

I was secretly informed, on the first school day of my 5th grade year, that "Mrs. Bissell sat on a thistle and went to the moon like a guided missile." Slightly bewildered by such a description of my new teacher I took a second gander to be sure this was not a teacher who, having sat on a thistle, was going to be bristly and ready to explode. The rhyme's myth never materialized. Mrs. Bissell turned out to be a fine and memorable 5th grade teacher.

Gertrude Delalla Godbold, oldest child of Ivan Winfield (1880 Canada-1960) and Katherine (Lutz) (1884-1964) Godbold, was born 14 November 1908 in Idaho. Her parents had married 31 July 1906, Big Rapids, Mecosta County, Michigan and moved west. Ivan and his young family were enumerated living in Montana in the 1910 US Federal Census. By 1920 the Godbold family was back in Mecosta County where Gertrude grew up and, after receiving a teaching certificate, taught school for number of years in the small logging communities of Stanwood and Hall's Corners. By the 1930's Gertrude employed in the Ludington school system, Mason County, Michigan, as a 4th and 5th

Lansing State Journal,
September 1, 1951

School at Okemos Opens Next Week

Sept. 6 First Class Day,
Staff List Announced

(Special to The State Journal)

OKEMOS, Sept. 1—The Okemos Consolidated school will open on Thursday, Sept. 6, according to George H. Richards, superintendent.

The staff for the 1951-52 school year will be as follows: Lyle Wakeman, elementary principal; Mrs. Mildred McKinley, kindergarten; Miss Joyce VanVlerah, kindergarten and first grade; Mrs. Ellen Somers, first grade; Mrs. Vaneitta Rosdall, Mrs. Carmen Horn and Miss Mary Lou Peters, second grade; Mrs. Kathleen Taber, Mrs. Theresa Voelker, and Mrs. Lois Hanslovsky, third grade; Miss Dorothy Hensel and Mrs. Fern Bogue, fourth grade; Mrs. Thora Aldrich, fifth grade; Miss Gertrude Godbold, fifth and sixth grade; Lyle Wakeman, sixth grade; Edwin Mumby, sixth and eighth grades.

grade teacher. Miss Godbold remained at Ludington until being newly employed by Okemos Consolidated Schools for the 1951-1952 school year.

On 1 August 1953 spinster Miss Godbold married Paul Phillips Bissell in Ludington. Paul, born 26 May 1913, Clinton County, Michigan, was a divorced father of 2 and employed at Atlas Drop Forge in Lansing. Paul owned a home on Clark Road, Lansing and the newlyweds settled there while remaining employed in their respective careers.

Paul died suddenly of a heart attack 15 January 1969, Lansing. It was right about this time that Gertrude retired from teaching 5th grade at Okemos. She died 17 May 1974, Lansing. Paul and Gertrude were interred St. Joseph Cemetery, Lansing.

The Ludington Daily News, June 13, 1942

Lakeview Teachers Leave for Summer

Lakeview school teachers who are leaving Ludington for the summer vacation are:

Miss Ruth Rasmussen who will go to her home in Manistee, Miss Gertrude Godbold to her home in Rodney and Miss Helen Freericks to her brother's home in Muskegon Heights.

a
was

GERTRUDE BISSELL

Mrs. Gertrude D. Bissell, 65, of Clark Rd., died at a local hospital.

A teacher for 47 years, Mrs. Bissell was a member of the Michigan Education association. She had taught in the Okemos school system and in Ludington, Stanwood and Hall's Corners. She was a member of St. Therese Church.

She is survived by two brothers, Wendall Godbold of Rodney, Michigan., and Loren Godbold of Big Rapids; two sisters, Mrs. Gladys Martiny of Lansing and Mrs. Arlo Norton of Big Rapids.

Rosary services will be Sunday at 8 p.m. at the Lee R. Rummell Funeral Home, DeWitt. Funeral services will be Monday at 3 p.m. at St. Therese Church.

Ah - efficient but kind Mrs. Bissell. She certainly knew how to handle rambunctious 5th graders. One of my vivid memories is the day we showed up for class and Mrs. Bissell was not at her desk. She was across the way handling the other 5th grade class (this was at Wardcliff Elementary) due to the unexpected death of the other 5th grade teacher's husband. Mrs. Bissell had a hard day ahead. She and the Principal (I think it was Mr. Way) handled the two classes between them all day long. Our class was given assignments and told to stay in our seats and complete them. Naturally there were a couple boys that cut up due to no adult presence. Jeff somebody-or-other was a real pill and he managed to do his usual devilment but over-all, due to the sobering nature of the situation, we did well as a group of 10 year-olds. I do remember Mrs. Bissell complimenting us on our good conduct. A shining moment!

Sherrie Paty Barber '66