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Letter from Margaret Boal to President Roemer, November 18, 1924

Margaret E. Boal

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1610 Rock Glen Avenue
Glendale, California
November 18, 1924

Dr. John Roemer
St. Charles, Missouri

Dear Sir:

I wonder if you can imagine Linderwood's cupboard being bare of food on a Thanksgiving Eve? And a number of young ladies there, far from their homes. Well, that was a fact along in the '70s. Someone either forgot, or the matter was mixed up some way. But on Thanksgiving Eve a note was brought down to the farm that the school cupboard was bare. No money to get a proper dinner, also too late. More than one farmer's wife and farmer cooked and baked and slaughtered and made it possible for the dinner to be a credit. The morning of Thanksgiving I remember they began to come to our farm with great baskets of everything a farm used to have. Our old family carriage was filled up to its top, only room left on the front seat for the driver and a small excited kiddy. The sight of the face of the lady in charge was well worth seeing when she saw what was there. Those girl students had the dinner of their young lives, no doubt. We were back home in time for ours. I was worried, fearing there were not enough drumsticks to go around. There were some famous cooks down in that neck of the woods, towards Alton, Black Walnut, etc. I couldn't understand why the lady had to cry when father began to carry the dinner in. But it was the best to be had. That was the shortest 8 mile drive I ever took, - the way home in a blinding snowstorm. I know some of the trustees thought it was giving them too much. It couldn't be given often, but it was given at the right time, - that time. The late Mr. Samuel Watson helped many times in many ways. He was called close in money matters, but he gave freely to L. I knew Dr. Niccolls, Brookes and Gause. They used to drive across to our farm, stay all night and go on to St. Charles.

Those days were days of toil for all; nothing to help along but two hands and faith in the school. I am very glad indeed it is so prosperous now. There were some trustees unfriendly to the school, always on the opposite side of its progress. How they ever got to be on the board, I do not know, but it succeeded in spite of them. They were displeased at the generous response to the call; regretted that they did not know of all that feast until too late. But I do know that one of them went over as soon as he heard about it and asked for some; one of the young ladies gathered up some toast crumbs on a plate, with a napkin, and served it to him on a big tray. He was telling the folks about it - whew - wasn't he mad!

These are just side-lights on the early struggles. Mr. Samuel Watson had the name of being close, but whenever L. was in trouble he was always there with more than his share. He did not get his money lounging around feed stores and grocery stores. It became a regular habit among some of the farmers, if one had a surplus or was going to town with empty wagon, to put in something for the school; often they would make a special trip for it. I know that as long as we lived in Missouri - its cupboard was not bare, Thanksgiving nor Christmas. It was an ordinary thing for some of the farmers to take things, - a barrel of flour, several hams, a big barrel of apples, or potatoes or sugar, even nuts were not refused, or loads of wood, baskets of eggs. No one missed any of the things, yet a load of it counted up when the bank account was low, or nil, - it was better than rice and molasses. It was unthinkable that any one

should be hungry or miss even one meal.

Those two fault-finding trustees tried the souls of the others, at times, and gave less than any of them, except that time 1877, I simply sat down on my knees in front of them until they gave what the others did. One, a relation, had it in for me ever afterwards. I was a saucy, badly-spelled kiddy those days. The other one disgraced himself before he died in some asylum. How long would your girls stay on a diet of rice and old Orleans molasses, cornbread, and milk diluted with water? That was the dinner those girls would have had on that long-forgotten day. Someone had taken up a load of wood and feed to the school stock. But I felt badly that the lady cried over what we brought. I felt that there was something missing or not quite right, but the older folks knew why. Those lovely, peaceful days are no more. It has weathered the storms and winds of life. It is receiving its just reward now.

I am tied here to California. I would possibly be the only one at the 100th, that was at the 50th, but my ties are all here. None of those I knew are there in St. Charles now, or but few anyway. I am of another generation, yet I am glad to meet the new ones coming from there, to our Club. Our ages vary greatly. I have one advantage, I have known it longer than any of the others; but I was there only one half-term 1883, but I had studied all the books my sisters had used.

I hope I have not taken too much of your valuable time, but an impulse to recall that other long-ago Thanksgiving prompted this letter - possibly 50 years ago.

You, or whoever may be guiding the destiny of Lindenwood, have my very best wishes, and I am sure proud of her many fine young women who pass through her doors.

Sincerely,

Not for publication

(Signed) Margaret E. Boal

P. S. Just a suggestion has flashed through my head. Why not send out a call for the 100th celebration for earliest bits of history of L. from its oldest pupils? You might get something worth-while, put in book form.