

Trouble!

I started to school in a new, fast growing suburb of Dallas. Robert E. Lee Elementary School accommodated the local school population in a series of temporary wooden classroom buildings on one end of the block where the permanent school would eventually be located.

A slatted wooden sidewalk ran between the buildings. In wet weather the black gumbo ground became a quagmire even the youngest children knew to keep away from. Yet, one morning I was captivated by the dual fact that I was wearing brand new rubber galoshes over my school oxfords and that the ground beyond the wooden sidewalk was untested. There were sprinklings of gravel that looked like prepared steps for venturing across the ground away from the sidewalk. I couldn't resist testing those tempting footsteps with my protecting footwear.

Alas, the gravel was thin and unsubstantial; two steps convinced me to return to the sidewalk, right into the indignant arms of Mr. Turner, the custodian, who had just cleaned the walks so that the students wouldn't track black mud into HIS clean classrooms. He swept me into the principal's office, where I was instructed to tell my mother about my misdeed before returning to school on Monday.

The long weekend provided no conspicuous opportunity for a guilty little girl to confess her misdeed. I went to bed Sunday evening without having said a word. The evening was warm, the windows were open, and the booming fireworks at the distant fair grounds intensified my growing dilemma about how to break the news of my misconduct, which was growing more serious by the minute. Finally, close to hysteria, I blurted out my confession.

However, my obvious panic combined, fortunately for me, with my mother's dislike of my teacher, Mrs. Anderson, a neighbor whose undisciplined son was a constant thorn in the flesh of all of the neighborhood. I don't know what transpired behind the principal's closed doors between Mother, Mrs. Anderson, and Mr. Lloyd, the principal, but nothing more was ever said about the "incident." I was soon moved into the next higher grade where I was no longer bored by school and stayed out of trouble for the rest of my grade school days.

(See "Model Student Days")