



Violet Sunde
Violet Sunde's Memories of School Cooking
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or baking cookies, etc.

We had very little to cook in and eat out of. The children would bring their own plates, cups and silver, but we were always short, so the P.T.A. bought several dozen tin cups and a kettle or two. Most of my cooking was done in #10 cans on a three-burner gasoline stove that someone donated to the project. I remember Mr. Redlock would come half an hour early to school; brought Mrs. Drew, the other cook, to light the stove. It would smoke — all the kettles black. Mrs. Haggerty, Mrs. Garlow, cooks from Clover Valley School (on Homestead Road) and I would go to the pig farm and go through the garbage when the Kissling boys would come from Duluth with the garbage truck. We 'picked out' some fine silverware from the large hotels and restaurants. Also, cups, saucers and other dishes that had been thrown away. We took them to school, scrubbed them and put them in a kettle to boil. We had the most beautiful silverware in town! Surprising what goes into the garbage. It kept us at Bloomingdale happy as (we needed) no more tin silver!

I worked one month in Clover Valley School when Mrs. Johnson, one of the cooks, was called on jury duty; after which I never left Bloomingdale again until they tore it down and we moved into the new school — North Shore Elementary (now our North Shore Community School on Ryan Road). Eventually the P.T.A. bought us plastic dishes and more silverware.

After ten years under the W.P.A. the St. Louis County School District took over the hot lunch program. My wages were cut one-third. The P.T.A. came to my rescue and gave me \$5.00 a month for two years until the School District raised it to where it was when the W.P.A. had it.

Then the school district decided there was no money for hot lunch cooks. They asked the P.T.A. to send volunteers to cook for the children. I got a job for two weeks for the railroad — this during the Second World War. After that ended, I wages from January and (I) have been paid ever since.

Food was hard to come by in those days. The children brought vegetables, breads, sauce, meat when they butchered, pork, beef, venison or whatever. They also would bring whatever they could from home, some brought sugar, salt and one boy always brought two quarts of milk for chocolate pudding on Fridays. That was a big day. If they couldn't bring anything, we asked for 3¢ but seldom got it. No one was ever denied a meal.

I remember one little boy who was so lonesome for his mother and would not eat. So after I finished feeding the rest of the children, I'd take the little fellow on my lap and feed him. It wasn't long before he ate with the rest. It paid off because he is now a strapping six-foot woodsman.

Our school was one big happy family — teachers, janitors, bus drivers, and children. It was a happy school. The library was the kitchen, one end a sick room and the place where all the adults gathered for conferences.

I had one daughter who came to school where mom cooked. It was hard for her at times. She was a fussy eater, too long having the run of the home with her dad who was ill. She had to eat, so as not to let her mother down in front of the children.

There were many hardships getting to school in the early days. I didn't drive and no car to drive. My husband went to the junk yards and picked up parts and built a motor. We then went to a farm house and got a coupe body that was used to house chickens; took it home, cleaned it up and assembled our first car. I had to learn how to drive, which gave me

many sleepless nights wondering how I would get up the big hill to school. There was dirt in the gas tank and I'd get half way up the hill and the gas line would plug up and I'd have to back the Model A down the hill, take the gas line off and blow in it and try again. When I got to school, I'd worry how I was going to get down the hill as the brakes would wear out if they were used too much. In winter the roads were very icy (as now). One day, coming down the road for home, I started rolling and couldn't stop on the ice until I landed in the ditch and rolled over on its roof.

The snow storms seemed worse then (than) now. One time we had a huge wet snow storm and then it got cold and froze. I knew there would be school even if the bus would not go on our road, as the snowplow didn't come. So I decided to walk half a mile to the main road and catch the school bus. I waded in snow over my knees. By the time I had gone half way, I knew I couldn't pull my legs out of the snow. Just as far to go back as forward — so (I) decided to lay down and roll the rest of the way, which I did. Finally (I) caught the bus and only got frozen clothes and frosted legs!

Our Christmas programs were put on by our three teachers and students and they were masterpieces. Our teachers were dedicated girls who put their heartoffered to work two days a week if other ladies would donate their services three days a week, but very few came, so I finally worked five days a week until in February when the school board decided to pay my into their work, whether it was teaching the three-R's, putting on a play, teenie weenie bank, or sing and dance. All the children were in the programs. The community came all out for the school doings. The walls bulged at the seams. No matter how bad the weather was, people came out to hear their children. We had about 70 to 100 children in our school. At the end of school every year, (which we still have) we had the school picnic which was a gala affair. Parents, grandparents, aunts and cousins all attended.

The 25th year of my cooking for my hot lunch kids was the last year Bloomingdale was open. The kids and friends and teachers presented me with an engraved bowl for 25 years of cooking for the children.

We then moved into the new school as our enrollment got too large for our school and I have been here fifteen years, making it 40 years of cooking lunches for my kids.



The kitchen crew. Mrs. Sunde on the left.

Violet (Barthell) Sunde, 96, a long-time resident of Duluth Township, will be remembered by many who attended Bloomingdale and North Shore schools. Violet was born in Butte, Montana and raised in Knife River. She lives in Lakeview Memorial Home in Two Harbors. Helen Hendrickson provided the article with permission to print it from Violet's daughter, Marlene Mattson. Thanks also, to Marlene for the pictures.