

## **I REMEMBER . . .**

**by Olive Dougherty  
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As a newly hired teacher for Seabrook School, I arrived at my little assigned bungalow. I was full of great anticipation, not knowing anyone there. Two mothers of two of my Japanese students were awaiting my arrival. They were Mrs. Tei Hoshi, mother of my Danny and Mrs. Yamamoto, mother of my Rickey. How very welcome they made me feel and how happy I was to have their little boys in my second grade class! They were the very first Japanese friends I had at Seabrook. I'm still in contact with Tei Hoshi, even though she lives in California.

During my early days of teaching, I had a very bright, darling little Japanese girl, Barbara Joyce Kurakawa, in my class. Much to my sorrow, she had to leave me to move to Chicago. Her last day, as I stood at the door to bid her a fond farewell, she turned her face from me, reluctant to let me see the tears streaming down her face, in her pride to hide her feelings. I also found it hard to part with her without shedding tears. I've never heard anything about her.

A bright little blue-eyed girl strode into my classroom. I loved having her and soon found little Rachel Cobb very adept at all forms of art. She was just a joy to have and still is a joy to know, as she has the very prestigious position of head art editor of Fortune Magazine in New York City.

As I taught, I often saw an elderly Japanese man, with a hoe over his shoulder, walking past my classroom window to his little garden plot behind the school. A little boy trudged behind to help garden. That little toddler turned out to be Scotty Nagao, whom I later had the pleasure of teaching in my second grade.

Having a great interest in all nationalities, I had the great pleasure of having two little Russian children come to me in my class. To my dismay, I noticed that they were very shy about declaiming their heritage. So, I felt the responsibility of bringing out their pride to be Russian. After some encouragement, I soon found that they were not so shy about it any longer. I was so happy to see them proud

Russians from then on. They were Annie Wulfert and Victor Kowalenko. I was so happy and interested to have them with me.

Just before Christmas one year, I was sad to be told I would lose my beloved Mary Beth McAllister, as her father had employment elsewhere. They were gone from Seabrook for some years, but Mary Beth left some roots here from her younger days, as she chose to come back to be married here at the Deerfield Presbyterian Church. I was so pleased to be invited to attend. Her parents came back here again to have a plant nursery and for Myrtis, her mother, to teach fourth grade for some years. She was a very clever teacher.

Miss Moore, our beloved principal, placed a sweet little girl, right from Japan, in my class at the mid year. She didn't know one word of English. Fortunately for me, not knowing Japanese, I had a very accomplished and valued pupil, Sharon Yoshida, who knew Japanese in that class. So I put them together at one table. What good luck it was for me and for my little newcomer, Ruiko Sakata. I wasn't long before Ruiko was adept at English and understood everything. She was very quick to catch on. I enjoyed having Ruiko and we continue to be great friends today.

Every year in May, I invited my class to my home for a day's visit to show my pupils how teachers lived. I made sure that they saw all my curios collected from my many travels that I was unable to transport to school. I took particular notice that one of my pupils, a little Yugoslavian boy, was so pleased with his visit here at my home and seemed to be having such a good time. After getting back to school again, he talked about it with so much pleasure. I've always been so rewarded for doing it, as that sweet little boy drowned that summer at Silver Lake. I was so saddened but felt satisfaction that I'd given him a chance to have such a beautiful day at my home.

It was such a pleasure to attend the Christmas program that the Estonians held in the Moore School auditorium every year. I always looked forward to this magnificent extravaganza put on by the children and adults of the Estonian Community with its exquisite background painted by a very talented Estonian couple, whose names I do not know. There was a wonderful choir of adults with lovely voices to take part. My good friend and fellow teacher, Mai Olino, lent her lovely voice to that choir. The children all did so well with their memorized parts, as well as the adults. This program was

an outstanding annual performance that I looked forward to every year. It was such a beautiful spectacle.

Various exchange students have shared my home over the years. At this time, I had an 18-year-old girl, Futaba Otaki, coming from Toyokawa, Japan. I was so desirous that she feel at home and not be homesick. So I invited those cousins, all former pupils of mine, to spend a week with me in my home to help "break the ice" for our Tabi as we called her. Louise Ogata, Karen Takata, and Geri Ann Kato came and did just that for our Japanese exchange student. It wasn't long before all four girls were friendly, laughing and joking, helping a young girl from so far away to get accustomed to a new land and its culture.

Since social studies was my favorite subject to teach, I did much with it in my classes. One thing I loved very much to do was to have a big unit every Christmas known as "Christmas in Many Lands." Every year in November, I'd introduce this unit by revealing how Christmas is celebrated in many, many places and by having my pupils read some stories of the celebration in other parts of the world. After this first step, they would choose which country they thought most interesting to work on. We'd try to narrow it down to about six places, making it more workable in a classroom. From there on we began to find out more about each of these countries, their flags, money, customs, etc., used in these countries. We made up stories, posters, murals of scenes from our study. Then we'd compose a play putting all this together. Everybody had a part to play and we all learned their carols. We always presented it to the entire primary school, three rooms at a time in our classroom. My second grade classes are still remembered for that. Some of the teachers in the C.F.Seabrook School work on a similar program as that today at Christmas. One sidelight of this was: Mr. Mayor Sasaki, a beloved man of all Seabrook and of us teachers as well, was my school janitor. For our Christmas program, we'd made a door poster with "Merry Christmas" on it in many languages, including Japanese to advertise our program. One day as Mr. Sasaki was working in my room, he very shyly and almost apologetically whispered to me, "Mrs. Dougherty, you have the Japanese character for "Merry Christmas" on your door poster upside down. I was very grateful for his correction and for the many, many things I learned from a very caring janitor.

One year, the first day of school in September, I went into the auditorium in the Moore School, where the pupils were assembled

awaiting their assignments to their new rooms. I noticed two little Estonian girls sitting together, both in tears due to their confusion and frustration. I sat down to try to comfort them in their distress. Soon they were over their crying and seemed content. They were Eva Soone and Mari Nipsust and as it turned out, they were assigned to my room where all tears and fears were forgotten and a happy time was had that year by all of us. Mari left Seabrook to go to Lakewood, NJ but Eva Soone is my close friend today and teaches world history at Cumberland Regional High School.

As teachers of the community's children, we were encouraged to visit every home of every pupil in our class. So, I was very particular to see that this was done. Among those visited was a little Estonian girl, Kai Heinla, who then lived at the big white cafeteria building. Kai was the eldest Heinla child and her two little brothers were just toddlers. She was a very good student. Kai is now a teacher in Toronto, Canada. We were always welcomed into the homes at Seabrook, and, especially, at New Year's by the Japanese to their "Open House" to welcome the New Year with their warm welcome and an array of wonderful ethnic foods. We loved to go to this.

I well recall receiving a sympathy card from a troubled Latvian mother, who thought her son had been ill-behaved in my classroom. I never felt this way about her boy. I have fond memories of another Latvian boy who was a good student and purely a pleasure to have. He was Martin Preilis who recently was named the honor employee of the month as a highly valued worker for the Cumberland County Mosquito Commission. I wrote him a congratulatory letter and we spoke at length on the telephone after I learned this.

It was our extreme pleasure, my husband and I, to be invited guests at the opening and dedication of the Seabrook Buddhist Temple. It was a great new adventure for Seabrook Buddhist friend to have their new temple. The Buddhist Canon came from Japan to this auspicious occasion. How honored we felt! We were happy for all our Buddhist friends to have their very own house of worship.

One mid-year a pretty little Japanese girl, right from Tokyo, was brought into my classroom. She looked Japanese but had an American name, Margie Riegel, because her father had been an American GI married to a Japanese girl. They had come to Seabrook

to join the Japanese Community. She knew some English which was a great help. Near the year's end, I told Margie that I'd planned to go to Japan during the summer. She smiled with anticipation as she said, "You must visit my grandma and grandpa in Tokyo." I agreed if she'd get the address for me. So I did visit her grandparents, who luckily had an interpreter for us. I had a grand and welcome visit and could tell them something of Margie's new life in America. At their request, I brought a big parcel back to Margie and her mother. As her mother opened the large box, I could see the delight in Margie's eyes as it seemed like Christmas with all the goodies grandma and grandpa had sent. I'm still in contact today with that kind and helpful interpreter, Alex Katayama, of Yokohama, Japan, as we often correspond and have met several times since in Japan and on later visits there.

I always felt fortunate to be able to mingle with all the people of all nationalities at Seabrook, to learn from them about their cultures and many sharings of great times, such as for instance, the enjoyment of hearing the famous talented blind koto player, Mr. Kimio Eto of Japan perform his artistry which is recalled with such pleasure. We've had available to us all their customs and crafts. for instance the carved wooden birds and butterflies of Mr. Yamamoto and others; the art of the famous Seabrook artist, Mr. Yoshida; the exquisite jewelry hand-crafted by Mr. Tarnius, an Estonian craftsman; the elegant dolls of a very clever Estonian lady doll-maker and many of their clever artifacts, etc. For all of this, I shall be forever grateful! But most of all the lasting good and loving friendships which can never be replaced.