



Nelson C. Hawks

excerpts taken from
Letters to his Sister Fannie

School Days

The Heartwells, Sampsons and Lewises were the first children that I can remember- we used to play "Sunday School". It must have been about 1845 to 6 that Pamela and Annie went to boarding school at Prairieville - (now Waukesha) on horseback.

My first school days were really spent in a little log house that stood in our wheat field half way down towards Castleman's (about where). Pfeiffer's house stands). This school was more of a kindergarten of very small children. No desks, but there was a wide sloping shelf along the walls, where we did writing. Quill pens were used and our writing consisted mainly in making upright and slanting strokes /////. I remember my Saunders's first Reader. There was a fire-place in the room and we had benches to sit on. The place caught fire one day and the teacher, a curly headed man named Stewett, ran out bareheaded to the village an got help and put the fire out.

In the spring of 1849, when I was eight years old, I went to school at the old (brick) castle (south of Nashotah $\frac{1}{2}$ mile on Oconomowoc Road). The teachers were students from the College (seminary). Fonseca, Haywood, Chadwick and Schetkey. Fonseca was a favorite of the small children, as he told us stories of Central America and of monkeys and parrots. The older boys called Haywood 'peeled onions' on account of his pop-eyes. The boys who graduated before I went there were Dan Allman, Glennis hill and James Loring. The girls were Nancy Seymour, Rosetta Sexton and Regina Boughton. I took my lunch to school in a round covered basket. On the way home in the afternoon Jake Luther would bully me and knock my basket down. This went on for some time till one day a new scholar Tommy Cahill came. When Jake commenced on me, Tommy pitched into him and gave him a good threshing. I always like Tommy for that.

Morgan's school started about 1850. I am not sure if it was the spring of 1854 or 55 that we went to the Parish school. I think we went to the school in the year of Miss Carpenter of 1854. Willie Pope lived with his grandfather, James Cox of Pine Lake and in winter he used to come to school with ice on his eyelashes. Emily and Lizzie Pope also had a long walk as they lived on the west side of Lower Nemahbin Lake - some two miles from school, but they were always at school, in all weathers. You remember the plaid cloaks as they came up the road.

Public School - Daniel W. Morgan was the first teacher. This was about 1850 for I know Albert Alden (Sr.) had just come back from California. The school house was unfurnished inside and the seats and benches were poor. We used to sing Geography and it was a sing-song tune of four notes. We would sing the rivers of the U.S. and the states and capitols. We had McCuffey's Readers, Pinnes's Grammer, Ray's Arithmetic and the old blue Elementary Spelling book. We wrote from copies set by Morgan. The spelling matches were a feature and drew visitors. Morgan used a ruler freely. He had a way of throwing it at a boy and make him bring it back to him. Then as the ruler changed hands, Morgan would hit the boy a lick with it. Morgan was sweet on some of the big girls and finally married Lorinda Dopkins.

Parish School - In the Spring of 1855 you and I went to the Parish School. Before that I went a short time to Edwards, who had the first church school in the house next to Parmelia's (Mrs. Dr. Sperry's). At that place the boys and girls sat together which we thought very funny and wrong. But I now think it was wise as it made both better behaved - while at Edwards School we were taken to Rev. Markoe's to see a magic lantern show. I forget if you were there or not. Emily and Lizzie Pope were there, but I did not know them then.





The Parish School on the hill demands some attention for it was there I got the best of my schooling. I was 14 years old and you 10 years.

I will speak of the Library first - I went to the Mission (Nashotah) and brought the first books down in my little wagon. Kreuts made a cupboard for them and I was Librarian. I will mention some of the old books which you will not doubt recall.

Prasca Loupoloff

Tanglewood Tales

Hans Anderson's Tales

The Shadow of the Cross, etc.

Elizabeth the Exile of Siberia

The Magic Ring

The Cherry Stones

Swiss Family Robinson

The Little Savage

The Distant Hills

You and I had a desk that came from Miss Rinker's Girls Seminary (which was kept in Lowerre's house a short time but (the school) failed from want of support. I wore a velvet jacket, a silver watch. These were the days when you and I rode over to Waterville on the bay mares with a colt and a dog in the procession.

Our first teacher was Marie Carpenter; then Rosa Carpenter - then came Mrs. Randles, if I am right. The head of each class at close of each recitation got two marks - next got one mark - at the end of the term the highest number of marks took first prize; next got second prize. Among the boys I recall to mind Billie Pope, Frisbie,

Charley Schuchart, Albert Alden, Conrad Freuts, John Rivers, Geo. Bonell, Hans Gassman, Israel Shaw, Wareham Parks and Charlie Germann. Of the girls - Emily and Lizzie Pope, Lizzie Cole, Phoebe Seymour, Adelaide Kinde, Helen Lucas, Maggie Hill, Julia Proudfit, Margaret Rivers, Charlotte Jacques and yourself and some more.

Referring back to Lizzie Cole, she was full of capers. She used to go to the students' rooms when they were out and disarrange things. They caught her one day and took a shoe-brush and blacked her face.

One summer Miss Handall of Waukesha, taught the school and boarded at Proudfits. She was a sister of Governor E. H. Randall and a very sweet girl. She taught me water colors and I used to call at Proudfits to see her, then I was 13 years old and went bare foot. This was the first time I realized the indelicacy of it, and I quit going unshod. It was a case of boy love for his teacher. I used to take strawberries to school to her and also ice for her water pitcher. She was very kind to me and she is one of my happiest remembrances.

Mrs. Randles used to play "pomp pomp pullawdy" with the scholars. Once Billie Pope caught her face with snow.

Mrs. Teeter Bottom: That is what the students used to call Mrs. Gurney. Very impolite of them. But what do you expect from divinity students? They used to tell of boating parties on the Nashotah lakes and often the ladies were invited.

"Uncle Tom's Cabin" was the first issued in book form in 1851 but we read it as a serial in the "National Era" before that.

