

May 25, 2009

Dear Mom,

Among the old photos I have on my website, I have 4 or 5 of McDowell School kids. A few days ago, I got this email:

My name is Ruta Buckingham (maiden name Ruta Bredikis) and I live in Grand Rapids, Michigan; I am one of the Bredikis kids that used to live on Harry Cogdal's farm. I live in Grand Rapids, Michigan and wanted to let you know that I saw the old McDowell school picture of all the kids, including the six Bredikis kids and was moved by the picture (1949). Wow, that was a long time ago, but so grateful to see this picture. The spelling of Bredikis was spelled correctly once in the picture, but who is counting. We were little farm kids, but that has all changed. All of the Bredikis kids now are city dwellers. My sister Vizbulite (next to the oldest) still keeps in touch with the Compton family. All of us live in Grand Rapids, except for Ilze (the baby) lives in New Jersey and my brother (only brother) lives in Paw Paw.

Steve, that is a quick update, not sure if this email will reach you, but if it does, thank you so much for the great picture.

I replied:

So good to hear from you, Ruta! What are the first names of your sisters (third and fourth in top row)? And what is your brother's first name? I will correct the captions. Did we call Vizbulite "Vis"?

If I remember correctly, it was you who tattled on us boys for having wrestling matches in Jim Marshall's yard on the way home from school, and I think you got picked on by my big brother Walter as a result.

She replied:

What a pleasant surprise to hear from you; I am still in awe of the picture and can't believe that we were once these young kids attending a one room school house. That was a different world!

To answer your question, there are three sisters in the top row of the picture, the one on the end starting from left to right is Lilita (Lil), the sister with the white blouse is Inta (the oldest), next to her with the dark hair is Vizbulite (Viz) and you are correct about her being called Viz. What a memory! Middle row, my brother whose name is Janis (John) is third from the right. That takes us to the bottom row, the first little girl on the left is Ilze, and in the middle with the plaid dress is me. That takes care of the Bredikis clan.

I have been looking at the picture trying to remember some of the kids...Judy Fowler is one that I do remember. Of course Mrs. Reuschlein...not too many faces I recognize. Steve, are you at the very end of the bottom row (the row with Ilze and myself)?

I will be discussing the picture with my sisters to see who they remember and enjoy some good memories; that should be a riot!

Once again, thank you for the awesome picture of the cutest kids I have ever seen!!!!

I relied:

I've corrected the captions in the 1949 McDowell School photo with the information you gave me. Thanks. And I think it was Lil, not you, who told on us for wrestling in Jimmy Marshall's yard.

How did you find out about my website?

I am sending a copy of our correspondence to brother Walter Harry, who lives in South Haven, and Charlotte (Harry) Keegstra, who lives in Grand Rapids.

Steve