

SEPTEMBER 23, 1996

DEAR SHELLIE,

THANK YOU FOR ASKING ME TO WRITE YOU A LETTER ABOUT MY GRADE SCHOOL DAYS. YOU ARE BLESSED TO HAVE YOUR MOM AS YOUR MERRIE MISS TEACHER IN PRIMARY. SHE IS THE MOST GENTLE PERSON I HAVE EVER MET. I'M SURE GLAD OUR SON MIKE FELL IN LOVE WITH YOUR MOM AND THEN WAS SMART ENOUGH TO ASK HER TO MARRY HIM.

I WENT TO GRADE SCHOOL IN WAPELLO, IDAHO. WAPELLO IS SIX MILES NORTH OF BLACKFOOT, IDAHO. IT WAS A SMALL SCHOOL SURROUNDED BY FARMS. WHEN I STARTED FIRST GRADE THERE WAS EIGHT GRADES IN THE SCHOOL. THERE WERE FOUR CLASS ROOMS ANDEACH ROOM HAD TWO GRADES. JANE MARLOW TAUGHT FIRST AND SECOND GRADE, (YOUR DAD HAD THE SAME FIRST GRADE TEACHER AS ME.) MAE WILLIAMS THIRD AND FOURTH MARY FELT FIFTH AND SIXTH AND MARY MILLER SEVENTH AND EIGHTH. I WAS SCARED OF MRS. MILLER. ONE DAY I WAS COMING BACK FROM THE BATHROOM AND SOME "BIG" KIDS WERE RUNNING IN THE HALL. SHE MADE ALL OF US COME INTO HER ROOM AND WRITE 200 TIMES "I WILL NOT RUN IN THE HALL." SHE WROTE THE SENTENCE ON THE BOARD AND I HAD TO RAISE MY HAND AND ASK HER TO PRINT THE SENTENCE BECAUSE I DID NOT KNOW HOW TO WRITE IN WHAT WE CALLED "LONGHAND." SCAREEEEE..... I WAS SO HAPPY WHEN THEY CHANGED HER ROOM TO A HOT LUNCH ROOM AND SHE DID NOT TEACH THERE ANYMORE. AFTER SHE LEFT WE WENT TO BLACKFOOT FOR SEVENTH AND EIGHT GRADE. WHEN THE LUNCH ROOM WAS BUILT WE ALL BROUGHT INGREDIENTS FROM HOME AND MADE POTATO SOUP. IT WAS SO FUN TO HAVE SOMETHING BESIDES CHEESE SANDWICHES EVERYDAY. MY MOTHER, ISOLENE COOKED AT THE WAPELLO SCHOOL FOR TWENTY-NINE YEARS. SHE WAS COOKING THERE WHEN YOUR DAD WAS IN FIRST GRADE. I GOT ON THE BUS AT EIGHT O'CLOCK AND ARRIVED HOME FROM SCHOOL AT FOUR TWENTY. BEFORE BREAKFAST EACH MORNING I HAD TO FEED THE CHICKENS AND WATER THE CALVES. AFTER SCHOOL I WOULD AGAIN FEED THE CHICKENS AND GATHER THE EGGS AND GO GET THE COWS FROM THE PASTURE TO MILK. WHEN I WAS ELEVEN AND TWELVE I WOULD START TO MILK THE COWS FOR MY DAD.

WE USUALLY HAD THREE GIRLS AND THREE BOYS IN OUR GRADE. FRIDAY WAS PRIMARY DAY AND WE LEFT SCHOOL AN HOUR EARLY RAN TO THE CHURCH HOUSE WENT TO PRIMARY THEN RAN BACK TO THE SCHOOL TO CATCH THE BUS TO GO HOME. THE OTHER TWO GIRLS IN MY CLASS WERE NOT MORMON, BUT THEY CAME TO PRIMARY WITH ME.

EVERY YEAR AT SCHOOL WE WOULD HAVE A CHRISTMAS PROGRAM. WE WOULD PRACTICE AND PRACTICE THE NAVITY STORY AND THE SCHOOL PROGRAM WAS ALWAYS HELD AT THE CHURCH. ONE YEAR FOR THE PROGRAM I WAS A BALLET DANCER. EVERY YEAR TO CLOSE THE PARTY SANTA CLAUS CAME AND GAVE US A BAG OF CANDY.

WE HAD A HUGE PLAYGROUND AT SCHOOL WITH SWINGS AND A MERRY-GO-ROUND. WE PLAYED SOFTBALL, PUMP PUMP PULL AWAY AND RED ROVER. WE HAD A FOREST TO PLAY IN. IT WAS REALLY JUST A STAND OF ABOUT THIRTY HUGE COTTONWOOD TREES. THE GIRLS BULIT AND PLAYED "HOUSE" AND OF COURSE THE BOYS BUILT FORTS. DURING THE WINTER WE ALWAYS BUILT SNOW FORTS. WHEN I STARTED FIRST GRADE WE HAD TO WEAR A DRESS AND TO KEEP MY LEGS WARM I WORE YUKY LOOKING LONG TO-YOUR-THIGH BROWN SOCKS. MY FRIENDS BONNIE AND PATTY HAD WHITE SOCKS BUT I COULD ONLY WEAR MY WHITE PAIR TO CHURCH. YES, I ONLY HAD ONE WHITE PAIR AND TWO BROWN PAIR OF SOCKS.