Zoë, Paul and Carl Chew, Ted Troller and Sheila Rivers Clark. Alice and Scotty Anderson wrote an account of their children, Vincent (Winkie) and Melodee. Other memoirs come from interviews with Sally and Finley Richards, September 25, 2004, and Eric Hayes, September 2004.

Photos were supplied by Virginia Cutler, Alice Chew, Ted Troller, Zola Stolz, Scotty and Alice Anderson, Rosalie Gilliland and Sheila Clark, who also furnished the once-only school publication from which an Eighth Grade Graduation program is taken.

In addition to Alden's excellent history, further reading about the area includes his *Resting in Paradise*, a history of the cemetery; published by the Paradise Cemetery Association; Hank Messick's *Desert Sanctuary*, University of New Mexico Press, 1987; *Galeyville* by Brooks White, Pentland Press, 2000; *The Chiricahua Mountains* by Weldon Heald, University of Arizona, 1975; *Teacher at Hilltop* by Maryan Stidham, Summer 1990 issue of the *Cochise Quarterly*; *Our First Year in Arizona 1958-59* by Alice Westlake Chew, privately published; and *Pioneering From the Aravaipa to the Chiricahuas* Irene Hancock Kennedy and her daughter, Rosalie Kennedy Gilliland, privately published, 1997. The

latter has much information about Paradise when it was booming and considerable about the school. Some of these publications may be found at the Chiricahua Gallery in Rodeo, and the Rodeo and Portal stores.

AREA SCHOOL NOTES

from Alden Hayes.

I think these were checked over by several old-timers, including Fin and Sally Richards, but there are some discrepancies and blanks. Anyone with further information is invited to kindly send it to Jeanne Williams at P.O. Box 16335, Portal, AZ. 85632.

* beside a year means that the person named at the end has contributed memories of that period, or that an article is included farther on.

ADA means Average Daily Attendance. State aid was figured on this basis.

1895-Scott White took census of Teviston, District #14, for \$6. Today's town of Bowie, named for James Tevis who wrote *Arizona in the 50's*.

1900 San Simon District 18. Teacher Marie S. Hayes @ \$60 per month.

1905-1906-Paradise District 31 organized. Trustees: Henry Chamberlain, J. C. Hancock, W. K. Morrow. Teacher: Maud McDonald. She married and Spring Term was finished by Mr. Alma Jones. Carson Morrow said there were 84 pupils ranging from 6 to 21 years of age.

1906-1907-Paradise teacher: Mrs. Ola Martyr (daughter of Gus Chenoweth, wife of Forest Ranger Herbert Martyr for whom campground is named).

1907-1908-Paradise taught by Miss Delia Sweeten.

Portal District 34 organized, taught by G. E.

Markers.

1908-1909-Paradise, Delia Sweeten and A. Powell. (Split term?)

Portal taught by Nettie R. Hewitt.

*1909-1910-Paradise taught by Emily A. Martin @ \$75 per month. School opened September 6. Census 27: Rosaline, Carson, Ralph, Chester, and Roy Morrow; Clifford (Jerry) and Dorothy Chamberlain; Willis and Myrtle Sanders; Irene and Earle Hancock; Bertha and Frances Bendele; Georgia and Reed Walker; Ted, John and Fred (twenty years old) Hall; Maria, Natividad, Preciliano, Carmencia, Ventura and Margarito (twenty years old) Mejia; Jessie Myers; Ora (probably Ellie) Estes; and Clarence May (nineteen years old). Ivy Bisby is also listed as a teacher so perhaps it was a split term.

*Ralph Wayne Morrow

Portal, Cave Creek District 34. Trustees: William Rose, clerk; J. F. Finicum, Hugh Mouser. Teacher: Ola Chenoweth Martyr @ \$75. Census shows 39 pupils, ADA 10

Rodeo District 48, "Lone Oak", organized in Fractional Townships 18 and 19, Range 32 on State Line (possibly in mid-year, explaining discrepancy in Portal census and ADA).

Trustees: G. A. Threlkeld, Henry Hale, J. S. Lee. Teacher: Anna Richardson. Census 48. ADA 26.

1910-1911-Paradise School opened August 29. Trustee Chamberlain moved to San Simon mid-year, was not replaced. Teacher: Lillian Riggs @ \$75. Census 27, ADA 15.

Cave Creek (Portal) opened September 19. William Rose transferred by Forest Service, replaced by James Reay. Mouser moved to valley, was not replaced. Teacher: Emily Martin @ \$75.

Lone Oak (often referred to as Rodeo in school records) opened September 16. Teacher: Miss Lily Roberds @ \$75. Census 24, ADA 13.

Moore's Spur. Teacher: Neva Marken

1911-1912-Paradise. J. C. Hancock and W. K. Morrow still

only trustees. Teacher: Lillian Erickson (part of year?) and Adelaide Keith.

Portal -Trustees: James Reay, J. F. Finicum, Chester F. McCord. Teacher: Eula L. Chenoweth.

Lone Oak -Trustee Lee moved to Paradise, replaced by Stephen E. Miller. Teacher: Lily Roberds.

Moore's Spur-Teacher: Neva Marken.

1912-1913-Paradise-Teacher: Clara Sumrell.

Portal-Teacher: Anna Richardson.

Apache-Neva Marken.

Lone Oak-Ola Dial.



School function April 14, 1918 (present post office). Photo from Zola Stolz's collection.

Zola Stolz: "My eventual mother-in-law, Lelia Cloe-Dell Maloney, and her brother, George E. Maloney, would have been about ten in this photo.

Since their mother, Emma Maloney, had these photos in her album, I assume that one or both of her children are in the photos."

1913-1914-Paradise-Teacher: Jennie B. McLaughlin.

Portal-Teacher: Margaret Poiser.

Moore's Spur-Teacher: Clara Sumrell.

Apache-Teacher: Neva Marken.

Lone Oak-Teacher: Mrs. D. A. Moore.

Mexizona (on state line just east of railroad)-Teacher: Lily Roberds.

1914-1915-Paradise-Teacher: Mary Dutro.

Portal-Teacher: Lily Roberds.

Lone Oak-Teacher: Mrs. D. A. (Jessie) Moore.

Mexizona-Teacher: Neva Marken.



From right: George Pat Stolz, Emma (with big hat), Jack Maloney.

Photo from Zola Stolz's collection.

1915-1916-Portal and Paradise-No records found.

Lone Oak-Teacher: Ethel Herrell.

Mexizona-Teacher: Neva Marken.

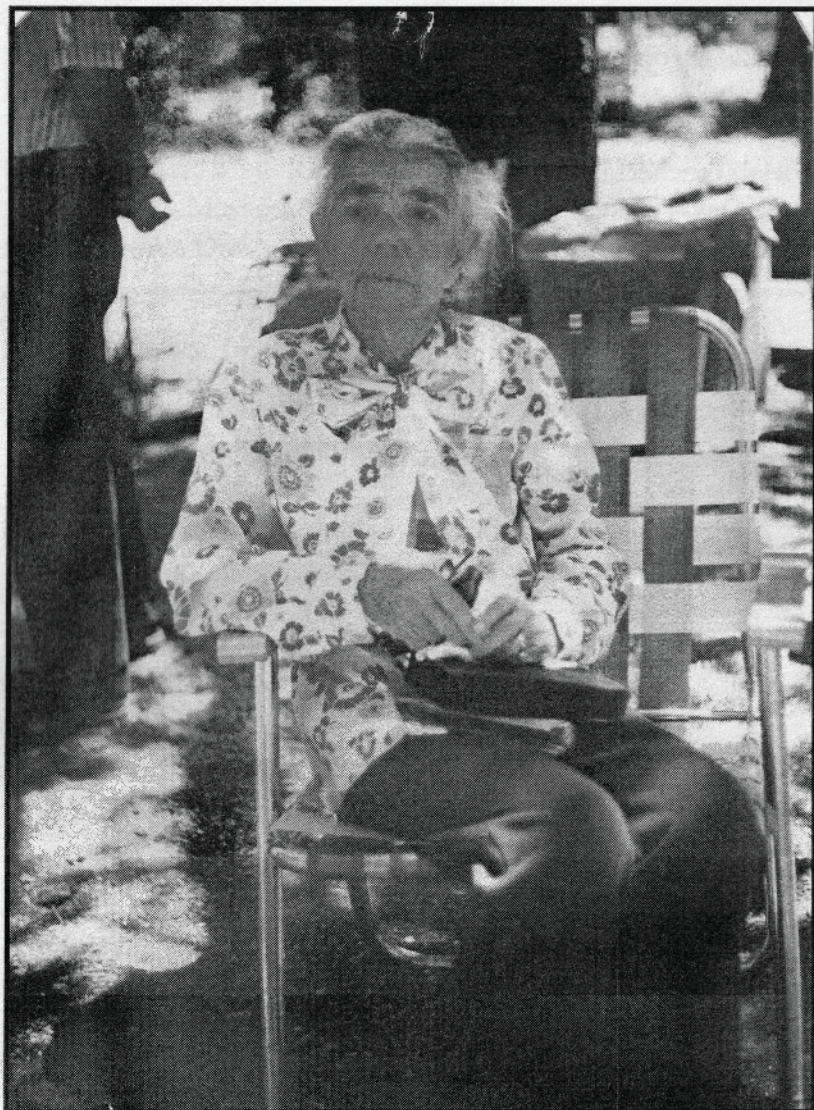
1916-1917-Paradise-Teacher: Mary Church (later Reay).

Portal-Teacher: Maude Vandiver.

Lone Oak-Teacher: Jessie Moore.

Mexizona-Teacher: Margaret Ross.

Luzena (District 52)-Teacher: Mrs. J. R. (Ola) Martyr.
 1917-Elsie Toles became County Superintendent of Schools.
 1917-1918-Paradise-Teacher: Mary Church.
 Portal-Teacher: Willie Deane England.



Mary Church Reay, Paradise teacher, at 1976 Paradise Memorial Day Picnic. Photo from Rosalie Gilliland.

Apache-Teacher: Mrs. L. R. Ball.
 Lone Oak-Teacher: Doris H. Allan.
 Mexizona-Teacher: Clara (Kistler) Sumrell; W. W. Patterson (divided term?).
 1918-1919 Paradise-Teacher: Elizabeth Cooper.
 Portal-Teacher: Julia Paul.
 Apache-Teacher: Mrs. L. R. Ball.
 Lone Oak-Teacher: Edith Miller.
 Mexizona-Teacher: R. F. Richardson.
 1919-1920 -Paradise-Teacher: Mary Church.
 Portal-Teacher: Nelle I. Jacobson.
 Apache-Teacher: Mrs. L. R. Ball.
 Lone Oak-Teacher: Mrs. D. A. Moore.
 Mexizona-Teacher: Mrs. L. P. Reed (mother of Mrs. Thetis Ball).
 *1920-1921-Hilltop (Gadsden District) Teacher: Mary Faulkner.
 Paradise-Teacher: Lotus Thompson.
 Portal-Teacher: Myriam Toles.
 Apache-Teacher: W. W. Patterson.
 Lone Oak-Teacher: Mona Boldman.
 Mexizona-Teacher: Cortha Kagay.
 *Memoir by teacher Myriam Toles.
 1921-1922-Paradise-Teacher: Mary Church.
 Portal-Teacher: Mary Gardner.
 Lone Oak-Teacher: Mrs. J. R. Martyr.
 Mexizona-Teacher: Cortha Kagay.
 1921-Luzena suspended.
 1922-Moore's Spur merged with Apache.
 1922-1923-Hilltop (Gadsden District 19)-Teacher: Ruth Wynne.
 Paradise-Teacher: Susan Collum.
 Lone Oak-Teacher: Minnie H. Brown.
 Mexizona-Teacher: Georgia Holmesley. Last year. Merged with Apache.
 1923-1924-Hilltop-Teacher: Ruth Wynne.

No Lone Oak data. Anna Richardson teacher?

*1924-1925-Hilltop-Principal and Upper Grades: Mary C. Fritz @ \$185 per month; Maryan Williams, Lower Grades @ \$150.

Board President: William H. Cochrane. Pupils: Evelyn, Eleanor, Benny and Hope Pague; Alice, Margaret and George Colvin; Lamar and Harry Underwood; Agustin Ortiz; Ruth, Carlos and Willie Wesson; Harvey, Frances and Van Noland; Nellie and Thelma Hall; Mary and Dorothy Morrow; Juanita, Eric and Marshal Kuykendall; Jonny and Dan Wakefield;

Johnny Fritz. Board President: William H. Cochrane

Lone Oak-Teacher: Anna Richardson.

*Maryan Williams wrote of her experiences in a whole issue of the Cochise County Historical Quarterly.

*1925-1926-Hilltop-Same staff as above.

Lone Oak-Teacher: Mrs. I. B. Richards.

1926-1927-Lone Oak-Teacher: Murray Patterson.

1927-1928-El Dorado—Teacher: Ruth Stidham (formerly Wynne)

Hilltop-Principal: Martha Wildesen. Teacher: Ida Gentner.

Trustees: Willie Chapman, Ben Pague, W. H. Cochrane

Paradise-Teacher: Doris Patterson (certified by Sam Houston Teachers' College) Trustees: J. C. Hancock, Mrs. E. F. Epley, E. E. Lee.

Cave Creek-Teacher: Mildred Long. Trustees: Carl Scholefield, Eula Benshimol, Mrs. C. W. Bush.

Lone Oak-Teacher: M. E. Patterson (Velma's husband, Dora did not marry).

Trustees: B. F. Sanford, Mrs. Roy Olds, Bill Click.

1928-1929-Paradise-Teacher: Helen Kinsella.

*1929-1930-Paradise-Teacher: Helen Kinsella. Merged mid-term with Portal. Lone Oak divided, with northern half of District going to Portal and southern half to Apache.

Price Canyon merged with Apache.

Portal-New adobe school built next to existing frame structure (now the post office). Teachers: Dora Patterson in old school with older children. Myriam Toles (Michigan State Teachers'

College) taught younger pupils in new building. In mid-year, Miss Burke taught first year of High School in one of Gordon Newman's cabins across the creek from what is now Cave Creek Ranch.

*Finley Richards' account covers this period.

*1930-1931-Portal-Teachers: Dora Patterson with Lower Grade students: Daisy, Ola, Eula, Fanny, Dorothy, Mary, Amos and Douglas Chenoweth; Alpha and Naomi Nicholson; Loren and Bill Richards; Beatrice and Edward Travis; Jim, Pete, and John Jay Van Vechtin; George and Sammy Louis Sowell; Ruth Roush; Carol Scholefield, and Eugene Kellar. Myriam Toles taught older students: Catherine, George and Virginia Scholefield; Finley, Richard, and Katherine Richards; Betty and Marianne Van Vechtin; Frances and Van Noland; Dorothy Morrow; Lamar Underwood, and Maurine Walker.

Trustees: Robert Chenoweth, J. L. Shad, and Carl Scholefield.

1931-1932-Portal -Teacher: Mrs. Phoebe L. Scheerer with 17 pupils: Mary Martha and Dorothy Chenoweth; Lulu Dell and Fay Kelly; Cipriana, Joe, Richard and Josephine Arvizo; Billy and Lorena Richards; Jimmie Benshimol (Simmons); Pancho Carrillo; Francisco Hernandez; Billy Scheerer; Louise (Sammy) Sowell; Hale Torrence; Coribel Birtrong and Nadine Click.

1932-1933-Portal-Teacher: Elsie McGraw with 16 pupils: Cipriana, Joe, Richard and Josephine Arvizo; Lulu Dell and Fay Kelly; Julio, Manuel and Rita Montoya; Kenneth and Bayard Walker; Pancho Carrillo; Pedro Dominguez; John Lee, Jose Lucero, Coribel Birtrong.

1933-1934-Portal-Teacher: Elsie McGraw with same pupils as above plus Edward Montoya; Raul Miranda; Jerrel Cole and Mary Helen Beddow.

*1934-1935-Portal-Teacher: Ida G. Miller (Mrs. James M.) with up to 30 pupils including Hunsucker; Chapman; Kinman; Bartlett; Brannin; Cooper; Smith; Rank Roberts; Clara May Clark and Rosalie Kennedy again.

Hilltop-Teacher: Mary Rieder with 13 pupils: Joe Ledford; two Beaches; three Hills; 3 Nicholsons; Ruby Reider; Audrey Morrow;

Jas. Keel, some Gillespies, and Mary Michael.

*Rosalie Kennedy Gilliland contributed a memoir, photos, and some records.

*1935-1936-Portal-Teachers: Fawn Sanders and Lillian Reed had 31 pupils: Elvira and Nancy Cox; Petra, Mary and Pete Dominguez; Vicente, Quirino, Rita, Manuel and Julio Montoya; Dorothy, Doris, John and Gail Lee; Frank and Cruz Soqui; Jas. Willoughby (This seems to be the girl, Willoughby James, mentioned in Wayne Morrow's account); George Newman; Neil Bennett; Erma Miranda; Clarice Ramos; Betty Jo Walker; Robert Schneider; Glen Brabbin; Pat Myers; Vernon Shad; Max Rogers; Rosalie Kennedy; Rex McCary and Ruth Reed.

*Ralph Wayne Morrow has contributed a lively account of his schooling and kindly checked this chronology.

*1936-1937-Teachers: V. Constance Flickinger and Lillian Reed (another source names Elsie Munda and Lillian Reed) with 39 pupils: Manuel, Vicente, Rita, Julio and Quirino Montoya; John, Billie, Charles and Eugene Seales; Glen and Inez Brabbin; Nancy and Elvira Cox; Gail and Arthur Lee; Pete, Mary and Petra Dominguez; Cruz and Frank Soqui; Ruth and Joan Reed; Ofelia and Alicia Rendon; Pete Ramos; Betty Jean Wheeler; Leonard Bex; George Newman; Godfrey Sykes; Bobby Lane; Billy Weber; Dorothy Gonzales; Anna Marie Foster; Betty Jo Walker and Rosalie Kennedy.

Hilltop-Teacher: Julia C. Wyckoff had 6 pupils: Albert Noland, Judy Wyckoff, and Wayne Morrow, all 6 years old; Theresa Nicholson, age 11, and Naomi Nicholson, age 13.

Merged with Portal at term's end. All subsequent figures for Portal only.

*Elvira Cox Scott wrote an interesting story of her Portal education.

1937-1938-Portal-Teachers: Lillian Reed with older children; Elsie Munday (some confusion on name; Wayne Morrow says she was married to Lyn Monday or Munda and then to Harvey Doss) with younger of 37 enrolled: Nancy and Elvira Cox; Gail and

Ernest Lee; Audrey and Wayne Morrow; Naomi and Theresa Nicholson; Barbara and Robert Pague; Frank and Myrna Hancock; Charles and Jim Edison; Cruz and Frank Soqui; Pete, Mary, Petra and Antonio Dominguez; Anna Marie, Philip and Kathryn Foster; Jimmy and Donald Capps; Betty Jo Walker; Pat Maloney; Rosalie Kennedy Violet Mugford; John Kempton; Bobby Lane; George Newman; Godfrey Sykes; Jean Reed; Jas. Willoughby (again, I suspect this is the girl, Willoughby. Wayne Morrow recalls a boy named Bill James who was perhaps Willoughby's brother and both the children of Rose James) and Adela Vasquez.

1938-1939-Teachers: Elsie Munda had older pupils: Nancy Cox; Rosalie Kennedy; Gene Lynch; Audrey Morrow; Pete and Mary Dominguez; Barbara Page; Betty Walker; John Lee; Virginia Alvarado; Melvina Sloan and Geneva Hughes. Lucille Corbett had younger students for first term and Marian Boll for the second: Esther, Barbara and Marjorie McGinty; Petra and Antonio Dominguez; Cruz and Frank Soqui; Paul and Thelma Vogel; Betty Jean Wheeler; Jim Willoughby(?); Teresa Alvarado; George Newman; Adela Vasquez; Bob Pague; Elvira Cox; Anna Marie Foster and (Ralph)Wayne Morrow.

1939-1940-Teachers: Elsa Munda had 17 upper graders, including these new ones: Theresa Noland; Margaret Decker; Sam Ward; Ralph and Joe Ennerson. Mary Ellen Trask had lower grades, 16 ADA, including Beve and Albert Noland. Board members were Ernest Lee and Jerome Clark.

1940-1941-Teacher: V. W. Kartchner taught 16 in upper grades, including new pupils: Donny Kartchner; Beryl and Willie Moody; Paul Hamlet and June Boggs. Lucille ("Johnnie") Corbett had lower grades ADA 11, including Larry Hunt and Yvonne English.

1941-1942 and 1942-1943 no data. However, according to Elvira Cox Scott's account, Mr. Kartchner left before term was out and Elsie Doss finished out the year.

1943-1944-Teacher: Mrs. McSparron had 13 pupils including Larry and Barney Hunt (children of John Howard Hunt, Forest

Ranger); Wila, Beve, and Earl Noland; Leonard Bex (son of Henry); Nancy Matlock (child of AVA Ranch cowboy); 3 Fosters (children of Phil, Anna Adamson's brother) and Billy Walker.

1944-1945-Teacher: Mrs. McSparron had 11 pupils including Frances, Louella and Billy Fritz (Henry's children); Gene Fritz (Leo's son); two Hunt boys; Ralph Miller; Betty Louis Moore and Vernon Hill.

1945-1946-Teacher: Myriam S. Toles @ \$1400 per year.

1946-1947-Teacher: Myriam Toles @ \$1600 per year. Thirteen pupils: Billy, Dorothy and Louella Fritz; Judith and Walter Hodge; Leroy, Eugene and Johnnie May Mingus; Beve, Wilma, Martin Earl, Albert and Lonnie Noland; Billie Walker and Ralph Miller. Trustees: Alden Hayes, Ben Erickson and Elmore Walker.

1947-1948-Teacher: Ruby Nave with 24 pupils: Billy, Louella and Dorothy Fritz; Leroy, Eugene and Johnnie May Mingus; Wilma, Earl, Frank and Lonnie Noland; Don and Shirley Miller (mother a cook in Portal); Nancy DeLean; Rosie Pisano; Bennie and Mary Silvas (children or wards of Ben Silvas, a Hilltop miner); Kathleen and Nancy Nowlin (children of Ray Nowlin, a hilltop miner); Billy and Sarah Tinney (children of Earl Tinney, electrician); Laddie Bennett; Eric Hayes and Dick Hastings. Trustees: Alden Hayes, Mrs. Fannie Fawcett and Elmore Walker.

1948-1949-Teacher: Ruby Nave with 23 pupils: including Micaela Lopez; Alicia Perez; four Ortega children; George McGinn (son of William McDonald, "winter visitor"); Linda Turner (daughter of Ada Turner, "health seeker"); Linda McClintock (Melvin McClintock's child); and Emma Lou Clayton (ward of Frank Noland).

*1949-1950-Teacher: Ruby Nave with 27 pupils including: Duane Bingham; Glenda, Lee and Robert Beecroft (children of John Bingham of Paradise) David, Leslie and Yvonne Wilbank (children of Joe Wilbank, game warden); Deevee Marley; Eric Hayes; Richard Pulliam; Fred and Maxine O'Donnal; Alfred and

Carol Gonzalez (most of these children of Sawmill workers at Paradise). Trustees: M. C. Pugsley, Alden Hayes and Claudia Maitland.

*Eric Hayes has provided recollections of his school years 1950-1951-Teacher: Mary Lou Etchells with 19 children including: four of same Nolands plus Sharon; five Silvas and Raymond Hood. Trustees: Same as above.

1951-1952-Teacher: Mary Lou Etchells. Trustees: Herman Kollmar, Mrs. J.Fisher and Mrs. Weldon (Phyllis) Heald.

1952-1953-Teacher: Mrs. Elma H. Riley with 24 pupils, including many miners' children from Hilltop: Priscilla and Dorothy Cutright; Bertha and Jackie Ray; Annie, Alvino, Norma and Lupe Lopez; Earl and Isabel Fullen; Jo Ann, Nancy and Patsy Catero; Marshall Fender; Leonardo Madrid; Ada Celena Dunagan; Connie Coombs and Eric and Mark Hayes. 1953-1954-Teacher: Mrs. Elma Riley. She was let go in spring of '53 and term finished by Dorothy Bliss. Trustees: Dorothy Bliss, Phyllis Heald, Alden Hayes.

*1954-1955-Teacher: Sally Richards. Trustees: Dorothy Bliss, Phyllis Heald, Oscar Olney.

*Sally has given her memories of her teaching days in Portal. 1955-1956-Teacher: Sally Richards. Trustees: Tom Stafford, Birt Roberds, Oscar Olney.

*1957-1958-Teachers: Lillian Reed and Ruth Reay divided 24 children. Some new names are: Dave and Stanley Payne; Vincent Anderson; Allen Cox; Allan Gordon (Carol Cazier's brother? Her husband, Mont Cazier, was first director of SWRS); Roy Nichols; Mike Murphy; Gary Spencer; Chuck Troller; Bagwells; Eugene Washburn and two Suttons (children of AVA Ranch employee).

*Scotty and Alice Anderson have recorded school day memories of their son, Vincent, and daughter, Melodee. Zoë, Carl and Paul Chew have supplied memoirs, and Myrtle Bagwell and Marilyn Bagwell have shared recollections. 1958-1959-Teacher: Lillian Reed had 25 pupils, including several SWRS people: Paul, Carl and Zoë Chew; Roy Nichols,

Alan Gordon and Pamela Weems.

1959-1960-Teacher: Lillian Reed had to leave after two weeks.

Year finished by Sally Richards.

1960-1961-Teacher: Mary L. Jones

1961-1962-Teacher: Emerald Tibbetts had 13 pupils.

1962-1963-Teacher: R. F. Holman with 15 pupils.

1963-1964-No data.

1964-1965-Teacher: ? Shaw with 12 pupils.

*1965-1966-Teacher: John M. Pirtle with 35 pupils, including nine Riverses and two Jensens.

*Sheila Rivers Clark wrote an excellent account of her days at Portal through 8th Grade graduation and supplied a number of photos.

1966-1967-Teachers: Margaret M. Ryan and Everad L. Vernier divided 36 pupils.

1967-1968-Teachers: Mrs. Lillian H. Marshall had 13 pupils in Grades 1 through 3; Mr. Vernier had 11 in Grades 4 through 7.

1968-1969-Teachers: Aloysius H. Seubert had 12 pupils in Grades 4 through 8; Lillian Marshall taught 13 in Grades 1 through 3.

1969-1970-Teacher: Lillian Marshall had 12 pupils in Grades 1 through 3.

1970-1971-Teachers: Grace F. King had 15 students in Grades 4 through 8; Joy Jones took over at mid-term. Margaret Ryan had Grades 1 through 3.

1971-1972-Teachers: Margaret Ryan had Grades 1 through 3; John van Moort taught 13 pupils in Grades 3 through 7.

1972-1973-Teacher: Margaret Ryan had 6 pupils in Grades 1 through 3. Older children went to San Simon.

1973-1974 onward, all children went to San Simon and Portal School District merged with San Simon.

After Portal School closed, some pupils have attended Apache, the only one of the small schools to survive, and others have gone to Animas, New Mexico.

How I Went to Portal

by

Myriam Toles

Cochise County School Superintendent Ruby Fulghum eyed me with shrewd brown eyes. We were standing in her office in Tombstone as she handed me my contract to teach at Portal.

"The school is in the canyon," she said, "at the foot of the Chiricahua Mountains: A beautiful spot, but lonely, no house within a mile. The children ride in from scattered ranches on burros or horses. There are ten children in all eight grades. Do you think you can manage?"

I nodded confidently. I was determined to teach as far away from the noise and confusion of the city as possible.

"You're pretty young to live in such an isolated place," she cautioned.

"I'm twenty-three," I said defensively.

Her eyes twinkled. "Well, you can live on the old Finnicum place. It's within walking distance of the school. Old man Finnicum homesteaded 160 acres long ago; tried to farm it but all he ever raised was a crop of beans. He'll rent the place. It has three rooms and a well. He's in Texas now trying to sell it, but so far no luck. All it is good for is scenery.

"I'd rent it if I were you, otherwise you'll have to live with the Bradfords. They have six children, four little ones and two in school and they have goats all over."

The Bradfords did not present a very attractive picture. "I'll rent it," I said. "Now, how do you get there?"

"Wait a minute." She gave me a dubious smile. I learned later that she was the daughter of a pioneer cattleman and had no illusion about living on a lonely ranch.

"I have an idea," she said. "We have a young Mexican girl just out of school who lost all her family. She has no place to live. She's a fine girl, Maria Lopez. If you'll provide her food, I think she would go with you. She could help with the house and bring in the supplies and you can talk to her. I think it

would be a fine arrangement.”

I had no intention of taking a companion but such was the force of Miss Fulghum’s personality, I agreed to see Maria.

She came bouncing into the office, all energy and smiles. She was about sixteen, with strong, broad shoulders, a mop of curly dark hair and laughing brown eyes. We took to each other at once and soon settled the matter, although I wondered how my small salary would pay for her food and rent. Little did I know what a treasure Maria would be in the long months ahead.

We bade Miss Fulghum goodbye and spent the next two hours shopping for supplies. We took a bus to Rodeo, N. M., and from there we were to go by mail stage to Portal.

The stage was a battered Ford, the driver a wizened old man in Levis and cowboy boots, who ignored us completely as we stowed our boxes and bags on top of two big mail sacks and climbed in.

The road soon turned back into Arizona and toward the deep blue mountains. After nine miles, we crossed a creek. We were at the mouth of the canyon, with a magnificent view of the great cliffs that rose from the canyon bed like a giant portal.

The driver stopped the stage and announced tersely, “This is where you get off. Over there is the Finnicum place.”

Tired and dusty, we climbed out and dragged out our belongings, feeling forlorn and abandoned as the taciturn driver threw in the clutch and the rickety stage disappeared into the mouth of the canyon.

A dim track lay to the right. It wound along a creek bed through tangled bushes of mesquite and creosote. We stumbled onto a wide mesa. There, before us, lay the Finnicum estates.

The worn, brown shack was roofed with red corrugated iron and surrounded with three large cottonwood trees. We crossed the weed-grown yard, passed the well and pushed open the back door to the kitchen.

It was a dark little room, sparsely furnished with a wood stove, a table and a cupboard. Beyond it were the two larger rooms, dark as a bat’s cave, papered in black tar paper and

with only two small windows.

There was a lumpy iron bed in each room with worn blankets but no sheets, a couple of rocking chairs and a table with an oil lamp on it. This was our home sweet home and a dismal sight it was.

We opened the windows to the cool breeze of early September and lit the oil lamp as darkness closed around us. We were tired and hungry but not up to coping with the wood stove yet.

Maria went out to the well and pulled up a bucket of fresh water so we could wash our dusty faces. We dug out some bread and cheese for our supper, then prepared for the night. We blew out the light and tumbled into our lumpy beds.

From the *Cochise Quarterly*, Vol. 21, Winter 1992, used by permission of Cochise County Historical Society

Sally Richards

Sally, then Darnell, attended Apache School. After graduating from college, she taught in Rodeo and Tucson till she married Fin. The young couple moved to Portal in 1953. The school was in desperate need of a teacher. The Board, Alden Hayes, Dorothy Bliss and Phyllis Heald, a writer and the wife of Weldon Heald who wrote *The Chiricahua Mountains*, approached Sally and she agreed to take the job. Eric Hayes, who was in Eighth Grade that year, says, “She was a wonderful teacher.” That sentiment is echoed by other students in this history.

Sally says that she enjoyed teaching at Portal much more than in city schools. She had good students who wanted to learn and their parents were involved and interested. She recalls that when Eric Hayes was her only Eighth Grader and Christine Troller the only Seventh, Eric offered to tutor Christine in Seventh Grade work while she took Eighth with him. They

both did very well.

The severe drought of '54 to '56 compelled the Richards to leave off ranching and go to Texas where Fin worked in the oil fields till it was possible to return to Portal in '59, where, once again, a teacher was sorely needed when Lillian Reed had to leave after two weeks.

Sally finished out the school year in '60, but then she and Fin became parents. She taught no more, though she continued to play the piano for community and school programs.

Fin Richards

In 1929-'30, Lone Oak (Rodeo) was divided with the north half of the district going to Portal and the southern half to Apache. Price Canyon merged with Apache.

At the same time, a new adobe school was built close to the old frame building. Myriam Toles, who had graduated from Michigan State Teachers' College, helped design the new building. She wanted the stage for puppet shows and other programs. She was the first teacher in that building and had the lower grades, while Mrs. Dora Patterson taught the older students in the present P O.

When Fin, who lived in the San Simon Valley in what is now Sharon Dayton's house, was a freshman, he and about ten or eleven other youngsters attended a little high school in one of George Newman's old cabins across the creek from Cave Creek Ranch. The children from three valley families drove a car and the other students were Portal locals.

Miss Burke was the teacher and lived in a little house over there. When the creek rose so high the kids couldn't cross it to get to the car on the other side, one of the couple of families who lived on that side allowed them to sleep on the floor.

Fin then went to high school in Douglas, but graduated from San Simon.

Rosalie Gilliland

I attended Kindergarten and First Grade in Imperial Valley, California. We then moved to Paradise and my mother home taught me for Second Grade. When I started school at Portal, I was in Third Grade. Miss Elsie McGraw was the teacher for all eight grades. I had heard the older children talk about how strict she was so I was afraid of her. I was the only pupil in my class. One day Ruby Fulghum, the Cochise County School Superintendent, came from Bisbee to visit us and observe each class.

When it came my turn, Miss McGraw told me to go to the blackboard and spell dresses. Well, I knew how to spell dress but had no idea how to make the plural so I wrote "dresss." The teacher was not pleased and said, "Whoever heard of putting three S's to form a plural?" Believe me, I remembered how to spell dresses after that. She also told me to multiply a two digit number by a single one. I knew my times tables, as we called them, but I didn't know how to do what she wanted, so that was embarrassing. When you are the only one in a class, you are the smartest and the dumbest.

Fourth Grade was a little better for me because the Kinmans had moved to Paradise and one child was in my class. Mrs. Ida Miller was the teacher and my mother would invite her to go on picnics and walks with us. I remember hiking to the white rocks on Silver Peak. Another time when we went to Galeyville, my grandfather, Jim Hancock, came along and pointed out places of interest such as the old oak tree where Curly Bill was standing when Jim Wallace shot him. We went into the Outlaw Cave written about in Brooks White's book, *Galeyville*, and our names are on the cave's walls. I don't know where the cave is located unless it is the one by the little concentrator.

I liked Fourth Grade because we started studying History and Geography. We had brand new books and they were beautiful.

In History, Marco Polo was finding a new route to the East and bringing back silks and spices. In Geography, we pretended to visit other children of the world – a little boy in the Belgian Congo, and another child who was an Eskimo living in the frozen north.

The Kinmans left so I was alone again in the Fifth and Sixth Grades. We had a new teacher, Lillian Reed. She was just wonderful; she made me feel like I could do anything. In History, we studied the Civil War. At night, my Grandfather Hancock would ask me what we studied in school that day and we would discuss it. He was very interested in the Civil War because his mother's people were from Monroe, Louisiana and had owned slaves. His father was born in South Carolina and did not believe in slavery. Grandfather remembered a couple of old slaves who would not leave when they were freed. They stayed with his mother until their deaths. When told they were free to leave, they said, "Where we go? What we do?"

In regard to the Civil War, Miss Dora Patterson, who was retired but had taught at Paradise School, never believed the South lost the war. She disliked Abraham Lincoln to her dying day and would play the piano and sing: "We'll hang Abe Lincoln on a sour apple tree." Grandfather said Lincoln was the best friend the South ever had but they didn't know it.

Mrs. Reed had the children put on a program or play twice a year, one at Christmas and another in spring. One year we did a play about a little gypsy girl and I was given the lead. I was ecstatic. My grandfather had a man helping him build a storeroom for my mother. The man said he thought he might have chicken pox. Mother told me to stay away from there. As soon as the man left, I went right out and was climbing around on the ladder. Well, I got the chicken pox and didn't get to be in the play. My good friend, Betty Jo Walker, played the part and I'm sure did a great job.

In Seventh Grade, Hilltop School consolidated with Portal. I was visiting June Lee and she told me Barbara Pague would be

in my class. I can still remember that we were sitting up in an apple tree when she told me this good news. "Are you sure?" I asked. She said she was positive. I was so happy that I would have a classmate.

Mrs. Reed lumped the two Seventh Graders and two Eighth Graders together and taught us the State and Federal Constitutions. She knew James R. Murdock who wrote the textbook on the State Constitution. He had been one of her college teachers in Flagstaff. He explained a compromise by saying that when he and his wife were preparing to go to summer school at Flagstaff, she wanted to buy a wool blanket while he wanted a cotton one. They compromised and bought wool. Mrs. Reed made learning fun. We learned more than just what was in the textbooks. She also instilled in us a great sense of patriotism for this great nation of ours.

Our library consisted of a few books on shelves in the northwest corner of the room. We devoured the books and read most all of them. Mrs. Reed got us interested in everything from Sir Walter Scott's *Ivanhoe* to Dick Wick Hall's *Laughing Gas Station* about Salome, Arizona.

One December Monday in 1937 it started snowing. There was a graveside service at the Paradise Cemetery that afternoon which my mother and grandfather attended. I don't remember who was being buried. The snow started about the time everyone gathered for the funeral and fell so fast it was about four inches deep before the funeral was over. When Ben Pague, the bus driver, came to pick us up, he told Mrs. Reed he thought he should not go up the regular road to Paradise because of the heavy snow and meeting so many cars coming from the funeral.

He and Mrs. Reed decided to leave as many Paradise children as possible with Portal families and he would go around Foothills Road to Hilltop with the rest. Betty Jean Wheeler and I were the only two from Paradise who went on to Hilltop. We got stuck once but Mr. Pague had a shovel and was able to get

us out. We got as far as the Erickson place but they were not at home. We went in and used the phone to try to call our parents. Sally Coryell was the telephone operator and she passed on the message that we had got as far as the Ericksons'. It was close to Christmas and people had kids home from school and it was pretty crowded. We made it on to Hilltop and spent the night.

The next day we started out again but the snow was so deep we only got to Belle's again. She took Betty Jean and me in to spend the night with her. She had such a beautiful sitting room with many plants and a little puppy we played with. We had a great time. On Wednesday we were finally able to get back to school. Betty Jean has lived for many years in Cincinnati and she tells people the only time she was ever snowbound in her life was in Arizona.

We moved to Duncan when I was in the Eighth Grade. The Portal School holds a very special place in my heart and I feel very fortunate to have attended there. I am glad the building is still there and is such a wonderful place for the library.

Elvira Cox Scott

I started school in the one room adobe building in 1934. My sister, Nancy, had started in 1931. My first teacher was Mrs. Lillian Reed who had all eight grades. She was a wonderful teacher and we all loved her.

Ben Pague drove the bus from Hilltop. His daughter, Barbara, and son, Robert, got on there, as did Audrey and Wayne Morrow. At Paradise, the bus picked up Rosalie Kennedy, Gail and Sonny (Arthur) Lee, and Betty Jean and Karl Wheeler. David Crenshaw got on about two miles down the road and then it was on to Portal. Betty Jo Walker's folks brought her about four miles to Portal from the John Hands' place. The rest of the pupils who lived in Portal were Pete, Mary, Petra and Toni Dominguez, Pee Wee (George) Newman, Willoughby James and Frank and Cruz Sogui.



Students, Lower Grades, 1939. Copy sent by Rosalie Gilliland from Betty Jean Wheeler Lawrence. Teacher Lucille Corbett, in back. Children unidentified except from middle of bottom row: Anna Marie Foster, 'Pee-wee' Newman, second from right, Elvira Cox.

These are the kids I started with but a little later, families moved in at the CCC camp and another teacher had to be hired. We were living in the little schoolhouse next door but had to move so it could be used for classes.

One day while I was in Second Grade, I fell out of a big sycamore and broke both of my arms. Ruth Newman was a nurse so she splinted the arms and next morning they took me to the Douglas hospital to have casts put on. I wouldn't go without my teacher, Miss Flickinger, so school was closed that day.

The outhouses were behind the school and a little creek ran between them and the school. Every time it rained, a man named Pancho whose last name I can't remember, came to

school and carried us all across the creek to keep us from getting wet. (Comment from R. W. Morrow: *There was, and probably is yet, a small arroyo back of the schoolhouses, but I don't remember any water flowing there in the five years I attended the Portal Schools (2nd thru 5th, and then a two year break before returning for the 8th grade).*

The school was also a meeting place for the community. We always had a Halloween party and a big Christmas party. I guess the most unusual thing it was used for was as a funeral parlor. When Ed James, Willoughby's father, passed away, they brought him from Silver City where he had been in the VA hospital. Saw horses were put up in the school. These were covered and the casket placed on top of them. He was there one night. Friends and neighbors viewed his body and next day he was buried in Paradise.

It was hard to get teachers to come so far from town and I guess the Board didn't have a lot of applications. The year of 1937-'38 only one person applied, Don Kartchner. We had never had a male teacher. My father, Jim Cox, a School Board member, wasn't impressed with Mr. Kartchner or his application. But a teacher was needed, so he was hired.

Mr. Kartchner had a wife and three children: Danny was twelve, a daughter was ten and Karl was three-and-a-half and a brat. The first thing Mrs. Kartchner did was put up her quilting frame on the stage where she would sit and sing German songs and quilt. While she sewed, Karl was running all through the schoolroom. It was very distracting, but it didn't really matter, because his father wasn't teaching us anything anyway. He would tell us to read or do some math. Then he would go talk to Mrs. Kartchner or go outside. If we tried to ask a question, he would tell us to figure it out for ourselves.

His wife would cook beans or soup in a slop jar – I'm sure it was a new one – and she wanted us kids to eat it. She also made this real dark bread. Mr. Kartchner raised rabbits and some of the boys turned them loose. The boys also turned his

milk cow and calf in together so the calf would get most of the milk.

We were not learning much and our parents were getting pretty upset about that. The School Board had a meeting and decided to let Mr. Kartchner go and get another teacher. They hired Elsie Doss, who had taught there before. Mr. Kartchner received the rest of his salary because he had a contract.

Many years later, in 1956, my family drove up from Texas to visit my folks who were living at the Sanford Ranch. My brother, Allen Lee, was going to the old adobe school and my oldest daughter, Kristi Lynn, went with him one day, so we can say she went to the school I first attended.

In 1991, my husband and I retired in Portal. Our granddaughter, Lauralee, came to spend the summer with us. The school had been turned into a library and she visited it and read some books. The little building where we had lived, and where I had also gone to school, had become the post office.

There is no more school in Portal but the red adobe is still there, and is still used as a meeting place as well as a library.

Ralph W. Morrow

Audrey Morrow Miller and I were attending the old Hilltop School in East Whitetail Canyon in the early 1930s. All that remains of the schoolhouse is the foundation, which is near to the intersection of the electric power line along Whitetail and a branch line leading to the Hilltop townsite. Ida Miller was the teacher when I started Kindergarten in 1934, and soon after decided school was not my forte and dropped out of the program. Ms. Miller's daughter, Peggy, a few years my senior, was assigned the task of shaping a young malcontent into an acceptable member of society, and she went on to become a distinguished teacher in later years. Thus, I was back in the halls of higher learning in the First Grade at Hilltop School in the autumn of 1935. Audrey was then in the Fourth Grade.

Several families lived around the area such as the Gillespies up the one canyon where the Pagues later resided. The teacher was named Wyckoff, and had the apparently required regulation daughter named Judy. The Hilltop School closed its doors for a last time in the spring of 1937. Pagues had moved in up canyon, and there were school children all along the roadway down out of Whitetail, up through Paradise, and down Silver Creek to the Portal School.

Audrey and I, et al, attended the Portal School beginning in the fall of 1937 through the spring of 1941. I returned to the old school house in the autumn of 1943 and graduated, along with George (Pee Wee) Newman, from the Eighth Grade in 1944. In the earlier days both schoolhouses were used. The smaller frame house where the post office is now located was designated the "Little Room." It therefore followed that the building now housing the library was dubbed the "Big Room." And once you advanced to the Big Room, you had indeed achieved a higher station in life. All Big Roomers held the Little Roomers in some degree of contempt – possibly.

The LR's were from grades one through probably five, with the BR's grades six through eight. It was a recognized fact that the BR teacher even outranked the LR teacher. I think the second grade teacher was named Mrs. Reid, and another in subsequent years was Mrs. Trask, who was the daughter of the local Forest Ranger. Miss Elsie Monday, later Doss when she married one of the CCC personnel, was the teacher, disciplinarian, and absolute legal authority holding dominion over the Big Room.

We school bus riders left Hilltop early with Barbara and Robert (Sonny Boy) Pague, Audrey and I being the first on the reasonable facsimile of a bus, that more closely resembled the Toonerville Trolley in the funny pages. Occasionally the Hilltop Mine operated and then there would for a time be several kids down from Hilltop town to catch the bus: Up along East Turkey Creek, the McGinty kids, Barbara and

maybe one or two others. In Paradise, Ernest (Sonny) and Gail Lee came on board along with several others including a small boy who lived just east of Paradise on the property now owned by Debra Mues. Then it was down through Silver Creek with Mr. Pague directing due diligence to the curving roadway and shutting out the crowd which could only be compared to a trainload of East Indian peasants arriving in Bombay. In an effort to maintain some semblance of sanity and preserve his hearing, Mr. Ben Pague, the school bus driver, attempted to shut out his charges as we sped along the roadways going and coming from school. In the evenings when we approached Paradise, the boy who lived at the present Mues place would attempt to convey to Mr. Pague where he wished to disembark from the Toonerville Trolley. He spoke very slowly and a typical exchange would be thus: "Mr. Pague . . . I . . . want to . . . get off . . . at my house." By the time he had repeated this several times we would have arrived in downtown Paradise.

A partial listing of the student body for the years 1935 through 1944: Barbara and Robert Pague, Audrey and Wayne Morrow, Barbara McGinty, Gail and Ernest Lee, Irene Hancock, Billy Walker, the Foster twins (Philip was one) and their older sister Anna Marie, George Newman, Frank Soqui and his sister, Geneva Hughes, Betty Walker, Pete and Mary Dominguez, Nancy, Elvira and Jim Frank Cox, Albert, Beve, and Earl Noland, two lads name of Vogel, and Wilbur Ward. These are a few that come readily to an aged mind. In later years, when the student body was reduced to solely the Big Room, there was, when George Newman and I were the Eighth grade graduates, a teacher by the name of Miss McSparron. That school year being 1943-1944. The Fosters and Soquis were from the AVA, operating the apple orchard, etc. Foster was the brother of Mrs. (Doctor) Adamson who owned the AVA Ranch until Mrs. Adamson died and Doctor Adamson sold the property.

Academics and sports: There is no education quite like that garnered in those halls of rural learning. When Audrey enrolled in Douglas High School, I attended A Avenue School in

Douglas for the sixth grade and was at the top of the honor roll list throughout the year, not through study or inherent wit and intelligence, but for the simple reason that I had already covered the material offered by the backward urban schools. As for sports: there were various pieces of equipment like those used by gymnasts, and these were in continuous use. It was mandatory that all students played baseball, and good players could always look forward to a career playing for Bob Gresham's team or the CCC team when they oft times engaged in baseball games, usually at Sunny Flats. Uncle Bob Gresham (he was married to Mary Morrow) was an outstanding athlete and pitcher. Miles Graves, who had the Apache store, was his catcher decked out in full chest protector and catcher's mask. So, we definitely had something to shoot for in that direction. Of course there was volleyball, and other questionable sports such as dodge ball, which was played for the sole purpose of inflicting as much pain and injury as possible on those in the ring. Another sport was Alley Alley Over. Groups formed on each side of the Little Room, a ball, usually volley but at times basket, was thrown over the roof of the LR with the receiving side running with the ball, and attempting to outguess the opposing mob who were obliged to run in mass one way or the other. A wrong guess resulted in a head-on collision and usually loss of the ball. This went on until the ball was successfully run and then was thrown to the other side. My first exposure to this sport was rather peculiar. Being a second or third grader, and small in stature, I tried to stand a bit apart. Over came the ball, and what are the chances of this?— it came squarely down on the top of my head. Perhaps I should have considered a career in soccer. In retrospect, I have this happening several times, but that seems rather unlikely.

Along about the Fourth Grade, I, and other yet to be named confederates, decided the time had come when we should try cigarettes: The problem being where and how to obtain them. I shall confess to being the criminal mastermind in this diabolical undertaking. I suggested one of the AVA lads go to

the Cave Creek Grocery during lunch hour (there were two stores then, Newman's and the Cave Creek Grocery). There he was to tell the clerk that Mr. Foster had requested the pick up and delivery of two packs of Old Gold cigarettes, which were to be charged to Foster's grocery bill. Our supply of cigarettes at least temporarily achieved, we set about organizing the Portal School Smoking and Discussion Society. Somehow, someone, spilled the beans. From the Big Room came Audrey Morrow with a summons. The chief magistrate required that I be questioned extensively in a matter pertaining to some irregular goings-on. Since Audrey was an older sister and, more importantly, from the higher echelons of the BR, her face was lighted up with pleasure derived from seeing a Little Roomer in difficulties. Thus, before the Big Roomers, who were always as severe on detected crime as they may be inclined to "look the other way" when was merely wanted, engaged in various degrees of smirking and making snide remarks. I denied any knowledge of cigarettes, and when grilled as to who among the student body my confederates were, stated I had no knowledge of the alleged circumstances and therefore had no knowledge of any alleged confederates – or words to that effect.

Unfortunately, loyalty and the code of silence are unknown to some when it comes to turning school's evidence, and I was tried, convicted, and sentenced for not only taking part in a heinous crime, but for gross perjury. That was the end of my criminal career, but not my Portal School days.

Another girl who attended Portal School was Willoughby James, and she was an important part of the student body. Her mother was Rose James. Willoughby's father died of cancer and his body lay in state in the Big Room for at least one night, with several of the community ladies in attendance: my mother, Juanita Morrow, one of them.

Each Christmas, Willoughby and her mother traveled about visiting other places and no doubt various relatives. Each return from Christmas vacation brought Willoughby once again to Portal School, and with her came: one year the measles,

another the whooping cough, and the list went on. Thus, we Portal students gained our lifetime immunities to common diseases thanks to Willoughby.

Speaking of slight and serious health considerations, there was a time when the Little Room gained stature over the Big Room, and that occurred when most all of the Big Roomers became infested with head lice. We, in the Little Room, escaped that problem.

We initially played baseball with regulation hard balls, but fielding grounders over the uneven schoolyard and the resulting occasional injury caused a change to softball. Some local ladies challenged us to a game, which we thought would be an easy win as most of the ladies were sturdy, and some more than that. Running would not be their game. What we failed to reckon was their hitting strength, but after a few hits well over into Cave Creek, the game was lost. We always weaseled out of a rematch.

Wilbur Ward was around the area for a year or so. His father was a watchman at the Hilltop Mine and townsite. Wilbur was probably sixteen or seventeen at the time, the time being 1938 or 1939, and for some reason or other had never completed schooling through the Eighth Grade. Elsie Monday, ruler of the Big Room and Portal Schools, prevailed upon Wilbur to finish his education at least as far as offered at Portal, and this Wilbur did. So far as I remember Wilbur went about his business with as little acknowledgment of us lesser beings as possible.

Just to the east of the property in Whitetail Canyon that is now owned by Tom and Debbie Collazo, there was another house, well, etc. There, Bob and Mary Gresham lived when they were the drivers of the U.S. Mail. Greshams (Uncle and Aunt) left after a time for a career as Immigration Border Patrollers, and Bill and Roberta Stevens took over the reins of mail delivery, until Bill left for the army and various entertaining activities in Italy and other spots during WWII.

Bill was an expert rifle shot and undoubtedly his skills were put to good use. For some reason or other he left the army as a private, and is buried in the Paradise Cemetery. He was one of my cousins. Anyway, there was a post office at Hilltop, one in Paradise, one in Portal in the Cave Creek Grocery Building (later converted to an office by Henry Beumler), and the post office in Rodeo where the mail was collected from the Southern Pacific Mail Train. The mail carrier in those days served as a means of supply, transportation, and newscaster. People who required some supplies, such as Al Richardson who was about four miles east of Whitetail Canyon and had no vehicle, simply left a list and some money in their mail boxes. The carrier purchased and delivered the goods along with any change.

One afternoon, Wilbur Ward rode in with Bill Stevens. There was a gate east of the aforementioned house and a fence that trended southerly to the creek. It so happened that Sonny Boy Pague and I were standing around waiting, I suppose for the mail, when Wilbur arrived. I had a new Daisy Air Rifle, or as we called them in those days-a B-B gun. Wilbur, without so much as a: "Hello, boys. How are you? Nice day." looks at me and says: "Don't you dare shoot me with that B-B gun." And added: "You little S.O.B." Downright insulting, I'd say, even though in later years people would oft say to me what a mean, contentious youngster I was, and I have strived, and successfully I might hope, to overcome those traits. Wilbur started walking, sauntering, along the fence south going to the road leading to Hilltop. When he got just to the edge of the creek, I drew a sight exactly between his shoulder blades (allowing for the long range and trajectory of said air rifle) and squeezed off a shot. It hit Wilbur dead on in the seat of the pants, sending up a puff of dust. Out flew his arms like a Bugs Bunny cartoon character. Around he spun, but I was already in flight. Whether he caught Pague, I do not know. Wilbur never attempted revenge and said nothing about the event. That was the Shooting of Wilbur Ward. And that was the sort of students the teachers contended with at Portal School.

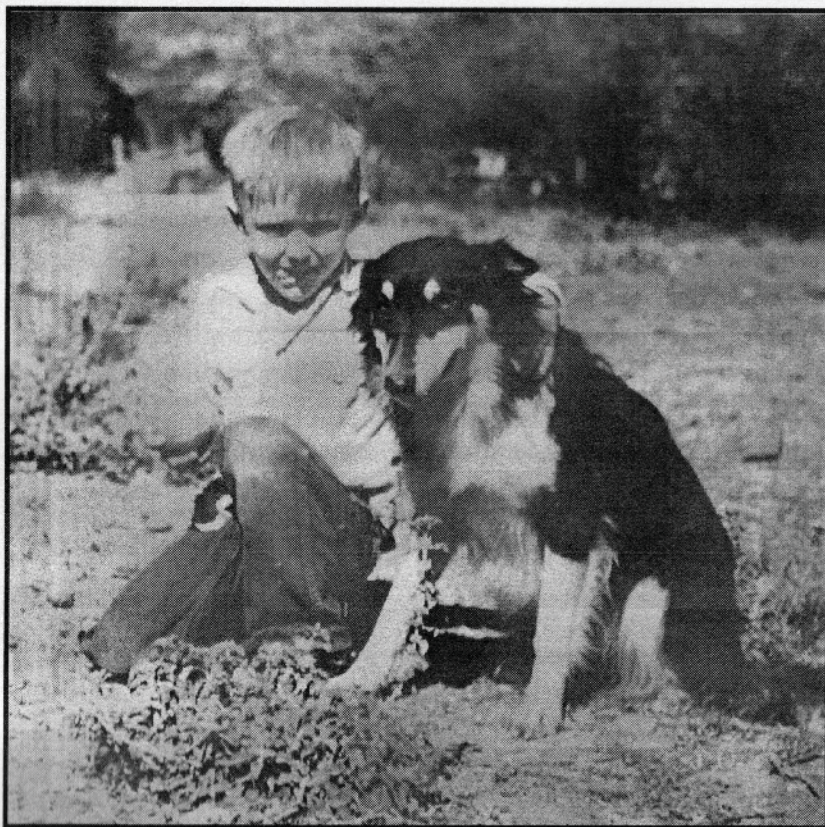


Photo from Alice and Scotty Anderson. Vincent 'Winkie' Anderson and friend.

Alice and Scotty Anderson

Our son, Vincent "Winkie" Anderson attended Portal School from 1955 to 1962. This thick adobe building surrounded by tall sycamores was a perfect picture of a rural school. Sometimes a child's dog would wait patiently on the stoop for its owner to be released.

Sally Richards was our son's first teacher. He loved school when Mrs. Richards taught. We remember his first day. "I am going to learn to write my name," he told us, and he did, thanks to a teacher who understood this need.

By the time he was in Fourth Grade, the school population had grown enough for the county school superintendent to say two teachers should be employed. The small wooden building beside the adobe one was put to use for the four lower grades. Ruth Reay whose husband was the forest ranger for the Portal area, was Winkie's teacher then. She made lessons and learning interesting for her pupils. Mrs. Walter Reed taught the four upper grades in the adobe school.

During those years, our son had a small horse, Little Britches, that he rode between the Research Station where we worked, and the Portal Ranger Station where Leona and Carson Morrow lived with their grandson, Mike Murphy. Mike was a couple of grades ahead of Wink. He, too, had a horse, and these boys spent many hours riding together. Leona (Grammy) always had good food ready for the hungry pair.

Carson could always be depended on to watch out for them and tell them the history of the area. It was a perfect time for two young boys. Wink learned much Indian lore, history of the Paradise area, and how to do things from Carson. When Wink and his wife had a son, they named him Carson. We know Carson Morrow would be proud of his namesake who graduated from High School in Wheatland, Wyoming with a full scholarship to Eastern Wyoming College.

When we moved to Paradise from the Research Station in 1960, Wink continued at Portal School. He and Gail Stoechner were the two graduates from Eighth Grade in 1962. We remember the teacher, Mr. Holman, as being interested in all his students.

Parents and others in the Portal area were always doing interesting things to raise money for things the school needed. Lavern and Oscar Olney, parents of Phil, did much to get the cement platform built beside the present post office. Dances were held on it, and games played. Potluck dinners, cake sales, and other activities not only brought in money for the school but provided good times and good relations for all in the

community.

Our daughter, now Melodee Boss, went to First Grade at Portal from August 1966 to May 1967. That summer before school started, parents and neighbors painted the school red and did lots of cleaning inside and out. When the first day of school arrived, shining windows said "Welcome to all."

There were enough pupils that year for two teachers. Miss Ryan taught First through Third Grades in the small wooden building. Melodee remembers Mike Richards, Leanne and Yvonne Gomez, Joyce and Chris Kolmar, and Eddie Rivers. Pupils from the Fourth through Eighth Grades that she recalls are Catherine, Donald and Robert Caron, and Sheila, Sally, Bucky and Larry Rivers.

When all the pupils were outside for recess, Melodee says her hands were often cold. (She lost her mittens frequently.) Sheila Rivers would rub Melodee's hands to warm them. Melodee liked Catherine Caron's long blonde hair. Being friends with her, Donald and Robert (called Rabbit by his many friends), who were a little older than Melodee, made her very happy. She and Catherine are still friends and keep in touch with each other.

Miss Ryan took her pupils once or twice a week on nature walks. Melodee brought home dried weeds, rocks, and cocoons from these strolls.

That December, Miss Ryan's classes sang Christmas carols as their part of the program. This was held in the red adobe building. The pupils, their faces shining, standing in rows on the stage, sang to a full house. One of the songs was about a Merry Christmas and a Figgie Pudding. Melodee kept asking us what a Figgie Pudding was so I got out an old recipe for steamed plum pudding and she and I made a couple of them.

May came and ended yet another busy year at Portal School.

Eric Hayes

Eric started First Grade at Portal in 1947. The building at that time was painted sort of a yellow-tan with white trim, which he suspects was courtesy of the Forest Service. The school was heated by a kerosene stove over where the present heater stands. There was a water faucet inside.

When he walked in that first day, Eric says all the kids stared at him. He stared right back. "Didn't you know them?" I asked.

"No," he said. "We didn't run around to each other's yards and houses then. We saw each other at school, at the potlucks and ball games in Sunny Flat, and at Sew What."

"Kids went to Sew What?"

He said they did, and played while their mothers visited and had the program given or planned by the Rural Home Demonstration Agent. These were potlucks so everyone had a feast.

The Toles sisters, Elsa and Myriam, had been teaching all the grades, but the year Eric began, Mrs. Ruby Nave took over and Eric had her for three years. She was, he says, a good teacher, but strict; in fact, he didn't know what recess was till he got out of third grade. There were 24 pupils, including the Mingus and Fritz children from the AVA Ranch and a number from mining families at Hilltop.

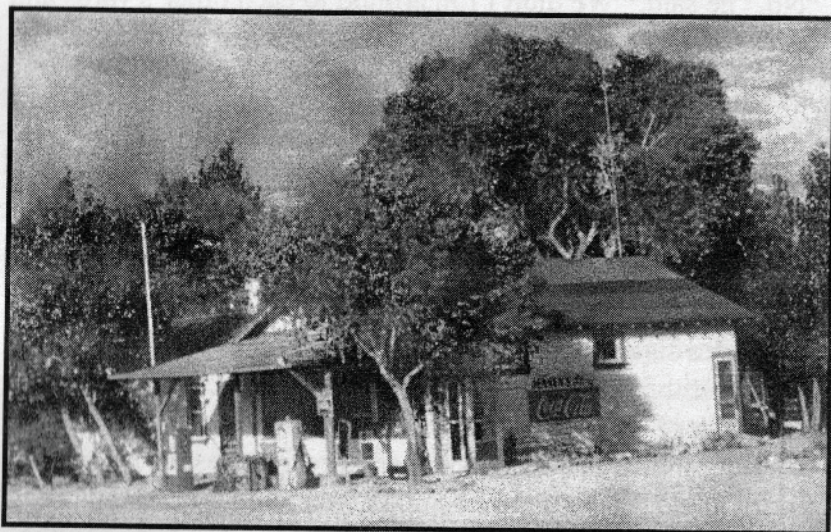
Another good but firm teacher taught Eric through Fourth and Fifth Grades. For most of the next two years, he had Mrs. Elma Riley, who had been Sally Richard's teacher at Apache. Eric thinks she had been a good teacher but by that time was getting tired and not able to control the lively youngsters. She left in the spring of '53 and Dorothy Bliss finished out the term.

In his eighth and last year, Sally Richards taught. "Sally was wonderful," Eric recalls fondly, and she remembers him with equal affection.

The County Health Nurse used to come out to give the

students smallpox and diphtheria shots and check their eyes and teeth.

School was a big thing then. There was always a big Christmas program, and there were plays and other doings. Colonel M. C. Pugsley, famed for once climbing a windmill to give someone a shot, served on the School Board though he and his wife had no children. He loved to sing at gatherings and usually could coax some others to stand up with him and make a joyful noise.



Newman's Store, where there was a long room with a pool table that was also used for dances.

Ruth Newman acted as a nurse and midwife.

Photo by Virginia Cutler.

He and his wife, "Aunt Duck" or Queen Ann, operated the little store below their home where a gas pump still stands which was once Henry Beumler's law office, and is now rented to visitors. Colonel Pugsley used to go to Douglas and buy a huge chunk of ice which he sold to owners of ice boxes up and down the canyon before the days when refrigerators were common.

George and Ruth Newman had the store at its present location, painted the ubiquitous Forest Service yellow-tan. It had a large room on the side where the restaurant entrance is now. There was a pool table at one end and a fifty-foot floor for dancing. Sometimes there was live music and sometimes the music came from records.

"Could the community support two stores?" I puzzled.

"Neither got rich, but they did all right," Eric said. People then bought most of their groceries from the local stores, including meat, so that made a big difference. The beef was not local but bought by the storekeepers in Douglas.

Eric also remembers the old crank telephones served by the Forest Service line before Valley Telephone came into existence. The phone operator worked in the rock house north of the Ranger Station. Eric remembers that Mamie Franklin was the operator in World War II when his father, Alden Hayes, was in the service. Alden once tried to phone his wife from New York, going through numerous small exchanges to reach Mamie who then wanted to chat and hear all his news till he reminded her that he wanted to talk to Gretchen.

Now a designer and builder of beautiful, energy-efficient homes, Eric was, during its years of publication, tophand cover artist for Carson Morrow's *Chiricahua Bullshead*.

Marilyn (Bagwell) Hoffman,

(daughter of Phillip Bagwell and Frances Bagwell, Portal ranchers)

I attended Portal School when I was in the Eighth Grade in 1957-58. It was a one-room school for most of the year, and Mrs. Lillian Reed was the teacher for all eight grades. I believe there were between 16 and 21 students.

Sometime during the second semester, the enrollment grew enough to hire a second teacher for the lower grades in the

building next door. There were four students in the eighth grade when the term started. By May, there were just two of us: Charles "Chuck" Troller and myself. I have a wonderful color photo of Eighth Grade graduation with Mrs. Reed flanked by Chuck and me. Unfortunately, I have moved twice since I last examined the photo, and I'm sure it is buried in one of my heavy boxes in my downtown San Diego rental storage unit.

Even as a 13-year-old, I knew that Mrs. Reed was a remarkably accomplished woman: She taught music and the students learned to play "My Country 'Tis of Thee" on the harmonica for both the Christmas and graduation programs. We were really quite proud of ourselves! She wrote plays and composed one for one of the programs. I can't remember what part I played, but I remember Chuck was an irascible old man and really hammed it up, much to the delight of the other student actors and the audience!

Mrs. Reed was very well read and articulate: She had gotten her Master's degree in English, and was so pleased when I majored in English and went on to get my master's in English at ASU. She promised me that she would give me her Master's thesis on Thomas Carlyle when I completed my graduate study. Sure enough, when she attended the reception that my mother gave for my new husband and me (we had flown in from Sacramento), she walked in the door and said, "Here it is — I want you to have it!" I was glad that I had remembered to write her that I had visited Carlyle's home in northern England the year before when I went on a tour of Europe sponsored by the California Teachers' Association. She had always wanted to do that, so she enjoyed it vicariously through me.

Mrs. Reed made school fun! This was the next to the last year of her full-time teaching, so she must have been between 62 and 64. She *looked* like a "little old lady" with her shock of white hair, but she *acted* much younger. She had a jolly face and an optimistic, positive attitude. She was always thinking of "fun" activities: One the whole school enjoyed was the spelling bee.



Top row: Alan Gordon, unidentified, Chuck Troller, Mrs. Reed. Second row: Phil Olney, Mike Murphy, unidentified, Marilyn Bagwell. Third row: Gail Stoechner, a Nicolas child?, unidentified, Stonely Payne, unidentified. Fourth row: Unidentified, Myrtle Bagwell, Forest Nicolas.
Photo from Ted Troller.

Seventh Grader Sally Dixon, who was my best friend and whose mother, Betty Dixon, drove the Portal "school bus" (a station wagon), won the school spelling bee contest and got to compete in the county competition (at Willcox or was it Tombstone?). Between Mrs. Reed, Mrs. Dixon and a few other parents providing transportation, all of the students got to go see Sally compete. Another time, Mrs. Reed arranged a trip to the Desert Museum in Tucson. She also was involved with 4-H. I believe she started the Portal chapter. Chuck was president and I was secretary. I think there were only six of us, but we had fun. Mrs. Reed took us on field trips to Paradise.

The community was very supportive of the students and their activities, and packed the little red schoolhouse when we presented our programs. Of course, with Mrs. Reed in charge, these were always entertaining and there was a lot of laughter. When Chuck Troller and I graduated from Eighth Grade, many community members even gave us gifts at the reception. I can't remember whether it was Bert and Bertha Roberds or the Staffords who gave me my first real grown-up cologne: "Heaven-Sent" – and I was so delighted with it!

I feel fortunate to have had the one-room school experience at Portal School and to have had Lillian Reed as a teacher and mentor. I think that was one of the most enjoyable years of my life. Mrs. Reed taught one more year at Portal (my sister Liz attended first grade there), and then did substitute teaching in Douglas schools. I was attending Douglas High School by then and it was always pleasant to see her. She was just as competent in dealing with high school students as she was with six-year-olds.

This probably sounds corny, but every Sunday during the moment of silent prayer, I give thanks for the generous and supportive network of Portal and Rodeo community members who influenced my life: the Reed, Russell, Richards, Roberts, Pugsley, Stafford, Dixon, Miller families and so many others who have passed on. Children really DO absorb the lessons the

adults around them teach. I feel privileged to contribute to the tributes that Lillian Reed deserves and to help preserve her memory.

The following is from an E-mail to Jeanne Williams from Marilyn Bagwell Hoffman:

I thought you would enjoy the first two paragraphs of this e-mail by my sister Myrtle (Bagwell) Young. She would have been 4 years old that year. The "Winkie" who had stage fright was a first-grader who was the child of Scottie and Alice Anderson, Portal ranchers. I had forgotten about that part of the Christmas program. The audience got a big kick out of the fearless little girl in the blue flouncy dress taking charge of the recalcitrant little boy. Myrtle's self-confidence was indicative of her future school and career success: she has been the Chief Juvenile Officer of Cochise County for many years and is a respected member of several state boards, including at least one appointment by the Arizona governor.

David Ahl of Douglas was co-valedictorian with me, not Chuck. (Our grade indexes were two ten-thousandths of a point apart and the school administrators decided to have us share the honor). Chuck Troller was, I believe, third or fourth. However, Chuck was student body president our senior year (1961-62) as well as student council president. I'm sure the Portal and Rodeo communities were proud that Chuck and I had done well at Douglas High School, and I'm sure that much of our success was due to the influence and encouragement of Mrs. Reed.

My parents' ranch was the Alden Hayes/Elmore Walker place, two miles from the village of Portal, just off the San Simon Road. At the time the Cave Creek crossing was gravel and was graded sporadically by the county. Crossing the creek was difficult and sometimes impossible when the creek was running heavily from winter run-off. In addition to the high and swift

water, big boulders presented a serious obstacle to the vehicle. I do remember now riding across the creek on horseback on at least one occasion to meet Betty Dixon in the school bus on the other side. There must have been other times when I waded across, carrying my shoes.

From Myrtle Bagwell Young:

It's interesting to note that both Marilyn and Chuck Troller whom she mentions, went on to become co-valedictorians of Douglas High School, which was as large as many in Tucson at the time because of Phelps Dodge.

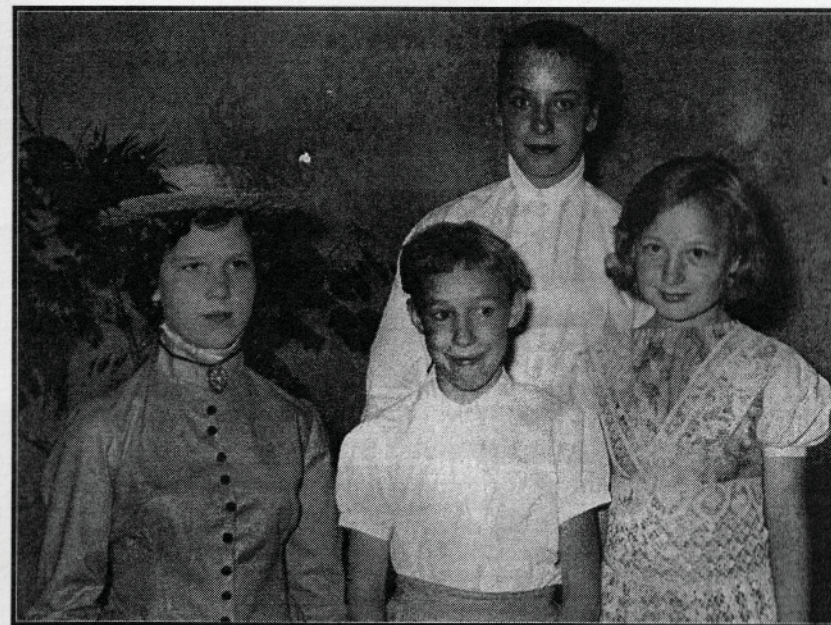
I know it's hard to imagine but when Winkie got stage fright and refused to move, I grabbed him by the hand and started twirling him around. Well, that's what they say, and I do remember it. He was mortified but as far as I was concerned, the show had to go on.

Zoë Chew

A one room school was a wonderful concept to a girl of nine in 1958. It was like a class of siblings. Working in the Fifth Grade math book was great because I could be where my intellect was and not be placed in work according to my grade level.

It was always intriguing when a parent arrived to take a student out of class. It usually meant a trip to Douglas or Lordsburg, but my imagination raced to wilder thoughts: snakebite, injury on a windmill, being thrown from a horse, or worse.

We played kick-the-can relentlessly at recess and lunch. The dust was a novelty to my black-top background. Mixed in the dust were a wonderful lot of sycamore leaves, both fuzzy and prickly. The slide and teeter-totter were great additions to the playground. We had naught in L.A. but we did have hopscotch painted on the black-top which I missed during my year in Portal.



**Ladies of the cast in a Christmas play:
Sally Dixon, Zoë Chew, Brigitta, Gail Stoechner.
Photo by Alice Chew.**

Car-pool was different because I was used to walking to school on cement pavement with corners to look from, and dogs to be wary of in back yards. We did have the Portal Store just down the road and whenever a chance arose, we'd walk down there and buy penny candy, root beer barrels and Bazooka bubblegum, a huge handful for a dime. I think it must have been forbidden but there were still times when we went and bought those things.

We did plays right there on the stage. In one, I had been picked for a certain role, but it was later given to my friend Gail. I think the play was part of a celebration for her aunt who was getting married and they thought it more appropriate that Gail have the part. You could go up on the stage and there were small side alcoves where a few students could talk quietly. These seemed to be the only private places in the whole school

except for the outdoor restrooms.

There were numerous arguments between friends. One day some conflict got so intense between Gail and myself that I suggested we meet at the restroom and "fight it out." I requested permission to go out there and several minutes later, Gail did the same. Mrs. Reed had forgotten I was there so Gail and I were face to face in the gray coolness of the cinderblock building. Within seconds, we were giggling at the silliness and never came to blows.

The school had just a handful of students. I seem to remember that it started with 24 in September but by the time apple season was over and the migrant children moved on, we were down to 18 for the remainder of the year.

Once a girl came to stay overnight. Next morning was Saturday and Mom took us kids to Douglas. She bought the little girl a new dress and perhaps underwear and socks at J.C. Penney. I hadn't noticed the girl's need, nor that she was probably wearing the same clothes day after day. I have always remembered that act of kindness and can still recall the sunny warmth of the store and the round racks of new dresses.

This was the first time I was allowed to wear pants to school. They were a necessity when winter brought snow and very cold temperatures. It felt wonderful and dangerous at the same time to go against city traditions. As my feet grew, I remember how hard it was to find new shoes. Lordsburg had no shoe store and mail order catalogs could be problematic in getting a good fit. We solved the problem somehow and I had my white and black saddle shoes to wear. We each had a cowboy shirt and I wore mine whenever possible.

Mrs. Reed was an understanding teacher about giving me appropriate work. She did not understand the emotional conflicts that girls could get into when there were three of them. Gail, Sherry, and I had the usual tussles of a threesome. Mrs. Reed consulted my mother once (or maybe more!) about

our behavior. I think my mother clued her into the "wicked triangle" dynamics and things settled down with just a friendly reminder to be more inclusive and kinder to one another. Gail and I remained friends, writing after I moved back to L.A. and I'd visit her on vacations when we'd return to Portal during spring or summer break.

The harmonica was the preferred schoolwide musical instrument. It meant great success and a world of new friends for my musical older brother, Carl, but I was hopeless. I could play a simple tune and keep up with the class but never developed any greater ability to play or enjoy it. We played for some dark-suited men who visited the school one day. They were probably from the school district or board members from somewhere. They scared me. I was thinking they would find some fault with this idyllic hiatus in my education. Mrs. Reed stood tall at the front of the class with the men at her left and instructed us to play for them. I think that fear added to my inability and I could hardly play.

It was quite a surprise to me that the teacher and her husband lived right next door in the teacherage. We called on her for some reason once and I longed to see the inside of the tiny cottage but we were met at the door and talked there. Her husband was older than she and possibly ailing. It intrigued me that his name was Walter Reed as I associated that name with the famous hospital. He seemed frail, thin, and slight to her ampleness. I remember printed cotton dresses belted at the waist for her attire but not much else. I can't even put a face to the tall person I recall standing at the front of the room.

We helped ready the school before classes started in September. We swept and arranged and dusted inside and outside. My younger brother, Paul, came upon a coral snake at the base of the large sycamore right out the front door. I knew there were threats to our safety here as elsewhere in the world, but this kind was also fascinating to my parents and the other scientists at the Research Station. Snakes and the like would

never be killed but would be captured, protected, and kept alive for study.

I had to write the first report of my school career in Mrs. Reed's class. As a Fourth Grader, I had never heard of anyone having to write such a thing. I couldn't imagine what I would write about and resources to investigate and study some topic were not available. My mother urged me to write about something I liked and already knew about. I chose Kokeshi dolls from Japan. I had a few of them among a collection of international dolls. I still have the report, one paragraph, beautifully printed in pencil, with a cover of pastel paper on which I had very carefully drawn, using pastel chalks, a large Kokeshi doll.

The school was also the center for the community, for gatherings and celebrations. The basketball court to the side was used for a dance our family once attended. I was so impressed by the older girls, who I thought might be in college. They wore their boot-cut jeans, cowboy boots and plaid cowboy shirts with pearl snaps. I wanted to grow up and go to Arizona State so I could be just like them, dancing with real cowboys at nighttime in the dusty wilds.

There was more gossip in the community than I could fathom. There hadn't been much that came to my attention in L.A. but in Portal there was always something going around about someone. Our family was not immune to being gossiped about and I remember feeling hurt and sad for my parents when mean things were said. To this day I have a true aversion to gossip and can imagine the relief I'd feel if the world were free of it.

We have funny black and white school photos of ourselves from that year. A photographer must have made the trek out the long road from someplace else. There is no photo capturing the group of us and our teacher. That is something I miss in the stack of pictures from kindergarten and on tucked in the back of my scrapbook. In my picture, I look a little goofy with an eager smile and sort of slicked-down hair, wearing my cowboy shirt.

It was a year of contrast, the best kind to wake up the senses and the mind. It split wide open my universe of concrete blocks, asphalt black-top, and city school experience of room after room down a long hallway. In Portal, there was no "milk money," no chain-link fence, no bells except perhaps a handheld one Mrs. Reed rang herself, and no *Weekly Reader*. There was instead a wonderfully rich world of dust, gravel, sycamores, a rushing stream, snakes, scrabbling games in front of the school house, cold that prickled, heat that itched, and many new faces for memories.

Carl Chew

The road from the Research Station down to Portal was still dirt in 1968, so though it was only six-and-a-half miles or so, it seemed like it took forever. I think Alice Anderson took us to school in the morning in a blue car. One day there was a storm and it took even longer as there were branches all over the road.

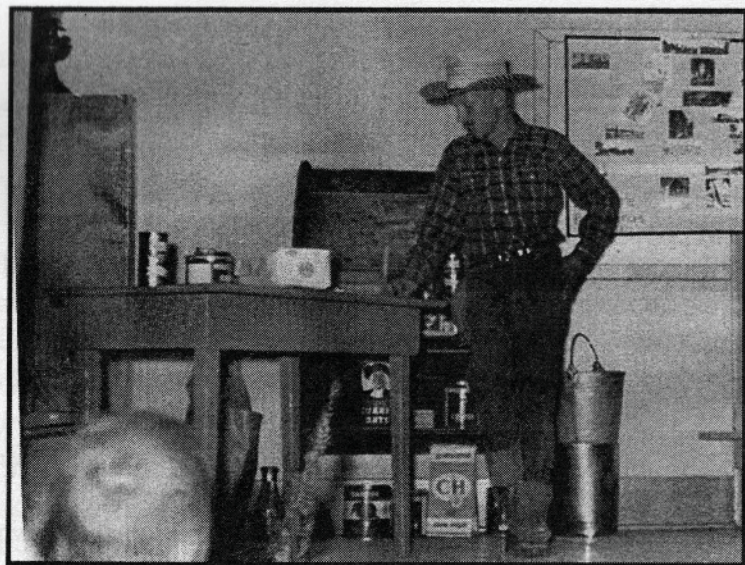
The school was kept pretty cozy by Mrs. Reed. I sat next to the only other Sixth Grader besides myself, Phil Olney. He and I were very tight pals and spent most of our time together, in and out of school. His mom was the Portal postmistress and their house was just down from the school.

None of us messed around in school too much – we were actually very nice kids. Because there were all ages of kids in that little schoolroom, we had to be helpful and courteous at all times. The only trouble I remember having was with an Eighth Grader, Alan Gordon, who had a thing for picking on me. Phil would encourage me to let him have it back. One evening there was a dance on the school's basketball court with live honky-tonk music and all. Cowboys and their gals came from all over. Sometime during the dance, I watched as one cowpoke told another fellow to stay away from his girl. A punch was thrown and the interloper was knocked back into the bushes. That same evening, Alan had been teasing me constantly, so after I watched the big fight, I gathered up my own courage and

walked over to Alan and punched him, too. The amazing thing about that dance was that they put some sort of white powder all over the court. It was so slippery we couldn't play on it for weeks, but that was okay because we just loved sliding all over it like we had ice skates on.

Mrs. Reed trained us all to toot away on harmonicas and the entire school formed a band. We played tunes like "Old Black Joe," and "From the halls of Montezuma." I took to harmonica like a bee to honey and pretty soon could play just about anything. At that time, you could go to Agua Prieta and buy good quality German toys, including harmonicas. Every time we went across the border, I tried to get some kind of fancy Hoehner harmonica like an Echo or a Double Concert. In the spring we had a visit from the school board. Mrs. Reed was so proud of me and my harmonica that she asked me to stand up and play a tune for them. I can't remember why, but I wouldn't play a note no matter how much she begged me.

Next to the school was an outbuilding (present post office)



Christmas Play in 1958 with Carl Chew playing the Sheriff. Photo by Alice Chew.

filled with furniture and all sorts of things. That's where the post office is today. One of the treasures was a jukebox. We knew how to open the door just a crack and squeeze in. The front of the jukebox was open and all one had to do was hit the coin mechanism in a particular way to get it to play. My favorite song on it was a Ricky Nelson hit, "Mr. Ree." We played that record over and over and over.

More than anything, I remember the endless games of kick-the-can and hide-and-seek. There were so many good hiding places all around the school that the games were really exciting. I can remember thinking, as I hid myself under sycamore leaves in the ditch behind the school, *I sure hope there are no snakes back here*. All the kids, big and small, played these games. In the spring, we started playing softball in front of the school in the gravel parking space. One day we had a picnic and the school from Rodeo came to play ball against us. I can't remember who won, but it was a very serious event for us. I was playing outfield, just where the road humps over a little drainage ditch. One of the Rodeo players hit a long fly ball out towards me. I zoomed across the road, and as I caught the ball, fell backwards down into the creek. When everyone got there to see what had happened to me, I still had the ball in my mitt and for a few moments was a big hero.

After school, we had a ritual of walking down to the Portal Store to get a little something while we waited for our ride home. There were a lot of glass candy jars filled with all sorts of good things. My favorites were jawbreakers and sour lemon drops. When I go in the store now, I am always disappointed not to see it the way it used to look.

Mrs. Reed was a dear soul with whom I stayed in contact off and on until she died. Once I visited her in a nursing home in Willcox. I brought along my harmonica which I had learned to play quite well over the years. I played all the old songs for her, the ones we learned at school, and she just had the nicest twinkle in her eyes!

Paul Chew

I remember my wooden desk with a hole in it for an inkwell, and a top that lifted up. Since so many students were in different grades, we often worked in workbooks. I learned to play the harmonica that year, too.

Once when I got in trouble, I had to go up on the stage to lie across Mrs. Reed's lap for a spanking. I haven't the faintest idea of what I did. Nevertheless, I did like Mrs. Reed. My name appeared frequently on the board on the naughty list, too.

On the playground there were cut up hollow sycamore trunks which we climbed through or could hide in. The creek seemed to me to be very far away; now I see that it is quite close to the school.

Dances on the concrete court were a big hit with the community.

Sheila Rivers Clark

I started going to school at Portal in 1965 when I was in Third Grade. I had gone to Rodeo for First and Second Grades. Besides me, my sister, Sally, and brothers, Larry and Eddie, all went to Portal School. We lived about two miles west of the San Simon Cienega and were about ten miles from school. My mother drove the school bus for several years.

Kids whose names I remember when I started at Portal were Aurora and Juanita Jensen, whose family had the Portal Store, Patsy, Bucky and my cousins, Linda and Danny Rivers, all in the Seventh or Eighth Grades. Two or three children named Woods – one was Billy – lived at the AVA Ranch owned then by Mr. Troller.

Also living there were Rosie and Dolores Terrazas, and the family of my Dad's brother, Albert Rivers and his wife, Martha. Besides Linda and Danny, there was young Martha, better known to us as Ellen. The AVA was home to Nancy and Jimmy Willems as well.

Yvonne and Leanne Gomez lived out in the valley. Living where Carol Whitten does now, on what used to be Community Road, was a Mexican family with three or four children in school that year. I don't remember their last name, but one girl was called Cilla, and one of the boys was Jesse. John Caron had three children in school, Donald, Robert and Catherine. I can't remember if Melodee Anderson started school that year but there were twenty-six or twenty-seven students.

My teacher's name was Mr. Pirtle. After school had been going on for a while, Mrs. Tibbits took over teaching the lower grades, First, Second and Third. The primary grades were in what is now the post office while the older children were in the present library.

The teacher's desk was always up by the stage on the left hand side of the room and the piano was on the right. The table top of our desks opened up so we could keep our books there.



**Sheila Rivers Clark
Third Grade**

All six years I went to Portal School, we started the day with raising the flag and giving the flag salute. Some years we sang "The Star-Spangled Banner." Mr. Seubert also had a silent prayer time.

1965 was the only year we had a basketball team, but we just played against Animas. At recess, the boys played marbles while we girls played jacks and jumped rope. We sometimes ran foot races on the road. There was a tetherball pole in 1965 but it was taken down the next year. Hop-scotch was also fun.

There were quite a few games to play while jumping rope, like

"Blue bells, blue bells, cockle shells, eve ivy over." We would sing, "Cinderella, dressed in yellow, went upstairs to kiss her fellow. Made a mistake. Kissed a snake! How many doctors did it take?" Then the girl jumping went on till she missed. I could jump the longest without missing.

For two to jump at the same time, the jumper called, "I love coffee, I love tea. I want (someone's name) to come in with me." In a game called "School," we ran through the rope while it was swinging. The first time was Kindergarten. For First Grade, you jumped once and ran out. Second Grade was twice, and so on, all the way through Twelfth Grade.

Double Dutch was jumping with two ropes. I was pretty good at it. Another game was to start with the rope on the ground and raise it a little bit each jump till it was held so high that no one could jump over it.

The kids also had two forts where all of them could play. We just pushed the leaves away to show where they were. One was under the trees behind the boys' outhouse and the other was north of the basketball court.

We played on the swings at recess or played baseball or volleyball, or games like "Run, Sheep, Run," "Mother, May I?" and "Red Light, Green Light." A game we really liked was "Rotten Egg." One kid was the Wolf, another the Storekeeper, and the rest were Eggs, each given a different color. The Wolf came to the Storekeeper and asked to buy an Egg of a certain color. If he guessed the color of one of the kids, that one said, "Bep! Bep!" and started running around a circle. The Wolf had to pay the Storekeeper however much he asked by slapping his hand before he could run after the Egg. If the Wolf tagged the Egg before he got back to his place, the Egg had to be the Wolf.

Other games were "Swinging Statue," "Freeze Tag," "Shadow Tag," "London Bridge," and "Red Rover." When it rained or snowed, we played "Tic-Tac-Toe," "Hangman" and other games on the blackboard. We had a hand clapping game where

partners clapped their hands together in different ways while chanting words like, "Take me out to the ball game..." We played that on the bus a lot. There were also checkers and puzzles, and the year Mr. Seubert was there, he taught us to play chess.

1965 was the year we had a play called "The Kitchen Night." There was also a big Halloween party at the school. The older kids made a Haunted House out of sheets in one corner of the room. When we went into the house, a big kid would have us stick our fingers in a slimy mess they said was someone's brains. This was really boiled spaghetti. There was a cakewalk and bobbing for apples. We also played musical chairs and a game where we put a fishing line over a board or sheet and someone on the other side would tie a prize on the line.

The next year, in 1966, the Halloween party was at the Research Station. Sheets that looked like ghosts were hung on some of the trees. We sat around a big campfire while Vince Roth told ghost stories. Someone had fastened a sheet on a cross-pole and this floated into view at the right moment in Vince's stories.

Those two Halloween parties were the biggest held while I went to Portal School. Other years didn't have half as much going on. For Thanksgiving, we drew and colored turkeys. Sometimes, we drew Pilgrims and wrote about that first Thanksgiving.

In winter, we made paper snowflakes in all different designs. At Christmas, we had a tree and exchanged names and bought a present for the person whose name we drew. We had a party in the afternoon and there would be a nighttime program for the whole community. Usually, we just sang songs like "Oh Christmas Tree," "Jolly Old Saint Nicholas" and "Jingle Bells." Sometimes we had a play. One year, Michael Richards sang "Oh Little Town of Bethlehem" by himself and the rest of us sang other carols. Sally Richards played the piano.

We made paper valentines for our mothers, and made Valentine holders. Sometimes these were shoeboxes; sometimes they were made of colored construction paper. Of course, we exchanged valentines.

We celebrated Easter with an egg hunt on the school grounds. Several times while I was in school at Portal, we were taken to the Research Station on field trips. Sometimes Vince would bring some critter down to the school for our class to study.

We lost a lot of students in 1966. Juanita and Aurora Jensen had graduated, and the Woods family and Jimmy and Nancy Willems moved away. We gained Michael Richards and Beverly Gomez started First Grade.

Mr. Vernier was the teacher for Fourth through Eighth Grades. Mrs. Ryan had the lower classes. Both teachers were



From left: Michael Richards, Max Rothpletz, Lupe Dominguez, Eddie Rivers, Mary Somoza, Lucia Dominguez, Judy Richards, Patsy Somoza, Sheila Rivers, and Sally Rivers taken about 1966.
Photo from Sheila Rivers Clark.

here for two years. That year we started getting a full-color five-page paper called *The Weekly Reader*. It had current events, science and other information.

The first year Mr. Vernier taught, he got into it with my brother, Larry. During morning recess, Larry and some other boys were standing at the side of the schoolhouse. The teacher

GRADUATION PROGRAM		PORTAL ANNUAL	May 23, 1969
Opening Song Followed by		OUR PORTAL VALLEY BATTLE HYMN OF THE REPUBLIC	
Individual Histories in order of their enrollment in PORTAL SCHOOL			
Dolores Terrazas, Historian		Yvonne Gomez, Historian	
Martha Rivers	Rosie Terrazas	Leanne Gomez	
Larry Rivers	Sally Rivers	Sheila Rivers	
David Stoechner	Lupe Dominguez	Patricia Somoza	
<u>SONG OF HIAWATHA</u>		<u>RHYTHM BAND</u>	
1 2 3 4 Play		School	Re - union
<u>Presentation of Certificates</u>		Mr. Aloysius H. Seubert.	
<u>SIXTH GRADE</u>			
Larry Rivers - Penmanship - Librarian			
Martha Ellen Rivers - Penmanship - Reading - General Achievement and Good Scholarship.			
David Lloyd Stoechner - Penmanship - Reading * President of the Valley Saints.			
Rosie Terrazas * Penmanship - Reading - Secretary to the Valley Saints.			
<u>FIFTH GRADE</u>			
Yvonne Gomez - Penmanship - Reading - Secretary to the Valley Saints			
Sally Rivers - Penmanship - Reading - Asst. Librarian and Projectionist.			
Sheila Rivers - Penmanship - Reading - General Achievement and Good Scholarship.			
<u>FOURTH GRADE</u>			
Lupe Dominguez - Penmanship - Reading - Vice President and Acting President of the Valley Saints.			
Leanne Gomez - Penmanship - Reading - Achievement and Good Scholarship.			
Dolores Terrazas - Penmanship - Reading - Achievement and Good Scholarship.			
Patricia Somoza - Penmanship - Achievement and Good Scholarship.			
<u>eighth grade</u>			
GEORGE W. STOECHNER * - Achievement and Good Scholarship			
The <u>GRADUATION</u>			
Presentation of Diploma		The Board	
Good Night and GOD BLESS YOU			

Eighth Grade Graduation Program, 1971.
From Sheila Rivers Clark.

walked around there. Larry had this "cat that ate the canary" grin. "Wipe that grin off your face," Mr. Vernier said.

Larry took his hand and ran it over his face. That ticked Mr. Vernier off and he slapped Larry fairly hard across the face. At noon break, Larry and his Mexican friend who lived two miles from us, decided to walk home. They followed Cave Creek most of the way to our house. Larry finished the rest of that year at Animas and never came back to Portal School. Mr. Vernier didn't punish Larry's friend.

In 1967, we were going to have a Christmas play but we got a big snow storm instead and school closed a week early for the Christmas break.

Mr. Seubert was the teacher in 1969. He showed lots of teaching films and he gave us treats like caramel popcorn balls. He gave us chores like raising the flag and taking it down and gave us rewards if we did our jobs well without being reminded. The rewards were books or pretty post cards and we got to pick out the one we wanted.

He also got all the kids to play baseball together. There weren't enough of us in Grades Four to Eight to play regular basketball, so he taught us how to play "Horse" where we shot baskets from different places around the free shot marker.

We made Halloween masks out of paper bags that year. At Christmas, he showed us how to make wreaths by bending a coat hanger so it was round and tying on strips of crepe paper till the circle was covered.

Mrs. King came next year, in 1970. She was good at teaching English on the blackboard. One recess I cleaned out the school filing cabinet. Mrs. King appreciated it so much that she told me I was "worth my weight in gold." She hadn't told me to do it, I had just stayed in and got it done.

Because of a death in her family, Mrs. King left in the middle of the next school year. I don't remember the name of the teacher

who finished out the year. She drove up from Douglas every day. What I do remember is that she read us stories. One was *My Friend Flicka*.

This was my last year at Portal. I graduated from Eighth Grade in 1971. Next year, the older kids were sent to San Simon. The school closed in 1973.

Ted Troller

I was one of three students in my grade when I attended Portal School in 1953-'54 and when I graduated I had to give a speech on the stage at the school. I don't remember the speech but I do remember that my knees were knocking. For graduation, Mrs. Ruth Newman, owner of Newman's Store, now the Portal Store, presented me with a board that said "Congratulations Teddy" spelled out in Double Bubble gum. Of course I had to hide it from my brother and sisters and by the time I remembered it, the gum had become so hard I couldn't chew it. Mrs. Newman also acted as the local nurse and assisted in the delivery of many neighborhood babies.

There were 28 students that school year. Mrs. Riley started the term, Sally Richards taught interim, and Mrs. Dorothy Bliss finished the year. Alden Hayes and Phyllis Heald signed the graduates' diplomas that year.

We started our day by waiting for Mrs. Alma Pague's bus to arrive from Whitetail. It was actually just a Chevy sedan but it seemed larger when all the students that she had picked up had piled out. The next activity was the flag raising on the pole in front of the school. Unfortunately, one of the Portal citizens backed his car into the pole, knocking it over, and it was never replaced. The remaining pipe stub and cement remained for many years and was just recently removed to improve the parking lot for the post office and library.

We ate sack lunches by the creek and played softball in front of

the school. We also played softball at community potlucks held at Sunny Flats. Because of, or in spite of, the rocks we had to play around in the schoolyard, we thought we were a pretty good softball team so we challenged the team in Rodeo. We ended up without a win.

We got to see the Ringling Brothers Circus in Douglas where we saw the elephants parade down G Avenue, the colorful circus train on the railroad tracks, and the big tent.

When Portal School was on its own, it was a very poor district and local citizens helped raise money to buy things for the school that could not be covered by the yearly budget. Laverne Pague Olney, longtime postmistress, ramrodded the building of the concrete pad to the north of the school. One of the reasons was to have dances and charge admission. The money raised could be used for school projects. Over the years there were a number of dances in the summertime. People came from all over and it was fun to see Pug Scott drive up in her bus with her band.

Periodically, during the '50s, evangelists would set up a tent in the parking lot of the school, which would probably not be politically correct today. My brother, Chuck Troller, and his friend, Mark Hayes (Eric's brother), were nine or ten-years-old at the time. Overcome with curiosity, they took seats in the front row. They had the daylights scared out of them when the preacher wanted to save them....from what, they did not know.

During my year at Portal School, there was a young man from Douglas who had been expelled from schools there. He would drive his car to Portal and spin doughnuts in front of the school during recess. It was quite entertaining the short time that it lasted. Needless to say, neither car nor driver returned to school.

For entertainment, we had movies on Friday nights in Rodeo. The movies were held in the old school at first, shown on the outside white wall in the summer because of the large attendance

and the heat. It was like a drive-in theater. Because the school was too small, they then moved the shows to Buford Martin's building on the highway.

Electricity for the movies was provided by Ray Eddington Power Plant in Rodeo. It was a flickering experience. The movies, new and old, came from somewhere mysterious to young people. Usually the film broke or the projector bulb burned out at an exciting moment. There was a small admission and the 4-H club (Sharon Dayton and Chuck Troller) sold popcorn for various projects. It wasn't the Fox in Tucson or the Grand in Douglas, but it was fun. Later, the movies were shown in the new Rodeo School which was later abandoned and sold after Rodeo consolidated with Animas in the early '60s.

By then, interest in the movies waned, probably due to television, and Friday night movies became a thing of the past.

In 1966 I was appointed to the Portal School Board to replace Maree Bartelt who had resigned. I served with Myrtle Kraft (for whom the library, once the school, was named) and Fin Richards. There was no school administrator and a very limited budget so board members had a number of "hands-on" responsibilities that board members do not encounter today such as plumbing problems and other maintenance. It was not unusual to be called at 9 p.m. to unstop a toilet.

In the late '60s and early '70s it became apparent that Portal School District had to seek alternatives. The district was the poorest in the county with erratic enrollment numbers which led to the local population having to endure erratic taxes, so, with pressure from various county and state agencies, the U of A Education College was asked to come up with options. The U of A did a study and recommended consolidating Portal, Apache, San Simon and Bowie into a unit that would bring enrollment up to a more stable level. Apache opted out because of distances.

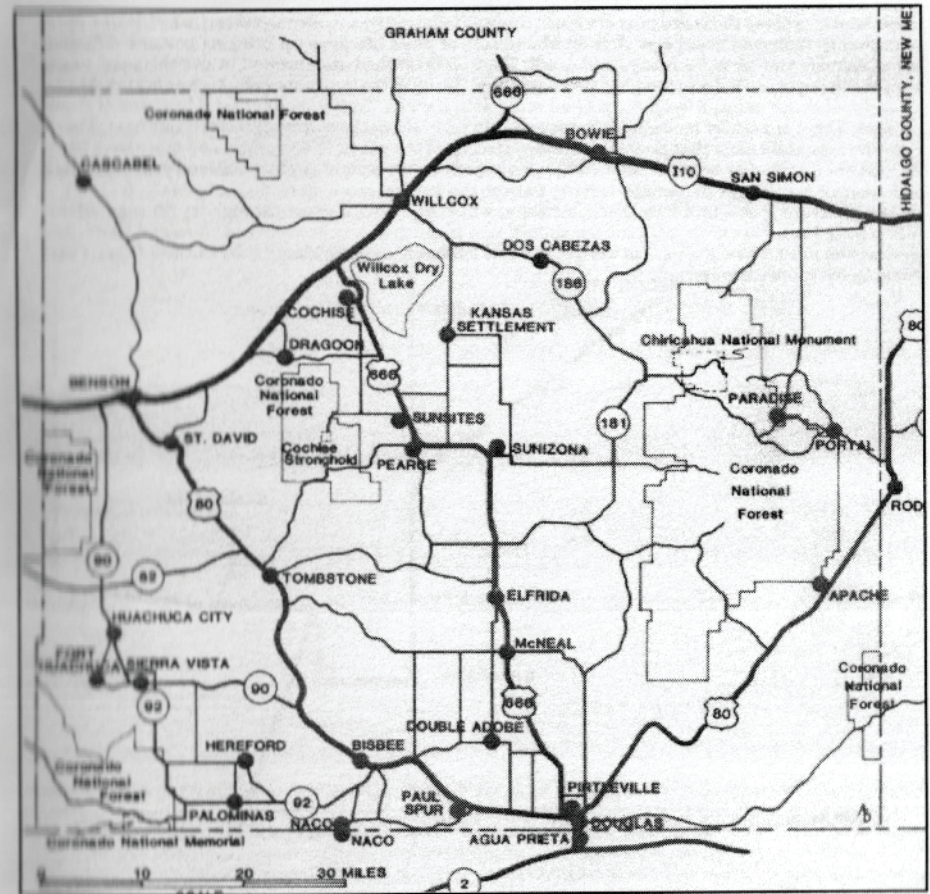
The community was polarized by the school issue. Colonel Pugsley and Aunt Duck were vehemently opposed to consolidation. However, Portal and San Simon voted to consolidate by a vote of more than two to one in favor. One of the concerns was distance of travel for the children so the board pledged that the Portal School would be open for the first three grades as long as there were sufficient students to maintain the school.

After a short period of time, a majority of families chose to send their children on the bus to San Simon, one of the perks being the hot lunch served there. For the few short years that Portal School stayed open with the first three grades, it was always a pleasure to see Ms. Ryan, the teacher, with her charge of youngsters, reciting as they walked down the road. She was a stern teacher who got excellent results from her students. The school was reluctantly closed in 1974 and stood empty for many years until the post office and library were established. The teacherage was rented for a number of years but now is used for library storage.

The patient wolf-dog, Sitka, no longer guards the children as they eat lunch by the creek but local youngsters still play on the teeter-totter and swings. In the late '70s, Myrtle Kraft and a cadre of volunteers, including Delane Blondeau and Bob Chew, got permission to open a library in the adobe building. For some years, Myrtle ordered in films like Laurel and Hardy to show once a week or so.

In 1981, Delane Blondeau initiated a most successful Library for Kids which is still going strong with help from community members who give programs on everything from reptiles to baking sourdough biscuits in a Dutch oven. Once again the two little buildings under the huge sycamores are the heart of the community.

Notes



Cochise County, Arizona

Cochise County Historical Society Membership Information

Individual/family	\$20
Business	\$25
Lifetime	\$500

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P. O. Box 818
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