

My Story

By Sampson Hill (May 1st, 2003)



My name is Sampson Hill. I was born April 13th, 1928 on a small farm in rural Veblen, South Dakota. My parents were Eliza Plume Hill and Lucas Hill. I was the sixth of seven children. I had five older siblings, two brothers and three sisters and one younger brother.

I lived on this farm until I was nine years old. I began attending school at a Catholic Mission School, in Stephan, SD when I was seven I got on the bus with other Indian children and traveled to the school. The school in Stephan was a boarding school, so I stayed there. My father died in 1938. My mother died just four months later.

After my parents died, my oldest brother went back to school. My second oldest brother, Ben, stayed on the family farm. One of my older sisters got married, and one went to work at the catholic orphanage in Sisseton, SD where my younger brother was sent. This was a very sad time because we were a large family and now we were alone and apart.

After my mother died, I spent the summer of 1939 with my brother, one cousin and sometimes with my uncle, John Plume. He was my mother's brother who had never married. Uncle John had a place about four miles to the south of ours. He would walk to our place. I was always glad to see him. His cooking was better. We always had plenty of milk to drink and there was always oatmeal. I remember one day uncle John and I hitched up the team and wagon and took cream to town. I guess it was a three-gallon can with a cover. We kept the cream in the root cellar until it was time to take it to town. We had to cover it in the wagon with something to keep it cool. Uncle spent all the proceeds on food. He gave me a dime. He would come and spend a couple of days and then he'd go home. He always had a big garden to take care of.

The following school year I was sent to the Wahpeton Indian school. I remember the first day I came to the Wahpeton Indian School. It was September 11, 1939. I was home with my cousin Benjamin and brother Ben. Ben was 21 years old that day. He told cousin Benjamin, who was 18, to have me in Veblen by 1:00 p.m. to catch the bus. Ben had other plans and wanted to go to the neighbors to see his friend B. Robertson. Benjamin didn't take me to Veblen' so I caught one of our horses and rode it to town. When I got to town I tied the reins around the horse's neck and slapped its hind side and said, "Go home" and off she went. I remember brushing horsehair off my new jeans. I had a new pair of jeans, a new shirt, new belt, and 50 cents in my pocket. I stood around waiting, and talked with a couple of kids that I knew. A man called my name and I got on the bus. I sat by the window. I remember this older man was handing out something to some of the kids. He handed me one. It was a dime. I never saw the man again. Years later, I found out who he was. He was one of my relatives.

We got to the school about 4 or 5 p.m. The first thing they did was give you clean clothes (jeans, shirt, underwear, socks, and shoes). Then you hit the showers. They took the clothes I had on, marked them with a number (mine was 49) and sent our clothes to the laundry.

I enrolled in the third grade and was assigned to the smaller boy's dormitory. It was on the second floor, west wing. My work assignment was to keep that dorm clean. All of us had to work on it. You made your own bunk bed, cleaned under your bunk, sweeping the dust out into the center. Some of the other boys swept it down the center.

The classes started on September 12th. We had one day off and that was Christmas day. The school year was over on May 18th. It was lonely at times and I was scared sometimes. The loneliest time was when the buses loaded up the students to take them home. Since I was an orphan, and had nowhere to go, I stayed at the school all year. After a couple of years of that, I didn't care anymore. There were

several of us that stayed yearlong and we would move into one wing. There were maybe about 40 of us. There probably were that many girls too. We had a little more freedom in the summer, but only after we had the dormitory spic and span from top to bottom. We also cleaned the bathrooms and dining room and some of us would work on the lawns and pick weeds.

Mr. Carl Stevens was the Superintendent when I came to Wahpeton. I was there one year when my sister Gene came to the Wahpeton Indian School. She was sent from the orphanage. She was two years older than me. Then about the same year, 1941, my oldest brother Solon started working at the school in the power plant. The next year, my kid brother, Solomon came from the orphanage, too. I sure was glad to see Him! He stayed at the school year around, too. He was still there when I left the school. He lives in Spokane, Washington with his family today.

My oldest brother worked at the power plant and coached football and basketball. He was my coach for one year. Then he enlisted in the Navy. Then I had another coach, his name was G. Robertson. I remember that year, nobody could beat us in basketball! We played all the little towns around Wahpeton as well as the Wahpeton and Breckenridge Juniors. We were unbeaten. That summer I met my first white friend. We would ride bikes on Sundays, play basketball down at the park and swim. Through him, I met more kids from town and that's how I mixed in.

I only went back to Veblen area once during the seven years that I attended the Wahpeton Indian School. Aug. 1st, 1943, I asked the Superintendent, Mr. Mote, if I could go home to Veblen for a visit, I knew my grandfather, one aunt and a couple of uncles lived around Veblen some place. Mr. Mote said, "I guess I can let you go Sampson". I'll never forget those words, I told him, I'll be back before school starts.

I left the school, hitched a ride to Fairmount, ND and from there I got another ride to Rosholt, SD. It wasn't easy to get a ride in them days. There weren't many cars traveling, a war was on and with gas rationing and all. I did a lot of walking. Anyway, I got to Clair City, SD somehow, it was 9:00 p.m. and it was dark. I had a sandwich and a bottle of pop. I asked somebody how far it was to Veblen, he said it was 9 miles west. He might as well have said 900 miles. I was tired. Anyway, I got started and I must of walked a mile when this car pulls up. I got in, it was some old gent who lived in Veblen. He told me his name, but I forgot that years ago. I told my name, where I came from and I can't remember what all we talked about, I was just glad to get the ride.

He let me off someplace in Veblen, it was Saturday night and nobody I knew was in town. Just this one cousin. I asked him about everybody. He said he walked to town, he was staying with an uncle on his mother's side. He told me where my aunt on my dad's side lived. We both had to walk South, he had to walk 3 miles, I had to walk 4 miles and it was pitch black out. And 2 of those 4 miles I had to walk were in the hills. We walked 2 miles then we parted ways, oh man it was lonely as I walked. I was thinking "what am I doing out here". It was dark so I just kept following the white gravel road. Then I saw this white church and cemetery and I knew where I was. I didn't have too far to go. Then I had to get off the gravel road, there used to be a wagon trail off the road. I had a time finding it, it felt like it hadn't been used recently. I went up a small hill and then I heard a dog barking. Then from the top of the hill I see this white house. I went down to the house and the dog barked and growled at me. There was nobody home at the house. I slept on the porch along side of the dog. In the morning I kept looking at this dog, he sure looked familiar, he looked like the dog we had when I left home. So I called his name, Rover and he answered to that name, so then I knew.

Then I heard a church bell ringing, so I walked back down to the church. I talked with some people I knew. They told me where my grandfather lived. So I went to visit him. He lived a half a mile from where I had slept the night before. I saw he had 2 of my dad's horses. I rode one that day, he had an old army saddle. I never saw those horses or the dog Rover again.

I was home for one month, Aug. 1st to Sept. 1st and I worked for a farmer pitching bundles. It was harvest time. The farm was about two miles north of Veblen. I stayed right there at the farmer's home, upstairs. Good thing, because I didn't have any other place to stay. The whole time I was there I was anxious to get back to school, because, it had, by then, become my real home.



When Sept. 1st came around, we were almost done with the harvest. The boss paid me and took me to Veblen. At 3:00 p.m. I caught a ride with the mail truck to Fairmount, ND, for one dollar. From Fairmount, I hitched a ride to Wahpeton, walked to the Indian School and checked in with Mr. Selkirk. I checked in all my money to him, to put in the school bank. I took a shower put my clothes in the same locker I always had, visited with old friends and went to bed in my same old bunk. I was back to the old grind. All of this happened when I was 14 years old. It was good to be back. The next morning I went to breakfast and saw all of my old friends. (Photo of me about 1942)

The other students and I were housed in dormitories. The boys and girls were in separate dorms. The dorms were two story buildings with basements. There were 28 staff people on campus. There were 3 in the boy's dorm, with one part time. The boys did all the work. One bigger boy would be the head of each dorm wing. There were four wings in each dorm. The school had a band, so the dorm had a bugler. He would bugle each morning and evening. We would put up the flag in the morning and take it down in the evening. I have lowered the flag many, many times in my time at the school. We also had to learn how to properly fold the flag, and how to take care of it.

All of the students slept in open dorms with row after row of beds. Approximately 300 to 400 students attended the school. They came from many states and many tribes. There were busloads from Kansas, Nebraska, Sisseton, SD, Belcourt, ND, and of course, Veblen, SD.

When the students arrived at the school, they were assigned a workstation. This assignment lasted for 30 days. Every 30 days they were given a new work assignment. The students were required to work at their workstation daily. If a charge person of a workstation liked how a student was working, then it was probable that this student would be frequently reassigned to the same workstation.

Some of the workstations included the dairy barn, poultry barn, laundry, bakery, dormitories, campus grounds, and hospital. Most of the chores done at these workstations were done in the morning before going to school.

The students who had dorm detail were required to scrub the floors weekly and wax them. I remember that a student would lay on a government issue (GI) brown blanket and the other kids would drag him around on the blanket from one end of the hall to the other until the floors were shined enough to meet the expectations of the floor supervisor.

My main workstations were the laundry and the bakery. I liked working in both places. The lady in charge of the laundry liked my work and she requested me to be assigned at her station. I didn't mind working there because it was not very hard work. I was responsible for putting the laundry into the big washers with a wooden fork. Other students were assigned to move the clothes from the washer to the dryer, and then others folded them and stacked them in the clothing rooms of the dorms. You must remember, these were huge wringer washers and steam powered dryers. There was a lot of heat generated from the heating plant and all of the laundry preparations. The laundry was closed in the early 1960's. There was an accident and a student had an arm taken off by the spin dryer.

I really liked working in the bakery, which was in the basement of the dining hall. When I worked there I got homemade cookies and extra bread to eat. I appreciated that. I remember always being hungry at school.

The school had a very strict military discipline. Each student was assigned a number. I was number 49. I kept the same number for all seven years that I attended school. Almost everything that needed identification bore our student numbers. All of our clothing was numbered.

When we had roll call at morning, noon, and night, our numbers were called out and the students responded to their number. Hooks for the student's clothes were designated by their student number. We also had steel lockers in the center basement. East basement was the clothing room, for towels, sheets, etc. North of there was the shower area, one big open stall.

To move from one area of the campus to another, the students marched in military style. They moved in line, but they did not have to be in step. We certainly learned right from left, because we were required to turn corners as directed by the lieutenant. When it was time to come into the building, a supervisor would blow a mouth whistle. Two whistles signaled the first four grades, and three blows meant everyone was to come in. You had better run too. Lights were out at 9:00 p.m., and the day started again at 6:00 a.m.

As in the United States military, each student was issued clothing when entering the school each year. The boys each received a shirt, a pair over overalls, underwear, and a pair of everyday shoes, which were used for school and chores.

It was wartime when I was there, so we had very few clothes other than the ones that were issued to us. The older boys (grade six through nine) did have a suit and a pair of dress shoes to wear. The dress shoes were obtained with a war ration card. Some students got cards from their parents, but my shoe ration card was somehow obtained by the supervisor of the boy's dorm. These dress shoes had to be worn to the dining hall on Sundays. Our attire included a tie. I remember hating to wear our Sunday dress clothes, and I couldn't wait to get them off and hung back on my clothing hook.

During the war, anybody that wanted one, could get a war bond stamp book. You could then fill it with 10-cent stamps. When you had \$18.75 worth, you would turn it into the office. That would get you a real war bond. I had one, but I don't remember how long it took me to get it. We would save rubber bands and aluminum foil and turn that in, too. Chewing gum used to come wrapped in aluminum foil, so we saved that, too. In the Summer, the boys used to have "Victory Gardens", where the football field is now. All of the garden produce would go into the root cellar. We had a lot of free time during the summer. The swimming pool was at the park and swimming was free for us, as the school paid for us to go to the park. We would get swimming tickets. There was nothing else down at the park then. We would just play around, probably ball tag. The old baseball bleachers were there. We played at the park a lot! Also, whenever a carnival was in town, the school would get tickets for us, a ticket for each ride.

Meals were also eaten military style. The students marched to the dining hall. We were all assigned to eat at certain tables. We stood by our table until everyone was there. At the command of the matron, who would ring a bell for Grace, and then we would all sit down. Our food was brought to us in bowls, and then passed around family-style. There was never enough food! To make sure that there was food remaining for the last students at the table, the students were seated alternately, boy and girl. It was assumed that the girls would eat less. This was probably true. It also made sure that the smaller students got the same share. The girls and the smaller boys did not get the physically demanding chores, such as milking cows, making hay, cleaning barns, or maintaining the grounds. The campus was very well maintained. There was a grounds man, Mr. Davies who supervised its care. He had students assigned to him as their detail. We were not allowed to walk on the lawn. If we did, even if it was to retrieve a ball that had gotten out of the playing area, we received consequences!

These consequences were usually in the form of restrictions, which meant the student could not leave their dorm room after a certain hour, or leave the campus for any activities that would be planned for the students. In the winter, punishment included shoveling snow off the sidewalks, or sweeping the sidewalks. A little worse punishment was having to stand while eating in the dining room. You didn't want your girl to see you standing and eating!

Discipline was strict. A mild form of punishment was additional work hours. This meant that for each infringement of the rules, the students had to work many hours above their required chores. Cleaning and scrubbing the basements was another way to work off hours. This was done after everybody was in bed. The next severe form of punishment was restriction. The students were restricted to campus for a specified number of days. The length of restriction was dependent upon the severity of the infraction. Finally, the most severe form of punishment was a spanking given by the dormitory floor supervisor. This spanking was done with a rubber hose, which was usually a piece of garden hose. The rubber hose was our only counselor!

I did get one spanking in my seven years at the school. My friend and I pulled a prank. We each got three licks. We had it coming. It's funny to think about now, but nobody wanted a spanking, so there really were few discipline problems. There was no breaking anything, not windows, doors or bunks. There were no maintenance people like today, sure, we had a carpenter, but he had other things to do.

All in all, I look back on my time at the school with fond memories. They were hard times, but they were also good times. The school was my family. I recall one dormitory floor matron who was my favorite. We called her Ma, but her name was Mrs. Selkirk. She has passed on now, but I did have an opportunity to write and thank her for guiding me in the right direction in life.

I was on the football and basketball teams for two years. Our school colors were orange and black. My number was #9. We had a nice gymnasium. It sat on the west side of the campus, right where White Shield Hall is now. Our football fields were where the new school and Tinker Hall are today. The boy's dorms were just west of the dining hall. The old dining hall was East of the new dining hall. East of that was the girl's dormitory and main office, and East of that was the Superintendent's house. North of there was his stone garage. It's still there and just West of the garage was the root cellar.

Then came the heating plant. Everything around the building seemed dirty, because of the coal burning boilers. The West part of the heating plant was the school laundry. West of the school laundry stood a brick building. It was a schoolhouse and the first four grades went there. Later, it was called the Employee's Club. The staff took their meals there. There were a couple of apartments in that building also. Later, the school bakery was put in that building. They used to store some food in the basement, dry goods mostly. West of the club building was another brick house. It used to be a shoe repair shop. It was made into living quarters in the early 1940's.

The present log building, the Cultural Center, was the Girl Scout Cabin and the candy store. I spent a few nickels and dimes there. It would be open from 4-5 p.m. Monday through Friday. Then there was the big shop. It housed the two buses. The carpenter shop was North of the big shop. Mr. Brunner was the carpenter. I guess he was the only maintenance man. Mr. Brunner was the overseer when the school was built, between 1904 and 1908, and then he stayed on after the school was opened. Mr. Brunner was German. He didn't speak English very well. He always had a big cigar in his mouth. I remember that he was a funny man. He was always chewing on that cigar. During the war, the FBI would check on him. Mr. Brunner always wore suspenders that made his pants look short.

There was a blacksmith shop in the big shop, too. To the North of the carpenter's shop was the butcher shop, milk house and the barn. West of the barn was the hog house, hog pens, and the corncrib. The machine shop was at the South end of the corncrib.

The school would butcher hogs about once a month. The barn boys would always help. After they were cleaned and cut into quarters, we would hang them in a walk-in cooler in the milk house. From there they would go to the kitchen. I worked in the barn when I was bigger. It was a huge barn, it faced East with a large door on the East and another on the West. The barn housed about 40 head of dairy cows. We milked about 20 cows, three times a day. There were four boys that had the chore of milking with six machines. We had a cream separator in the milk house. We would separate so much milk, that we could make our own butter. Mr. Comford was the farm manager. He was good man to work for. We all knew that he was a World War I veteran and we respected him.

There was a horse barn connected to the main barn. We had two bulls kept in separate pens, some calves, and two horses. The bull's names were Senator and Nuts. We would use the horses every morning to clean the barn and pull the manure spreader. Two boys would load the spreader and two boys would take it out, I was one of them. The closest field was where the NDSCS stadium is today.

There was about six or seven boys that took care of the barns and I was one of them. It wasn't a bad place to work. On Sunday afternoons, the barn boys would get together, make a ball out of rags, and play tag ball. Man, we used to have a lot of fun! We had a lot of room to play in, all over the barn, up in the hayloft, and the straw loft. We would have to get back to the dorm by 4:00 p.m. We would then clean up for supper. After supper, it was homework time. After homework, we could listen to the radio until 9:00 p.m. Some nights it was Gang busters, the Green Hornet or The Shadow and sometimes if we were lucky, the Joe Lewis fight.

The barn, milk house, butcher house and all of the garages were heated with steam heat. None of these buildings was insulated. The cars and trucks were nice and warm when it was cold out. The old school building sat right North of where the present school building is now, right about where the flagpole is. The flagpole was moved, too. It was about 300 feet north from where it is now. The old school sat facing North. It had four exits, two facing North, one on the West and the other on the East. The library was between the two North exits. When walking to the South you would come to the auditorium, then to four classrooms. The building had two stories. Upstairs there were two more classrooms, one on each side of the library.

The hospital was East of the campus. It was the clinic, too. There was a nurse on hand at all times. She lived in one part of the hospital. A doctor from uptown would come out once in a while, if someone were sick.

Sometime during the 1930's the old school had an addition put on to the South, which was comprised of boy's and girl's dorm wings that stood two stories high. That's when they built all the wood houses and garages. I know that the laundry was added on to the heating plant in 1936.

I left the school in the spring of 1944 and enlisted in the army in 1945. I was seventeen years old. A friend and I enlisted, we were sent to Fort Crook Neb. It was a prisoner of war camp for the Italian prisoners. They were okay guys, they did all the K.P. work. I talked to one of them, the first Italian I saw and talked with, he was lonely and he showed me where he came from on the map. I don't know where he got the map. He sure liked American cigarettes, he bummed enough from me.

From Fort Crook I went alone to Fort Leavenworth, KS, my friend didn't pass his exam. The fort was a huge place, that's where we were issued our G.I. clothing. We did some of our footwork there, it was easy for me, I already knew most of it from the old Wahpeton Indian School. The rest of the guys were falling all over their feet. I already knew how to make up my bunk, too, and bounce a quarter off 6 inches. I used to like to listen to the bugle blow taps, it was a sad sound. I had 4 good friends. One from Iowa was the closest.

In 1947 I was honorably discharged and came back to Wahpeton. It was hard times! You couldn't buy a job. At nineteen years of age I went to work for a trucking company in town for one year. Then I went to work for B.J. Williams Roofing Co. I worked there for fifteen years. I liked B.J. He was good to me. He treated you fairly. That's probably why I stayed with him for so long.

In November of 1947, I told my boss, B. J., I was going to the Cities (Minneapolis and St. Paul) to try and find some work. He said fine, we'll be shutting down here for the winter, come back in the spring and see me. So one cold night I caught the Great Northern Empire Builder for Minneapolis. I left Breckenridge about 2:00 a.m. and arrived in Minneapolis around 6 or 7 a.m. Here I was in Minneapolis and all I knew was that I had 2 cousins there someplace. I checked my bag in a locker and went downtown. I found myself on Washington Ave. They tell me that's where all the bums hang out. I was walking down the street when this bum stopped and panhandled me. Funny I wasn't scared, I just got out of the Army and I was still in good shape. Just as I was going to give him a half a buck, he said, "hey!, you're a Hill aren't you"? I said yeah. We talked a while. I didn't know him, but I knew his people. So I bought him breakfast. He told me where one of my cousins lived. He told me what streetcar to take and where to get off.

After we finished breakfast, we said goodbye and I got on the streetcar. I sat behind the driver. I told him where I wanted to get off and so he stopped there. I knocked on one door and this guy sticks his head out. It was my cousin. He was just having breakfast. I had coffee with him. He had a wife and 2 small boys. He had a job with a trucking company. We visited a long time. He told me his other 2 brothers were living in St. Paul. I had gone to the Wahpeton Indian School with the younger brother just a few years before. He didn't know my other cousin. He was in St. Paul someplace. I stayed overnight. The next day I went to St. Paul. Cousin said to get off on St. Peter Street, that's where you'll find the Indians. On St. Peter's Street I found Indians and every other kind of humans. I found two other cousins and a couple more former students of the Wahpeton Indian School. They were a wild bunch and I was one of them. I soon ran out of money. I had to find a job. I made friends with another Indian boy my age (19) and we found a job together. I stayed with him at his folk's place. It was good to get away from the wild bunch. About 30 days with the job, I quit and bought a bus ticket to Graceville, MN and on to Breckenridge, MN. I was back to Wahpeton. I was 20 years old and went back to work for B.J. Williams.

That's when I made friends with Len Marquardt. We had some great times, we hunted pheasants, ducks, and deer and we fished together many times. He arranged a blind date for me with a girl back in 1952, Jean Jones from Wyndmere, ND. We were married on April 20, 1954 and have been married for 48 years now. We lived Northwest of Wyndmere for about 4 years. Then we moved to Wahpeton in 1957. Jean and I have 4 daughters and now we have 8 grandkids and 5 great-grandkids. Len is still my friend and my wife and his wife are best friends.

The schools today are wild, no discipline, everybody is afraid to say or do anything for fear they will be in trouble and I don't blame them. The teachers ought to get together and let the state lawmakers go back to some of the old laws. Get religion back into the schools, I always say God should come first, then your family, then your job. You lose your job, you can always find another job. You should never lose the first two, When I went to the Wahpeton Indian School we had religion, we had religious instruction every Monday evening and attended church every Sunday. The School got along very well.

In 1962 I went to work at the Wahpeton Indian School. I trained to be a boiler operator for one year. The new school was heated by steam heat from 3 new Cleaver-Brooks boilers in the heating plant. I read everything I could find on boilers. I was the youngest boiler operator here and 2 older men were ready to retire. So, I guess, the boilers were mine to work on. I worked the night shift and I used my time to read a lot on boilers and anything else I could find. Boiler operator shifts were 8:00 a.m. to 4:00 p.m., 4:00 p.m. to 12 midnight and midnight to 8:00 a.m. After I worked about five years on the boilers, I would have to train the new men, after the older men would retire. The pay was the same. I think I trained 5 men in 25 years. For 5 of the 30 years I worked at the school, I transferred over to the carpenter shop, after the carpenter retired.

After I got used to the heating plant, it was fun. It was fun to come to work. I guess I got along with everybody, or everybody got along with me. There was this one fellow I worked with, he came there

after I did, he was a former student of the Wahpeton Indian School, too. We got to be friends, we all worked together well.

This friend and I would give nicknames to some of the guys. Not just in our department but all over the campus. Names like, Dude, Lardhead, Slow, Pieface, Sack, Nasty, Sloppie, Monk, BigHead, Blackie, Pistol Pete, Pecos Pete, and Slick. That's most of them. I wonder what they called us. Anyway, we had fun working with these guys. This friend and a friend of his, Crooked Man, put on the party when I retired in 1990.

In 1992 my wife, the superintendent and another lady retired. Then the school board hired a new superintendent. He was trouble, he gave the school a black eye. The school board got rid of him. Then after he left the board hired a woman for superintendent. About Nov. of 1996, the maintenance manager called me to help them out with the heating systems. At first I didn't want to do it. He called again so I went to work part-time, 20 hours a week. What a mess the place was. No one knew anything about the heating systems. I started with White Shield Hall mechanical room and then went on to the next dorm. Twenty hours a week wasn't enough time, so they let me work 32 hours a week. I had been back to work at the Indian School 5 years when this woman superintendent got into trouble. She stole money, lots of money. The school board got rid of her. So, the old school got another black eye, that's two black eyes for the school. The school board hired another superintendent, now things are running pretty good. I came back to work again last fall, my 6th year, I might retire for good this year.

I remember back in 1943 the government wanted to close the Indian School. Some lawyers and big shots from the City of Wahpeton went to Washington, D.C. and raised hell. It never closed. The government tried again to close it in 1982, June 1st. They didn't close it again. I don't think the school will ever close. It's a different kind of school now, it's a therapeutic school. The school's name is even changed to Circle of Nations. I don't know who came up with that name. The School is different, the people are different. The old times are gone.

I'll have 36 years of employment and 7 years as a student, so I have been on this campus 43 years. The facility has good maintenance people now. Back in 1986 we shut down our boilers and started buying steam from the Science School and in 1996 we got rid of the boilers. Someone from Bismarck bought them. There were 3 boilers all Cleaver-Brooks. There were 2 high pressure, 200 horse and 1-100 horse high pressure. I was there when they hauled them away. All the firemen were made maintenance men. We had another boiler an Iron Fireman 500 horse, we had wanted a 300 horse. The B.I.A. got a 500 horse, it was huge, we only used it for 2 months out of 12. The school gave it away to another school in South Dakota, a Catholic Indian School. I hear they are still using it. We named the boiler Big Bertha.

In 1963, Tinker Hall, the boy's dorm was built and then Sacajawea Hall, the girl's dorm. The gymnasium and some living quarters north of the boy's dorm were torn down. I was in the storage room of the gymnasium with my oldest brother the day before it was torn down. This was where the old football and basketball equipment was kept. I saw my old football uniform and basketball jersey #9. I should have taken them! I have been kicking myself ever since for not doing so! I just don't know why I didn't take anything as a souvenir. There were all the old football uniforms we used. The helmets that were made from all leather, some were missing chinstraps. When you got hit by another player, your helmet would fly off and roll down the field. That looked funny, just like your head was rolling. The shoulder pads weren't too bad, but everything below wasn't much good, you felt it when someone blocked or hit you. I remember the football shoes, the ones I wore were 2 sizes too big for me. I remember one practice, there was this guy that came out on the field late. He looked like a clown, pants were too big for him, helmet was too small and he looked 6' 6" tall. He had a jersey on that had a number 00. He was from Macy, NE. I asked him, what are you, all he said was, he wanted to play football. We got to be good friends' yes, if I would have taken those basketball and football uniforms, I'd have made sure they would be where the young players would see them today. The football uniforms were sent here from another Indian School, so they were not new when we got them. The School got new uniforms in the 50's. Football is a tough game.

The gym brought back some good memories. We would have parties, dances, boxing and basketball in that gym. I lettered 2 years. During the 40's there was lots of boxing going on. There were the Golden Glove fights at the Science School and the Indian School always had boxing gloves. We used to put boxing shows on at the gym. I even tried boxing in one of them exhibitions, and I thought football was rough. If two boys were caught fighting, they were made to put the gloves on and go into the West basement. Then we would see a nice clean fight. There was always a winner. The boys would shake hands after the fight and they were friends. I received my last letter W with football and basketball and 2 hash marks, I gave it to a girl from Kansas.

After the gym came down they demolished the boy's dorm and the cottage West of the dormitory. In 1967, they built White Shield Hall and in 1972 they build Pemican Hall, the new dining center. When the new dining room was finished, they knocked down the old kitchen, the old girl's dorm, the milk house and the barn. The hospital was torn down in about 1995, along with 2 houses South of the main office.

So, I came to this school in 1939, was clothed, fed three times a day, educated and then it gave me thirty years of employment. When I hear former students running down the old school, it makes me mad. I wonder what they did to get punished. I have lived in Wahpeton for 60 years and made lots of friend in this community. I have no complaints.

I am certain God had something to do with it