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Interview with Junia Noyes

Ronald F. Boid
Fort Hays State University

Junia Noyes

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Paper Written in Partial
Fullfillment of Grade

for

HISTORY OF AMERICAN EDUCATION 700

Dr. Allan R. Miller

Stone Schoolhouse Project Paper

by

Ronald F. Boid

The following is a transcript of a taped conversation between myself and a Mrs. Junia Noyes. The conversation took place on Monday, October 18, 1982. Mrs. Noyes taught in a one-room school north of Portis, Kansas during the period 1936-37-38. She has retired and now lives in Osborne, Kansas.

Question: How many years did you teach at this one-room school?

Answer: I taught four years.

Question: For four years?

Answer: Yes, eight months a term.

Question: Did you teach anywhere else before then?

Answer: Yes, I taught south of Portis.

Question: Okay. Would you have any idea how much you were paid at that time?

Answer: One year I was paid \$50.00, and I was the highest paid rural teacher at that time.

Question: That would be \$50.00 a month?

Answer: A month.

Question: Okay. How many months would you work for that?

Answer: Eight months.

Question: Let's think about the start of your school day. What time did you start in a morning?

Answer: School began at nine, and was dismissed at four.

Question: Okay. What was usually the first thing you did right at the beginning of school?

Answer: We usually had flags to move, sometimes the Lord's prayer, and sometimes after the beginning of the noon session I had a book usually that I read to children.

Question: What kind of a book would it be then?

Answer: It would have to be one that would be of interest to eighth graders. And I don't remember the titles, but I tried to choose books that would be of interest to all ages.

Question: When you say all ages, what are you talking about?

Answer: First grade to the eighth grade.

Question: Okay. What about the subjects that you taught. Can you run through a typical day, and name the subjects as you went through them?

Answer: Well, at that time, we were not teaching Social Studies until the last part of my teaching years it was introduced. And of course we had our history books, and our readers. Spelling, Writing, and of course on my own we had Music, and then of course English and our Grammar. Let me see now, all the subjects that you'd use under Social Studies were individual subjects at that time.

Question: I see. What about discipline. How did you discipline the student?
Answer: Well that was different because you had the different ages. Usually, I tried to discipline in a way that they themselves were responsible for what they had done.

Question: So, are you saying then that...let's see?
Answer: Take a privilege away from them, or require them to do something more in school work.

Question: Okay...?
Answer: Rather than to...I don't think I ever spanked a child in my life.

Question: Never?
Answer: Now...I had one or two in all my thirty-five years, but very very few.

Question: Yes?
Answer: There's too many other nice ways to do it and get results.

Question: Okay. You told us early on in the conversation how much you were paid. How did you get paid? Did you get payed by check?
Answer: By check, and usually the school board member would bring it, or I think like once they would send it with one of the children. North of Portis the school board member lived about a...less than a fourth of a mile. And usually he sent it with his children, or he brought it. I never had to go get it.

Question: Did you ever meet with the school board at any time?
Answer: Well, of course you do when you're hired and before would have school meeting in Spring they would come and visit with me to see if I was interested in coming back, and discussed salary and that.

Question: Of course we're talking about the county school board right?
Answer: Yes. Each district had their own school board members.

Question: Okay. Let me see...your school was in a district then?
Answer: Yes. I think it was called Union 4 or Union 3, and I don't remember, because there was both of those.

Question: Would it have one representative then on the board?
Answer: No, there were three.

Question: Three representatives?
Answer: Yes.

Question: What about the supplies that you had in the classroom? How did you go about acquiring your supplies?
Answer: I think our supplies were very limited, and many a teacher bought what she wanted to have for the school. Especially at the beginning. Now, when I taught later, the district would allow me more money. But, at the time I taught there I did an awful lot of that.

Question: You spent your own money then on buying supplies?
Answer: I spent my own money many a time.

Question: Would you have any idea how much...say a year?
Answer: I would have no idea.

Question: What about your training as a teacher? How much schooling did you have to take?
Answer: Well, do I have to tell? I taught eight years without one hour of college.

Question: Okay.
Answer: But I did have to take a written examination to get a second grade county certificate. You could have that for two years. I don't remember the requirement, but to get a first grade county you had to average ninety, and I think there were about seventeen or eighteen subjects, and that took a lot of doing.

Question: Did you have to maintain a certain level then?
Answer: Yes. You had to...then after I got my first grade county, then they began to require some college.

Question: Yes?
Answer: And I would renew it with so many hours of college.

Question: Just out of curiosity, how much did it cost you? You had to have a teaching certificate right?
Answer: Yes...

Question: How much did it cost you for that certificate?
Answer: I don't know. I would get it through my taking the test you know. And I think I paid a dollar or maybe two dollars to take the test.

Question: What about while you were teaching up at that school. Where did you live?
Answer: I lived in Portis since my husband was teaching there, and I drove the four miles.

Question: Let's talk about the types of books that the students had. Let's start with reading. What kind of reader did you use?
Answer: I believe at that time it was Bob Merrill Readers. I believe I'm right on that. And of course they were graded more difficult as you'd go down the line. I believe I'm right on that. I believe it was Bob Merrills.

Question: Yes. Did you have to order those books, or did the district order those books?
Answer: To me it seems that the parents bought the books themselves. But I could be wrong there.

Question: They did?
Answer: But, I think the parents furnished the books for the children.

Question: Let's talk about the subject of Science. How did you go about teaching Science?

Answer: I can't remember for sure, but I don't think we had a science book. It was simply what I wanted to bring out. Like the different seasons, and things of that sort. And that was done as a group. I don't believe we had a science book, not a textbook. I've always been interested in science, so I'm sure I brought out...

Question: What about language? What kind of work did the kids do in the language textbooks?

Answer: Well the older children, I know, I required them to do some writing. Is that what you wanted to hear?

Question: Yes?

Answer: Now, as the lower grades...I think it was mostly reading and learning poetry. Of course the upper grades did the same---read stories.

Question: At what point did you have them then starting to write stories?

Answer: I imagine along about the fourth or fifth grade, writing very short ones.

Question: Did you have such...what we call book reports?

Answer: Book reports? Well I know I did, but I'm not sure whether I began them out there or not. I think I did, because I'm sure we had it at the first school we taught. I think we required some reports.

Question: How about spelling? How many words would a fifth grader have to study for a week? Can you remember?

Answer: It seems to me that they had so many words each day that they had to learn. And then of course after they had learned so many, they had a test over those words. But I think we had spelling everyday. And I think I began with even first graders teaching them to spell. Of course you know when I got first graders they didn't have kindergarten.

Question: Right?

Answer: They had no preparation ahead, so there was quite a bit of that to be done.

Question: What age were those children in first grade?

Answer: I think the ages was six years.

Question: Six years?

Answer: Yes. I don't remember the dates, but they had to be six years.

Question: In all your years of experience in teaching was that the age at which kids started in first grade?

Answer: I believe so.

Question: I understand though that later on in other schools, where you taught, you came in contact with kindergarten where kids started at the age of what?

Answer: Say; you know I do remember I had a little boy in this first

school out here that the parents thought he was ready, and sent him before. I think he was just five. But you know, down later in life he handled that all right, but later in life he...it kind of caught up with him.

Question: Yes. Could parents do that then?

Answer: Well, evidently they did. This was a school board member's child. And of course being close to the school, he was anxious to go. So...he liked it. I guess there wasn't a law against it. Anyway, they sent him. And I tried to teach him.

Question: Let's talk about the population of the kids that you had in your school. Where did they come from? Where were they living?

Answer: They lived within a mile, any direction I believe. I don't believe I had any child coming over one mile.

Question: Over one mile distance from the school?

Answer: One might have been a little over a mile.

Question: Did they have to walk to school then?

Answer: Yes, they did.

Question: Let's talk about your relationship with the community, where you were living in Portis with your husband. How were you expected to conduct yourself as a teacher?

Answer: I don't think they put any restrictions on me whatsoever at this school. Now my husband teaching in Portis...I think there was a little requirement there. You know, attend church and things like that. But this community...I can't remember any requirements whatsoever.

Question: You weren't given a list of rules and regulations and so on?

Answer: No. No. In fact, I don't think I have ever have. Maybe they thought it wouldn't to any good.

Question: What did you do then as fas as husband and wife...what kind of activities did you do?

Answer: In this community we were...they were a community that liked to get together. And my husband joined right in with the activities. You know at night...like we put on two, three plays that were three-act plays, and things like that, where we were involved in the community affairs. It was a community that enjoyed having things like that.

Question: Did you have a central place then where you went and did all this?

Answer: At the schoolhouse.

Question: At the schoolhouse itself?

Answer: Yes. I'd use my piano.

Question: How long did you teach at that school?

Answer: Four years.

Question: Would you have any idea how long the teacher taught there before you?

Answer: No. I did not know of any teacher that taught more than two years, but then I...

Question: More than two years?

Answer: I don't think that they did. Nor afterwards either.

Question: Would there be any reason for that do you think?

Answer: I imagine it was the teachers themselves. I don't know. I had a girl who took my place. Just taught one year. She was from a bigger city, and was real unhappy.

Question: Who hired and fired the teachers so to speak?

Answer: I think that was completely up to the three member school board.

Question: The three member school board?

Answer: I think so. I never experienced that, only the hiring. I know they were the ones that hired me.

Question: Do you want to describe the building itself, what it looked liked?

Answer: This was quite a modern building for those times. It had a furnace. In fact it's still standing. It was a very nice building. Nice basement.

Question: What did the desks look like?

Answer: Well, they were the old-fashioned desks.

Question: Just made of wood?

Answer: Yes.

Question: Were they fastened to the floor?

Answer: No. I don't believe these were, and they were singles. Some schools you know had doubles.

Question: Had doubles. Ah ah.

Answer: But these were just the singles. I don't think I had more than twelve students at any time while I was teaching.

Question: If you only had twelve students, what was the spread? You said you had them from first grade to eighth grade? Would you have some in each grade then?

Answer: I think I had one first-grader at that time. I think there were eighth graders. I don't remember for sure the other ones, but they were...I think I had more than twelve. It was a nice sized school for that time.

Question: What about the upkeep of the building? Did you have the clean it?

Answer: Well of course I was the janitor. Usually the school board would

have cleaned nicely in the summertime, and repaired.

Question: Painted and so forth?

Answer: Yes, but as far as taking care of it at school term, that was up to me.

Question: When did you do that? At the end of the day?

Answer: After four. Wash blackboards of course, and sweep the floors.

Question: What kind of special events did you conduct at the school? That is, with the kids.

Answer: With the kids?

Question: Yes.

Answer: Well of course we put on programs at different times.

Question: Special er...?

Answer: Special day events?

Question: Special days?

Answer: Yes. I don't believe we were involved with any other district. I don't believe we were ever involved with their playday, or anything of that sort.

Question: Did you have a kind of an Open Night were the parents came?

Answer: Well, quite often they would...yes the parents would come, and it would be at night. We would sing, and a little dialogue of some sort.

Question: Did you have a parent-teacher organization?

Answer: No, we did not as such. It was just a community affair.

Question: Since you said that you were the janitor as well as being the teacher, you then would be the sole person as far as the upkeep of the building was concerned? Am I right?

Answer: Yes, during the school term. Only for major repairs it might have to be done. But, I don't remember much of that happening.

Question: So...what if you had a special event in the evening then, did you have to clean up after that event in the evening?

Answer: We would usually. If we had a meal it would be in the basement. And of course after all I was the one that had to...

Question: Did any of the parents help you on those special events?

Answer: I kind of think they did. They were sure a nice bunch of people. I think the mothers made sure that things weren't left in too bad a shape. However, I did have to carry water. We had no well at the schoolhouse.

Question: The period in which you were there at that school was what year?

Answer: Let's see, that would be about 1936-37-38.

Question: Okay. Do you know how old the school was then? Do you have any idea?

Answer: No, I have no idea. It seemed like a real nice school.

Question: Did it seem like a "newish" school to you?

Answer: Well, not brand new. But it wasn't what you would say an old building where the floors are worn. No, it was a fairly new building I'm sure. Rather modern.

Question: What kind of material was the building made of. Was it wood, stone?

Answer: Wood.

Question: It was made of wood. A frame building?

Answer: Yes.

Question: What about the floor?

Answer: The floor seemed nice to me, but I don't...

Question: Was it a wooden floor?

Answer: It was a wooden floor, definitely yes.

Question: What about your desk in that school? Where was your desk?

Answer: I liked to have my desk at the back of the room.

Question: At the back of the room?

Answer: Yes.

Question: Then are you saying then that the floor of the school was perfectly level from wall to wall?

Answer: Yes, however, we had a little stage like in front. And of course sometimes I would do my teaching from that area.

Question: You had your desk at the back then?

Answer: Yes.

Question: Would you have any reason why you did that?

Answer: Well...I just always liked to be back of them instead of stood in front of them. I don't know that I can give you any reason, only that I just felt like I had better control of them.

Question: You were the only teacher in that school right?

Answer: Yes.

Question: No one else worked there at all?

Answer: No one.

Question: What if you were ill:

Answer: When I was ill, a time or two, I had to call and they would go home.

Question: They would get a substitute teacher?
Answer: No. And I don't think I had to make up those days...I'm not sure.

Question: They wouldn't just hold school?
Answer: 'Course I didn't miss very many.

Question: Yes. Yes?
Answer: But, I remember one morning I was quite ill and called them early in the morning, and they just called, or else my husband called the others and told them I wouldn't be there.

Question: Yes, Okay?
Answer: But, I think I was there most of the time.

Question: Did you have anyone that we would call a principal?
Answer: No.

Question: No principal at all?
Answer: No principal. The nearest would be the school board.

Question: So the school board then employed you, and was essentially your superior...kind of thing?
Answer: Well now then the county superintendant visited us once or twice a year.

Question: Okay. When he came visiting what did he usually do?
Answer: Of, he just listened to some of our class recitations. One day he came, and it had been real hot, and I was reading to the children. We all had our shoes off. We did some scrambling, and he just laughed about it.

Question: Was the schoolhouse used only for teaching?
Answer: Except for these community affairs.

Question: Community affairs?
Answer: Now they might have had some elections there. I'm not sure about that. You know quite often schools were used when it was voting time, and I'm not sure if this was used for that or not.

Question: Let's see if we can go back and think about the teaching methods used. Let's kind of look at each subject and see how you taught. Let's talk about mathematics. How did you teach mathematics to the kids?
Answer: Well now, you know you're taking me away back. I know we used the blackboard an awful lot.

Question: Did you show them examples first?
Answer: We would go to the blackboard, and I would show them how. They were required to learn their multiplication tables. We did some ciphering on Fridays. It was kind of free after the last period, and we'd do some ciphering. Yes we used the blackboard a lot.

Question: Did the kids use the blackboard?
Answer: The children used the blackboard a lot.

Question: Okay?
Answer: They were certainly...I guess you could do that with a smaller number, more than you could do with a large number couldn't you?

Question: Yes. Yes.
Answer: And I had a pretty nice blackboard area.

Question: Did you ever have mathematics games that the kids played?
Answer: Not as much there as I did later. Not as much then. However, I did have it with the little first, second, and third graders. We had different little games. And if it was stormy we would have some sort of games instead of being on the playground, involving the whole group.

Question: What about Reading? Did the children read a story and then you ask questions?
Answer: No. I think every child, almost everyday, was required to read aloud.

Question: Did you ever read silently then?
Answer: Oh yes! Oh yes! But I think I listened to their reading a lot more than I did later. Especially in a city school where you have so many.

Question: Right. Since you only had about twelve kids, you could handle it a lot better?
Answer: Yes. I tried to teach expression in their reading, as well as...

Question: The oral expression?
Answer: Yes. Yes.

Question: When they did language, what kind of activities did they do? Did they write poems?
Answer: I don't know as we did so much writing poems in either reading or language. I required a bit of writing for language. More than er...

Question: The older the student the more writing...the more writing they had to do probably?
Answer: Yes.

Question: Okay. What...Did they have to do a lot of creative...what we'd call now, creative writing?
Answer: I don't remember that I did a lot of that. Which was not the best thing was it?

Question: Mm...Mm...
Answer: But...Mm...we did act out of some little plays, or anything like

that, in our book. We acted those out. You're taking me back to remember some things a long time ago.

Question: Do you remember your Reading? Who published the book? Can you remember?

Answer: Bob Merrill...but I don't know...I think it was by the Kansas Publishing Company wasn't it? I think so.

Question: Mm...Mm...You said the ages of the children at the school were from six to what?

Answer: Well...it would be thirteen, fourteen wouldn't it? Fifteen maybe.

Question: The distance that the kids had to come to the school er...you said was about a mile?

Answer: Yes. I think the one little first grader had a mile. And I can't remember his folks ever bringing him.

Question: Did folks usually bring first graders?

Answer: No, but he lived farther than most of them. It seemed to me that most of them were within a mile. Not quite a mile.

Question: And he had to walk that distance?

Answer: Oh yes! One morning it was icy and he came in and said, "I tripped and fought all the way to school". He did.

Question: Did you ever bring people in from the outside to help you in your teaching? You know, people who were in business or farming or...

Answer: No, not then, no not then.

Question: What about the evaluation? How did you grade the children's work? A's, B's, C's?

Answer: I'm sure...I'm sure it was by the number.

Question: By the number?

Answer: Yes.

Question: Are we talking about one, two, three...?

Answer: One from one hundred to ninety six, ninety four, eight five...

Question: Okay.

Answer: I'm quite sure at that time that's what I graded by.

Question: For a child to go from one grade to another, er...did they automatically go, or did they have to pass a test?

Answer: I think that was up to the teacher individually whether that child... But I always liked to consult with the parents. However, in this district I did not have anyone that I needed...

Question: You did not have anyone who was really failing?

Answer: No, but I have in later life where I taught somewhere else.

Question: Can we say then that...when you taught a subject all the children were learning that subject, or were different grades doing different things at the same time?

Answer: I think as a rule I would try to have math the first thing of morning, and that would...the whole school would be having it.

Question: The whole school would be doing it?

Answer: And then when we had Reading they would all be doing it. Of course we didn't have many workbooks. That was...That was before workbook time.

Question: What about the environment in the school? What about lighting? Did you have electric lighting? Gas lighting? or what?

Answer: I think when we had our...No, nothing for the daytime.

Question: Nothing at all?

Answer: When we had our programs at night I think there were lights...you know, gas lights and things like that that they brought in. No electricity.

Question: What about the heating? How was the room...?

Answer: Furnace.

Question: A big furnace then?

Answer: And it was...it burned coal...wood and er...I think they always had coal in this school.

Question: What about toilets?

Answer: Out front toilets.

Question: Outside toilets?

Answer: And they'd put them just as far from the school as they could get them.

Question: What happened if a child wanted to use the bathroom...toilet?

Answer: I think they would just ask permission to go.

Question: They'd just ask permission to go?

Answer: Yes.

Question: Okay. What kind of equipment did you have in the room? You've spoken about a chalkboard being there, a teachers desk, the childrens desks...Any other equipment in there?

Answer: There was a little room off from the stage area, and there were just a few books in there. And I can't remember whether there was any other equipment or not, but I think not.

Question: No projectors or...?

Answer: Oh! We didn't even know that word. And of course with no electricity it would have been of no use.

Question: Quite. So...the only equipment you really had then was the chalkboard and yourself?

Answer: Just about all. Of course I had music. I furnished...We learned to play guitar a little bit, harmonica.

Question: You said you had a few books. How many books would you have in that little library?

Answer: They were very simple little books too. What I mean...You know. It doesn't seem to me there were very many. Most of them I think were discarded classroom books. Not many...because I got the books from the county superintendent you know.

Question: Did you have any dictionaries and that?

Answer: I'm sure we had a few, but not...not every child by any means.

Question: Did...Since you drew on kids within about a mile, I assume there were schools within two...three miles of you right? Two to three miles from you?

Answer: It must have been north of me. How far was that school? I think it would be safe in saying that was right.

Question: Did you ever associate with those schools? Did you ever take the kids to these schools? Compete or anything?

Answer: Not as schoolchildren. Now, when we put on these three-act plays we went to...

Question: To other schools?

Answer: To other schools and did that.

Question: Did other schools come to you then?

Answer: I can't remember if anyone ever came to us. I guess we were unique.

Question: You were unique in taking those plays out to other schools?

Answer: Different ones in the community would take part. It wouldn't be children. A sort of community affair.

Question: This then...Would you say then that those plays were a kind of tradition. You did them every year?

Answer: Well...just about every year while I was there. I don't know whether the other teachers did or not.

Question: Did you bring up the...Did you formulate the idea of putting these plays together.

Answer: Usually one of the ladies in the community would sort of take over and...You mean to conduct a play?

Question: Yes?

Answer: Yes. I didn't take the responsibility for that. However, my husband was always the victim.

Question: What about these plays? What about the costumes that the kids wore? Did parents produce those or...
Answer: Now these plays were put on by parents, not children.

Question: By the parents themselves?
Answer: Yes.

Question: Okay. What kind of plays were they?
Answer: Well one was "A Little Clodhopper" now I don't know...Another one was "A Lady in Red" so you know they were comics.

Question: Yes?
Answer: I don't remember the third one. Oh yes I do too, "Aaran Slick". No, these were community...

Question: Okay. Did your school differ in any way from other schools around you? Were they all...
Answer: I don't believe all schools had such a community gathering like we did. Now I'm not saying that was my making altogether, but it was just the people of the community were eager to get together.

Question: Would you say that that was an outstanding feature of your school then?
Answer: I think it was.

Question: Can you go a little bit further and say what benefit that was to the kids in the school?
Answer: Well it was a time to just meet everybody, and get together and have a good social time.

Question: Did your school have a name?
Answer: Yes. It was Union 3 or Union 4, and I think this one was Union 3.

Question: Do you have any idea why it was called that name?
Answer: No I don't. The one east was Union 4. I know it wasn't because they were united with any...because they didn't do that then.

Question: What about drinking water?
Answer: There was a well across the creek. Quite a distance from there that...Part of the time I was able to get it there, and part of the time I carried it from home. There was no well at the school.

Question: How much did you have to carry then?
Answer: I had a regular water jug with a little faucet thing for them. And I could carry that in my car quite easily.

Question: Were they allowed to drink that water whenever they needed it, or did they have a specific time when...
Answer: I think probably at...when they came in from playing. I can't remember that class was interrupted by them wanting to get a drink. I'm sure I wouldn't have refused them though.

Question: What about lunch period? Did they bring sack lunches then to school?
Answer: They brought their lunches in a little...Most of them little metal...

Question: Little metal boxes?
Answer: Yes. I don't believe at that time that any of them had these thermos bottles, or anything like that.

Question: Did any of them drink milk at that time?
Answer: They didn't bring it to school.

Question: So, if they needed a drink they'd just be drinking the water that you...?
Answer: I don't think I'd put a restriction on them getting a drink. Oh, unless they abused the privilege.

Question: Yes. Okay. Why was the school there? What was the reason do you think?
Answer: Well I imagine it's the same reason of all, they wanted their children to get an education. And with transportation like it was, they'd have to be fairly close.

Question: Close to the people's homes?
Answer: And I think most districts had enough children to...

Question: Do you know who owned the land on which the school was situated?
Answer: I'm not sure about that. I know Mr. Bodge was right close. Whether it was his property to begin with or not...

Question: When the kids had gone through your school, and they'd gone through to eighth grade, where did they go from there?
Answer: Most of them go into Portis to High School.

Question: To High School?
Answer: Yes. It was only about four miles you know.

Question: What eventually would those kids...What occupations would they go into?
Answer: Well I know of some of them. One girl especially is a farmer's wife, and one boy is a farmer. I think probably...I expect the biggest majority went into farming.

Question: Went into farming?
Answer: Yes.

Question: Did you talk about occupations in the classes that you had with those kids?
Answer: I can't remember that I did.

Question: Now you said the name of your school was...?
Answer: Union 3.

Question: What district was it in? Do you know the name of the district?
 Answer: I think it just went by that name. Now that was in Smith County.

Question: In Smith County?
 Answer: Yes.

Question: That was north of Portis right?
 Answer: Portis right. Portis is right on the Osborne-Smith County line.

Question: What about the religion of the students. Where they protestants, catholics, do you know?
 Answer: I do not think there were any catholics. I think if they were anything, they were protestants. I know two of the families especially. There was one family I don't know...well two families... I'm not sure about.

Question: What about nationality? Were they all Americans? Were some of them immigrants?
 Answer: No, I think they were all Americans.

Question: All Americans? Okay.
 Answer: Knowing their...somewhat of their background, I'm sure they were.

Question: At the end of the school year did you hold any graduation exercises, or anything of that kind?
 Answer: No. Only the eighth grade were required to write on a county exam.

Question: Okay...?
 Answer: Usually we had a community dinner.

Question: Just a community dinner and...did they...
 Answer: Played games, ball, baseball and things like that.

Question: What if you had a student who was really slow, really having some real problems? How was that handled? Did you have any input from special services of any kind?
 Answer: None whatever!

Question: None whatever?
 Answer: None whatever!

Question: Did you have to handle it all on your own?
 Answer: Absolutely!

Question: Could you probably describe an instance where a child was having a problem? What did you do?
 Answer: Well, I guess one that I'm thinking of, I think came from a...kinda mixed up home was part of it. But I don't think in watching him as he went along through life that he ever was very successful.

Question: Did you...did you tend to work with that child more than the others?

Answer: I had to. I had to. And there were times when I could get an eighth grade girl or somebody help him along too.

Question: Okay, so really you were providing special services all on your own then?

Answer: Yes, right in the building.

Question: Right. Is this school still working now?

Answer: Oh no. It has been...

Question: When did it close down? Do you know?

Answer: Oh, I really don't know.

Question: Would it be before the war, or after the war?

Answer: I would say after the war. I was trying to think how many teachers taught there after I did, and there weren't too many. It seems that they were so close to Portis you know, that I think probably it was part of the reason.

Question: So...is this schoolhouse still there?

Answer: The last time I was by there it was still standing. And I asked someone not very long ago, and they said yes it's still there. I even stopped one time, and it made me feel kinda sad. It was run down pretty bad.

Question: Would you have any reason why it would have closed down?

Answer: One reason I think...being close to Portis, and running out of students. One family...well, two families moved away. And the one family graduated their students. And I think there were just such few students left that I imagine it was closed down much sooner than some of the others.

Question: You spoke about the three members of the school board right. Are any of those people alive now?

Answer: Yes, Mr. Bodge is still alive.

Question: What about the students? Can you think of any student or students that just went on and really made it well in life?

Answer: Yes, this one little boy that his folks sent him when he was five, he went on to be a teacher for several years. The he went into some other kind of work that was quite outstanding. But I can't tell you for sure. Then another child has been teaching in California, and I'm real happy to say she's teaching Art. She sort of gives me some of the credit because I got her interested in it. She's quite a successful art teacher I think.

Question: What about the rules of your school? Did you formulate those rules, if so, what were they?

Answer: Oh, I can't remember that I made rules. Not unless they were something that...some cause or some difficulty arose that I felt...

Question: Did you have them listed on a wall somewhere?
Answer: Oh no!

Question: Did the student have to pay anything for anything to come to the school?
Answer: No. The only thing...I think they bought their own books. I believe I'm right about that. I think each parent had to buy their books for the children.

Question: What kind of an involvement did you have with the parents of the students you had?
Answer: Well, by having this community deal...that I felt very close to them.

Question: What kind of an input then would you say the parents put into the school?
Answer: I never...had any of them ever object to anything I wanted to do. They were very cooperative. In fact...

Question: Did you have to ask the parents, or did you have a good idea what they might expect?
Answer: I think if I were going to do something a little unusual-like I might want to take them on a trip or something-then I would ask permission to do that.

Question: Did you have to send a letter home and have them sign it?
Answer: I think maybe just talk to them on the telephone. I don't remember for sure. I never liked to send notes. I liked to talk directly to the parents. Notes have a way of getting lost you know.

Question: Am I hearing it right then, that you sometimes went out on field trips with the kids?
Answer: Well...I have many a time. I even took some children-not this group, but some children-on a train ride. In fact, I took several of them when I was teaching in Osborne. You would have thought the circus came to town the first time we went.

Question: What about the dress the kids wore? I'm pretty sure were not talking about blue jeans here, or that kind of apparel?
Answer: No, not for the teacher or the children. It was dresses, definately.

Question: Dresses for the girls?
Answer: I think boys little overalls. I don't think they even knew what jeans were.

Question: Did you have a rule where you checked the cleanliness of them when they arrived at the school?
Answer: No. No. That would have been embarrassing to one family.

Question: When you first started teaching what was your salary?
Answer: Well it must have been less than \$50.00. I think it was \$40.00 the first year.

Question: Did it increase?
 Answer: Well yes. The one year I got \$50.00, and there was one teacher teaching for \$25.00 north of me. She was staying at home, and had no board to pay.

Question: What was your salary based upon? Was it based upon the years of experience you had?
 Answer: Not at that time, no. It was sort of a bargaining deal.

Question: It was how you arranged it with the board, and discussed with them?
 Answer: Yes. I don't think I every met salary schedules until I taught in Osborne.

Question: Okay. Did your salary increase then every year?
 Answer: Yes.

Question: How did you base...Did you discuss it with the board, and come to an agreement?
 Answer: No. I think when they would meet with me in the Spring, they had their school board meeting, and I would tell them what I would like to have.

Question: Ultimately whose decision was it about how much you would receive as a salary?
 Answer: I think it was the school board. They would always ask me what I would teach for.

Question: You've taught in schools later on, did you like that arrangement?
 Answer: I think when I first came to Osborne it was more or less that way, where we bargained with the school board. Which is not so now, is it?

Question: No. There is a group that bargains for the teachers per se.
 Answer: However, I think the first year I taught in Osborne it was with the High School Superintendent, and the school board. Kind of individually.

Question: Yes. Would you say that your salary was er...how can I say...was it a good salary? Were you satisfied with it?
 Answer: Yes, definately, because there were so many others who were not getting what I...that I felt fortunate to be getting that much.

Question: Were any of the patrons, or the parents...did they ever ask questions as to why you were receiving that high of a salary?
 Answer: I can't remember that they did.

Question: They didn't grumble about it or anything?
 Answer: Well I sure would...I think I would have remembered if they had.

Question: You said that you spent quite a lot of your salary...
 Answer: Not a lot!

Question: Well, some of your salary for the things in the school that you

needed to work with. Did you feel obliged to do that, or was it just what you wanted to do?

Answer: Well, I guess that I wanted to do it. One thing I did, I had... I can't think of the word I want to use...something like ceramics. I had casts the children made. Simple little things you know. Well, that I bought on my own. My sister had these molds that she loaned me. They made plaques.

Question: What about if you had a child in your class who was from a real poor family, did you feel obliged to buy them pencils or books, or anything like that?

Answer: Well, I'm sure I had extra pencils if one family might have needed pencils at times. But I always tried to keep extra so that...in fact I tried to keep them on my desk.

Question: Was the average child in your classroom...Would you say that they came from a relatively poor family, a farming family, or what?

Answer: Well, there were two families that were definately very poor. Then another...the other two I thought were...especially one wasn't. And then the other was...well the other two they were farmers, and I thought they were...Well the other three or four. But this one family especially was...Their lunch pails would indicate it.

Question: Yes. Yes. Did you perhaps bring food into the school?

Answer: No! No!

Question: What about birthdays? Did you have parties for the kids at that time?

Answer: I'm sure we must have observed it a little bit, yes.

Question: Yes.

Answer: And I think I took treats for them at different times...Valentines, simple little things you know.

Question: What about at Christmas time? Did you have a vacation at that time?

Answer: Yes, I think about a week. But we didn't have many vacations. However, we did go to a state teachers meeting, and I think that was usually maybe two or three days.

Question: The school closed down?

Answer: Yes.

Question: Were you encouraged to go to these meetings?

Answer: Well, if I needed encouragement I'm sure I would have gone there, but I don't think I...maybe because both of us were teaching. I think that might have made some difference. I think a lot more restrictions were put on him in a town school than was...than on me in the country school.

Question: What kind of satisfaction did you get out of being the sole teacher in that building?

Answer: Well, I guess I must have gotten quite a bit to keep it up for thirty-five years. But, one thing I enjoyed was being on the playground with the children. I played ball, I rode down the hill on the sled, played hide-and-seek. I laid down the creek one time, got poison ivy. And I enjoyed that part.

Question: Would I be right in saying then that the kids had a very positive relationship with you because you did such things?

Answer: Well...if I were to relate some of the stories I still get from some of them you would feel that I did.

Question: Well...?

Answer: I'm not going to tell them, but...it would sound like I was boasting.

Question: Couldn't you bring up one story?

Answer: Well...just about a week ago...the one for all...it was a seventh and eighth grader while I was there said er...I was the best teacher she had ever had. And here she is I guess a grandmother. I don't know.

Question: Were there any...Can you recollect or remember any funny events that occurred?

Answer: I could...I could relate one that you wouldn't want on tape.

Question: Well, I don't know. Why don't you try it?

Answer: No, I'm afraid not. You'll...you'll blank it out if I do, I'm sure. This little boy opened his lunch paid. He hadn't even sat down to eat, but he opened it up, slammed the lid back and he said "Shit'n again, today for darn" big and loud. Now, you're going to erase that aren't you?

Question: We'll probably erase it.

Answer: Oh yes that was a funny one. One little boy couldn't speak very plainly, and they had this poem "Pussy Cat, Pussy Cat Where Have You Been," and I hadn't heard him read. But, it was his turn to read and he said "Pooley Cat, Pooley Cat where have you..." Oh yes, I enjoyed...I should have...My husband was always saying I should write a book.

Question: Did you have kids occasionally who were really outspoken, who kind of seemed to want to have a lot to say, and get more involved and that?

Answer: I think maybe er...most of the children in this community were not that type very much anymore.

Question: Was that part of the cultural background do you think?

Answer: I think er...I think maybe so. I don't think they...Oh they might have gone to Portis. But I don't think they've been very far in the world.

Question: They...When you say they haven't been far, did they have any concept

of the world out there? Did they understand what big cities were like?

Answer: There were some that I'm sure didn't. I'm sure.

Question: You said early on that you took some on a train ride. Did many of them see trains?

Answer: The first group I took was this country school south of Portis. And er...Yes, that was the first group. And you know where trains are now. They couldn't take a trip if they wanted to. It wasn't only the children that were thrilled about us doing that, but it was all of the parents. And all of the parents seemed to be thrilled about it. I know I took my son on my first train ride. He was older of course but he'd never been on a train. Well, later he went into the Navy, and went across the United States. But, I wanted him to have a train ride.

Question: So you would say...you would say then that these kids really because of their locality, and where they lived...Did that restrict their ability to use their education do you think?

Answer: I don't know if it did too much. But at that time you know transportation wasn't...What I mean people didn't have big cars.

Question: You said that some of the...Most of the kids, at least when they graduated, they went to High School and eventually went back into.... back on the farm right?

Answer: Yes I think so.

Question: Did any really, really move away from the community?

Answer: Oh yes. This one boy that I said was a teacher, he's in Kansas, but he's down...I think around Wellington. And then the one girl that was quite outstanding...I'm not sure where she lives, but it's quite a distance from here. I never get to see her. I see her sister in Smith Center, but I don't get to see her.

Statement: Well, I think we've more or less looked at most of the questions we've got here and er...

Statement: Well, I hope I've been of some help to you.

Statement: I think you've done a marvelous job.