

Dorothy Young
By Joann Masalin Ratliff

Everyone who attended the Youngtown School during the 1930's and early 1940's remembers the teacher, Dorothy Young. Everyone took turns helping Miss Young. Older students carried in wood and water. (Water was carried from the Carver farm in pails and poured into a ceramic container, white with blue stripes and a spigot. We all brought in our own glass or cup which we took home every Friday to wash.) They also put up the flag in the morning and took it down at the end of the school day, being very careful that it didn't touch the ground. Younger children sharpened the pencils and passed out paper.

When a student had a good paper Miss Young stamped it with a star, flower or animal from a wooden box full of rubber stamps. She was always kind and fair to everyone, even when reminding us not to say "ain't"! There was a sand box set on a card table at the back of the room where a child could quietly play after finishing his or her work. Right after lunch Miss Young would read to the students to quiet them down from noontime play. Don Fendler, the Boy Scout who was lost on Mount Katahdin, is one book I remember.

Miss Young involved students in more than schoolwork. Two of her projects still survive -- a wooden bowl painted inside with a red stripe, two squirrels and two pine cones for our mothers and a wooden tie rack with wooden dowels attached for the ties and a sailboat painted in the center for our fathers. The kids worked on them according to their age and abilities, the older ones sawing out the pieces and helping with the painting. I remember dabbing on paint at age 7 or 8.

Holidays really brought out Miss Young's creativity as she devised projects to include the whole school. Though only one room, the Youngtown School had a huge monks' cloth curtain in two pieces that was strung across the front of the room on ropes to make a stage. For Thanksgiving the Pilgrim costumes were made from black, gray and white crepe paper --hats too. The cups for the Thanksgiving table were made from gray cardboard. Each student had "pieces" -- poems -- to stand up and recite in front of everyone.

Christmas was even more involved, with robes for the Wise Men, crooks for the shepherds, and costumes for Joseph and Mary. The program was presented as a pageant with silent tableaux of each scene. There were more poems to learn and recite. Finally, there were gifts for each child on the big Christmas tree in the corner. Of course, we children made the paper chains and popcorn strings to decorate it. All the parents, grandparents and neighbors came to the program, and they brought the refreshments. Claude Heald made popcorn for all the children, and Sy Hardy made ice cream; he brought it in the ice cream freezer to keep it firm. And then there were all kinds of homemade goodies such as fudge, cookies, and cake. The school was overflowing with kids and relatives, and everyone had a great time.