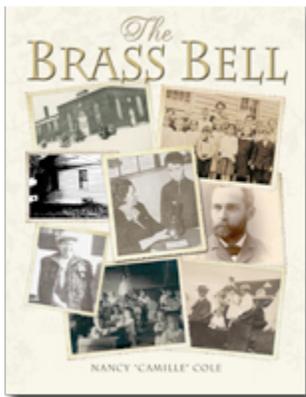


The Brass Bell

by Camille Cole

Synopsis

In everyone's life there is one person, one event or one experience that affects who they become, the road they take. For hundreds of people in Central New York that person was Miss Parsons; that experience was their days at Cherry Road School. *The*



Brass Bell tells the story of Marion Parsons' life, and of the school she started in a hen house in her father's cherry orchard that grew to become one of the highest-rated schools in New York State. Those who are left still get together to talk about their Miss Parsons and their times at the red brick school that grew up out of the old orchard. They shared their stories for the book. The backdrop of this non-fiction account that reads like a novel is the turn of the last century, the Great Depression, two world wars, and the baby boom years that followed.

The book's author, Camille Cole, is the great niece of Marion Parsons. For her, Marion was a beloved great aunt, but more like a grandmother. Throughout her childhood she was enraptured by stories of the Olden Days. She would go to her aunt and plead, "Tell me a story out of your think," and Marion would begin, "Jack hitched up the horse and buggy..." Cole recounts these stories in vivid detail in *The Brass Bell*. She weaves an account of a young woman who chose duty over desire, who returned home to fulfill her father's wishes to turn the struggling farm into a modern-day community with a school at its heart. She tells the story of a woman who seemingly gave up everything, but realized her dreams in ways she could never have imagined as a young woman who left home to discover the world and then returned to build a school.

Cole took liberties to create a story based on her aunt's journal and letters, the tales she remembered, and histories shared by the huge fan-base of a woman who has been gone for over 40 years. For anyone wondering if schools were better in the good old days and why, this is the book for them. For every nostalgia buff in every American community, this is a requisite read.