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1983

### Interview with Claude & Margaret Summers

Pat Call

*Fort Hays State University*

Claude Summers

Margaret Summers

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ORAL HISTORY  
Of  
Claude and Margaret Summers

By  
Pat Gall

July 16, 1983

for  
History of American Education  
Dr. Allan Miller

Pat: What years did you teach?

Claude: Uh, what years did I teach? From 1923-1970. Uh, I taught a rural school grades 1-8, nineteen twenty-three and four. Uh, I went to college three years and a half. I graduated with a B.S. degree in Education. And I taught, uh, one year Peculiar, Missouri High School grades 9-12, twenty-seven and eight. Taught science, math, and agriculture, uh, coached boys and girls basketball. Uh, the next year I was elected superintendent of the Mets high school and think the seven elementary schools that were in the system. That was nineteen twenty-nine and thirty. And I supervised the elementary schools. I taught math, science and agriculture in the high school and coached girls basketball. I did that through, uh, year 1940, at which time I, uh, was elected to teach in the high school in Nevada, Missouri and I taught there 1940-42. And I taught, uh, uh, industrial arts and math. And at that time I enlisted in the Air Corp and uh, we moved to, uh, Kansas City and, uh, and I was an instructor in the Air Corp Aviation Department there in Kansas City. The Air Corp had a school there it had about 900 men enrolled. The ran two, uh, sessions a day and those classes included a week of engines, a week of electrical, a week of hydraulics and so forth, And I taught aircraft instruments. And then uhm, uh, we were transferred to Washington D.C. and, uh, I worked as a mechanic, uh, at the airport that had 30 C-54's that flew the Atlantic for the Army, uh, and when, uh, that service was concluded they transferred me to Newark, New Jersey. Where I was the instructor for the men, the mechanics who were, uh, working for their aircraft and engines licenses and I worked at that until, uh, about 1945. At this time I transferred back to Kansas City and I worked there with TWA. And then in nineteen and, uh, forty-seven I completed my, uh, work for the Masters degree in Education. And, uh, we came out here in the year of uh, uh, school year of 1948 and nine. I became superintendent of the High School and Elementary. And, uh, then, uh, I served as Superintendent from then until nineteen and, uh, sixty-seven. At this time Sylvan Grove and Hunter Unifed and they, uh, and they moved the Hunter High School to Sylvan Grove and I served as High School Principal at Sylvan Grove until nineteen and, uh, seventy. And that, uh, pretty well takes care of my teaching part of it.

Margaret: I taught school over in Missouri and in, uh, our requirements before you teach in a rural school, had to be in 1929 when I graduated from Cotty College where that is a 2 two year woman's Junior College and I went to college there 2 years and graduated in 1929 and so that gave me a certificate to teach in all rural schools and if we had 2 years of experience we could teach in the city grade schools and, uh, but, I taught, uh, five years in a rural school. They were close to my home and I stayed home and, uh, I really enjoyed those five years because of the things that we taught then are so different from what they are today. And, uh, I had all eight grades and, uh, the first grade. Uh, well, I taught writing to all the children, but we never taught one day of printing, everything was writing and we started that right off first day of school. I had learned that in Junior College. When we use to supervise some of the city, city, city elementary schools, there was an old teacher there that showed us how to teach them, the children, how to write and we had the three lines and they have tablets I think like that today. That you can use that is almost like that, but she called them the celler and the dining room and the attic. And each one goes up that height and, uh, that is the way she taught the

children the ABC's, too. She called every letter out and she always had sentences for them to write and they always started with a capital letter and they closed with a period. And, uh, like the letter E it starts down in the basement goes up to the dining room comes back to the basement and then up to the dining room. She always says to them swing your tails right up there to the dining room and at the last thing she would say dot the I's and cross the t's and put a period there and thats a sentence. It tells you something. And, uh, she, her children demonstrated how to do that and their writing was just beautiful. And see I was teaching Kindergarten, at Cotty, and, uh, so I tried it on them and it worked on them. Which I was very glad because I got a much better grade by teaching two, uh, children of my English teacher. And, uh, one of them was considered very bright, but he learned to write. And, uh, so after, uh, all my years I taught even in my high schools I have I have showed the children those three lines and how to space their letters and you know, uh, the children who really wanted to improve their writing did and they would go to the board, black board, draw their own lines and, uh, just make up words. And, uh, you know, learn to write nicely. And, uh, I saw that on TV just the other day and they called it the same thing they called it the basement, and then the living room, and the attic. So I guess some of those old things are coming back. We surely do need some of that because, uh, a lot of time when they have these writing books they have to write from, you know, you can take it home. You are laying on the floor or on your back and fill them out, you know, that is all necessary. So you get them all filled in and take them back but, we had regular exercises, you know, where we used the, uh, made the ovals and push and pulls and, uh, the children love that and they do today and, uh. We have a little red shoolhouse up here at Beloit and I belong Delta Kappa Gammas and, uh, every, no, two years ago, now I believe they started that and they invite every child in Mitchell County and I think Lincoln County, too, can attned at least one quarter of a day and, uh, they write back and thank the teacher and nobody can teach in there school, but teachers who have taught in a rural school. And, uh, they write back and they say, "You know, the thing we enjoyed the most was the writing of the ovals and the push and pulls and lunch in our dinner buckets." And, uh, they was thrilled to death with that. And, uh, they had to sit up straight, you know, and get their pen parallel with their shoulder, and, uh, most people realize that their is much to that, but it pretty important for them and they became beautiful writers. And then, uh, after my fifth year I had, uh, three years the in this consolidated district. And they asked me to come up to the high school and be a high school English teacher. I majored in Home Economics in college, but at that time Home Economics and Music and Art were all considered a frill. It wasn't necessary you could learn that at home and, uh, so I, uh, taught four years of English and I really enjoyed that, too, because, uh, nearly all of our students were from the country. They'd drive horseback, or they'd drive a buggy or they'd get there a about any they could. Some of them had an old Model T, you know, where they pick up kids along the way, but they were country children. Elementary children I taught too were all out of the country children and, uh, they had lovely manners and they would tell or make remarks, you know: "Mommy said or Daddy said, 'If I didn't behave myself at school that I would get a whippen' when I got home.'" And, uh, high school kids didn't say that, but, uh, they kind of understood it the same way. They thought Mr. Summers had eyes in back of his head. He was--- The children were kind of scared of him and so was I. But, uh, we really had good discipline and when he would go out

to the country rural schools and he had eleven rural schools, I believe.

Claude: Seven.

Margaret: Seven, and, uh, he went out once a month at least and when he was gone I had to be in charge of the high school students and, uh, never a time did we have any trouble. I had one time, it was kind of funny, uh, I was, uh, keeping study hall and everything seemed to be fine. And, uh, the telephone rang. She wanted the teacher out of the history class and, uh, so I went to get her and, you know, they boys the, they, she was kind of easy, you know, they just scooted down in their chairs, you know. Their head was upon their chair alright, but just sprattle and they acted like they were sleepy, you know. And I and I knocked on the door and there they were and what I was so surprised my mouth flew open and were they ever surprised. Boy those kids just, they really just inched their way up. I never saw anything like it. And they just turned red, you know, and, uh, one boy was in there was the president of the board son, his son and he was scared to death that somebody would tell on him, you know, to his dad because he was really stricked. And, uh, oh dear, I didn't say a word to him. I just turned around and shook my head and walked out. And I never did, I never did tell anybody and I never did tell Mr. Summers till much, much, many years later, because I knew his father would really, be really strict with him he wouldn't be off the ground, probably. And, uh, they couldn't go through to go home. They had to go straight through the school yard. The town was a block this other way, but, uh, they had to be home by a certain time after four o'clock and, uh, when I was in high school there, uh, I was Pep Club sponsor and, uh, chaperone, and, uh, had to go to all the ballgames. And I was their timekeeper. And sometimes we had Superintendents that were pretty, pretty ugly about keeping time, you know, and, uh, ball out this timekeeper here you keep your eyes right on that watch don't you let her pick up that watch a minute before or a minute after. You watch that clock, you know, and, uh...

Claude: Back in those days they did not have the time clock on the wall like they do now.

Margaret: We had stopwatches see. And, uh, finally one night one, some board member said, that he had two people that kept walking in front of him. He said, "You have two good people keeping time." He says, "Why don't you sit down and behave yourself. And you walking in front of me. . . ." And of course he felt like he owned the whole building, you know, and he was sitting right up even with the timekeepers, you know, and, uh, he says, "If you walk across that floor in front of me one more time I am going to call a foul on you, because you are walking out on the court." And by he sat down and behaved himself. But, uh, well those are some of the little things, you know. But I tell you, the girls, our girls never lost a game on our court and I don't think they ever lost a game the four years I was there, but one and that was a tournament at. It was over at Eldorado and then those girls were big as giants and everything, so the coach told them not to wear themselves out. Just play for fun, because, uh, they had another game coming up at school that will really amount to something and that was just a tournament game. And so, uh, I got to go to, uh, the different places and chaperone the girls. Then, after, uh, 1948 I, uh, as I say I got to looking around and, uh, things kind of began to look up. People had a

little more money then they had, had before and so they were going to put back Home Economics in the high school, uh, curriculum. And so, uh, I applied several places and I five contracts in my pocketbook at the same time. And, uh, I just picked the choice, the one that paid me the most. And, uh I started out in the rural school two years My first two years teaching I got seventy dollars a month for eight months. Then the next year, I got into this consolidated district and I got 80 dollars for the first year, for 9 months. Then for the next 2 years in a rural school I got 40 dollars and then I got up in high school and then I really got a big jump because I got 62 dollars and 50 cents a month for 9 months. If there was money in the treasury to pay it and if there wasn't we got a warrant and we just kept it till there was money, maybe it was a year before you could cash your warrant and the banker was real generous. He'd say, "Well, girls I would cash it for twenty percent off."

Claude: Those were the depression years twenty-nine through thirty-four or five.

Margaret: Oh, it was terrible during the 30's it really was everywhere. And, uh, so nobody growled bout the teacher's salary being bad and everybody was happy. And, uh, the teachers were really dedicated. And, you know, if you had Art or which we did why, uh, you had to buy all the paints, paper and pencils and everything else. And, uh, then, uh, as I say I had five contracts and I got the best one, I thought. It was down in the Joplin district down in Joplin, Missouri and I'd teach Home Economics and, uh, one government class and I was pep club sponsor and I had to go to all the games. I was also the girls chaperone and, uh, so, uh, I taught there 3 years and in 1970 beginning of the fourth year I got married. The superintendent tried to talk me out of it he said, "Oh the war will all be started, (it had)" and he says, "I don't know where I can get another teacher or not," he said. Please just don't tell anybody your leaving just let me look around first and then he announced it at the Junior/Senior Banquet. Some of the girls were kind of mad. They say he just wanted to tell everybody himself about it, and, uh, he made quite a speech about it, too. Then, uh, then that was in nineteen and, uh, oh, I got married. Well, Claude was teaching in Nevada and getting 112 dollars a month and I thought that was really rich and we didn't need for me to teach. So i, we bought a place there in Nevada. And was going to live there in Nevada and I was just going to take it easy. We didn't need any more money. Well, uh, at that time the war was on, you know, Pearl Harbor had happened and everything and, uh, if you were married you weren't so apt to get to go to war and if you had children, why you sure didn't have to go. So, uh, there was a little, little girl that had been teaching and, uh, she had two children and her husband up and left her. When the second baby came and, uh, she just had to teach school to take care of them and I think the baby was just two weeks old when she started shool. And, uh, there was a young man out of that community, this was a little town south of Nevada, about seven miles south. And he got to going with her and he thought that wuld be a good catch 'cause he would had, he would be married and have a family already and she thought they were wonderful because they were pretty good, rich farmers, so that left them without a principal of the grade school. So a friend of mine that lived there in Nevada was calling around to everybody asking if they couldn't come and substitute. You didn't have to have a degree. And, uh, she called up one girl and asked her if she couldn't come and substitute. She said, "No,

Momma, uh, my Mother has been with me when I substituted before, but Momma isn't here now an I have two babies and, uh, my husband is working on the railroad and he is on call 24 hours a day, so I can't come." And she says, "Who in the world could come?" And she said, "Well, there is Margaret Summers. And she is not doing one thing and she belongs to a club that I belong to. A little sewing club and she's not doing anything. Why don't you call her." So this teacher came by to see me and she says that she would come by and get you at 7:30 every morning. I thought 7:30 I says couldn't get up at and be ready by 7:30. Her husband worked at the round house and he had to be there by, uh, 7:30 and, uh, of course we just lived 2 or 3 blocks from there and, uh, then she says I'll bring you home every night says he gets off at 4:30 and, uh, of course, you know when you are working for the public like the round house as a mechanic or something like that when 5:00 comes and the whistle blows you just drop everything, drop your hammer and everything else beside. And somebody else comes in and picks it up. You don't do that in the school. So the principal of the high school said that if we would come and be there at 8:00 every morning and meet the first bus that he would stay after school till the second bus had left, so we could walk right out the door at 4:00 and I mean we walked right out the door. And she used to say to me, "Now Margaret, " she say, "be ready to walk out the door. Have the children all over shoes on all the coats buttoned up or nailed up or whatever you had to do and ready to go." Which we did and I was grade school principal there and they hired me back to teach the next year. But the next year, uh, that summer we went down to Parsons, Kansas and Claude was, uh, supervisor on one of the amunition, uh...

Claude: Primer lines.

Margaret: primer lines, and so, uh, we knew he was about to go to the service in September, he wouldn't know it, but we came back to Nevada one day and looked in the mailbox. And, uh, we've been gone all summer and there was his invitation to report to report for active duty, so he saw their people, the draft board and they said, they would postpone it for a week. So then we went to Kansas City. He had been offered Navy, uh...

Claude: I hadn't been offered I had an application for comission in the Navy and it hadn't, uh, come through yet. It hadn't been processed. They told me it would probably be 30 days before it would be processed out of Chicago. Well, I had orders to report for pre-induction physical, but I was overdue.

Margaret: Well, so anyway, we went to Kansas City and we saw a friend up there he told him about. Well you ought to go down to see TWA or the Cadillac. They were having lessons down there in airplanes and everything else and they're crazy about teachers and they couldn't get any teacher.

Claude: Say that was the Army Air Corp that was wanting instructors in their school.

Margaret: Yes.

Claude: They nine or eight hundred or nine hundred students in their school and they were short instructors. So that, but the, uh, school was in the Cadillac building at 29th and McGee. That was the Army Air Corp School.

Cadillac moved all there stuff out and the Army moved in all their, uh, airplanes mockups and, uh, uh, they had cells there for engine run up and all that stuff.

Margaret: So we moved to Kansas City then and so I didn't have a thing to do. We just had an apartment there on the third floor. We could find a decent place to live or anything. So I got so tired of looking at the four walls. So, I saw a piece in the paper, you know, wanted help and, uh, picked up one paper that said, uh, "shoesalesman wanted at Kliens Better Shoes downtown and women please apply" and they never would of hired me for that. So, uh, I went down to apply, he said, "What makes you think you can sell shoes?" And I said, "Well, if any other woman could sell shoes I thought I could and that I had taught long enough that I felt comfortable." And, uh, "Oh," he said, You know he had me write down kind of my resume. You know, what I have done and he looked at it. "Oh," he said, "I can't hire you." He said it would be too embarassing. He said you are a teacher and you been use to too high salary. Now all our clerks get, they just get eighteen a week and their tickled to get, because they don't have to go to college to learn it and they learn on the job. "And, uh, well," I said, you know, "I'm not so interested in the money I just want something to do" and, uh, "well," I said, "I can't sit in a third floor apartment and look out the window it got so monotonous." And he said, "Don't tell the girls, but I'll give you twenty dollars a week." And, uh, I think, uh, that, so I said, "Well, yes." He said, "Come in the morning." (And that was Saturday morning and I came in Saturday morning that I came in and that was before rationing.) Before they were rationing shoes, you know, and he said it will probably be a week to be able to sell shoes, because you had to go back and study the stock and you had to memorize the numbers, in like a pair of shoes would be 6, uh, 67281 or maybe 2, and, uh, that would mean that was a red shoe, it was a pump, high heel and it was also a size, uh, seven and a half and one on the end would mean it was an A and if it had a 2 on the back of it was a double A and 3 and 4 and 1's designated for that size. So I went back and I started studying and right after dinner he came in and he said, "Oh, Mrs. Summers, " he said, "We've just got to have you sell." He said, "People are just waiting." He said, "Do you think, uh, you can manage to sell any of them." "Well," I said, "I don't know." I said, I'd try. And I said, "I have learned several of them." And we got along pretty good. And so I sold all afternoon. And, uh, I worked there for and and I was the high saleman. And, uh, I used a little psychology on some of them. One day I, uh, the manager came up to me, he said, uh, "Mrs. Summers," he said, "You did a wonderful job today, but you are terrible report Monday. You are just going to get an awful report." "Well," I said, "Why?" and he said, "You sell more shoes, but you didn't sell a bottle of polish and they were only twenty-five cents a bottle and you didn't sell a one and look at all the polish you could of sold." "Oh," I said, "I never thought about polish." And, uh, he said, "Well, you've got to sell." Oh, I forget how much it was a hundred dollars or something like that, by the end of this week or you don't get pay and that's what my letter said on Monday from the company. They send everything into the company at four o'clock, by four o'clock every evening and the books were closed by four and what you sold by five was next days work, see. Sure enough he really gave me a really good going over for not selling any polish. Look at what period it was and told Mr. Goodwell, I said, "I can't do it. I just can't do it." And he said, "Well I'll help you." "Well," I said, "That wouldn't be fair." "Well, he

"We will just see what you can do." And you know everybody that I sold a pair of shoes to that week I's say "Oh, you know, these are rationed shoes are going to last you and you are going to have to take care of them, they are roped soles, you know." And I said, "Now look at this you have roped sole shoes, and uh, well, they'd say how much are they? Well, they are just twenty-five cents a bottle, but if you don't have or don't pay for one today. Why, we usually have polish on hand. If it isn't all gone I'd say there is usually a rush after the first of the month, but I could tuch you back some. Well, how much is more. I'd say "They're twenty-five cents of four for a dollar." And you know, everyone I sold ration, I sold a dollars worth of polish. That brought in, and, you know, especailly men if their with their wives, why, well get the whole thing and they don't wait all day to think about it either. "Well, Ma if those shoes fit you get'em come on and let's go and get the polish, too." So, I had over a hundred dollars that next time. So, next week the man came down from, uh, the company. He stood by there cash register all day. And the, the after the, uh, books were closed. You want to turn this on again? (Mr. and Mrs. Summers were recording this too and their tape ran out before mine.) He came up to me, he says, "I want to talk to you."

Pat: Un, why don't we go on.

Margaret: Okay. Then he called me in to talk to me and he wanted to know if I would go to Dallas, Texas and manage one of their shoe stores. And I told him, "No, I would not, because my husband was in the service ans were going to move to New York in two months and so I was going to live in Washington D.C." And so, uh, then he said, "Well, would you take it here in Kansas City?" And, he said, "We don't really have anybody to really good enough to take over here in Kansas City." Jim was talking about leaving of course and, uh, or moving. I told him, "No, I didn't, I really didn't want to think it over and start, you know, and just leave after 2 months." So, I thanked him, so, uh, you can work in the store until the night before you leave. Well, I worked there six months see. And after that I took a civil service test and, uh, because selling shoes is real hard. And, uh, the main thing that made it hard because at 9:30 the store opened those little seats you sit on and have them put their foot up on to to measure. They disappeared by 9:30 and so you had to just lean over and bend your back and fit them with the foot on the floor and it was hard on you. And you didn't dare sit down one minute all day. The only time you sit down was when you went to lunch and the supervisor would always say, "hurry back, hurry back, hurry back." And, uh, so, uh, I told the manager that I was going to take the civil service test and I went down to the civil service department and he said, "Well, we don't have any tests now, but you just wait about 2 weeks." He said, "We will have all kinds of test." and, uh, he wanted to know what I wanted to do and I said, "I wanted to do just what your doing, just sittig there." And, uh, he says, "I'm must direct people thats all." He says, "I'm sure you can get a job out of it." So he called me Monday, to give me the test and I say it in the paper. So I asked the manager of the store if I could go down and take the test and he said, "Sure, you deserve it if you want to go." So I went down and I got a job offer. And, uh, in fact I got two job offers. And, uh, I could go to Washington D.C. and I wouldn't miss one day. So, uh, Mr. Summers had gone two weeks before I was to go because he took the car and he was going to find a place to live, and everybody said you would spend a month hunting a place to live, but he didn't. He got there

and they were building new apartments down in Alexandria, Virginia, and I don't know how many rows of them. And they had about 400 people come into the city. And TWA got them and everyone of them got a brand new apartment. And so, then I moved and I went down to work and I didn't miss a bit of work. And I worked there until we came back nineteen, uh, forty-six in May. And, uh, then we lived at Fort Sumner and, uh, in forty-seven I had this baby, my Darrell, and uh, so I didn't think I would ever teach anymore and we had saved our money. We had bought our Western Auto Store and, oh, Claude thought that would be the world's best thing to do because everybody had done so well in those stores. So we got a place and moved in and cleaned and papered and, oh, fixed it real nice for my kids and, uh, you know, we could not get stuff that sell. There were no refrigerators. There were no bicycles and there were no washing machines, nothing to sell to make ends meet. All you could get was maybe work shirts and work socks and, uh, stuff like that and my lands you just went broke on it. And we had, uh, we told them that we just had to sell it back to them. We're not making it and there was a young man came out, not so young kind of old, I guess. And he says, "Mr. Summers I guess you don't know anything about Western Auto." He said, "I worked for Western Auto for years and everybody makes money in Western Auto, because, well we have tried it." If we could get materials why we could make money, but we couldn't get it and so, uh, he said, "Well, if you don't want it, I think I'll buy it." And he did buy it and you know six months later he came to see us and he told us he had gone broke and that they hadn't gotten any refrigerators or washing machines or anything like that, just some old stuff that you can buy in any drugstore or something. How was I going to sell stuff like that? And so then, uh, Darrell was 18 months and, uh, Claude went to school that Summer and finished his masters and then we came out here all of forty-eight. Then, uh, I taught here, uh, 18 years and, uh, then we went, uh, I taught Home Economics and Algebra and I was Pep Club sponsor. And, uh, I was Junior Class Sponsor every year. I had to get all the banquets for the school board. We had school board member banquets every year. And they took turns at that and so, uh, then we had Junior and Senior banquets. We had regular banquets and we had, you know, speakers that had a theme to them, you know, and every kid of the Junior Class was on the program, everyone of them. And, uh,

Claude: The first year she was here she taught band.

Margaret: Oh yeah, they didn't have any music teacher that was a frill too, you know. So, uh, I took over the band and had the band and I also,

Claude: had chorus.

Margaret: Yeah, had the chorus and, and one year the yearbook and, uh, we did get paid, not here at Hunter, we didn't get paid for that nothing. I got thirty bucks, twenty-two hundred the first year.

Claude: Uh, twenty, uh, twenty-four hundred first year and I thirty-six, no I got thirty-nine hundred, because I was a supervisor and you got twenty-four hundred.

Margaret: And thats a far cry from the salaries of today. And then, you moved to Sylvan and I was down there four years. And, uh, we had got up to,

uh, the last year I taught at Sylvan I got seven thousand thirty dollars and uh, thirty dollars was for coaching the Kayettes and, uh, then, I had the yearbook, too, and, uh, one year I got fifty dollars for that. And, uh, but, I went to all the ballgames. I had, uh, I was Junior Sponsor down there every year and we always had big banquets. And, uh, one year before the last year we were here down to Brookville and we took all our decorations and it was cherry blossom time and we got little tree, you know, and had cherry blossoms on them and everything. Oh, it was beautiful. And Mr. Gaddis was the superintendent he had, uh, uh, we were just going into Sylvan in the fall, see, and this was the spring before and so, we invited him to come. And, uh, we had a beautiful program. We invited, there weren't too many Juniors and they had put their money. And they had made quite a bit of money at the stand and, so we invited all the Juniors and Seniors mothers and fathers and so it made a big housefull. And, uh, Mr. Gaddis told me, he said, it was the nicest banquet he had ever attended and every child was in it. Every Junior was in it and, you know, sometimes you can find children some are real, uh, quick and some are a little slower, but I never found one that couldn't do something. And, uh, in our Home Economics, uh, in our years up here. The 18 years, uh, we made, uh, uh, I had gone and learned how to do ceramic work and, uh, the girls could take could take, uh, if they took Home Ec. Four and Claude helped them make cedar chest, so every girl had a cedar chest. Every girl has, uh, a doll, uh, with well it was a picture of a girl, a Southern girl, with a big dog standing at her side that we painted and Claude would put the electrical stuff in it. And they were all given that stuff free and, uh, they had a cedar chest full of everything you need when you started housekeeping, but we made all that stuff. We made tea towels, we made aprons, we made blouses, we made skirts, and we made children's garments. And, uh, "Oh, I would never use children's garment." and I'd say, "Yes, you will." And I'd say, "Just keep them and don't give it away because you'll need them." and you know, they did. And down in shop, why, Claude let them make little horses and my lands horses are just running places all over this town and he could be busy every hour of the day as it was, making cedar chest or horses for people. They's be just, uh, the, uh, everybody would keep him busy. Old people I never had a cedar chest would you make one for me. And well, then we went down to Sylvan and we had Ceramics and I had two art classes. And, uh, we did ceramics and charcoal, we did pastels we did oils and, uh, we did pen work. So we had quite an Art display on everything.

Calude: Yeah, the school board bought a new kiln, a ceramic kiln. A nice one, but, you know, after we left you can burn those things up. They blow up, if you get stuff too hot, they blow up. That I think the year after she left that thing was just...

Margaret: They cracked the lid on it.

Claude: Was'nt any good it just look like they burnt stuff up and blew up in there. It just. And they didn't have ceramics anymore and I don't think they ever did.

Margaret: Well, they learned how, uh, to uh, I think one year Mrs. Dubbs came over and showed them how to start the kiln. I taught them how to load the kiln. And you know those little cones you put in it, and, uh, but we put in in for greenware and put in in for glazes and put the ones that had

gold on it and put the ones that had red on it and you red in with, uh, greenware boy it would turn brown, brown. And, uh, the kids knew how to load it, but they didn't understand all about the little cones. We didn't go into much detail on that, because the instructor told me down at Salina be very careful which cones and don't let the kids mess with those cones because they will ruin you whole stuff, but, uh. They said the shelves were all had paint all over them, some of the girls said that the boys they let a bunch of boys go in there and, uh, you are not supposed to put anything in a kiln any thicker than an inch because you just can't get all the air out of it. And they use to make models you know and put them in there and they go BOOM, you know, and everything would fall off those little nails, you know, And somebody told me that it sits in that art room. Do they ever use that thing beside a junk room anymore? Well, you've seen that kiln in there I'm sure and they looks like they've been cooking in it and there's grease all over the top of it, last time I's been there to substitute. Oh, it just made me sick and it didn't cost those kids one dime, and some of them have four, five hundred dollars worth of stuff. We made a lot of nice things, vases, and, oh we made lots of things. Kids just loved it. I did it for the Junior High and Senior High and we had both boys and girls in there and they made some beautiful things. But, uh, they don't even have art down there now. And I think that is a disgrace because every child has some ability. And, uh, I know one boy that was going to go play hooky and, uh, they decided to go down to Lincoln and they wanted him to go along. "Well," he said, "What time are they goin?" they said, "One o'clock." And he said, "Nothing doing." He said that he was going to art. Charcoal today and he said, "I'm going to learn how to color with charcaol and then we are going to do pastels" and he couldn't get out of that he just had to have that. And, uh, can you wait till later. The he wanted to go. No sir, so they went off and left him and, you know, his mother told me that made a complete change in his whole life and said well one board member told me that he wasn't, but a trouble maker, but he was the nicest boy in there and I really did enjoyed it and he did, too. He asked me one time if he could buy some broken charcoal sticks. you know, he wanted to make his mother a picture and I said no, you can't buy from me I will give you some of it to make a picture for her because, uh, we got some little charcoal, we got some big, we got some little bitty scrap, but I'll give you some scraps and I'll give you some good stuff, too, because, uh, I buy that stuff and, uh, I'll give you some of mine. And you know, he made the most beautiful picture and, uh, he was so proud of it sometimes we have kleenex in there, you know, they drew a picture and they'd rub the colors together and blend them together and he was so proud of those. Everybody, we even had one or two girls that there was one girl especially that kind of really slow and everybody said she couldn't learn anything when we started, but she learned in there. And, uh, well the kids just all enjoyed it. Then, uh, as we retired down there, why, I didn't teach the next year, then the next 2 years, I mean, the next year we both taught down there at Topeka. We wanted just one more year to finishup, you know, so we didn't have to wait, uh, oh this, uh, KAPERS. So we taught one year down there and I had, uh. They were real nice to me and, uh, the superintendent, uh, he looked at my principal and said, "What? You only got seven thousand and something down there." he said, "How com?" He said, "You have enough hours for a Masters Degree and that is foolish." He said, "You will get a Master Degree pay." So I got it about 8,500 and I also got paid for keeping, uh, for being, uh, Pep Club Sponsor and, uh, Junior Class Play and the annual. And, so, uh, I was I was

really well satisfied. They built a brand new high school at...Where was that school?

Claude: Uh, Harveyville was where they built the new school. No, it wasn't

Margaret: No, it wasn't.

Calude: No, Harveyville was where, uh----

Margaret: Harveyville and Dover and Eskridge all went together..

Claude: Eskridge, yeah, Eskridge, Eskridge.

Margaret: Now that was just a little town. Now did they put the new school there?

Claude: Yeah, you see I taught half time at Eskridge and half time at Harveyville.

Margaret: And, uh, well, anyway the superintendent asked me if I wouldn't go over there to the new shool building and he said, You can have all the clothing and the other girl can have the foods." And, uh, but we had our house here and we were going to retire anyway, so I just told him that we were from the very beginning we just wanted a one year contract, but they asked us to come back.

Pat: Well, that's good. Now, you answered a lot of my questions already, so I'm just going to skip through and pick a few, out. Uh, I would like to know how did you start out your day in the rural school?

Margaret: Well, I started in the rural school, I started the day out with the Salute to the Flag, allegiance to the flag, then we sang a patriotic song, America or, uh, God Bless America or some of those and then we had our Good Morning Song and we always had time for that. And then after that, uh, this was kind of unusual and I really didn't realize it, but, uh, that the children would, uh, there wasn't a child in my school that ever went to Sunday School. And, so I took that big Hulburt's Bible Storybook to school with me and I'd ask them if they'd like to hear a Bible story. Oh, yes, yes, and so I would read a Bible story every morning. Now, we had time for all that. And I had first grade, you know, had all the reading and all the arithmetic, you know, and, uh, at noon. Couldn't we sing at noon and learn some of those jingle songs, you know, like The Frogies Went to School, and Down By the... Down by the Old Swimming Pool and things like that. There was twenty-one of them and they those kids could sing. We either need a piano or an organ or we had to have a pitch pipe. And there wasn't anything in the school, so I had a pitch pipe and so I got the tune by the pitch pipe. I have had organ and piano and I'd have voice, too. And, so I taught them by rote and you know, those first graders learned just as quick as the eighth graders. And sing, oh they would sing. And, uh, well, I was going to say about this Bible Study, when school was out of school one year one little boy used to walk home with me every night and he would say, "Oh, Miss" (they called me Miss Margaret) he says, "Miss Margaret I sure do thank you for having Sunday School everyday." But you couldn't do that today now could you?

Pat: Uh, Claude, how did you start out you day?

Claude: Uh, pretty much the same way. We always had opening exercises. School started at nine and, uh, lasted till twelve and was out at four, so we had plenty of time. And they, uh, my first school we alternated the,uh, fifth and sixth grade and the seventh and eighth grade. In other words, fifth and sixth had their classes together.

Margaret: All, but Arithmetic.

Claude: Yeah, and the next year they reversed it, you see. Yeah.

Pat: What were some special observances of the school?

Claude: Well, like I mentioned, uh, while ago the programs at, uh, the pie supper, the, uh, we had a program at, uh, November or Thanksgiving program. You had a Christmas program, and then, uh, had an Easter program.

Margaret: And the last day of school.

Claude: And the last day of school a big program and a big dinner, you know, and everybody and all the people came in to the big dinner.

Margaret: And I, uh, I invited all the women in my district to bring their children and if they had a piece for them or if they didn't I had a piece for them and if they could sing. Anybody could bring their children in and we make up the program after we would get there and after or while their getting the dinner ready and things like that to see that every child that wanted to participate could have a chance to do so and you'd be surprised how many mothers brought little kids, little children two and three and four years old that would get up and sing a song or could say a speech. We, uh, I don't think a child was left out. And I always gave them treats. To all the children in the district, too. And, uh, of course that last day of school was a big day.

Claude: At Christmas time we always furnished some of the orange and the apple and a sack of candy, at Christmas time.

Margaret: And sometimes a little gift. Maybe, the girls a little cotton bow or something like that. It didn't cost over twenty cents and things were really cheap then, you know.

Claude: That was for the Elementary. We are talking about the Elementary School.

Margaret: And, uh, we always gave them a treat up in the High School.

Claude: And high school teachers gave treats, also. We use to have programs, too. At Christmas time. And usually had someone act as Santie Claus and come in with the treats, you know.

Margaret: Oh, that was a big day. The Rural School really put out lots of energy and effort to make everybody happy and you always invited grandma and Aunt Sally and everybody and they all came with big baskets full. You know, even during the depression, you know they would have potato salad and they

would have this and they would have beans and they would have cucumbers or, uh, pickles. Oh, all this stuff, cake and pie, pudding and jam. And they just really put on a spread. And, uh, usually they got the teacher a gift at Christmas time maybe it wasn't much, but oh, all around everything was so nice. And just maybe a little handkerchief with a little embroidery on it. You know, it was big stuff. And even at birthdays they use to bring me a piece of cake, you know, and maybe they kept it in their pocket and maybe there was there was a frog in there or worm or something. And this was a piece we had left from my birthday cake and I want you to eat it and you would say, "Oh, thank you and I'll eat that with my lunch." "Aren't you going to eat it right now." "Eat it right now!" And you ate it right now and I never knew anybody who got sick on anything the children gave them a piece of candy or whatever, you know.

Pat: Uh, you both have given me lots of interesting things. Just to kind of wind this up. Is there any one event or special happening in your teaching career that you would like to tell me?

Margaret: Oh, as I said, we had no discipline problems, because the family, every, every husband, every man in that district when he would talk to me and you would ask him a question and he's say, he's say, uh, he'd answer by saying "No, Mrs. Summers," or "No, sir," or "Yes, mom, no yeah, nobody, anybody that is over 60 years old would answer that way today, but the kids and young guys. Huh, I don't know, hey you. You never heard that and I heard people say, the year after I retired that some of the kids said I don't have to do that. I've got my rights. You write that paper yourself. Now I think they have gotten away from that now. Where they have a little more respect, but the teachers have to respect the children before the children will respect you. And you have to ask them and in a nice way, please do this for me? Uh, would you mind going out and, uh, maybe get me a pamphlet or something. And thank you so much and say it before everybody and thank you for going, anything and, you know, the kids didn't catch on. But I have never in my 35 years of teaching had a child say, I'll not do it, I'm not goin to do it, or call me some ugly name. I have never heard it. A lot of them, somebody told me as she went through the line as they graduated and one of them say, huh, you old bag you still teaching here. Now I don't know if they would do that today or not. I never hear of it and they talk that way now?

Pat: Oh, uh

Margaret: Hugh?

Pat: Sometimes. Claude do you have any special event you can think of right quick, to wind it up.

Claude: No, I don;t know as I do.

Margaret: Well, I'll tell you another thing that I really appreciated. Now they inviteded us up here to alumni, every dinner, every year we get a letter to come up. And, uh, our 40th, was it our 40th anniversay?

Claude: mmhumm.

Margaret: Yes it was, 40th anniversary.

Claude: Oh yeah, it was the 30th.

Margaret: Oh, I don't know it was when they had that, uh, one couple had their 40th, they gave us an atlas.

Claude: That was a road map, a road map.

Margaret: An atlas, uh, anniversary dinner and gifts and things like that at our 30th open house. Then at our 40th one, one of the classes invited us to come and, uh, be at there table and had a special party after it was all over and, uh, all the kids and people were there. And, uh, I didn't expect anything. Uh, they introduced the guests and things like that and just about the time they closed the program up they said they had a little special thing. And, uh, this was our 40th anniversary, our wedding anniversary. And, uh, they had a cake on our table all decorated up. And, uh, they presented that to us and then after we got through they presented us with a plaque, kind of like that, only it had, uh, uh, hands like this, wedding hands and uh, ring on them and, uh, what else did it have? Beautiful roses and things like that. And Dee Schultz bought it from someplace and had somebody get it. And, uh, this had this school, uh, not school board, had that night for the alumni present that to us and they gave us a standing ovation and I thought that was really a highlight to remember.

Pat: Uh, thank you very much for doing this I really appreciate it.