



Honoring American Education

I enjoy taking walks around Platteville and looking at historic homes and buildings. I had stopped one day in front of the old Platteville Normal School on the corner of Elm and Main, now called Rountree Hall, to read the commemoration plaque. What began as Platteville Academy in 1839, became Wisconsin's first state teacher preparation college in 1866. It got me thinking about my grandmother who originally came from Woodman, WI. I knew she was a teacher for a short time, and had gone to a teacher's college, but I didn't know where. I wondered if she had gone to the Platteville Normal School.

I followed up with a relative to see if she knew and a short time later she sent me a small tablet that had my grandmother's name on it and "Platteville" on the front cover. I am guessing it would be from around 1915 or so. In the booklet were notes she had taken from her various classes. On the first page was written "School Management: Education has been defined as the process of canceling the difference in knowledge that exists between two persons...the teacher and student." I can't say I have ever thought about it that way, but how could you argue with that logic.

There were several fascinating notes about teaching vocabulary, Wisconsin geography (how to draw the state freehand), taking care of the school house, and common causes of pupil tardiness. She wrote about "accounting for lack of interest" in her future pupils. "Either the subject matter is not adapted to the understanding of the children or it is not presented to them in the right manner." I wonder what my grandmother would think if we could have a conversation about education today. I am sure she would be amazed at the capabilities that the iPad offers over a slate.

November 17th is the start of American Education Week. Following World War I, representatives from the American Legion and the National Education Association joined together out of concern for the high number of draftees that were illiterate. In 1921, the NEA Representative Assembly in Des Moines, Iowa, called for "an educational week ... observed in all communities annually for the purpose of informing the public of the accomplishments and needs of the public schools and to secure the cooperation and support of the public in meeting those needs (<http://www.nea.org/>)"

I hope you will join me in celebrating and continuing to support our successes. The Platteville Community can be very proud of their schools and the education that is offered. Our students

consistently stand out academically, as performers, and as athletes. Our staff works very hard to prepare our students to be successful in their future. The support of the Platteville Community for our schools is exceptional and we appreciate it. I look forward to seeing you in our hallways, our gyms, our auditoriums, and in our community. Go Hillmen!