

A sod schoolhouse built circa 1902 in Nebraska.



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## EDITOR'S NOTE

**A** little red schoolhouse is a familiar icon to almost anyone in the United States. Nationwide it is a common symbol for schools, even though our modern schools do not at all resemble this design, which is drawn from one-room schools of the past.

Many of us have heard stories from our parents or aunts and uncles about what it was like to attend a one-room school. But we ourselves went to schools that had a separate classroom (or more than one) for each grade level. It is hard for us to imagine what it would be like to go to a tiny school where all the students, whatever their ages, learned their lessons in the same room.

Schoolchildren in the Washington, D.C., area can experience a one-room school firsthand by taking a field trip to nearby Seneca Schoolhouse. Built in the 1870s, the school has been restored to its original condition. Students who visit the school wear costumes that resemble the clothes schoolchildren wore in the 1870s. When these young visitors arrive at Seneca Schoolhouse, they are greeted by a teacher in 1870s dress who teaches them lessons based on *McGuffey's Readers*—popular textbooks of the 1800s. Like schoolchildren of long ago, the visiting students write with chalk on small slates instead of using pencils and paper. They role-play historical activities and even eat lunches made of simple foods that children ate in the nineteenth century. (No potato chips or cans of Coke.)

Students enjoy immersing themselves in a school experience from the past, as evidenced by the popularity of field trips to Seneca Schoolhouse and other schools like it in the Washington area. We hope our readers will enjoy reading the feature article in this issue and using the lesson plan that accompanies it to help their own students learn more about one-room schools and take a closer look at their own school and other schools around them. —MK