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History of Freeland, Pa.

Alberta (Quinn) Bittenbender (1907-1975)

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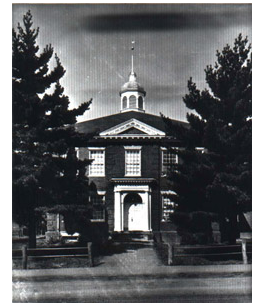
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MMI's first female teacher



Here is a contribution from Nancy (Bittenbender) Gerlach, whose mother Alberta (Quinn) Bittenbender -- Mrs. George Bittenbender -- was MMI's first female teacher. This photo was taken in Mrs. Bittenbender's classroom. The MMI Flash



newsletter shown below is from October 8th, 1954 and reports the surprise news that the first woman teacher in 76 years has come to M.M.I. She also worked as the school secretary (replacing Irene Kempchinsky) and apparently helped the students to get that week's issue of the MMI Flash done. Students called her "Mrs. B." The second page of the MMI Flash lists student assignments for an upcoming open house, including those assigned for "Typing -- Mrs. Bittenbender." Nancy also shares the report of her mother's death on April 5, 1975.

Nancy (Bittenbender) Gerlach wrote:

My grandfather was a boss at the old Drifton Shops and when he died at 26 leaving my grandmother with 6 children. Mrs. Coxe of course stepped and took care of them. My uncles all attended MMI and graduated from college and went on to great jobs. My mother attended business school and became the first woman teacher at MMI.



My mother first taught at McCann's School of business. After my brother and myself were in high school she went back to work for Lambert Broad at MMI. When there was a need for business skills, he asked her to teach typing. She was always completely disciplined about everything.

She was born in 1907 and passed away April 5, 1975. She started at MMI in 1954. I



don't remember when she left. ... Forgot to tell you another one of her stories. When she was teaching, there was a photography club at the school. Once a year in the spring they would go to New York City to photograph professional models. I forget which year it was. ... Anyway, to be funny, the yearbook editor and his staff superimposed my mom's picture on the body of a model for inclusion with the teaching staff section. Needless to say, the entire yearbook staff that year spent quite a bit of time cutting out that picture in every yearbook before they were distributed. That probably was the only MMI yearbook with holes in the staff section.

The school newspapers are the ones that were put out every month. The picture was actually taken in her classroom.

Thank you to Nancy Gerlach for sharing her mother's story with us. All images but the MMI photo are here thanks to her. The MMI building photo is here thanks to John Zubach.

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Site constructed by [C. Tancin](#).

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