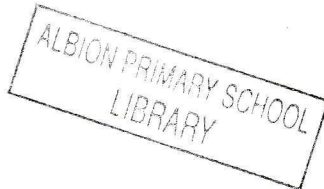


## 1930'S



### Memories of Beth Hamilton (nee Powell) of her time as a student at Albion State School from 1936 -1941, as a student Teacher 1948 - 49, and as an Assistant teacher 1951 - 53.

I started school at Albion State School in 1936 when I was 4 1/2. The Kindergarten Class was called "The Bubs" and we did Bubs and Grade 1 in the first year. Our teacher was Miss White - she wore a green overall I remember. There wasn't any "play" in the classroom those days...you got straight down to writing, sums, and reading. The sounding or phonic method "Aa is for apple, Bb is for ball" type reading. From memory there wasn't much sports equipment. At play time, in those early days, the girls made "houses" under the big trees on the boundary, making outlines of rooms with stones, and sweeping them clean with leaves. Someone would have a skipping rope and we would chant "I was in the kitchen, doing a bit of stitching, and in came a black fellow and pushed me out" and, the next in line would run into the rope and push the previous one out (Imagine the uproar if kids chanted that these days!). There were many other skipping rhymes but I don't remember them.

We had other teachers...Miss North, Miss Dodd and two sisters the Miss Smiths. In grade 4 I had Vida Ashford, in Grade 5 Mr Gallery and Mr Cunningham in Grade 6. When the Inspector came in Grade 5 I was terrified of him. He said, "stand up all those who bite their nails". I had to stand up on the desk seat feeling so ashamed. Then he said, "stand up all those who bite their lips". He glared at me and said, "stand up... you bite your lip". I didn't know I bit my lip, but of course hastily stood up feeling such a fool. I wonder what his aim was in doing that... it was really cruel!

I loved Grade 6. Mr Cunningham seemed to have ideas out of his time. We were allowed to take our pastel books and pastels out into the garden and draw the flowers. My two favorite past times... drawing and gardening. Mr Cunningham had a lovely school garden in those days. We also had a tree plantation somewhere along Ballarat road where we each planted a tree and went up once a week or so to water them.

One of the highlights for me in Grade 6 was being chosen with one other child, to go to the shrine on Anzac day. We went by train (with a teacher I guess) and walked up St. Kilda Rd. There were hundreds of people and children. I was overawed. We sang "Eternal Father strong to save", having learnt the hymn at school. The other exciting thing was the arrival of the Red Wizard. How our mother afforded the money to go in to see him I don't know... perhaps the mothers club paid for the poor kids. In those days I used to walk home with Keith Keogh who lived in the "concrete houses" up at Ardeer. Obviously the Red Wizard had got this information from the other children in the class so for one of his tricks he got Keith and me up on the platform standing together, broke an egg into a glass and shook it up but when he poured it over our heads it had turned into confetti!!

In those days, if you raised 1 pound for the Social Service league, you got a certificate with your name on it. That was a lot of money to raise but I managed it by making and selling toffee. Mum would advance me the money for the ingredients, and, every Saturday morning I would make toffee, weigh it up into little bags with 4 ounces each (I got the bags from McDonalds shop on the corner of King Edward Ave. and Adelaide St.). I had built up a round of customers, calling on each one and selling the toffee for 6 pence a bag. Then I paid mum what I owed her, and took the rest of the money to school for the Social service League. I think we also belonged to the Gould League of bird lovers and had a certificate with birds all round the edges.

There were five of us Powells, and our father was killed in 1935, so we were poor, as there was no Child Endowment or Widows pension in those early days. So, at the end of every year, mum had to fill in a form applying for free books for all of us for the following year. When we got back to school at the beginning of the next year the Authority for our new books never seemed to arrive in time, so we had to wait for them. I think the Headmaster had a supply of books but couldn't give them until the authority came through. Everyone in the class had their new work books except us. When the teacher said "take out your new work book and put the date at the top of the page"... we had to use up our old book from the year before until our new books came. How I hated that.

We used to have 1 1/4 hours for lunch, and we always ran home for lunch, and after had to run back to school, hearing the bell as we were coming down Adelaide St.

Each Monday morning there was a special assembly for "saluting the flag". We all faced the flagpole and the flag was raised. We had to put our right hand over our heart and repeat the oath. "I love God and my country. I honor the flag, I serve the King, and cheerfully obey my parents, teachers and the laws of the land." Then the boys saluted the flag, and I think we sang the National Anthem, in those days "God save the King".

They were wonderful happy days. I loved school and I was sorry to leave and go to Williamstown High after winning the 30 shillings as top of Grade 6 in 1941.

After my Matriculation year in 1947 I was still only 16 and too young to go to Teachers College... you had to be 18. So I was sent back to Albion State School as a student Teacher. I didn't realize it then, but now know that those 2 years were a