

TANNEHILL AND SOUTH VERNON SCHOOLS

by JoAnn McClung Parsons

Tannehill School, Beaver Township, 1962-63

It had rained the night before our first day of school, but that didn't dampen my enthusiasm. I suppose it was the day after Labor Day (1962) because that's when school always



First day of school for the McClungs, 1962.
Vic, Jim, and JoAnn

started. It was my first day of school in first grade. Little did I know I would have dozens of "first days" or that I would become a teacher in later years. My brother, Vic McClung, was 10, and in sixth grade, and Jim was 8, starting fourth grade. In those days you could start first grade when you were five, as long as you turned six before Christmas. I mention this because both my brothers would have birthdays after school started, and years later they would begin college at age 17! On this day, a picture shows we had with us a small paper sack with our school supplies and lunch boxes. Vic's was a square metal box with a picture of Trigger (Roy Rogers' famous dancing palomino) while Jim and I had very plain, hump-top boxes. All three were fitted with thermoses which we used for soup in the winter. We nearly always had bologna sandwiches, a few chips, possibly an apple, or a cookie. Our sandwiches were wrapped in Waxtex sandwich bags. (Having a school lunch was not an option until the next year when Jim and I went to South Vernon and Vic, high school.) My school supplies were crayons, pencils, eraser, scissors, paste, and my red, Big Chief tablet. My brother's supplies would have been the same, except for

notebook paper instead of a tablet, and a fountain pen.

I wore a shirtwaist dress (one of two that my Grandmother Bessie had made for me before school started—two was enough, and they were worn more than once a week). Sometimes I wore jeans, which was allowed in our country schools. I was told by friends that the city schools required dresses for girls, every day. Vic and Jim wore blue jeans, bought with room to grow, with pant legs rolled up one fold to be the right length. The boys both wore cotton, button-up shirts, tucked in. All the kids pretty much dressed the same.

Mrs. Cora White was our teacher. I think it was her third year. She was the first Negro (this was before the term Black was used) I knew on a personal level, and we all loved her. Her husband was the minister of the Black Baptist Church on Main Street. Her clothes were always very fashionable, often three-piece knit ensembles. She always wore heels and hose, and looked quite modern and lovely. Mrs. White had 14 students in seven grades to begin the last year Tannehill was open. There were no seventh graders. Lester Priest, Bud (Grover) Miller, and Virgine Kukuk were in eighth grade. Vic, Donna Kukuk and Roger Dobbins were in sixth grade. Katherine Priest, Alisa Wagoner, and Randy Miller were in fifth grade. Jim was in fourth grade, cousins Marlene and Sherry Miller were in third grade and my closest girlfriends. Mike Wagoner