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## Belle Traver Moore, My Mother, The Teacher

*Thelma Serrie-Turrell*

Having recently reached the distinguished age of ninety, I am celebrating life and celebrating the many teachers in my family. I honor them all, most especially my mother. I know they join me in my praise of education and the one-room school of the early twentieth century as a good educational foundation.

Belle Traver Moore was born February 7, 1897 in the Livingstonville Hotel. Not the usual birthing room unless, of course, you are the daughter and granddaughter of the hotel proprietors. William and David Traver came from Albany to Schoharie County to operate hotels in several small towns: Roxbury, Broome Center, and Middleburgh to name a few. The White House was on the corner of River Street and Main in Middleburgh, and was the Traver home in my mother's growing-up years.



In the school picture above, Belle Traver Moore is in the center of the front row. Below, mother's graduation picture from the Schoharie Training Class, 1915. Left to right, back row: Hattie Conklin, Rose Westfall, Olive Martin, Miss Stout, Belle Traver Moore, Theresa Vroman, Mildred Laraway Barber, and Ruth Dietz; sitting: Ida Young, Edith Bellinger, Jane Lawyer, Kathryn Parslow, Gertrude Lloyds, and Clarence Barber.



My mother was educated in the Middleburgh School from grades 1–12, where she was an honor graduate in 1914. There were 8 students in her high school graduating class. In high school, Belle Traver pursued a college entrance course: four years of Latin (Caesar, Cicero, & Virgil), four years of math, and four years of science including physics. In her senior year, she studied English with an intensive reading program emphasizing poetry. She memorized Shakespeare, Browning, Whittier, Longfellow, and James Whitcombe Riley, which she in turn taught to her daughters. They are still in the forefront of my mind and a tremendous help when watching Jeopardy.

## Class Roll

Motto: *Animo et fide.*

CLASS COLORS—RED AND WHITE.

CLASS FLOWER—AMERICAN BEAUTY ROSE.

Clarence E. Miller.....	President.
Lynden A. Hulbert.....	Vice-President.
Clarence Barber.....	Secretary.
Grace Vroman.....	Assistant Secretary.
Naomi E. Goodrich.....	Treasurer.
Gertrude Tator.	
Belle Traver.	
Pearl D. Van Buren.	
William Armlin.	
Wayland H. Elsbree.	
Class Historian.....	Lynden A. Hulbert.
Class Poet.....	Grace Vroman.
Class Musician.....	Gertrude Tator.
Class Prophet.....	Clarence Barber.
Class Lawyer.....	William Armlin.

## Class Day Exercises

MONDAY EVENING, JUNE 22, 1914.

Orchestra.	
President's Address.....	Clarence E. Miller
Solo.....	Elma Bost
Class History.....	Lynden A. Hulbert
Orchestra.	
Class Poem.....	Grace Vroman
Instrumental Solo.....	Gertrude Tator
Address to Juniors.....	Wayland Elsbree
Junior Response.....	William D. Cornwell
Orchestra.	
Class Prophecy.....	Clarence Barber
Solo.....	Elma Bost
Class Will.....	William Armlin
Orchestra.	

## Commencement Exercises

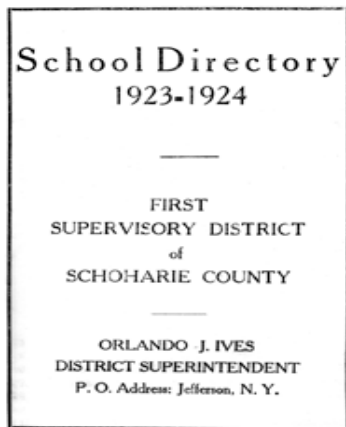
TUESDAY EVENING, JUNE 23, 1914.

Invocation.....	REV. E. L. CRAPO
Orchestra.	
Salutatory.....	WAYLAND ELSBREE
Commencement Song.	
Oration—"The Activities of the American Woman"	NAOMI GOODRICH
Oration—"The Passing of the Monroe Doctrine"	CLARENCE E. MILLER
Oration—"The Greatness of Little Things"	GERTRUDE TATOR
Solo.....	GERTRUDE CRAPO
Oration—"Social Discontent".....	GRACE E. VROMAN
Oration—"The United States Navy".....	CLARENCE BARBER
Orchestra.	
Oration—"Fighting the Forest Fires".....	PEARL VAN BUREN
Oration—"The United States, a World Power"	LYNDEN A. HULBERT
Duet.....	(KATHERINE MANN GERTRUDE SHAFER)
Oration—"The Customs and People of Japan"	BELLE L. TRAVER
Oration—"The Voyage".....	WILLIAM ARMLIN
Chorus.	
Valedictory.....	NAOMI GOODRICH
Presentation of Diplomas.	
Orchestra.	
Benediction.....	REV. E. L. CRAPO

Commencement Exercises at the Middleburgh School in 1914.

During the high school graduation program, Mama gave a presentation on "the Children of Japan."

In September 1914, a Teacher's Training Class was offered in Schoharie. It was a year-long program, inexpensive, and five miles down the road. Teaching was one of the few professions offered to women at the turn of the century and wanting to continue her education, she signed up, graduated at the top of her class, and was offered a teaching position in Patria, a remote area above Cobleskill and West Fulton, really on top of the world. Her beginning salary was less than \$1,000 a year. The Steinovers, a family the Travers knew, welcomed her into their home. Sometimes teachers of one-room schools "boarded around" (i.e., they lived a week with one family in the district and the next week with another family). This was part of the plan to save expense and yet provide education for the children. When Mama taught in Patria, she had a pupil, Julia Rose, who became a famous missionary to India and was supported for years by the Breakabeen Presbyterian Church. Teaching in Patria required transportation from Middleburgh after enjoying weekends at home. Grandpa David Traver, Mama's favorite, would drive the horse and wagon to Patria on Sunday night, deliver Mama for the upcoming week of teaching, and then pick her up again on Friday. The roads to Patria were dirt and gravel, "not the best," so Grandpa David would say, "If you went one way, you'd wish to Hell you'd gone the other."



Town of Blenheim		
Teachers		
Dist.	Name	Address
2.	Helen L. Dauley	Jefferson, R. D. 1
3.	Mrs. B. H. Haverly	North Blenheim
4.	Marion H. Parker	North Blenheim
5.	Belle A. Benny	Emmensee
6.	Mrs. Eugene Gorse	Jefferson, R. D. 2
7.	Mrs. Anna El. Becker	North Blenheim
Trustees		
1.	Mrs. Adeline Goss	Stamford, R. D. 1
2.	Harold D. Terrell	Jefferson, R. D. 1
3.	Gordon Shaver	North Blenheim
4.	Nelson Parlow	North Blenheim
5.	Lawrence Hollenbeck	North Blenheim
6.	Arthur Moxham	Jefferson, R. D. 2
7.	John Craft	North Blenheim
Town of Broome		
Teachers		
1.	Mildred Laraway	Middleburg, R. D. 2
5.	Mrs. Hazel E. Lloyd	Middleburg, R. D. 2
6.	Mrs. Emma Cole	Dotter Hollow
7.	Frank E. Benjamin	Middleburg, Star Route
8.	Vernon H. Cornelius	Livingstonville
9.	H. Elizabeth Powell	Gilboa, R. D. 1
10.	Anna M. Souck	Livingstonville
11.	Mrs. Cora N. Schindley	Middleburg
12.	Mrs. Frances M. Winans	Peaston Hollow

Trustees		
1.	Arthur Cooke	Middleburg, R. D. 2
2.	Virtul Campbell	Middleburg, R. D. 2
3.	William Holzer	Middleburg, R. D. 1
5.	Virgil Campbell	Middleburg, R. D. 2
6.	Emmet B. Cleveland	Cooksburg, R. D. 1
7.	Martin Poland	Middleburg, Star Route
8.	A. E. Haskin	Middleburg, R. D. 1
9.	Harry Moore	Gilboa, R. D. 1
10.	Mrs. Alice Achempough	Livingstonville
11.	J. C. Nickerson	Middleburg
12.	Marion Teter	Cooksburg, R. D. 1
Town of Conesville		
Teachers		
2.	Katherine A. Richtmyer	Gilboa, R. D. 2
3.	Raymond C. Nickerson	Gilboa, R. D. 2
4.	Mrs. Anna C. Thorpe	Gilboa, R. D. 2
6.	Helen D. Wyckoff	Gilboa
7.	Beatrice Wyckoff	Gilboa, R. D. 2
8.	Olin Haskin	Cooksburg, R. D. 1
9.	Willis Baker	Gilboa, R. D. 2
10.	Grace B. Roe	Gilboa, R. D. 2
Trustees		
2.	Wellington H. Finch	Gilboa, R. D. 2
3.	Fred H. Bates	Gilboa, R. D. 2
5.	M. C. Faulkner	Gilboa, R. D. 2
6.	Henry D. Young	Gilboa, R. D. 2
7.	Delos Castle	Gilboa, R. D. 2
8.	Walter H. Richmond	Gilboa, R. D. 2
9.	Osee Mulbery	Cooksburg, R. D. 1
10.	George Betts	Gilboa, R. D. 2
11.	Shirley Richmond	Gilboa, R. D. 2

Town of Gilboa		
Teachers		
1.	Mabel C. Patrie	Gilboa, R. D. 2
	Mrs. Etna B. Sackrider	Gilboa
2.	Muriel Gordon	Gilboa, R. D. 1
3.	Mrs. Mabel F. Becker	Gilboa
4.	Myrtle Hall	Gilboa, R. D. 1
5.	Helen V. Felter	Jefferson, R. D. 2
6.	Mrs. Belle More	Middleburg, R. D. 1
7.	Mrs. Clyde Foote	South Gilboa
8.	Helen C. Patchin	North Blenheim
9.	Charles Martin	Cooksburg, R. D. 1
10.	David W. Fancher	Breakabeen
11.	Edith J. Barber	Middleburg, R. D. 1
12.	Mrs. Susie S. Robinson	Gilboa, R. D. 2
13.	Mrs. Vadna Howell	Gilboa, R. D. 1
14.	Raymond A. Diabrow	South Gilboa
Trustees		
1.	Samuel T. Goldsmith	Gilboa
	Joseph Campbell	Gilboa
	Frank Stryker	Gilboa
2.	L. H. Kingsley	Gilboa, R. D. 1
3.	Arthur H. Decker	Stamford, R. D. 1
4.	B. F. Fancher	Gilboa, R. D. 1
5.	Melvin Hartwell	Stamford, R. D. 1
6.	John H. Warner	Middleburg, R. D. 1
7.	Charles Stone	Stamford, R. D. 1
8.	Walter H. Vroman	North Blenheim
9.	Ella Cain	Cooksburg, R. D. 1
10.	Ford C. Mattice	Middleburg, R. D. 1
11.	Ivan Hallock	Gilboa, R. D. 1
12.	John Cower	Grand Gorge
13.	Charles Lloyd	Gilboa, R. D. 1
14.	Charles Fengler	South Gilboa

Town of Jefferson		
Teachers		
1.	Mabel C. Nichols	Jefferson, R. D. 3
2.	Prin. Truman H. Wedge	Jefferson
	Preceptress, Clara L. Case	Jefferson
	Grammar, Mrs. E. B. Franklin,	Jefferson
	Intermediate, Cornelia Dunn	Jefferson
	Primary, Anna D. Ives	Jefferson
3.	Mrs. Adelaide F. Mesde	Charlotteville
4.	Mrs. Ellen S. Keyser	Jefferson
5.	Wilber E. Hamilton	Jefferson, R. D. 1
6.	H. Ralph Dart	Jefferson
7.	Mrs. E. G. Danforth	Jefferson, R. D. 2
8.	Lizzie E. Gregory	Stamford, R. D. 2
9.	Wilbur S. Beard	Jefferson
Trustees		
1.	William Clapper	Jefferson, R. D. 3
2.	J. H. Taylor, Pres.	Jefferson
	G. L. Vroman, Clerk	Jefferson
3.	Delbert Mesde	Charlotteville
4.	Chris Lane	Jefferson, R. D. 3
5.	Roy Burnett	Jefferson, R. D. 1
6.	J. H. Delaney	Jefferson, R. D. 1
7.	Oscar Vasey	Jefferson, R. D. 2
8.	David Henness	Stamford, R. D. 2
9.	John Zeh	Stamford

The directory from one of Mama's schools.

My mother taught in one-room schools for 25 years until I finished college and was teaching vocal music at Middleburgh Central. All that time, she worked almost entirely in the Gilboa district. Orlando J. Ives of Jefferson was the Superintendent of Schools along with William F. Spencer. These educated men set up the requirements of New York State and the local district, recommending teachers with acceptable credentials. These requirements varied. My Aunt Emma Mattice taught with just a sixth grade education. Appointments were made on previous experience, ability to discipline, personality, and favoritism. Men were most often assigned to schools where strong discipline was needed.

One of Mama's school days might begin with Ernie sitting on the schoolhouse steps telling Mom that she could build her own "G-D" fire because the previous day Ernie had been disciplined for disobedience. Without a word, Mom would open the door, build the fire in the hop-picking stove, and send two strong, responsible students to the nearest farm for a pail of drinking water. She would then ring the old school bell that is now on my granddaughter Tonya's desk. Tonya is the third teacher in four generations, now principal in Central Park Middle School in Schenectady. Big and little children would come running, slide into their assigned desks, faces turned toward Mrs. Moore. Mama always began the school day with a reading from the bible, a psalm or familiar scripture, followed by the "Lord's Prayer" and the "Pledge of Allegiance" to the U.S. flag. Once these preliminaries were finished, the reading classes began. Sometimes Mom had as many as 20 pupils in her one-room school. The younger ones would come to the recitation bench and read from their New Educational Reader. It was green with a red geranium. My book said:

Fanny can fan Dan.  
Can Fanny fan Dan?  
Yes, Fanny can fan Dan.

Mama's eyes searched the room. Everyone knew how to keep busy, to read, to practice the Palmer method of writing, to study multiplication tables, even to color, to review the Arm & Hammer bird chart, to look at maps, and to help another student. We had been instructed what to do and we did it. There was lots of math and geography from a big green book with Columbus on the cover.

Lunchtime was good. We toasted our sandwiches in the wire rack over the bright red coals of the wood fire. At our home, there was pie or cake made every day and cookies too for the lunch pails. Oranges were only for Christmas and apples for apple pie or applesauce. My friend Fran told me she liked to trade her roast pork sandwich for her friend's salmon. The salmon was different and from the store. Fran's was from the farm, a little different from today's PB&J.

In winter, at noon time we would ride down hill and Mrs. Becker would put a bell in the window when it was time to come back to study. Teachers always had a good story book that they read to us daily. Many times in the afternoon we would play a game or "act out" a story. I remember one time when I was Jack-in-the-Beanstalk's mother. I had little pieces of chalk for beans. With great gusto I threw the beans all over. Mom scolded me because we had to spend time picking up. I liked to sing. Mama could not carry a tune in a bucket. My father played piano and violin. When Mom sang "My Bonnie" to my daughter, Lin said, "Grandma, that's not quite right. I'll sing it to you." So she did.

One day on the way home from school, Louie, Gerry, Paul, and I had some excitement. Old Gerry's horse ran away. We were coming down the hill by Guinea School. I think Gerry was in a hurry to get home. He ran so fast, the one-horse wagon tipped over. Louie fell in the clothes basket we had just picked up at Mrs. Reed's. Mom and I sat in the road and Paul cut his forehead on a stone. Oh My! When Tilden, Paul's father, saw him, he was sure that Paul had a fractured skull. He kept saying "Paul has a fractured skull, Paul has a fractured skull." We all went home to supper and lived to go to school another day.

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My story of my mother's one-room school teaching is dedicated to all teachers, especially her contemporaries: Helen Wyckoff Carson, Myrtle Hall, David Fancher, Vadna Buel, and my dear Belle Traver Moore. As you recall your school days, please add your favorite teacher to the list.

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