

Mrs. Andrew Barkley invited my friends and me to their homes for freshly - baked cookies and lemonade on our way home from school. Walking to and from school in spring and fall with Annie and Susie Rempel, were hours of discovery and delight. We discovered pussy-willows, birds' nests, blue bells, and garter snakes. Early spring mornings frequently found us coming to school late. Our excuses were understandable and valid, for there were so many sheets of ice on the way that had to be tested whether any of them were "rubber ice". Most of them weren't. They simply cracked, broke, and swamped our boots. The noon hours in winter were not wasted either. Jelly sandwiches were gulped down. Galoshes, aviation caps, overcoats, mitts, and scarves were quickly put on. Then we all dashed to the precipitous snow hills of Dead Horse Creek, in order to hurtle down those dangerous snow slides. It is most remarkable none of us ever suffered broken limbs or necks. The snow forts that were constructed in order to engage in gang warfare were really admirable feats of engineering. During afternoon classes, the old wood furnace near the back of the room, had to be carefully stoked so that galoshes, coats, mitts, woollen stockings would be dry enough by four o'clock to prevent sharp-eyed parents from questioning us about our extra-curricular activities. Our unauthorized outdoor education also included memorable activities like flushing out crabs from the banks of the creek, rafting across the wide expanse of dammed up areas of the creek, or testing the tastiness of choke cherries, wild plums, and black berries.

I am sure we all have nostalgic memories of the annual Christmas concerts. There was the thrill and agony of being a leading character in the school play, and the feeling of exposure as we shed our long winter underwear to allow ourselves to be transformed into fairies or angels in filmy, sleazy cheesecloth robes. We cautiously marched the intricate formations of the "Star" drill to the accompaniment of the old wind-up gramophone. Do you remember the suspense and ecstasy of hearing the ringing of sleigh bells which heralded the arrival of Santa Claus all the way from the North Pole, or did that hearty voice behind the cotton-batting beard belong to the Secretary-Treasurer? The community picnic was the grand culmination of the year's Physical Education program which decided with finality, who was the fastest runner in the school, and who was the best long-distance ball thrower. And the suppers! Let me assure you, they were a lot tastier than jelly sandwiches.

I would like to make one more comment about my school-days in Cheval. It is usually the good fortune of every child to have one teacher who has particularly influenced his future course in life. That teacher, in my life, was Miss Laura Lovatt. To a large extent, I can attribute my love for music and my appreciation for poetry to her patient teaching. Unfortunately, we were a group of children not particularly appreciative of her many special efforts. However, she gave me a glimpse into a world I had been unaware of, and I have had many happy hours since, exploring the world of art, music, and literature. I know that many of my teaching methods have been adaptations of the methods she employed.