

The Farmington School Chapters

The school life of a young girl in the very early 1900s

By Hattie Adams Anderson



ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Born Hattie Adams on April 16, 1898 in Farmington, NJ, which is located within Egg Harbor Township, NJ. Hattie Adams Anderson lived there her entire life. She had two children, Thelma Cavileer and Raymond Anderson. During 1972 and 1973 she wrote a book describing her youth, growing up in Farmington; a wonderful history of her family life and of Farmington and her neighbors. This is chapter 24 and 25 of that book.

She was always a writer and poet, having written to the local newspaper many times – about all the flowers, birds, animals and the beautiful things in her life. So we suppose it was natural that she should write this history book.

She writes about the every day life of her parents, sisters and brothers, who lived, worked, and loved each other.

Close your eyes and have a quiet moment before you start her book. You will be transported back to the very early 1900s as you begin reading.

She passed away on February 25, 1989, surrounded by her children, grandchildren, great-grandchildren and great-great-grandchildren who love her still.

Her family wants to share this history with you; this is why we have published the book.

The Farmington School chapter ©

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Introduction of Hattie Anderson



I first met “Gram,” as we lovingly called her. She was my girlfriend’s grandmother and she wanted me to meet her Gram, so we drove over to her home in Farmington. She lived in a log cabin surrounded with a beautiful flower garden.

She was the most pleasant person I think I ever met. She made me feel right at home, offering a cool glass of lemonade as she showed me around her flower garden, naming each and every flower and shrub. There were bird feeders and houses hanging on every available tree limb. It was obvious she loved nature.

This book written by Hattie Adams Anderson was found sitting on a shelf in my wife’s mother’s home. The Cavileer family decided to share the history Gram so eloquently had written about the history of her life and of Farmington. I was selected to transcribe and lightly edit her hand written book and make it available.

– John Dilks

The Farmington School chapters

Chapter 24 – The New School

As I wrote before, ground had been given for a school, so eventually a two story house was built on Doughty Road in 1893. The room on the top floor was used as a store room for books and other supplies, the ground floor for the school room. A large cupola on the roof housed the big bell. A rope from it hung down through an opening on the ceiling of the main room so the bell could be rung from below. It rang out 15 minutes before 9 AM and again at 9 sharp every morning, and 15 minutes before 1 PM and again at 1 o'clock. There was a 15 minute recess every morning, and afternoon and 1 hr. noontime. Sometimes the bell turned over, then two boys were sent aloft to the belfry to turn it back again and they thought it great fun.



The school room itself was entered into by way of a hallway about 10 ft perhaps 12 ft wide, if I remember correctly. On one side were rows of clothes hooks for the girls coats etc. and on the opposite side under the stairs were hooks for the boys. The stairs to the upper room made a sharp turn about half way up the stair well; this had a four foot wall as it turned with a floor which made an enclosed area where the men teachers would hang their coats and place their hats on the floor.

There was a door in the center of the hall opposite which was the door to the school room.

To the left of the room was a masters desk, at the other end of the room on the right side was the large base burner for winter heat.

The janitor had to carry large scuttles of coal from an outside house behind the school, night and morning to keep the fire burning.

There was no kindergarten. The first class was known as the Primary and their books were Primary readers. Classes went all the way from Primary through eight grades, then came the Advanced Courses that took a pupil through what today would be equivalent to high school.

At the front of the room was a large chart standing easel like a large edition of the Primary book. How well I recall it! The first page had a picture of a boy reading "I am a boy." The words in the sentence placed at intervals about the picture; the next one read "I am a man" etc., each page teaching cats, dogs, rats, boys, girls, and the teacher would touch each word with a "pointer" until the beginners mastered them and in no time could read the book.

There were sets of "Cards" which were heavy pastel colored cardboard with a page front and back from the first reader books, cut out and pasted on them. These cards were passed out to the pupils to study and read and talk about.

The desks were double with their attached seats combined so that two pupils of the same grade might share a desk and seat. They began at the front of the room very small in size and height, graduating in size until the last three rows across the back of the room were used by the larger and largest pupils in the higher and highest grades. Later double desks and seats were replaced by single ones.

The walls were wainscoted half way up from the floor, the upper walls covered by black boards. There were windows on each side and back.

The pump house with its inside hand pump was on the right of the school and the coal and wood houses directly behind the school.

Toilets, the old fashioned out door kind were situated farther behind the coal house, and separated by a high 6 or 8 ft high fence which partially enclosed each one away from the other. The fence ran directly from the left side of the school to the boys toilet, came around behind it and up between the boys and girls toilet. Both were built over one deep pit with back doors that could be opened for cleaning out the pit.

I remember one time I had a furry white flat tam-o-shanter, which one of the boys stole from the cloak room and opened the trap door tossed it down into the girls side; it was never retrieved although sighted by the girls and me!

My first teacher was a young Italian man by the name Charles Peter Campanella, with a college education, whose home was in Hammonton, N.J. He had coal black wavy hair, brown eyes, rosy cheeks, a slight figure of medium height with a pleasant voice – quite dapper. (I always watched his prominent Adam’s Apple when he talked.) He could play a piano and a reed organ very well. He boarded with Mrs. and Mr. George Sutton and was invited to our home quite often where he played games with my older sister and Russ; played our organ and sang and shared in all the winter activities of the town.

I stood in great awe of him at first and as he taught our school until I was in fourth grade I was always half afraid of him but greatly respected him. He was jolly, but if provoked showed a violent, terrific temper. In those days a teacher could chastise a child in most any way he thought fit. I know a small mischievous boy about seven years old he punished by standing him up front near his desk, and drawing a ring around his feet, not allowing him to move until at times poor Danny would waver back and forth until he could stand no longer, then was allowed to take his seat! I know now how cruel that was, but by the same token, it helped him keep discipline in his one room school.

One day our Primary class (which of course included Klondyke, Effie and me) was called to the front for our spelling lesson. Addressing me Mr. Campanella said, “Spell the work up.” I said, quite proudly “P-U.” A great titter ran through the class and the teacher said, surprised, “Why, Hattie!” I was so confused by then that I hastily answered, “Oh, U-P” then!” and then the children did break into laughter. Mr. Campanella took pity upon me and said softly, “Very good!”

Of all the school systems today I give great credit to those teachers of the “olden” days who so conscientiously taught little beginners on through the eighth grades, advanced courses, also – aged anywhere from four up to eighteen and nineteen years of age, in one room!

How often I sat spell bound, listening to older pupils as they read allowed in their classes from Longfellow’s lovely poem “Evangeline” – Whittier’s “Snowbound” – Hawthorne’s “The great stone face” and other classics. Long before I reached the eighth grade I could



Charles Peter Campanella

recite from memory the whole prelude to “Evangeline” verses from “about Ben Ahhem”, “Elegy, written in a country church yard” by Grey, “Wreck of the Hesperus” by Longfellow – the entire poem of Whittier’s “The School House” and many more and won a prize of a 2½ gold dollar for the best composition on “Julius Caesar.”

The school day began by the ringing of the bell at 9 o’clock. After we marched in and took our seats, there was roll call, followed by the “Lord’s Prayer” in unison and a 15 minute song service. Then the real work began – lower grades first and on through the day until all eight grades were heard and taught. A 15 minute recess each morning and afternoon, also an hour for lunch and the balance was spent playing games “Duck on Davey”, Lay, Sheepie, Lay”, “Puss in the corner”, “Dicky land”, “Tag”, “London Bridge”, “Blue Bird”, ring games “In and Out the Window”, “Farmer in the Dell”, baseball and oh, so many old games, “Red Light”, “Grandmother Tippy Toe”, “Hide and Seek”, jumping rope, etc., then the afternoon session until 4 o’clock.

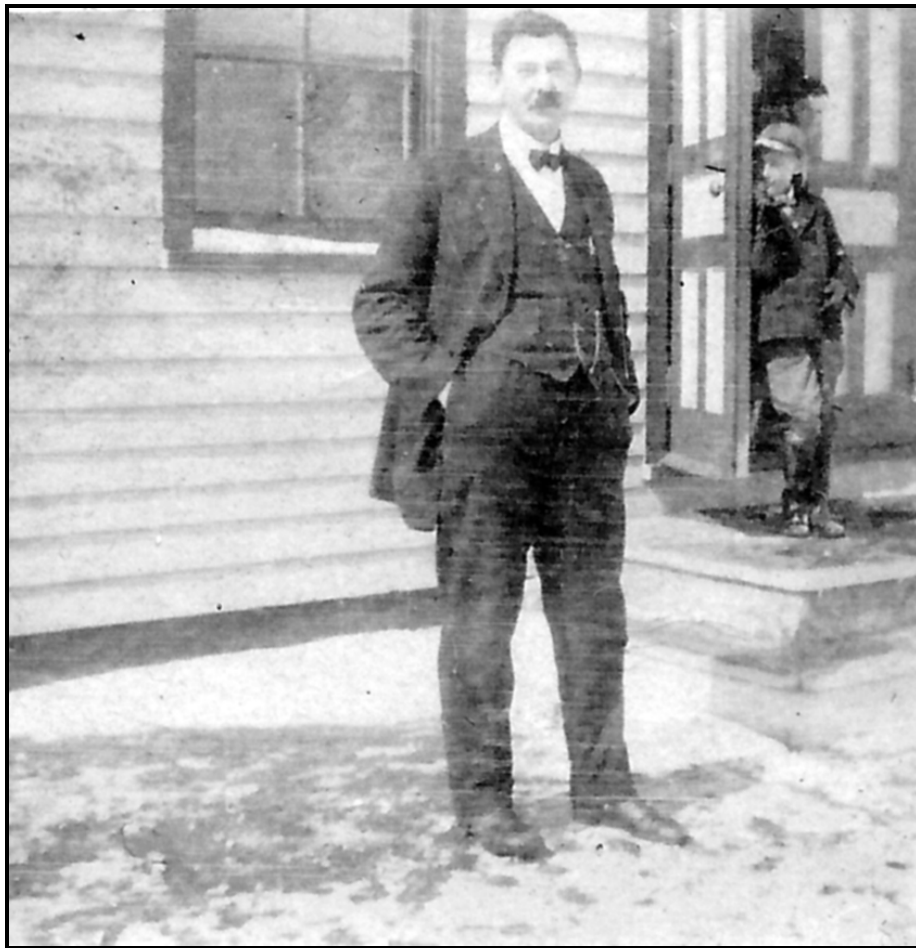
Each day a boy was appointed to ring the bell and another to assist him. On one occasion the bell turned over and the boys climbed to the belfry. As they climbed the stairs, one of the boys spit all over Mr. Campanella’s lovely black derby, resting on the turns enclosed floor. The other boy didn’t tell on him but of course the teacher knew who had rung the bell, but he kept silent for that week which intervened between then and Christmas holiday entertainment, which was held on the last day before school closing, and to which parents and friends were invited. On the great day, boys and girls dressed in their best, recited Christmas poems and sang carols that was joined in by their parents and other visitors. I recall Robert Thurlow reciting “Christmas is a comin’ and the goose is gettin’ fat – put a penny in the old man’s hat. If you haven’t got a penny then God bless you!” and taking his seat, smiling. After the program, Mr. Campanella gave out a “treat” consisting of a ½ lb box of candy, an apple and orange. Each pupil was called by name to the masters desk, where he received his treat, thanked Mr. Campanella and wished him a Merry Christmas and returned to his seat.

Every pupil had been called except Robert. Hearing his name called he arose and walked up the aisle to Mr. Campanella. Instead of the coveted box of candy, Mr. Campanella spoke gravely, “Robert, I am taking this opportunity to chastise you in a gentle way for the act of spoiling my derby a week ago. Do you recall such an incident?” Robert’s face suddenly grew fiery red and he fuddled his hands together nervously; lowering his head he finally muttered “Yes sir.” “Do you think I should ask you to apologize to me before our other pupils and guests today?” sternly asked our teacher. “Yes sir!” came slowly but emphatically from Robert who then lifted his head proudly and hurried on – “I’m very sorry, Sir, and – and – A Merry Christmas to you, Sir!” and turning, Robert rushed head long to his seat. Mr. Campanella then closed the entertainment with “A Merry Christmas to each and every one here, and a happy, prosperous New Year!”

We gladly and boisterously filed out of the room to don our coats and caps for the walk to our homes. But my heart was heavy for poor Robert who had apologized, but had not received his Christmas treat – the only one forgotten - ?

Chapter 25 – Other Teachers

Mr. Eugene Scull, a Scullville, E. H. Twp. Resident, was a tall pot-bellied man with a blunt nose, drooping moustache and wore glasses. He used to finger his moustache when talking and also, kind of slurped his breath through it.



Mr. Eugene Scull

He had no ability to handle mischievous boys and was so indolent he would lean back in his chair, prop his feet upon his desk, fold his hands across his stomach and close his eyes, sometimes snoring! And then – did the spit balls fly! The ceiling above his chair was peppered with them, where they would stick fast and dry. He never bothered or seemed to notice!

He came to school in a big old automobile. The boys, just before the afternoon recess was over, would let the air out of his tires, but he never reprimanded them – just didn't care!

Long about the first of December Mr. Scull announced that a basket of hard candy had arrived at the freight station in Pville from Sears and Roebuck, and as he could not leave

the school and asked someone to volunteer to go down and bring it back to him. Two boys volunteered to go. One owned an express wagon so next day they went to the freight station and trudged back with their candy laden wagon. Mr. Scull then told them to carry the basket upstairs. That was the last time they or any one of us pupils ever saw it. Each morning and noon Mr. Scull unlocked the stair door, went upstairs and filled his pockets, relocked the door and enjoyed the candy. He never offered anyone a piece of it and when Christmas arrived there was no gift of candy to the pupils. Oh, dear delightful teacher – Mr. Eugene Scull!

Another teacher was a tall black haired, black brown, black mustached man, Howard McConnell, whom the boys promptly nicknamed “Old Spider Legs” – a stern man with an almost ungovernable temper. I saw him upset backwards a boy from his seat and beat him with a sawed off broom handle, another boy with an oak tree limb which he had made the boy saw off and bring to him, after which he beat him! But when things were going well he would grin at us and shout “Oh boy, pussy cat – pussy cat three times!” My father did not care for that expression at all nor the one “Go to Helen Hunt for it!” Dad would say “Discipline must be upheld, but can be carried too far – he is liable to break bones!”

But Mr. McConnell only taught three months when he was exchanged for a lady teacher who was reported too lax in discipline. Well, maybe she was but the pupils of Farmington School #4 – Egg Harbor Twp. Loved her devotedly! Her name was Bicie J. Hamilton. She was a mistress of elocution and every Friday afternoon for the last hour of the day, she either read to us, or recited something; her facial expressions so droll as she acted her story out, we would be simply convulsed with laughter.

She brought with her a small organ, which on sunshiny Sept. days and springtime she had the big boys carry outside on the lawn during noon hour. No one wanted to play games then, but would gather about her as she played happy little ditties or songs we all knew.

She brought current sheet music and taught us to sing several popular songs of the day.

One in particular, I remember had a chorus that read like this “B_L_N_D_ and P. G. That spells blind pig, don’t you see? Teacher said in some surprise – “Oh, My, you’ve left out both “I”s and then I whispered “Teacher, dear – “Won’t you kindly listen here? Blind Pigs have no eyes you see” “you’re right” the teacher said to me. We were not anxious for the dwindling days until the close of that term.

Back to Mr. Campanella

I must tell some of the things he taught us. Each week he wrote upon the blackboard a “memory gem!” Friday afternoons it would be erased and the last half hour, he would ask if anyone could recite the “gem” for that week. I remember one time I raised my hand and was told to stand and recite one. I quoted “Tis the rule of the land, that when travelers meet, on highway, or byway, on alley or street, on foot or when riding, by day or by night each favor the other, and turn to the right.”

Mr. Campanella was pleased and complimented me. The next one I learned was as follows – “Have you had a kindness shown? Pass it on! T’was not meant for you alone – pass it on! Let it travel down the years, Let it wipe another’s tears – Till in Heaven the deed appears – Pass it on!”

Many “memory gems” I have always remembered one especially that gave such good advice – “If a task before you is set, don’t idly sit and view it – Or be content to wish it done – Begin at once and do it!”

After the recitations were over, we would rise from our seats, forming two lines, march slowly to the very front of the room, one then going down the aisle, the other likewise, to the back of the room, turning and marching up the center aisle out the cloak room and thus school was over for the week.

One thing he taught us was that the air about and above us was full of sound waves which he described as ripples and waves on water when a pebble is cast into it – the only way he could make us pupils grasp his meaning, “Someday” he told us “someone will be able to invent something that will capture those sounds and so be able to let mankind hear them!” “Won’t the sound be deafening, so many all over the world at one time?” we questioned him. “That I cannot foretell – I only know someday, someone will prove me right!” He was dead many years before radio did prove him right.

I was an avid reader as soon as I could master reading. I loved the grown up novels of Mary J. Holmes, Mrs. E. D. E. N Southworth, Charles Garvice and others, not sexy, sordid novels as are written today. To name a few “Dora Thorne” “Ethelyn’s mistake” “The Holmstead on the Hillside” “The hand without a Wedding Ring,” and many a secret tear I shed when reading them. I longed to grow up and become a novelist, to be able to bring tears to my readers eyes – smile to their lips, so I began writing little short stories, showing them to Dad who always encouraged me and read them word for word. (Somehow, I can not remember ever showing them to Mother!)

I remember taking one about a little motherless child to Mrs. Sutton’s one day and she had tears in her eyes as she read it and asked if she might keep it. Of course, I very graciously said she might and I was filled with elation as I told Dad about it. He put his arms about me and said for me to keep on studying and reading and who knew what the future held for me?

Chapter 25 continued

Back to School Days

Before the opening of the school term 1910 – 1911 – Mr. Wm. Hauenstein of the Egg Harbor Twp. School Board had a talk with me and told me a very young man from Mays Landing, would be our teacher. He was a high school graduate and had passed the state tests which permitted him to teach in a grammar school; after 2 years teaching he would go on to college education.

Mr. Hauenstein said “Now you are very familiar with our school layout, books, the supplies, etc. and being one I can trust and know you so well, I will tell him to trust you also. You will be privileged to help him whenever he calls upon you. If there is any trouble report to me on your way home from school, as the teacher will have to leave as soon as school is dismissed to catch the train to Pleasantville back to Mays Landing!” I thanked him for his trust and instructions and thought no more about it, one way or the other.

Here I must explain that the Electric Way Train from Philadelphia enroute to Atlantic City stopped at Mays Landing at 8:42 A.M. and also stopped at Mt. Calvary way station about two miles from our school. That would be how our new teacher would come to school, walking from Mt. Calvary north on Fire Road.

Several big boys had been told by Mr. Hauenstein to meet Mr. Taylor at Mt. Calvary and escort him to school. Between the school and the Reading Railroad was a strip of woods (old Johnson Field woods) with a narrow path cutting through it from Fire Road out to the edge of the wood and school grounds, to the school.

It was a lovely sunny September morning. Boys and girls were assembled in the school yard awaiting the arrival of the boys and the teacher.

We heard the boys’ laughter and a deep voice before they emerged from the wood.

When they did appear my heart stood still! I was used to the neighboring young men and other young men who called at our home but I never seen one like Mr. Taylor. He wore a blue serge suit, a soft tan pongee shirt, black tie and black shoes. His hair was a soft wavy brown, bits of curls in some places, his eyes were a sparkling blue, and on his chin was a deep, deep dimple. He introduced himself as Maurice H. Taylor and after a short address to us all, asked which girl among us was Hattie Adams. I raised my hand, unable to speak.



Maurice H. Taylor

In a rich, baritone voice he said “Hattie, I have been told by Mr. Hauenstein that he has appointed you to be my monitor, so I will therefore avail myself of your help whenever needed.” I nodded and we all entered the school and the day progressed as any first day usually did.

Upon being questioned at home about the new teacher I spoke nonchalantly, “Oh, he is big and tall and dark and seems very nice and pleasant.”

I helped him in what ever he asked of me which was not much – maybe show him certain supplies, quiet some of the little ones when they were noisy, lead in singing, etc.

Mr. Taylor had selected Rachel and Maude Johnson and me to become the “special singers” for entertainments, teaching us three part harmony, and he sang baritone, sometimes bass. He taught us many songs without any music to go by “a capella” and which we had never heard – “White Wings” “Christmas in the City” “The Winds of Wild November” “Speed Away” and several others, which we really learned to sing well.



Hattie Graduating in 1914

One Christmas entertainment at school we sang “Christmas in the City” which was loudly applauded. Then there was a short skit in which I was a beggar child, reciting a sad poem, as I stood looking through a doorway into the room where my sister Stell was seated at a table with a basket of apples upon it; Mr. Taylor, also seated at the table had a book in his hands. Quite a scene that drew a few tears from the visitors as I recited the poem, dressed in an old torn, ragged and patched coat, with my long stringy hair hanging from under an old rag around my head. We were applauded and the entertainment was over with gifts from our teacher to each pupil. That was the first term!

Farmington School Class Photo September 1907



Back Row: Joshua Webb, Willis Johnson, Reba Smith, Elizabeth Howenstine, Julia Adams, Dorothy Rudolph, Laura Bartnett, Rachel Johnson, Ureka Forrest, Nurr Cordery, Charles Campanilla –Teacher

Middle Row: Edna Taylor, Edna Wilson, Sadie Carman, Ethel Bradley, Annie Carman, Adelaide Thurlow, Elizabeth Johnson, Eva Ireland, Hattie Adams, Maude Johnson, Viola Harris, Scott Ireland

Front Row: Lee Roy Taylor, Adolphus Lewis, McKinley Spence, Robert Thurlow, Eddie Thurlow, Russell Bradley, Arnold Smith, Russell Johnson, Klondyke Larned, George Carman, Daniel Johnson

Alternate Front Row ? Names: Lee Roy Taylor, Arnold Smith, Adolphus Lewis, Russell Johnson, McKinley Spence, Milton Johnson, Robert Thurlow, Klondyke Larned, Eddie Thurlow, George Carman, Russell Bradley, Daniel Johnson

All names are as written on the rear of the photo. Due to way the names on the front row were written they could be either way listed.