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Interview with Goldie Haferland

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Goldie Georgeson Haferland

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ORAL INTERVIEW WITH

MISS GOLDIE GEORGESON HAERLAND

BY

GLENN DUNAVAN

Miss Goldie Georgeson Haferland, taught school at the Union School in Graham County, Kansas from 1929 to 1936. She had attended this school herself for eight years before entering high school. Miss Goldie did not attend a normal school in preparation for teaching. She didn't think that she wanted to teach school so she went to work in the local bank for two years, while working there she was asked to teach so she tried it. After teaching for several years she decided she really enjoyed it, especially the smaller grades. She then attended the University of Colorado in Boulder, Colorado. Miss Goldie did this to pick up her teaching requirements. After leaving the Union school she taught first grade in Lenora Grade School forty years. She also acted as principal for nine years.

The teacher usually came to school at eight in the morning. In the winter she was required to build up the fire so the building would be warm for the children. She also did other tasks of cleaning and maintenance of the school building as well as teaching. Teacher studying was done in the evening as there was little time to study during the school day and in between classes. When Miss Goldie taught, teacher activities were not limited, but she can remember when teachers were forbidden to attend dances. The teacher turnover was limited in the community with replacement teachers usually consisting of local girls when the present moved on to another school or left for other reasons. The methods used by Miss Goldie at the time had a lot of memorization with her own progressive method was the she taught. She also reduced the amount of recitation. Often the older children helped with the smaller children. Spelling Bees were often used as a learning element. The grading scale used by Miss Goldie was on a numerical basis 98, 90, 85.

Miss Goldie usually taught two types of class, because with written work they could go ahead and work on, while another class could work on spelling or some other subject that needed to be supervised. She never had any discipline problems like that. There were probably at least two male teachers in the surrounding area community schools.

The school day started at nine in the morning and ended about four in the afternoon. There was a recess at 10:30 in the morning, and another in the afternoon. About a half an hour was used as a lunch break. The school day started with the morning exercises, this consisted of a song or a poem the students liked, and possibly a part of a story might be read. About five to ten minutes were used in the opening exercise. The students enjoyed having the teacher read to them. The subjects taught in the school were: reading, writing, mathematics, and geography, with some others as time and student grade level permitted. When a large number of students were in school there might be only three to five minutes spent on a subject by a particular class. Miss Goldie's first year of teaching had thirteen students and about five different grades. In previous year classes had been as high as twenty or more, with sometimes as high as thirty- three, when Miss Goldie attended the school.

The texts especially the older books seemed not to change very often. They were probably used ten years before they were ever changed. Any text change came from the county superintendant or from the state. All supplies were recieved by contacting one of the school board members contracted for them to obtain it. The whole area around the school supplimented the texts they had. They covered a

wide area outside the school house as nature hikes and field trips. The usual age for children to start school was five to six years, they called the starting class the primary class. This was something like the present day kindergarten. The school was for all students in the community. Transit workers were limited in number but their children were included just like the others. The main body of students families were farmers. Most of the students went into farming with their families, while a few others went into businesses. Graduation was held at the county seat in Hill City. There was no dress code but they always came to school well dressed and clean.

The Union School was built prior to 1900. Around 1920 it was remodeled and expanded to accommodate the community meetings and the Literary Society meetings. This made the Union school one of the largest school buildings in Graham County. As often in other communities this building was used for community activities such as the Literary Society meetings and elections. Spelling Bees were held during the Literary Society meetings, where often the teachers could take part. The Literary Society meetings were held every two weeks and the building was crowded with people from surrounding districts. There was a school every three miles so the distance traveled by the students was usually less than two miles. Most children walked to school. Some were brought to school by parents in cold or stormy weather.

The school was a wooden frame building and in good physical shape. The inside walls were plaster which was painted. The interior lighting consisted of wall mounted kerosene mantle lamps. This gave perimeter lighting of the room. The whole front of the wall was covered with blackboards. The rest of the walls

were filled with windows giving the room plenty of light during the day. The school had it's own well with a pump. Heating was furnished by a big coal furnace which had to be fired every morning in cold weather. Individual desks were used in rows with a bench seat on the front for the desks in the front of them. The school had a small library of about a hundred books varied for the different grade levels. They were allowed so much money each year to buy books for the library. The county library which furnishes books to rural schools was not in use at that time. The school was sold after World War II and was then used as a granary. It was torn down later. The school closed because the number of farms decreased so teat there was insufficient pupils to keep the school open. It closed in 1940 or a little later.

Miss Goldie stated pay at the rate of 80.00 per month. She was payed at the end of the month by the school board members. These school board members were Tom Carson, Willy Wagoner, and Carl Howard all deceased. There was no organization like the P.T.A. in that school. They held teachers meetings once a month when they would all meet in Hill City. The only time there was a meeting with the school board members was at the end of the year. In all there are a lot of differences in the way the schools are run now compared to then.