

GEORGE MARTIN LAMBERSON, A REMARKABLE TEACHER

by

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“A Brief History of Temperance Hall, Tennessee”

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As you think back on-your school years, no doubt, one teacher comes to mind that was extra special. Many of us did not recognize the virtue of these special teachers until after our school years. I am probably heavily biased in my opinion on this but I believe the students of Long Branch Elementary School during the late 1930's and early 1940's were very fortunate to have George Martin Lamberson as a teacher.

Mr. George, as he was called by the students, had the unique ability to develop the individual student's potential. If a student showed a special interest in a subject, Mr. George, would arrange things so the student could “shine” in this area of study. He would then use this as a motivator to encourage the student to do his/her best in other subjects. Mr. George was not a “soft touch,” make no mistake about that. If a student misbehaved, he/she received fair and effective punishment. There was very little need for punishment as he used a number of methods to maintain order and keep our attention. One method he used was story telling. If we applied ourselves in a manner to finish our work and gain some extra time, there would be a story-telling session at the end of the day. These stories told by Mr. George and some of the students were enjoyed by all and served as a bonus for good work. One of the stories remembered by many former students was Mr. George's detailed description of the movie “Sergeant York.” He had seen the movie at Nashville during its initial showing. Although it would be months, in some cases years, before many of us would see the movie, we knew what to expect as each scene unfolded. This provided for a much better understanding of the movie.

Mr. George kept well informed on current events and cultivated our interest in the events by explaining how the community as well as the nation would be effected. He had an unusual ability to foresee future events. For example, he spoke well of the new formed social security and farm support programs but warned of the pitfalls of too much central government involvement in private affairs.

Long before the environmentalists and conservationists showed wide spread concern about the misuse of the planet earth, he warned us that the rivers, lakes and the air could not continually be used for waste disposal. He told us that some of our then plentiful natural resources would some day run out and alternates would have to be found. In 1940, he told us of seeing movie-like pictures being transmitted through the air from one point to another. He predicted we would some day be able to sit in our homes and view action taking place thousands of miles away. Most of us thought he was talking about the impossible.

In terms of years in the teaching profession, Mr. George was a lightweight (6 years total, all at Long Branch), but what he lacked in longevity he made up with in dedication and imagination during his time as a teacher.

Although we missed much of what he was trying to teach us, I can not recall any of his former students that did not become useful, productive members of society.

Mr. George did not return to the teaching profession after World War II (where he served admirably in the Mediterranean area). The reason for his not returning to teaching, I do not know. Perhaps it was a holdover from the rigors of war, or it may have been for economic reasons. Whatever the reason, future students of the area and the DeKalb County educational system were the losers.

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