

Clearwater School Teacher – Doris Arnold

Doris Ellen Arnold, was born northeast of Clear Lake, to Joseph and Frances (Carlin) Weis . She was the second oldest in a family of 10 children.

Doris graduated from high school when she was just 16 years old and from St. Cloud Teacher's College at age 18. She was ready to tackle the world and, like her older sister Kathleen who also was a teacher, took a job in a small country school. Kathleen at the time was teaching in Greenwald, west of St. Cloud and Doris took a job at the country school near Regal.

Arnold remembers fondly that the children were eager to learn and well behaved. One of her special memories of Regal is when they planned and performed a Christmas program one evening. Although thinking back about it, she wonders how they pulled that off, since they didn't have any electricity. Lanterns or candles perhaps?

Arnold lived with a family right across the road from the Regal school and in cold weather she would have to trudge across the road in the snow to start a wood fire to heat up the building. Then she would go home to eat breakfast and then trudge back again to teach. She remembers one time when three school board members came to watch her teaching. At lunchtime they went home to eat, only to return later to sit the rest of the day to observe her some more. The situation was a little unnerving but she must have done ok, because they didn't come back again. She remembers getting paid \$95 per month, which seemed like a good wage, since her room and board was only \$20 per month.



Doris at the Regal School

After teaching in Regal for one year she took a job at the Clearwater School. It definitely was a step up. The Clearwater School had a janitor to keep the building warm. . . and a flush toilet! And her pay was now \$120 per month! She taught in the 1943-1944 school year and also in the 1944-1945 school year, with grades three, four and five all in one room.

At this time, Clearwater had only first- through eighth-grade students with no high school students. Arnold lived on the north side of the Mississippi on weekends and rented a room in Clearwater with the Al Solinger family during the week in her first year at Clearwater. During the second year, she rented an upstairs room in the Fred Murray house. But getting back and forth across the Mississippi River was a bit challenging. Sometimes she crossed on the ice, but when there was no ice on the river she would ride a boat with some students, or her father would take her to St. Cloud on Mondays, where she would catch the school bus that headed to Clearwater to pick up the high school students. And of course, do the reverse on Friday afternoon. It was an arduous yet adventuresome commute in those days, but she loved her job and felt it was well worth it.

Her days teaching in Clearwater were filled with new ideas and projects. She remembers having her students make bird books, and the enjoyment of studying Minnesota History. Of course, she had no movies or television to rely on for resources; everything was done from scratch. She remembers one day when the school superintendent for Wright County came from Buffalo to monitor her teaching for the day. Again, she must have done ok, because nothing was said and he never came back.

Then, in 1945, adventure called Doris and her sister Kathleen to California. They caught a ride with a family friend, helping to pay for the gas used on the trip. Her clothes were shipped to California in a trunk, and Doris remembers her father crying when she left. It certainly was a big adventure for two little girls from Minnesota. Both girls had applied for, and received jobs in Porterville, which is located between San Francisco and Los Angeles. When World War II ended, her husband-to-be Phil, returned from his tour in Europe and they moved back to the St. Cloud area, where they were married in August of 1946. They had six children—one girl and five boys. Doris feels blessed to have them all living in Minnesota so she can see them all frequently.



Doris and her sister Kathleen, the summer before they went to California