



*The following was a letter sent from Otto O. Bernstein,
first principal of Maplewood Academy in 1904,
upon Maplewood's 50th anniversary celebration in 1954.*

Editor's Note: Mrs. Bernstein's maiden name was Myrtle B. Franklin, daughter of William Morris Franklin and Sarah Adeline (Addie) Schram. The Franklin family and, especially, the Schram family were some of the very first Seventh-day Adventist families in Minnesota. The Schram family is mentioned several times in the book by W. B. Hill, "Experiences of a Pioneer Minister of Minnesota" – a very interesting book highlighting, in story form, the development of the Seventh-day Adventist work in Minnesota throughout its earliest days. You can find a link to this book on the Resources page of www.mnsdahistory.org (Kathy Joy Parker-Parke, Editor, mnsdahistory.org, MWA class of 1973)

To members of the School Board and Faculty of Maplewood Academy and its Student Body and to the many friends assembled in Hutchinson, Minnesota, on this 50th anniversary year celebration. Greeting from us in California.

Yes, I was principal of Maplewood Boarding Academy for the first two years of its history – then located at Maple Plain. The school opened in September, 1904, with a curriculum comparable to that offered in any high school plus piano instruction and courses in Bible study.

Unbelievable as it may seem, a student's expense in those early days, living in the dormitory, was only ten dollars per month; which included board, room, tuition, laundry, etc. with a catalogue proviso that each student must contribute two hours work each day under proper direction and supervision – whether the work assigned be in the culinary department, the laundry, or in the ninety acre farm which furnished much food for the school – milk, cream, butter, fruit, vegetables, etc. The academy, in the first year, closed with a bank account of \$300 and the second year, with \$700 in the treasury.

During the years I acted as principal and taught the Bible courses, the following persons were associated members of the Maplewood Faculty: Prof. H. J. Sheldon, Miss Caroline Hopkins, Miss Wavie Tubbs, Mrs. Myrtle Bernstein, Miss Lena Rosenthal, Ralph Campbell, and Elder Samuel E. Jackson. To this staff of efficient instructors may be credited the laying of foundation principles which have made Maplewood an outstanding school of its kind.

The Christian influence of this group of instructors on the individual student outside the class room, was so marked that during those first two years we had scarcely any cases of discipline for infraction of the academy rules. Each student was placed on his honor – teachers and students studied together, played together, and ate together (but not in cafeteria style). Our taffy pulls, our spelling bees, our evenings of social entertainment, the hours of recreation in hall games and skating will always bring back bright memories.

From the beginning, Maplewood Academy has had an enviable record of achievement. It has not only provided high school education on a very inexpensive basis, but with its course completed, has sent out into the world, hundreds of young men and women pretty well equipped to meet life's responsibilities. However, many of its graduates have taken advanced college training and now have affixed to their names such titles as – M.D., R.N., Ph.D., D.D.S.; and others, in the field of religion, have been or are now, successful preachers, evangelists, conference presidents and secretaries, or foreign missionaries.

Now, here's one for the book ... it was past 11 P.M. – lights had been put out an hour earlier. The academy family lay peacefully asleep amidst the maple woods on this glorious Indian summer moonlight night. I had arisen to take my occasional midnight "look-around" to assure myself that all was well. In the chapel, where so often we had prayed for wisdom and guidance in fulfilling the trust the school board and parents had imposed upon us, I found but a sacred stillness.

As I was passing down towards the dining hall, I heard a rustling noise - or didn't I? Flashing my light here and there, I discovered, over in the dining room corner, a student couple "holding a conference." Such meetings, however, especially when held at night, were contrary to academy rules but I said nothing and passed along. Returning a few minutes later, however, I found the meeting had "adjourned."

The night passed - the sun ushered in a "Good Morning!" and, as usual, the school resumed its daily program. There were no calls to the "professor's office!" There was no "meeting of the faculty." There was no "pack your trunk" order. But I know there were two very anxious, extremely nervous students - expectantly waiting.

Days passed ... I let them wait ... waiting, you know, gives time for thought while silence often administers rebuke. The wise man wrote in Eccl 3:7, "There is a time to keep still." We proved it good counsel in this instance.

The students of our story became a "model pair" and, later, a "bridal pair." He became a successful preacher and she tells their children what wonderful faculty Maplewood Academy had when they were students!

After my withdrawal from Maplewood Academy to resume our calling to city evangelism in the east, Professor H. J. Sheldon was elected Principal and, although there were changes naturally from time to time in faculty personnel, yet the general principles in conduct of Maplewood remained the same through the years that followed. Maplewood Academy's removal to Hutchinson and its later history I must leave to others to relate.

One thing, however, upon which all can agree, is that this institution has had an enviable record – filling a real need in providing Christian education for Seventh-day Adventist youth. Let Minnesota be proud of its school for its influence has reached out far and wide and I dare say, will be evidenced when at last, under the Tree of Life, we will, in gladness, shake hands – teachers and students, and shout the triumphs of the cross. What a gathering that will be! Professor Butherus, you and your faculty members will, in that day, see that our teaching profession was not in vain. God bless you all.

Mrs. Bernstein and I deeply regret we cannot be with you on this Maplewood's 50th anniversary celebration. And now, before I sign off, the following facts may be of interest to you all – of the original Maplewood faculty, only four members remain: Professor H. J. Sheldon (retired) lives in El Monte, California; Miss Caroline Hopkins (retired) lives near La Sierra College, Arlington, California; Mrs. Bernstein and I are living in retirement in our Sunland, California home, called Dunmoven, appropriately so named because, during our career in city evangelism over a 60 year period, we moved 67 times, held 77 city efforts throughout America and three in London, England, besides 63 spearhead efforts on the Pacific coast from Washington state to Mexico. Age has now crept upon us and we are in fact "dunmoven" with only one more move ahead from Earth to Heaven. When that time comes, we hope you will join us in the glorious shout, "Heaven at last – endless, boundless glory in Heaven at last!"

Otto O. Bernstein