

Lorinda Martin's short story, written for school in 2001, ended up in the Franklin County Citizen.

My Great Grandfather's First and Last Day of School



ranny settled into a chair with the cup of tea that I had just poured her. Her gaze communicated that her thoughts were far away. We had shared many hours on various occasions sipping tea as she relayed to me her stories.

On this day, a smile came across her face and her chuckle broke the silence as she began to share with me the extent of her father's formal education.

Her father, George Aaron Williams was born July 19, 1852 in Vaughn Township, Canada. George was the son of a preacher, the Rev. George Fredrick Williams who had come from England to Canada in the 1830s. Granny's father had come to the U.S. with his family on a nickel ferry that carried folks from Canada to Port Urion, Mich. Thus he and his family were dubbed

"nickel immigrants".

Schools were few and far between. The school that George was to go to was having trouble-keeping teachers due to some unruly boys.

They had run off several lady teachers with

their pranks and mischief. The townspeople had decided that what these children needed was the firm hand of a male schoolmaster. Now

George's first day happened also to be the

first day of the teacher who took this task.

The new schoolmaster was out to make a statement to this disorderly bunch. One of the first things he did was to lay his pistol upon the desk as if to say he would not be challenged. The older boys took this as a dare but waited until noon to devise



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their plan.

In that day, the town's people

would let their pigs out to graze on the acorns that fell from the oaks that surrounded the school. When the boys saw that the schoolmaster was away at lunch they herded the pigs into the classroom.

Granny continued, "The pigs turned over the desk and made such a ruckus that the schoolmaster came a runn'en. He began grabbin' up boys and whipping them one after another. My pa had not done anything but he was so frightened when he saw that man heading his way. Before the school master could get his hands on him he jumped out the window and ran home never to return."

Was this a true story you ask? It was the truth, as my grandmother knew it. Such was story of my great grandfather's first and last day of school.