

Virginia Dorsey shares an amusing memory with Mildred Finlon when she taught at Sunderland School from 1915 through 1918.

Mrs. Finlon: And tell me about the time you came down on the sleigh.

Mrs. Dorsey: Oh, that was my ride on the train. I came from Baltimore on the WB&A and then at District Line we transferred to the train — to the Beach train as we called it — on my way to Owings Station. I thought we'd never get to Owings Station because we would move ahead and then back, and move ahead, and back, back. So, finally, we landed. It was a very cloudy afternoon in winter. And that night we had a heavy snow. And when I got to Owings Station, there was no one to meet me. So, I stayed at Mr. Harry Owings' that night — very hospitable people.

And the next morning Claude Owings drove me to Sunderland through snow drifts — I just don't know how deep. I remember that he was driving Mr. Owings' big, gray horse. But I thoroughly enjoyed that sleigh ride.

Mrs. Finlon: Now, when you say "Sunderland", that was opposite to the place where All Saints Church is at the present time?

Mrs. Dorsey: Right.

Mrs. Finlon: Is it on the side where the present Post Office is or is it over on the other side?

Mrs. Dorsey: The Sunderland School — the building is still there. It's right across from the — I guess it's the north entrance to the churchyard. And the school is still there.

And I have very, very amusing memories of what happened at that school to show you something about the kind of schools that we had in those days. Of course, it was one room with a vestibule. And the children used to — they put their lunches up by the chimney. And the little squirrels — flying squirrels — who lived up in All Saints' shutters, between the shutters and the building, they would come down and go underneath the school and come up between the chimney, and sometimes the children would find a flying squirrel in their lunch bag.

Mrs. Finlon: In their lunch bag probably eating their lunch; is that right?

Mrs. Dorsey: I guess so.

Mrs. Finlon: How were the schoolhouses heated in those days?

Mrs. Dorsey: We had the one big stove, one big square iron stove in about the middle of the floor. And, of course, we had the wood.

Mrs. Finlon: And who brought the wood? Did the Board of Education bring —

Mrs. Dorsey: Oh, that was a special duty of the Board of Education to buy and have the wood brought to the school and stored. I can't just remember, but I think we used to try to put as much in the vestibule as we could in case it snowed.

Mrs. Finlon: Were the children very interested in the surroundings? Were they interested in studying about the Bay or were they more interested in doing with the books?

Mrs. Dorsey: Well, they seemed to take the Bay really — this is at Chesapeake Beach now. They were just at home. They didn't seem to attach very much importance in those days, you know. We had science of a type, but we didn't go into much detail about the things that the Bay could offer about what we might have studied and are studying now in detail.