

The Mill Canyon, NV School

by Kaye Shelley

Extract from the autobiography of Kaye Shelley's father, Nile Gorringer (1913-2010):

"The spring after we were married, I decided to go back to school and gain a few more credits.

"Just before the end of school, we made a trip to Mill Canyon, Nevada where I applied for a one room school. Late the next fall I received word to come to Nevada to teach. The house was to be furnished, so all we would need was a few personal things. When we arrived, we found the bed to be a pair of springs set up on powder boxes, the cupboards were the same, a small stove with no oven, a couple of powder boxes for chairs and a table. The adjoining schoolhouse had one small window with tarpaper inside and outside. This did not make a very pleasant room for teaching, but with a little Celotex and some carpenter work to add and enlarge windows, we made the room quite attractive. My school was made up of four children (the Kimball Elquist family). In the three years I taught there, my largest enrollment was seven students. I was paid \$135 a month with a \$10 raise each year. This was more than the high school teachers were making in Idaho. We had to carry all our water from the creek. Wash day was quite a chore, but we didn't mind it. We were 35 miles from the nearest store, but the mail came within five miles so we had fresh vegetables sent out each week. Sometimes when we went for the mail, we would end up going to Elko, Battle Mountain or occasionally Oakley, Idaho (hometown of Nile and Rachel Gorringer). In order to meet the Nevada educational requirements, I had to attend the University of Reno. Rachel got a job in the dime store and after school, I washed dishes for four hours each day. After my third year of teaching, I entered the army and was stationed at San Diego. After my basic training was over, I was put in the reserves and sent to work in the copper mines. We ended up in Ruth, Nevada."*

*Kaye's note: When we travelled to Mill Canyon in April 2022, the old bedsprings were still in the "house", but no powder boxes were there.



Kaye Shelley in front of schoolhouse, April 6, 2022.



Rachel and Nile Goringe in front of their 'home' (metal siding room attached to schoolhouse) 1940.



View of Mill Canyon settlement. Superintendent's house (far left) with school and attached teacher's house. Possible barracks on right. (not identified in Nile's photos)



Left: Students Gayla Martin, Mary Elquist holding her sister GloryAnn, Sally Martin.



Below: 1941 Elquist and Martin children at Mill Canyon.



Mine dog begging for a treat.



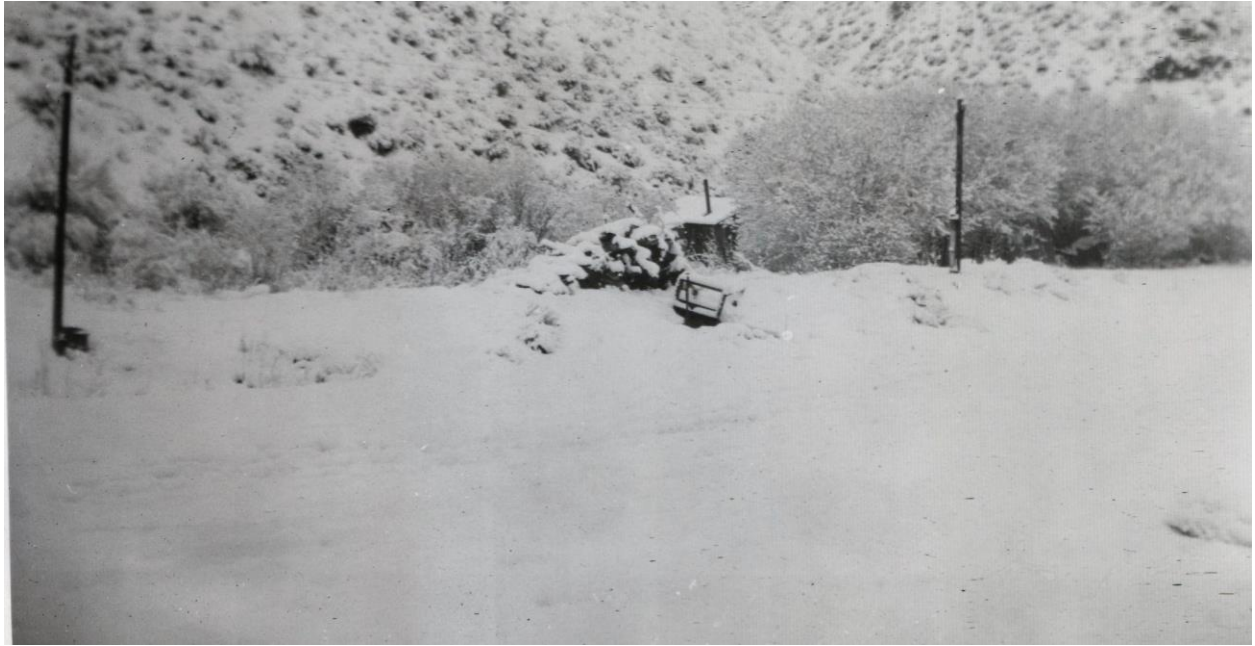
1941 Elquist children: Mary, Bill (in back), Bob, and "Buttermilk" (Allen) in front.



1941 Elquist children and friends at Mill Canyon



1941 This was Nile Gorringer's largest group of pupils while at Mill Canyon. They were children from the Elquist and Flynn families. Picture taken in front of the one room schoolhouse.



1941 Easter Sunday morning brought about 8 inches of snow. The small structure in the center of photo was their ice house.



Elquist family in old Model T Ford. My mother, Rachel, is in the back seat.



This is Kermit R. Gorringer, brother to my father. He was working at the mine when he heard there was a need for a school teacher, so he suggested his brother, Nile. Nile got the job and moved to Mill Canyon with his wife, Rachel. This was Nile's first teaching job.



Rachel and Nile picking up their mail. The mail box was 7 miles from the school and teacher's living quarters.



This is my mother, Rachel Gorringer, in front of their "home" at Mill Canyon. It was attached to the school house with a common door between the one room home and school. There was no running water and no oven. They lived here for three years, between the fall of 1940 summer of 1943.



1941 Top: The road to the mine
Below: Grandmother Mehitable Gorringer comes for a visit. Schoolroom in the background and Superintendent's house to the right.