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An Oral History of Mabel Lacey

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An Oral History of Mabel Lacey:
A Master Teacher

By
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and
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Fort Hays State University

Summer, 1990

Chapter II

Oral History Transcript

DONNA: Today, we are visiting with Mabel Lacey at her farmhouse east of Gorham, Kansas. After retiring from 48 years of teaching in the Kansas schools, Mabel lives here on the farm with her sister, Jessie. This interview, conducted by Judy Grabbe and Donna Kilian on June 22, 1990, will attempt to relate the memories and recollections of teaching in a rural Kansas one-room school to teaching in the 1990's.

To begin with, perhaps you might tell us something about your family and early childhood, Mabel.

Where did you attend school in your early years?

MABEL: I didn't start school until I was eight years old. My mother taught me at home, and then we started school in Gorham. Ruth and Sarah and I all started school at the same time, but Ruth was a grade ahead of me. We were so far from school that that was the way we had to do it, I guess.

DONNA: How far did you live from the school?

MABEL: It's about three miles, and we have walked it. Didn't hurt us a bit.

DONNA: What about your other family members? They all went to school at the same school that you did at that time. Is that right?

MABEL: There were just the three of us in school then, and Sarah didn't finish the year. Then, Jessie came along later on. I think she's about five years younger than I am, so she was ready to start when her six years came.

DONNA: What about some early school experiences? Can you think of some memorable teachers or experiences that you had in your early schooling?

MABEL: Mr. Joe Mermis was my first teacher, and he was very efficient. One thing I recall wasn't really schoolwork. I had something in my eye and couldn't seem to do anything but just weep and carry on with my eye. When he dismissed for recess, he told the youngsters to get out away from the building, and then he took the mote out of my eye. He wanted everything quiet when he took it out.

DONNA: Was that so he wouldn't injure your eye, do you think?

MABEL: Oh, that helped me! I was fine after that.

I have always remembered how good he was and how

gentle and so careful not to injure my eye. But he had youngsters of his own, and I guess he knew how you take care of them.

DONNA: What was your attitude toward school? Did you like school?

MABEL: I think that I did. I think that I had known as long as I'd known anything that the time was coming when I had to go to school, regardless of what I thought of it. And I think that I enjoyed it and enjoyed the company.

DONNA: How many years did you go to the school, and what was its name?

MABEL: Just Gorham School.

DONNA: And how many years did you attend?

MABEL: I attended until I finished eighth grade.

DONNA: And then your secondary schooling, where did you take it?

MABEL: That was examinations here and there, and I think I taught before I finished all of that.

DONNA: Can you recall at what point in your life you considered becoming a teacher?

MABEL: I think that when I was a child I wanted to be a teacher. But people had the notion I wasn't so very big, and it was hard.

DONNA: They felt like that might be a handicap for
your becoming a teacher--your size?

MABEL: Well, the people thought that I was too small.

DONNA: Who or what led you to this decision to become
a teacher?

MABEL: I think from the time I started school I must've
always wanted to be a teacher. I can't remember
when I didn't. Then one of my sisters had married,
and the other one who was teaching had taught one
year. The school board wanted her to go back,
but she was going to be married. She and I were
doing the washing, not quite the way we do washing
now, but we were washing. I was carrying the
washing in and out, you know, and before the school
board I said, "I wish they'd ask me! I wouldn't
stand around and say I was getting married. I wish
they'd ask me right now!" They said, "Get your
certificate and it's yours." She and I had gone
to school, I don't know how long we went, to Hays.
And at that time, we were talking about going to
be teachers. She did teach a year, but she was
going to be married. So, when they said, "Get
your certificate and it's yours," that's just
exactly what I did. I got a certificate, and I
taught there after that.

DONNA: What kind of certificate did you receive? Do you remember what it was called?

MABEL: No, I can't remember. It was big! I remember that. And it had my name on it.

DONNA: What assignments and requirements did you have in this first teaching position that you took?

MABEL: I don't know that I can remember.

DONNA: What grades did you have?

MABEL: I had anything from the first to the eighth. And I know I didn't have many.

DONNA: Do you remember the number of students that you had?

MABEL: Yes, I think we must've had eight.

DONNA: Back then, what was the length of the school term? Did it begin in August or September?

MABEL: It began the first part of September. I think it was a seven-month school.

DONNA: School children of today are always so interested in the one-room rural schoolhouses in which many of their grandparents went to school. Can you tell us something about the physical facility in which you did your first teaching? When was this particular one-room school built?

MABEL: It may have been moved in there from somewhere.

It was somewhere in the neighborhood of the Walburn's Ranch.

DONNA: Do you remember how old it was when you first began to teach there?

MABEL: No, I don't.

DONNA: Where did the school get its name and was there a significance in its being named this particular name?

MABEL: I don't remember. I can't remember if it had a name. Rockridge! Rockridge was what we called it.

JESSIE: And I suppose it was because it was a rocky ridge where it was.

DONNA: Very few one-room schoolhouses are still standing today. What did the outside look like?

MABEL: Just like a small house with quite a few windows.

DONNA: Wooden exterior?

MABEL: Yes.

DONNA: Can you remember the type of heating and lighting that you had?

MABEL: There was a large stove in the middle of the room.

DONNA: What type of lighting?

MABEL: I don't think we had any other than the windows.

We never had, I don't think we ever had, anything going on in the evenings.

DONNA: How did the school get its water supply? Was that one of your jobs as a teacher?

MABEL: I carried my own. If I wanted a drink, I carried some water along, and I think the youngsters did, too.

DONNA: Were you in charge of maintaining the school or did someone else take care of the physical maintenance of it?

MABEL: I did the sweeping and whatever needed to be done. We didn't have a very big school.

DONNA: Were there any changes that took place in the school building during the time you taught there? Was it changed in any way?

MABEL: No, I don't think so.

DONNA: Do you know what's happened to it since then?

MABEL: I think it's a house in Russell now.

DONNA: It was moved to Russell then?

MABEL: That's what I think. I wouldn't swear to that.

It remained here for school for several years.

DONNA: After you had left?

MABEL: Yes. I didn't finish it off.

DONNA: You weren't responsible for it closing then?

MABEL: No.

DONNA: We now know something of the one-room schoolhouse you taught in. What about your young students? What was the usual age a child began school in those days?

MABEL: It depended on the parents a whole lot. Sometimes, the mother would get them pretty well started, and they started out right in the first grade. Then the rest didn't get that start, and maybe the teacher held them on her knee while she taught them. I had one little fellow that sat on my knee and learned to read.

DONNA: How were grade levels usually set up? Did you combine grades or did it depend on how many students you had and in what grades they were?

MABEL: When I taught in the rural schools, everything gradewise depended on me. I think I could've moved somebody back or forward as I chose. Nobody ever said anything about it.

DONNA: Did most of the students in the school come from several families, or were there large families that had their children attending?

MABEL: I can't remember. I think I had around seven or eight.

DONNA: How did the students get to school? Did they have to travel very far?

MABEL: Most of them walked. I walked when the weather wasn't bad. But when the weather was bad and I rode horseback, the horse kind of quarreled with the others, and we couldn't stand that. So, then I guess if someone didn't take me, I walked.

DONNA: You say it was about three miles you had to go from your home?

MABEL: I think it would be about three. I remember one time when I had to go horseback, one family came to get their children, and they came in a wagon. I sat in the back and led my horse along, and then they let me off. I was sure where I was, and the man was sure where he was. We went where he wanted to go till we got home. I wasn't used to going across the pasture that way.

DONNA: You crossed the pasture instead of going by road?

MABEL: Yes. Yes, because that was the shorter way-- across the pasture.

DONNA: Did you live at home when you were teaching at the beginning?

MABEL: Oh, yes.

DONNA: Did the students at this particular school come from any particular cultural or heritage background?

MABEL: I guess not. Most of them were German. Most people around here called them "Roosians."

DONNA: Were most of their families farmers?

MABEL: They were. The Walburn Ranch up here was responsible for getting the school in the first place.

DONNA: What kind of appearance did they have--dress and overall appearance?

MABEL: The same as kids today on a farm.

DONNA: Overalls?

MABEL: Yes.

DONNA: Did most of the students attend all eight years at this one school, or did the families move in and out?

MABEL: In and out.

DONNA: What was the cost of education to the families? Did they have to pay tuition for their children?

MABEL: No, the taxes took care of that.

DONNA: Did many of your students go on to high school and college?

MABEL: I saw some of them after they went on to school. I saw one right after he graduated from high

school, and he told me that when he went through high school, he never had to relearn the things that we had him learn in his first years.

DONNA: You had to have been a good teacher then.

MABEL: I think I must've done fairly well with him anyway.

DONNA: Have you had any outstanding students that you remember particularly well?

MABEL: Yes, I had Bob Dole in seventh grade.

DONNA: In seventh grade in Russell, I would imagine.

MABEL: Yes, I had him in English, and he was outstanding.

DONNA: Arlen Specter? And you had him also?

MABEL: I can't place Arlen in school right now. I can't remember Arlen at all. But I sure remember Bob, and I remember right across from Bob was a boy that didn't want to study. I made a mistake one day and slapped that boy. I didn't ever intend to do that. But he was doing some monkeyshine, and before I could control anything, I slapped him! When you slap a student like the kick of a mule. . . You don't have any right to slap anybody.

DONNA: Having taught in a rural school, town grade school, a high school, and a university, I'm sure you've experienced a great variety of teaching

curriculums and methods of teaching. Can you tell us what the daily schedule was like on an ordinary day at Rockridge?

MABEL: No, I can't remember exactly.

DONNA: How did you schedule your classes with several grades and combinations?

MABEL: My sister had taught there before I took it. I can't remember that I had any scheduling problems at all.

DONNA: Did you have particular activities for one group of children to do while you were working with another group?

MABEL: Oh, yes.

DONNA: You would've had to.

MABEL: Not with the first group. There weren't enough of them. I remember having one child who sat on my knee, and he was the cutest little fellow. He probably should have waited another year before he started to school. He was an awfully cute little thing, and he did well after that in school.

DONNA: What were some of the subjects that were taught?

MABEL: We followed the state schedule. My sisters had been teaching there, and I guess I didn't do much thinking.

DONNA: Do you recall what reading methods you used?

MABEL: No, I don't recall any of the methods. I
remember things that I wanted them to know.

DONNA: What were some of the things you expected them
to be able to do?

MABEL: I thought they should know their combinations.
Some of them read most of the books.

DONNA: Was there a variety of textbooks, or were books
scarce?

MABEL: I think that the school must have furnished
the books. In one school that I taught in, east
of Russell, the books were furnished. And that
is really a problem for the teacher. When the
youngster owns his own books, he's more than likely
to take care of them. But if they belong to the
school and next year's kids will be using them,
why, he's just as likely to write something in
them thinking that nobody will ever find out.
So, I think it's a problem having the school
furnish the books.

DONNA: Do you recall how you decided on a particular
textbook?

MABEL: Yes. Yes, Kansas told what books to use.

DONNA: At that time, they pretty much designated the curriculum and the textbooks. Am I right?

MABEL: Yes.

DONNA: Were there any special classes that were offered? Did you have art and music and any type of physical education or tutoring?

MABEL: No. When I was in Russell, of course, we had everything. But that didn't concern me and mine. All I had to teach was English. I had seventh and eighth grade English.

DONNA: Do you remember some of the rules and regulations that you had teaching in the one-room school that might be different from today? Or were they pretty much the same?

MABEL: Just about the same, I would imagine.

DONNA: Any particular ones that stand out? A rule or regulation that you believed in?

MABEL: I can't remember anything. My first year, we were like one big family, you know. There was one boy who should never have started school. When he got to school, he'd cry, and we'd either have to call his folks to come and get him, or someone would have to try to get him home. I think he died eventually, but he was not normal,

and he never should have been sent to regular school. But we had to do whatever we could.

DONNA: And you did the best you could.

MABEL: We did the best we could. But this boy was really a pitiful thing. The school didn't have a phone. When he was sick and couldn't stay any longer, I don't know where he'd have gone if he'd tried to walk home. So, I'd have one of the youngsters run and phone. They had about a mile to go, I guess, to get to the phone. His folks would come and get him, but they always acted as if they wished I'd kept him. He was not normal, you see, and it's too bad to start one like that in school--any school. He couldn't learn.

DONNA: In today's schools, one of the major problems seems to be discipline. Was discipline a problem in your one-room school?

MABEL: No, I don't think so.

DONNA: How did you handle it? Do you remember?

MABEL: I'll tell you one I handled. I wouldn't have ever thought of putting pins in my shoes right down here. I saw some boys one day putting regular pins into their shoes, and I thought that was kind of funny. I thought they might cut themselves

and hurt themselves. One little girl told me that when she sat back in her seat, that one of the boys stuck her with the pins. And I said, "Now the next time that happens, you scream just as loud as you can." And she did! Scared the daylights out of me, but when I realized what it was, I just laughed and laughed. But I never saw another pin in a toe!

DONNA: That wasn't a problem after that!

MABEL: No. I don't think I ever laughed so much. I was standing up because I stood for most of my teaching, and I was standing when the scream came. I sat down and realized what it was.

DONNA: Did the parents pretty much back you up and become involved in any discipline problems that you had?

MABEL: Never had any difficulty at all.

DONNA: No doubt the funding of education in the 1920's was a major area of concern just as it is today in the 1990's. Where did the funds for the construction and maintenance of the school come from? You spoke a moment ago about taxes. Is that right?

MABEL: I think it was supported by the district itself.

If we wanted anything extra all the time that I was teaching in the rural schools, I think that I had to furnish whatever we needed.

DONNA: You furnished it out of pocket?

MABEL: Yes, and I was always glad to do it.

DONNA: What was your beginning salary? Everyone is always interested in the salaries that were paid to teachers back then.

MABEL: I'm not sure, but at the first one, I think it was about seventy-five dollars. Then we moved from that to one hundred where I taught the next place. I wanted to go back to Rockridge the next year, but each time I'd see a woman that hadn't been teaching and was going to be teaching, she'd say, "I'm going to have that school next year." And so I thought, "Well, if they've already given my school to someone, then they won't be asking me to go back." And so I had a chance to go to another school. Miss Homer told me she had just the place for me. And that was east of Russell and getting into civilization! I don't remember what my salary was then, but I stayed in a place with a mother and father and two little kids.

They were going to have another one. They had a kitchen and a bedroom, and I guess there was another room. There were three rooms, and they had lots of room for me, and I stayed with them.

DONNA: You had your room and board with them.

MABEL: I slept with the mother in the bedroom, and he slept with the kids. The living room was his bedroom, and the bedroom was ours. I always came home weekends. Someone would come and get me. I was quite a way from home, three miles east of Russell. And, in those days, that was quite a long ways from home. They'd come and get me and take me back Monday morning. One time some friends came, and when they came, they always stayed till midnight. They didn't ever go home. I think that was a family tradition. If you're staying the evening, stay till after midnight. So, in the morning when we got up, it was raining--pouring down rain. My dad got the saddle horse, and I went horseback in the rain. When I got to my boardinghouse, the woman and I were about the same size, so she lent me her clothes and her shoes, and I went to school. But I wasn't too dry when I got there.

DONNA: You went to school in borrowed clothes that morning?

MABEL: Yes! One of the men always stayed and gave the teachers trouble. They said that he took one teacher and he stayed there after school until dark. He stayed there and talked to the woman teacher. They said that he'd come and see me. (The folks that I stayed with said that.) And I said, "Well, he won't stay the second time, I betcha. And he did the first time. I saw him coming, just after I had the kids leave. I thought, "Now this is the one that stays so long and talks." The first time he came, I was right there and he came in and he talked and talked and talked and stayed and stayed and stayed. And finally, he left and it was getting toward dark. The folks thought that was such a joke on me. The folks that I stayed with were about my age. And so, they told me when I left the next morning, tonight they'd see me after dark. And I said, "I'm coming home!" And that night I saw him coming, and he was coming with a team. That's what he'd driven up there

with the night before. He was coming. So when the last kid was out, I shut and locked the door. And I went inside and I thought now I'd stay in this place and I'd be closer to him and maybe he'd see me there. And I'd lock this door and I went in there. He came and he pounded on the door, and I made no reply. After awhile he went away. When I was sure he was gone, I peeked out and looked around. He wasn't in sight, and I scanned away over to where he was standing on the hill. He was too late for that night. I thought that the next night he'd ride over. He didn't come; he never did come back again!

DONNA: He never came back again.

MABEL: We always had so much fun about it.

DONNA: Did they like to tease you about it, Mabel?

MABEL: Oh! They liked to tease me about everything.

They said that the other teacher would be hungry, and she'd want to go home and get something to eat, but he'd stay until dark.

DONNA: Was the room and board that you had with the family part of your salary at that particular school?

MABEL: What do you mean?

DONNA: Was it included in your salary?

MABEL: No.

DONNA: You were paid extra?

MABEL: My salary was just one thing. I don't know how they decided what a teacher was to get. I think that most of the time I got around a hundred dollars. But I don't think I did out there. Maybe sixty dollars, I'm not sure.

DONNA: Were there any special fund-raising activities that you as a teacher were expected to take part in?

MABEL: No.

DONNA: Suppers or anything of that sort of activity to raise money?

MABEL: No, not that I remember.

DONNA: Having grown up in this community, was your status as a school teacher any different from what it would have been if you had been a newcomer coming into the community?

MABEL: I don't think so.

DONNA: How were teachers expected to conduct themselves in the community?

MABEL: It seems to me just as you durn pleased.

DONNA: They weren't expected to be any different from anyone else?

MABEL: No, I don't think so.

DONNA: Was there a problem of teacher turnover back
in those times?

MABEL: Well, this woman that was there right before I
took over was there thirteen years.

DONNA: And you stayed . . . ?

MABEL: Was I there three years?

JESSIE: You stayed at Eminence two years and Three
Corners three years.

MABEL: Oh, that's right--one, two, three. One year
my first place, two years the next, and three
years the next.

DONNA: You taught at Rockridge, Eminence, and Three
Corners?

MABEL: Yes, and I stayed at Three Corners for three
years. This past summer we saw the man that had
moved into the schoolhouse, and he said it didn't
take him long to get me out of there. He lived
in Rogg's schoolhouse.

DONNA: What method of teacher evaluation was used
back then? Who evaluated you? Or were you
evaluated by the school board?

MABEL: I don't know. I don't think I had the sense of
being evaluated.

DONNA: It was more of an informal evaluation?

MABEL: Yes.

DONNA: Did you have a principal, or superintendent,
or school board to answer to?

MABEL: Well, I could have answered to the school board,
I suppose.

DONNA: Do you remember how many members they had on
the school board?

MABEL: Three.

DONNA: So you were pretty much your own boss in taking
care of your school?

MABEL: Yes, in all of the schools, even the first one
I had. Of course, Ruth, my sister, had taught
there at Rockridge. There weren't very many
youngsters in it. I think eight was the size of
the school.

DONNA: Did your school ever participate in activities
with surrounding schools?

MABEL: No. . . Oh, yes, we did too! When I was teaching
at Three Corners, but I don't think we did at
Rockridge ever.

DONNA: What kinds of activities did you participate in?

MABEL: I can't recall anything that we did.

JESSIE: I think you used to have a field day occasionally when some other school came.

MABEL: I think Three Corners and one other school.

DONNA: Was this a type with races and outdoor activity?

MABEL: Yes, usually just a ballgame and races and something to yell about.

DONNA: The years that you had eighth graders, did you have a graduation exercise for them when they left the school?

MABEL: No, the county graduated them.

JESSIE: They had county examinations that all of the kids in the county took and then they had a county graduation in Russell.

DONNA: So then most of the eighth graders went on to school in Russell, is that right? Russell and Gorham?

JESSIE: Gorham didn't have a high school.

MABEL: At that time Gorham didn't have anything other than grade school.

DONNA: Eighth grade was as high as they went there? Were there any particular traditions that were peculiar to your school--anything that was done year after year? Some sort of traditional occurrence or program?

MABEL: I can't remember it if there was.

DONNA: Can you think of any other observances or recollections that you might like to tell us about that we might not have been discussing?

MABEL: I'm trying to think.

JESSIE: You might tell them about the time you went in the rain out to Eminence. It was too far for some of the kids to come.

MABEL: Yes, I started on that story, too. Some people came in the evening, and I knew when they came they would not budge until midnight. That was the way they always did--that was their family tradition. You went in the evening and you stayed until midnight. And at midnight, they left, and we went to bed, and when we got up in the morning, it was raining. We didn't have a car then, I'm sure. And Papa got the saddle horse, and I went horseback to school. That was my second day, and I was up at Eminence. This wife of the man where I stayed, she was about my size. My shoes were wet, so I wore her shoes. My dress was wet. I wore her dress and I went to school. I had school. And here this man that had gone so many times so late to see the teacher, he went to the County

Superintendent, and he told her that I didn't give his little kids slips for something--that meant that his kids were late on that day. And I was there, but I was there in borrowed finery because I had to borrow her dress and everything. Even her shoes I had to borrow because I was wet and had to ride horseback. I got out there to my school and I was there when school began, but I didn't have my own clothes on. I had been visiting with the County Superintendent practically every week. I carried my own report in. So when he went to the County Superintendent (the father of this outfit that I was worried about that stayed late at night to see the other teachers, and I guess, would have gladly visited with me), he went in to report to her that I wouldn't give his little kids perfect attendance because they weren't there that day in the rain. She said, well, if I can ride 14 miles horseback and get to school, his kids could surely have gone part of a mile--he could have taken them himself. And she wouldn't give him any slip for perfect attendance.

DONNA: He wanted his children to have a perfect attendance.

Your reports then were turned into the County
Superintendent each month?

MABEL: Yes, each month we turned in a report, and I
usually took it in by hand to her. I enjoyed
talking with her. She was a comfort to me.

DONNA: Do you recall what her name was?

MABEL: Yes, Pearl Homer.

DONNA: After leaving the Rockridge School, you taught
in the Russell town schools for several years.
Was there any particular reason you left the rural
schools to teach in the town schools?

MABEL: Yes, I had taught in a rural school and what
happened? Oh! I got my degree then, that was it.
Anyway, they moved me into the Russell schools.
O. G. Rouse was the Superintendent at the time,
and I guess he thought, "We'll just see if that
little rat can do anything or not." He gave me
a wonderful schedule. I had a penmanship class,
and a literature class, and my English classes,
and. . .I can't recall what else. But I had
something just constantly. It was a pretty big
schedule. While I was going to school, I was still
working at Fort Hays and still getting my degree

there. So when they needed a high school teacher, he was sure they were going to get me. So he pushed me into the high school and gave me a literature class, an English class, and penmanship, and then he gave me study hall right before lunch and right before dismissal. I knew that he thought I wouldn't know what he was doing. We laughed about it, and he said that he thought Hays was going to get me and he wasn't going to have that!

DONNA: After teaching then in the Russell system, you went to the college level. As an instructor at Fort Hays, what classes did you have there?

MABEL: I had English and I may have . . . I didn't go to Hays until the soldiers came. We had all the soldiers--well not all of them, but we had a lot.

DONNA: You attended college at Hays?

MABEL: But I went up there.

JESSIE: You taught the soldiers three summers before you started teaching full time.

DONNA: Those were soldiers that were stationed at Walker Air Base?

MABEL: I went to Hays and taught on the campus. I had one English class and one big class of soldiers.

And I remember so well, when the teacher stood up, they all stood up. About the second time that happened to me, I said, "I can't teach sitting down." I never could. I have to walk around and write on the board and look around and see who's doing what. I said, "I'm sorry, but we'll just have to do it my way or else!"

Afternoon of June 25, 1990

DONNA: We have some more conversation with Mabel Lacey this afternoon. Mabel, you were telling us about your students at Hays.

MABEL: I do remember about the boys (soldiers), and they were telling about themselves. This one soldier from Wyoming wrote on the blackboard W-O-M-E-N. He wrote that on the blackboard painstakingly. He wrote W-O-M-E-N, and of course, they laughed. And he turned around, and then he said, "Oh, I forgot a letter!" Then he wrote a Y after the W and changed the E to an I and put a G at the end and he had WYOMING. I thought that was a clever thing to do. And, of course, all of them laughed about it, and I laughed, too. It hadn't looked like that was what he was going to talk about. He managed to get their attention by now.

DONNA: You hadn't thought about it in that way.

MABEL: They were interesting to work with and, I think, very well behaved.

DONNA: I have talked with several of the people around Russell in the school system today and those that still live in the town of Russell, and they remarked that they took the college English classes from you when you taught English at the college over there. One of the things that they pointed out was that you believed very strongly in diagraming.

MABEL: Yes.

DONNA: They felt that was something that was useful-- to be able to diagram sentences in order to understand them better. I know that is something that is coming back into vogue now. Anything else that you believe very strongly in doing, as far as your teaching methods? Can you recall anything?

MABEL: I didn't think it was very nice for anyone to let his mind wander. I believed in making them know that they were in class and seeing if we couldn't keep our minds on the same thing.

DONNA: Did you have any difficulty with students that had minds that did tend to wander?

MABEL: Well, yes. Every once in awhile, there would be one that would have enjoyed sleeping in the middle of the afternoon. We didn't have too much trouble.

DONNA: I'm sure that you kept them awake with your teaching methods.

MABEL: I think that we did.

DONNA: We were wondering a little bit about your education after you left high school here in Gorham. You went to school in Gorham--is that correct?

MABEL: Yes.

DONNA: And then what did you do to obtain your degrees and certificates? I noticed that you had a degree from Fort Hays, and you gained that degree with summer work and some full-time work as well.

MABEL: Yes, I can't remember the name of the place where we went in the summer. We went West.

DONNA: Would it have been, perhaps, in Boulder, Colorado?

MABEL: Some place in Colorado. Surely I ought to be able to remember the place we stayed. Sarah Boller and I went some place. I wonder why I didn't pick up some old letters. I'm sure there must have been some.