



Where it all began in 1935. The "Little School".



Okemos "Little School" 1st Grade 1935-1936 with Miss Alexander

There was no Kindergarten. In this picture with Miss Alexander, 14 of us would become the Class of 1947. They are:

Evelyn Brown, Joyce Arnold, Gerald Fuller, Patricia Kelly, Robert Webb, Frances Price, Mary Lou Black, Shirley Smith, Alden Brewbaker, Russel Schulz, Valere Nearet, Joann Holloway, Donna Burch, Lois Longanecker

My mother wrote the names on the back of the class postcard. As for my mother, like most people, she was very special and the absolute most perfect. She was little, spunky, and very caring. My parents, for a time, were homesteaders in Arkansas, and she had three of those children there, way, way back in the boonies. She fed us all mostly out of their gardens, canning enough for half the year, baking all the bread, and making all their clothes, both boys and girls, and made sure she convinced my father to give it up when her boys ran out of available schools at the 8th grade without boarding, which they could not afford. She was convinced everyone MUST graduate high school.



Okemos "Little School" 2nd Grade 1936-1937

Picture taken May 2, 1937 does not include our teacher, Miss Gubbins.

La Verne Springer.
 Melvin Harman
 Gerald Fuller.
 Isabelle Nelson
 Elmore
 Betty Hogle.
 James Worthington.
 Jerome
 Pally Kelly.
 Aldon Lee Gubaker.
 Shirley Smith
 Francis Linn.
 Molly Wheeler
 Janet Luesader.
 Frances Price.
 Rose Harmon
 Bobby Webb.
 Mary Lee Black

Teacher: Miss Gubbins
 ADDRESS
 May 2nd 1937

POST CARD
 PLACE
 STAMP
 HERE

Joann
 Evelyn Brown
 Joyce Skene.
 Elsie
 Joyce Arnold.
 Betty Jane Thondlye
 Donald Leg
 Donald
 Valere Merrill

Harry Rurch.
 Donald Harmon
 Russel Shells.
 Donald Alder

Don Green, absent.

3rd Grade 1938, Okemos Little School, Miss Alexander



Miss Alexander was also the Grade School Principal



4th grade, 1939 with Miss Lulu Way

Top Row: Jim Worthington, Tom Baker, Gerald Triller,
 Melvin Harmon, La Vern Springer, Irene Allen,
 Betty Hozell, Nellie Wohl, Frances Linn Frome Furgulla
 Second row:
 Beverly Guile, Shirley Smith, Frances Price,
 Betty Kelly, Betty Jean Steperly, Janet Lewander,
 Eleanor Lucio, Alden Lee Griebaker, Valerie Waret.
 Third row,
 Lulu Way; Joann, Beverly M. Callum, Rose Harmon,
 Mary Lu Black, Joyce Jean Stevens, Julia Buckenridge,
 Joyce Arnold, Patricia Bartow, Elsie Hoke.
 Bottom row:
 Donald Cokinhour, Russel Shultz, Harry Bich,
 Donald Kortman, Bobby Webb.

Okemos 5th grade 1940 with Miss Nora



Back row: Rose Harmon, Shirley Smith, Velere Heart,
 Bobby Webb, Patsy Kelly, Beverly Guite, Alden Lee Brewbaker,
 Russel Shultz.
 2nd - Thomas Baker, Jimmie Worthington, Melvin Harmon,
 Gerald Fuller, Betty Jean Sheperdy, Irene Allen,
 Betty Hogal, Frances Price, Jerome Fugenda.
 3rd - La Verne Springer, Donald Cocconougher, Harry
 Birch, Joyce Arnold, Lois Longenecker, Norma
 May Birch, Janet Lewsader, Joann Holloway,
 Beverly M.C. Kellen, Eleanor Lucis, Miss Nora
 4 - Mary Lee Black, Patricia Barton, Elsie
 Hoke, Donald Hotteman, Tom Wilson,
 Carla Pratt, Frances Linn.
 5th grade - May 28 - 1940.

Okemos 6th grade 1941 with Miss Neibling



"Miss Neibling had the reputation of being the 'strictest teacher Okemos ever had'. We were scared to death to go into her class...but when we got there, it was her last year before retirement and she fell asleep most of the time! It was very nice, she would read us something and just fall asleep."



1943 Okemos Marching Band



The 1943 and 1944 Okemos Marching Band was a 40-piece band (after recruiting 8th graders to fill in). "Biggest around for the time." They played very popular and upbeat music. Mr. Mussleman was our Band Director and Principal.

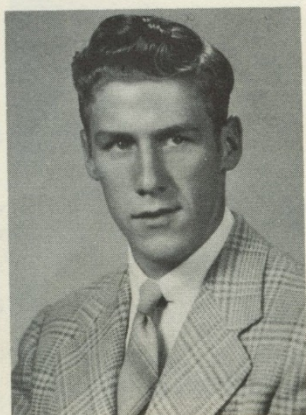
The 1944 Okemos Band marching over the camelback bridge



The Original 14 of the class of 1947

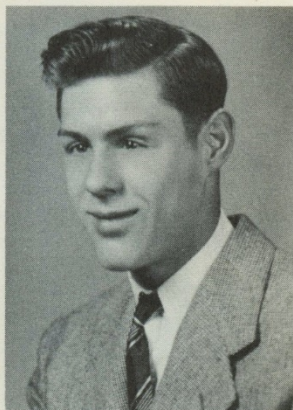


Evelyn Brown
Evelyn is the senior girl whose interests lie truly in sports, not only as a spectator but as a participant. She has been in both the Glee Club and F.H.A., and portrayed the part of the maid in "A Case of Springtime."



Gerald Fuller
"Gerry's" main interest is in sports of all kinds. Not only in school activities such as football, baseball, and track, but he also loves to hunt and fish. Gerry has been in the Varsity Club and participated in the junior play and helped on the stage work for both plays.

Robert Webb
Bob seems to like the executive type of position. Here's proof; he was junior class president, vice president of both the Varsity Club and Student Council, and we must not forget him as the high school superintendent in "A Case of Springtime". Bob has entered into every sport and so he was a swell person to be our "Tomahawk" sports editor. He was a delegate to the Wolverine Boys' State in 1946.



Mary Lou Black
Mary Lou's chief interest aside from Tom, Dick, and Harry (?) is music. She has been treasurer of the Glee Club, V. Pres. of the Student Council, and a member of the F.H.A. Mary Lou had a leading part in the junior play and is a typist on the Annual Staff.



Joyce Arnold
Joyce started school with the class of "47", but in the fifth grade left to go to Fowlerville, returning this year to finish her schooling with her old classmates. She has participated in the Glee Club and is a member of the year book staff.



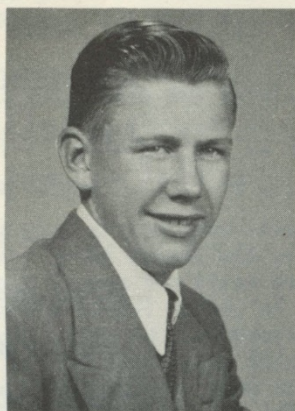
Patricia Kelly
"Pat" is the envy of her class mates because of her ability always to have her school work done and have a good time too. She has been in the F.H.A. all four years and was V. Pres. last year, in the Band one year, both the junior and senior plays, and is Sec. of the Student Council this year. As the outstanding girl of the senior class, she was given the D.A.R. award. Much of the success of the "Tomahawk" has been due to her efforts as editor.

Frances Price
Sweet and lovely fit her to a "T". What a shock to see her portray the funny old P.T.A. lady in "A Case of Springtime". Clerical work will probably be her pastime for a little while, anyway. She also likes music. Frances has been in the Glee Club, F.H.A., and a representative of the Glee Club on the Student Council. As a "Soph" she was class secretary.

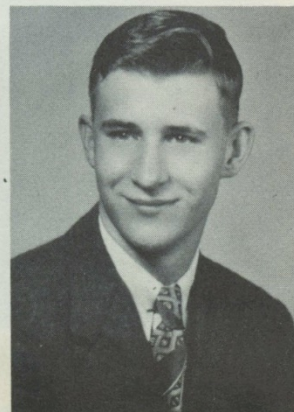


Shirley Smith
"Shirt-tail" seems never to lose her boundless enthusiasm, even though she's been a cheerleader for four years. She is the only girl who can say she has participated in all school activities. She has been a member of the Glee Club, Secretary and President of the F.H.A., Secretary and Treasurer of the class, member of the "Tomahawk" Staff, Drum Majorette, and a member of the casts of the class plays.

Alden Brewbaker Athletics and F.F.A. seem to be "Buster's" chief interests at the moment. He has gone out for all the sports, is a member of the Varsity Club, delegate to the "46" F.F.A. National Convention, held in Kansas City. The Polomar is his favorite hangout. Couldn't be he likes to skate!



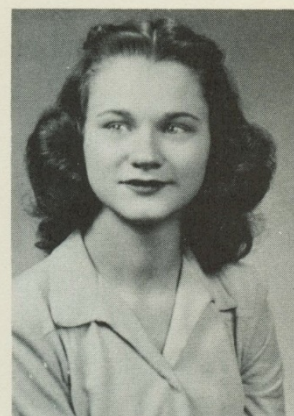
Russel Schulz "Russ" was well cast as the parrot in "Act Your Age". He was also in the junior play. His great ambition is to be a "Bug-ologist". Being the lab. technician has thoroughly convinced him this is what he wants for his life work.



Valere Naert Valere used to have a Dodge but it didn't quite live up to its name! He has been our school Visual Aide for two years and a member of the junior and senior play casts, on the "Tomahawk" Staff, and is our present class president.



JoAnn Holloway As the smallest member of the senior class, JoAnn has been well nick-named as "Pee Wee". She has been in the Band, F.H.A., and was secretary of the student council last year. She has had major roles in both the junior and senior plays. "Pee Wee" was also assistant editor of the "Tomahawk".



Donna Burch Hayhoe Donna surprised us all in February when she added a second ring to her third finger left hand. I'm sure we all remember the fine assemblies she arranged last year. As trip chairman she contributed much to the good time we all had in Chicago. She has also been in the Glee Club, F.H.A., and the Student Council.



Lois Longanecker - sorry no picture

As for me, I led a very uneventful life, both home life and school. I was the most un-athletic (surprise, surprise) in the class, being the last called for any game, unless it called for someone to be carried; then I was first. I was pretty lippy, though, and one story followed me from the third grade through the 12th. Gerald Fuller brought a homemade bow and arrow to school and was showing it to us on the playground, and then he asked if anyone wanted to try it. I was fascinated, so I was standing there with my arm waving screaming "I do, I do". He said okay and I got it all set to shoot, saying, "Is this right? Is this right." Everyone said "Yeah, yeah, go ahead," and I had it backwards and shot myself right in the face. Everyone laughed like crazy and thought it the funniest thing in the world. Everyone, that is, except my parents and me. Even Miss Alexander laughed. And that's my only funny story that followed me through graduation. I believe it's even mentioned somewhere in our yearbook. And yes, I can laugh at myself now, and could even then when the pain was gone (and it really didn't last long.)

I checked with my sister about Nick Mussleman. She thinks he started at Okemos in 1935, at least as math teacher and band instructor, and remembers him also as their class sponsor from their freshman through senior years. She's not exactly sure when he became principle, but she thinks at least by '39, and probably before.

Arneal also remembers Miss Neibling using the ruler, but she doesn't have any idea just how hard she wielded the weapon, nor do I. I know her reputation was such that everyone went into the 6th grade scared to death of her. As I said before, by the time my class got there she was ready to retire and dozed off often

There were two William Guiles in school with us and I think they were cousins. Billy (as he was always known) was a really sweet guy, and I believe he was a crossing guard in his adult life, and much loved by all the children and respected by all those who knew him. If I remember now, he died at about 62. The other William Guile was an older brother of Beverly Guile, in my class, and he was very bright.

My last two summers of high school I worked as a typist the Michigan State College. So started my career as secretary. Immediately after graduation I began as a stenographer with the State of Michigan. I worked for them for 22 years, with four pregnancy leaves. I climbed the ladder and eventually ended with an executive position, which was wonderful. In the meantime, my marriage had failed, and I wanted to move away from Michigan, but I had worked my way too far up the ladder to ever be able to replace my income and lifestyle anywhere but where I was. I had not gone to college, so I didn't have that to fall back on. Many people along the way had encouraged me to become a court reporter. This went on as far back as high school when Mrs. Clemow (our commercial teacher) tutored me for a while on the stenograph machine, but I liked my shorthand too well to make the transfer. Then later when I was older and had a little more sense, there wasn't too much time for school while raising three kids alone.

My job was good, but it was a bore, and I really couldn't think of facing that for the rest of my life. I really wanted something I could take anywhere without taking a big wage hit. So, after much consideration and the encouragement of my girls, I started to school nights. The college told me that no one who started at night had ever made it through and actually become a reporter, but I kept on. The second year was only offered days, so I finally had to quit the job, and got all sorts of flack from my family and most everyone else. My poor mother was sure I was going to go hungry, but nevertheless she still supported me. By then I was 38 years old. Lucky for me, I did make it through the tough times (failure was not an option) and have never looked back. I liked my work, and I could go anywhere and make a good living.

Right after school I remarried. We had a wonderful marriage for eight years until I lost him to a glioblastoma. At this time my mother was still living, and I was the only one of six children still in Lansing, so I stayed another few years. When she passed away I decided it was time for me to go, and by then my sister Arneal, and her husband Hazen Kart (both class of '39), had moved to Florida. My own girls were scattered from Okinawa to New Mexico, so at 56 years old I finally fulfilled my wish and got out of Michigan. It was easy enough to get a job down here, so this is where I landed. I worked both for the courts and free-lance, and finally retired when I was 80. I still miss it. It was interesting and kept me up with the world, but it was time to quit.

As for the rest of my family, my mother got her wish. My two oldest brothers graduated from Central High School in Lansing. We moved to Okemos when a very disgruntled Hugh was just starting the 11th grade, so he was promised if he would do 11th grade in Okemos and still hated it that much, they would pay the tuition for him to return to Lansing and finish school there. By the end of the year, he was totally sold on Okemos and did NOT want to return. You already know about him.

I had two older sisters, Ruth Holloway, class of '42, and Arneal Holloway, class of '39, and there's already a bio on Ruth. Also, as you know by now, Arneal married her classmate Hazen Kart. Both girls had families and worked in secretarial work off and on throughout their lives.

So now you have the story of my life.

Joann Holloway Hyde Lewis, Okemos class of 1947

1992 for our 45th Reunion



2003 for our 56th Reunion