

Aa Bb Cc Dd Ee

Mrs. Brown
Grade 1

My first two years of
school....

Hugs & Smiles

by

Pam Loesch Oldham

My first two years of public education in Miamisburg were in the Kercher School, a two-room schoolhouse, which was located less than a block from my house. Of course, readers born after 1946 cannot relate to this because they received their education in sprawling, temperature-regulated, modern school buildings. I wonder how many of these young readers were able to enjoy the luxuries of walking to school, going home for a hot lunch prepared by their mothers, and playing with their classmates at times other than recess because they all lived in the same neighborhood.



Thinking about Kercher

School brings back wonderful memories. This school was my first experience with education--since pre-schools didn't exist and kindergarten was not mandatory. When I climbed the huge stone steps to enter the building for the first time, I remember feeling scared, alone, and overwhelmed by the huge, old building. The sun was shining through the huge, open windows onto the freshly polished wood floors; and I immediately felt warm all over. The building held two huge classrooms (one for first-grader

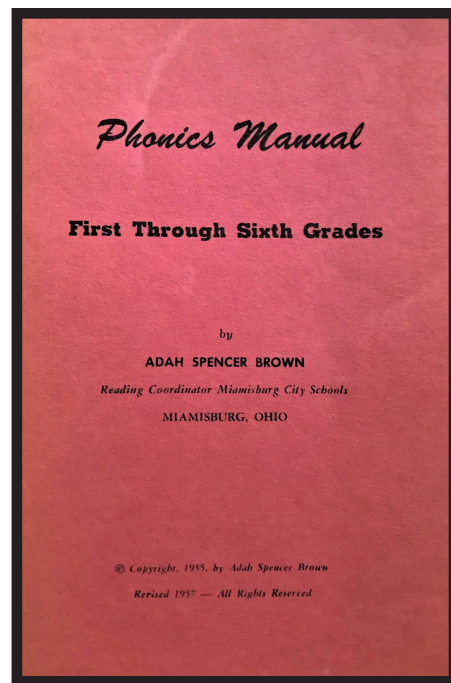
and one for second graders) and a basement (which we were never permitted to enter.) We knew that the basement held the noisy coal furnace and the dark, secret home of the janitor. The two classrooms were probably not as enormous as I remember, it was just that I was very small.

When I think about the school, I think about the wooden school desks with fold-down seats and ink wells. Contrary to popular belief, the ink wells were no longer functioning when I was a student there! White letters of the alphabet printed on black paper formed a border around the top of my first-grade classroom. I remember peeking into the second-grade classroom and questioning how I would ever be able to read the foreign-looking cursive letters which hung around the top edge of that room.



My first-grade teacher, Ada Brown, greeted us at the door with a hug and a broad smile. The amazing thing about her was that her hugs and smiles didn't stop after the first day. I often wonder if she ever had a "bad" day. If she did, we never knew it. Unfortunately, I am sure that most of my own students could tell when I was having a "bad" day. Mrs. Brown never had formal in-service teacher training like "Teacher Expectations and Student Achievement" training, but she treated each one of us the same. She knew that the only hug some of her students would get each day was the hug she gave them. I think she would be very disappointed to find that society and lawsuits have compelled teaching to become a "hands off" profession.

We first graders learned how to read and spell in a way that should be taught now, but isn't. Mrs. Brown authored her own book on teaching phonics. Every new phonics sound had a story to help us remember it. These stories were so great! She vividly told each story with animation and in a way that we didn't realize



Photograph courtesy of
Pam Loesch Oldham

we were actually learning something! At a class reunion several years ago, some of my classmates and I started talking about Mrs. Brown's stories. It was amazing how many of these phonics stories we still remembered. When students remember what you taught them over 50 years ago, you were a great teacher! I have a copy of her book that I cherish.

Kercher School was razed many years ago and replaced with apartments. I sometimes wonder if the people living in those apartments are aware of the history connected to their property or what happens to each of us who attended Kercher School every time we drive by the corner of Kercher and Eight Streets. I can only speak for myself, but I get the same warm feeling because I know I am getting another hug and smile from Mrs. Brown.



1952-1953 — Future members of the MHS Class of 1964.

From

The Dayton Herald, Dayton, Ohio

01 Aug 1899, Tue • Page 7

Weber and Schenck, of Dayton, O., have secured the contract for the new Kercher street school house, their bid of \$4,400 being the lowest received.

The Dayton Herald, Dayton, Ohio

29 Sep 1899, Fri • Page 8

The Kercher Street School House is under roof, and presents quite a good appearance.

The Dayton Herald, Dayton, Ohio

03 Jan 1900, Wed • Page 4

The new Kercher street school building was opened for school purposes Tuesday morning, and all children of the first and second grades, residing north of Sycamore Street are assigned there. Miss Mary Kinder is the teacher in charge. The enrollment the first day was about thirty-five. Two rooms are finished for school purposes, and later another grade may be established at this place.

The Dayton Herald, Dayton, Ohio

07 Feb 1900, Wed • Page 7

A new bell has arrived for the Kercher street school, which will be put in position as soon as possible.

The Dayton Herald, Dayton, Ohio

10 Feb 1900, Sat • Page 5

One of the workmen engaged in hanging the new bell at the Kercher street school, missed his footing and came near making a hasty descent through the plaster tag into the primary room below. The children were rather startled at seeing a pair of feet and legs dangling from the ceiling above-them, but the man managed to extricate himself from his ticklish position, and resume his work above.

the

Past

Dayton Daily News

Dayton, Ohio

06 Oct 1933, Fri • Page 13

DEATH TAKES MARY KINDER

Widely-Known Miamisburg Teacher Succumbs to Brief Illness.

MIAMISBURG, Oct. 6. Miss Mary E. Kinder died at her home on S. Fifth St. at 4 o'clock Thursday afternoon following an illness of about two weeks. Miss Kinder was born and lived all her life in Miamisburg. She taught in the Kercher Street School for 33 years and retired from teaching in May, 1932. She was very active in club work and had served 25 years as superintendent of the Methodist Sunday school. She also took a deep interest in all civic affairs. She is survived by her brother, Charles Kinder, and two sisters, Miss Bertha Kinder and Mrs. Herman Cellarius of Cincinnati. Funeral services will be held at the home on Monday, Oct. 9, at 2 o'clock, conducted by Dr. W. F. Blume of the Methodist Church. Interment will be made in Hill Grove cemetery.