

Fort Hays State University

## FHSU Scholars Repository

---

College of Education One-Room Schoolhouse  
Oral Histories

Archives Online

---

7-1-1989

### An Oral History of Hilda Steinert Schober, A One-Room Schoolteacher

Kurt Edward Goldenstien  
*Fort Hays State University*

Follow this and additional works at: <https://scholars.fhsu.edu/ors>

#### Content Disclaimer

The primary source materials contained in the Fort Hays State University Special Collections and Archives have been placed there for research purposes, preservation of the historical record, and as reflections of a past belonging to all members of society. Because this material reflects the expressions of an ongoing culture, some items in the collections may be sensitive in nature and may not represent the attitudes, beliefs, or ideas of their creators, persons named in the collections, or the position of Fort Hays State University.

---

#### Recommended Citation

Goldenstien, Kurt Edward, "An Oral History of Hilda Steinert Schober, A One-Room Schoolteacher" (1989). *College of Education One-Room Schoolhouse Oral Histories*. 293.  
<https://scholars.fhsu.edu/ors/293>

This Document is brought to you for free and open access by the Archives Online at FHSU Scholars Repository. It has been accepted for inclusion in College of Education One-Room Schoolhouse Oral Histories by an authorized administrator of FHSU Scholars Repository.

**AN ORAL HISTORY OF HILDA  
STEINERT SCHOBER A ONE-ROOM  
SCHOOLTEACHER**

**FORT HAYS STATE UNIVERSITY  
SCHOOL OF EDUCATION  
SUMMER 1989**

**KURT EDWARD GOLDENSTEIN**

## CHAPTER II

### ORAL HISTORY

**Kurt:** Thank you for taking the time to talk to me about the various one-room school houses you have taught in. I'll be asking you a variety of questions over your experiences in these schools.

**Kurt:** What schools have you taught in?

**Hilda:** 1941 to 1946 I taught in Rush County in a one-teacher school. I also taught in Russell County in 1931 to 1932. I only taught in Russell County for one year and had thirty-eight students for grades one through eight. In fact I even taught my own ministers four children. I went to German school when he was teaching and I was younger. I never did learn to do too much reading or writing. He was kind of a strict teacher. When I got teaching his kids I told him I might be kind of hard on those boys. He said, "That's all right, if you can't make them behave they'll get some more of it at home."

**Kurt:** Was that difficult?

**Hilda:** Yes, he was your minister and at that time you could still discipline children. I mean they had to mind the teacher not the teacher mind the pupil and the parents were one hundred percent in your favor. If they needed shaken up then go ahead, that was your privilege. If they didn't

behave, and you shook them up, they got another shaking and a little paddling when they got home.

**Kurt:** Let me clarrify the schools you've taught in.

**Hilda:** I taught in my home school for a year in 1928 and then got a job about 8 miles east in Barton County and I taught there for 2 years and moved to Milberger. I got married after Milberger in 1932 and didn't teach for 8 years. I had a son and didn't go back to teaching until he was in school. I had to take another examination from the State because I didn't have a degree. I passed the test and my son went out to school at Otis and I went out north to Rush County for two years and then to Albert for five years and taught fifth through eighth grade.

**Kurt:** Were did you go after Albert?

**Hilda:** Shady Grove, for twenty-five years until I retired.

**Kurt:** What did you do to become a teacher?

**Hilda:** I had to take a test to finish the eighth grade. You didn't pass the eighth grade unless you passed this test. I then went to High School for four years and took normal training in Hoisington. I then took the State teaching examination put out by the State. We were tested in reading, math, history, and psychology -- seven or eight subjects. The State put out the test and we had to go to Great Bend to take the test and then we got our grades from the State. I believe you had to have a score of eighty with no grade below seventy. My score was ninety-four total, so I got through

normal training just fine. I graduated May 18, 1928, and then the summer of 1928 I went to Hays College and took nine hours before I started teaching. I was nineteen years old and some of my students were fifteen. Well, evidently they were retained and had to take the eighth grade over. You didn't have to go on to high school.

**Kurt:** Did teachers frequently change jobs?

**Hilda:** Yes, one or two years was as long as most teachers stayed in one spot.

**Kurt:** Why?

**Hilda:** I think they wanted to meet new people and get a new start.

**Kurt:** Did you get tired of the same students?

**Hilda:** No, you just barely got used to them in two years and they would barely get used to you. They would work their heels off for you, they wanted to please. I taught for one year in Milburger and that's where I had the big bunch of thirty-four students. I started out at with twenty-three students at District 95 and went to District 62 and had twenty to twenty-three students. A lot of my first graders are sixty-one years old and they come and call me teacher. I wonder if when I was teaching all eight grades if I taught or just baby sat. One of them said, "You better believe you taught us teacher, you taught me how to talk, read, and write." Lavern Becker, he was a stuterer and couldn't speak a word so I taught him how to talk by talking around a box

drawn on a piece of paper. We learned to read the "Little Red Hen" that way. He even said that after he went to high school he made those boxes in his mind. He and his brother both were stutterers.

**Kurt:** What other teaching techniques did you use?

**Hilda:** I always started them on their multiplication tables on their nines and used the table of nine. It is very simple if you know how to add and subtract. I've even tutored here in town and taught students how to multiply using the table of nines and they all caught on.

**Kurt:** Did you teach art and music?

**Hilda:** I taught music and I played violin. I had a girl who could play chords on a pump organ and we would sing. Most schools had those old pump organs. We had no gas or electric lights and used oil lamps fascined on the wall and when it got cloudy and rainy we would light lose lamps.

**Kurt:** What subjects were studied?

**Hilda:** Well, the one that is sure lacking right now is Kansas History. We saw to it that the youngsters knew Kansas History from beginning to end. Agriculture of course, most of them lived in rural areas and children had to learn about farming. They learned about farming and cattle and raising chickens. Geography, we used to have geography matches on Friday afternoon if the children were good all week. If they didn't give you any static all week you would give them a reward. The reward was usually a geography match. We would

spend about an hour in the afternoon after recess and even the first and second graders would sit in with their upper room and open up their book with the map and maybe we would start out with Kansas and I'd ask them to find Topeka. They would shout out, "I found it right here." I would say, "What is Topeka noted for?" "The capital of Kansas of course," they would answer. Then we'd go into more detail and go to Europe and I'd ask them to find Leningrad and give me the latitude and longitude. We would study latitude and longitude and they would have to find it by using latitude and longitude. We learned a lot of geography be it city, lake, mountain range or anything like that. From the fourth grade on up I'd ask them to take out paper and pencil and ask them to write down as many states and capitals as they could in the next fifteen minutes. They ended up knowing all forty-eight states and their capitals just like that. In arithmetic would take problems that they had had trouble with in the week, be it addition, multiplication or division and maybe let a third grader start. I would ask them what they wanted to work on and to choose a partner. We would see how many they could work or give them three problems and see who could work them the fastest. If you got beat twice you could choose another partner. There were no such things as computers, they had to know their multiplication, subtraction and addition facts.

**Kurt:** How did you have the older kids help?



**Hilda:** I would have the older students who were the brightest and didn't need to much tutoring take the little ones, usually the first graders, and do oral reading and tell what they read. It was good for the eighth graders and the first graders. I had reading on my own for each person every day and I made sure that that each student read orally each day. I had the sixth, seventh, and eighth grade do a lot of silent reading. We didn't have work books back then. You had to make up you own questions.

**Kurt:** You had to read everything first then?

**Hilda:** That is right. Then at the end of the month we were given a course of study that was given to us by the State of Kansas that said how many chapters of reading needed to be done each month and so many poems to memorize.

**Kurt:** Was it your choice of books and poems?

**Hilda:** They had that all planned out but we could change. It was a little book that told how much was expected for each grade in reading, math and spelling. They had a spelling list each week and they would have to know the word and use it in a sentence. We had tests in geography, agriculture, Kansas History, Civil Government, science and penmanship. They were very strict on writing. I had very good penmans. When they graduated they could really write perfect. I mean they had beautiful hand writing. I have a grandson who can barely write his own name. Everything is in manuscript. You can't desipher their hand writing any more. I was just sick



when heard they dropped Kansas History. I believe that if they live in Kansas they should know a little bit about Kansas.

**Kurt:** How many courss did you teach at one time?

**Hilda:** I tried everything. I would have a reading period everyday for the first four grades. The other reading period was done by the upper grades. The eighth grade would read three times a week where they read stories and answered questions, and of course, poetry was something everyone had to read and memorize at that time. They had to memorize Shakespear. They also got reading in other subjects. If they didn't understand the subject I would have them read the material out loud and then we would discuss the material. I couldn't have reading every day for all eight classes in an hour and a half before recess, so the seventh graders who were sharp enough would read three times a week with the eighth graders. The others would read with the sixth graders. Of course, they didn't know they were reviewing sixth grade reading, they thought they were helping the sixth grade out. Math was something we had every day. We just never left math out. We had science twice a week and Kansas history three times a week. We would also have United States History twice a week. The next week we would have Civil Government twice and history three times a week. We couldn't possibally have everything. We also had health.

**Kurt:** Did you have physical education?

**Hilda:** Oh yes, we played ball and jumped rope.

**Kurt:** So you were the gym teacher.

**Hilda:** Not only that, I was the janitor. In a one-teacher school you were the janitor. You lit your own fire and in the evening you carried in your own coal if you didn't get one of the eighth grade boys to carry it in.

**Kurt:** Did you teach religion?

**Hilda:** No, but we did say the Lords Prayer because the preacher in Milberger asked us to do that.

**Kurt:** How did you decide on what textbooks to use?

**Hilda:** Well, the State decided and every family had to buy their own books.

**Kurt:** How much did it cost to go to school?

**Hilda:** The books weren't very expensive. It might cost two to three dollars for the whole year and they kept their books. The teacher had nothing to do with the books. It came out in the paper to what books the students needed. This came from the State and I used what they brought.

**Kurt:** What happened if they couldn't afford to buy books.

**Hilda:** Well, there was no such thing. They had to see that they got them.

**Kurt:** Was there any way to help out poorer families?

**Hilda:** No, there was no way. Most children came to school with a sandwich and an apple.

**Kurt:** Were there kids who didn't get to come to school?

**Hilda:** No, the parents made sure they came to school.

School was considered to be a very important part of their lives.

**Kurt:** Did the State supply anything other than textbooks?

**Hilda:** They supplied the tests. Every month we were sent tests on tissue paper. It was real thin paper because of postage. There were usually ten questions for every grade and every subject, even spelling. Penmanship was the exception. For penmanship it said to do one page of cursive writing, and of course, we had to make sure they did that oval excersize and hold their pens correctly. They had these old pens with the ink well and kids would flip ink on each other and then they would cry. We had these tests once a month and the teacher had to copy the questions onto the chalk board. We would start out with eighth grade reading and then they would have to write the questions on a piece of paper and then answer them. It took three days to take these tests. The teacher would have to take the papers home to grade them and usually they had three to four pages of paper for each question. They had to write on one side only and fold them neatly and put their name, grade, and subject on the outside. The teacher had to record every grade and average in the other grades and put this grade onto a grade card that went home every month. If the parents weren't satisfied they would come to school to find out how they could help better the grade. Parents were very much involved and thats what counted. Parents might ask you to send work

home so they could help their child so at least they could get an eighty percent. We didn't give A, B, or C grades, we gave percentage grades. Eighty was considered passing. You had to have an average of eighty with no grades below sixty.

**Kurt:** How did you handle kids with special needs?

**Hilda:** Well, I tell you there wasn't very much choice. I had one kid who was a discipline problem and he was the twelfth child in the family. I gave him a spanking and hauled him home one night and I told his Dad what I did. I told him I really gave him a good thrashing and he said, "Well, he's going to get another one tonight." I said, "If you don't train Augie he's going to land in the reformatory and we don't want that to happen. I could never live that down if it would happen." I tried to talk to Augie but I didn't know what was wrong with him. Well, eight years later he raped his niece and was put in the reformatory for eight years and when he got out he committed suicide. I had one that had epileptic fits and every time she felt one coming on she would grab me around the waste and about squeeze me to death. Her parents had told me about it, so I would let her be. One day she ha a fit and lay there for about an hour without coming to so I had one of the eighth graders run down to Milberger to the store and call her parents. By the time they hitched up the horses and drove that mile and a half to school she was stil out so they had to take her to the hospital. She was there about two weeks and they brought her

back. She died about five years latter. We had no telephone, car, bicycles, or horse and were about a mile from the nearest phone.

**Kurt:** Did you teach any mentally retarded students?

**Hilda:** Not really, we didn't call them mentally retarded we just called them slow learners. We retained them for about year or two. They were able to walk and talk and do things. They were able to read but I think most of their reading was done by memory. I had one that was hard of hearing and partially blind. I had her memorizing spelling words. They would last about ten minutes before she would forget them. She was able to read and count. They sent her to Olatha because they thaught maybe lip reading would help. When she came back all she would do is talk with her fingers and I said, "Rene you can do better than that because you have a voice and I'm not going to learn that finger stuff." I had her four years and then she went on to high school and with help they let her get through.

**Kurt:** You had quite a variety of students.

**Hilda:** Yes I did.

**Kurt:** How did the kids get to school?

**Hilda:** Most of them walked and if he weather was bad the parents would bring them. Some of them had 2 1/2 miles. I lived 1 1/2 miles from school. The first school was my home school. I walked every day unless it snowed or rained and then my dad would bring me. I taught at my home school for



one year and then went east and taught at District 62 for two years. I lived 1 1/4 mile from school and I walked back and forth every day unless it rained or snowed and then the people I stayed with would come and get me in the horse and buggy.

**Kurt:** Did community people give you a place to live?

**Hilda:** You had to pay for your room and board. My salary was ninety-five dollars a month and out of that ninety-five I had to give eighteen dollars for room and board.

**Kurt:** What would it take to cancel school?

**Hilda:** There was a big blizzard in western Kansas in 1928 and there was a bus load of children who all froze to death except one who kept running trying to keep everyone awake. Well, in Kansas where I was teaching -- District 62 -- we had a big blizzard that afternoon and all of a sudden one of the students yelled, "Teacher, teacher, the school house is on fire." We had one of those pot bellied stoves in the center of the room and the stove pipe went straight up and there was asbestos in the ceiling. The asbestos weakened and the the rafters started to burn. I had the stove red hot because it was cold. We had windows on the north and south with a draft coming through. Sure enough, I looked up and thought, oh by golly, what will I do next. There was fire and smoke coming out of the roof. I had two boys that were fifteen and were in the eighth grade. I said, "Manual and Roy, get the fire extinguisher." They were tall boys, and I had the children

go outside but they kept coming in for coats and caps because it was cold outside and they were freezing. I would try to keep them out and I told them to go to the coal shed and the toilets. There was no telephone and we were a mile from where I boarded with a school board member. I had one of the seventh grade boys run down and get him. He had a phone so he called the other board members and they all came with wagons and hauled most of the children home to their houses. The snow was getting deep. When they finally got the fire out, all of the rafters had burned in the roof. The roof was one of those high pitched ones and they had wondered why the whole thing didn't go up in smoke with all the wind and snow blowing. They had to rebuild the roof. I had quite a time getting all of those kids out of the building. They kept coming back in for pencils and crayons. They thought more about that stuff than they did about themselves. It was really a scarey time.

**Kurt:** What was the school atmosphere like?

**Hilda:** The children seemed to enjoy it. There was stress on the teachers part because you felt you had so much each day that you had to get done. Did we do this and memorize that? There were always some subjects that children liked better than others and would say, "Goody, goody, goody, lets study this today."

**Kurt:** Were there any special rules different from today?

**Hilda:** None that I can think of.



**Kurt:** Could you use punishment?

**Hilda:** Oh, yes there was no complaint there.

**Kurt:** What other discipline measures did you use?

**Hilda:** A lot of time we took away privileges. That really hurt. Like maybe they couldn't go out and play ball for a day or so if they didn't behave themselves. That was our recreation. I had some really good ball players in fact several of them almost turned professional.

**Kurt:** When you went outside and had a student stay inside what would they do?

**Hilda:** They had an assignment to do and they didn't have time to fool around because when their time was up those question had to be answered, so there was no trouble. I could have three of them staying in at the same time. I would give the three maybe four problems and they had to be worked and checked and done by the time recess was over with.

**Kurt:** How long was school?

**Hilda:** School would start at nine and be over with at four and lasted eight months. I had nine months at Shady Grove and Albert, but all the rest were eight.

**Kurt:** What vacation times did you get off?

**Hilda:** Well, Christmass was another thing. You might like to know how we got our ball and bat. We didn't have catching mitts unless the kids brought them from home. But how did you get your ball and bat? Well, at Christmass time you gave a program. We had dialogs, which you call plays, and

recitations. Kids got up and spoke pieces or dramatized poems and we sang songs. We had the old fashioned box supper where the young girls would decorate a box and put supper for two in it with sandwiches, apples, bananas, cake, and pie or cookies. They would wrap up this box like a gift box and put a big ribbon-bow or flower on top and ask some young man to auction off the boxes and see who would buy the box and get to eat the supper with the young lady. Some of the single girls would bring boxes and their boy friends would come. Sometimes we would have as many as twelve to fourteen boxes that needed to be auctioned off. Usually they always tried to buy the teachers box. They would try to buy the teachers box just because it was the teachers, but no one knew whose box was whose because the names were on the inside. The auctioneer would say, "I wonder if that's the teachers box?" They would bring up to three dollars but ranged from fifty cents on up. Usually they had a pound of chocolates for the most popular young lady and it cost a penny to vote. They would put her name up and people would say, "I'll give five pennies," or, "I'll give three pennies." The candy would bring as high as three to four dollars because people would vote for the lady they wanted to have the box of candy. A jar of pickles was given to the laziest man. Sometimes we ended up with twenty-four to thirty-five dollars. Well, that was the money the teacher used to buy their ball and bat or anything else the kids wanted to play with. We bought a

basketball one time and we had lots of fun playing basketball. It took a long time to earn that. You see the school board didn't buy any of that stuff. The teacher and the kids had to earn that money. We did this once a year and then on the last day of school the parents would bring a covered dish and they would go all out.

**Kurt:** Did you do anything for graduation?

**Hilda:** When I taught in Rush County I was hired to give the eighth grade exams in two other counties. The counties got these examinations from the State, but I teaching seventh and eighth grade couldn't give my students the test. Another teacher went to my school and maybe five other districts along with two other teachers who didn't teach seventh or eighth grade children at the school. They would give the test for two or three days, usually on Saturday, and it would take several Saturdays. They gave these tests and then they were sent in to be graded. I was hired to go to Rush County way west of Albert and I had five or six districts that would come. There was another teacher who came with me. I think we had fourteen eighth graders and then those tests were sent into Rush County and then into the State. They were graded in Rush County and the grades were put into the paper. When I was in Albert we didn't have any graduation because of the war in 1942. I had my own graduation for my fourteen eighth graders in Albert. We had music and a speaker and even District 11, south of Albert, brought their

youngsters up for graduation.

**Kurt:** What were the moral and ethical requirements for teachers?

**Hilda:** When I first started if you got married you were out. You had to dress neat with at least your hair combed and perhaps pulled back out of your eyes or in braids. Plain clothes.

**Kurt:** Did you have to go to church?

**Hilda:** Oh yes.

**Kurt:** You had to live pretty conservative then?

**Hilda:** You were looked upon and if anyone came up with some gossip on you, you were out. You were thought of as a role model for the kids.

**Kurt:** Were men teachers treated any different than women?

**Hilda:** There weren't that many men teachers. I don't know if the men thought it was sissified or if they thought they could do better in another job or if the wages weren't high enough. Clarence Brown and Dorcy Brown were both teachers and they had the same requirements as I did. Sometimes they might have gotten five dollars a month more because they were a man but that never bothered me.

**Kurt:** Was there any ethnic or race considerations?

**Hilda:** Not really, but if you got into an area that was Lutheran then they would hire you if you were Lutheran. They wanted you to go to their church.

**Kurt:** How were most school houses built?

**Hilda:** I don't no if the land was donated or if the State or District bought it. It was usually two to three acres and the farmers got together and built the school. They were usually made of wood and faced east and west and had windows on the north and south sides. This was done so you had light from both sides. They were just a one room school. They were about twenty to thirty feet wide with a stove in the middle of the room and they had a little cloak room before you entered the school house. That's where they hung their coats and lunch pails. The teacher had to make sure the school stayed clean. We always had the flag up and a picture of Washington and Lincoln, and of course, the hand ringing bell, that was a necessity.

**Kurt:** What kind of restrooms did you have?

**Hilda:** Out door restrooms. They dug the hole and they put a piece of wood over the top. Usually you had two holes. If you got into a large school you would have three holes and that was something great. We used the Montgomery Wards and Sears and Roebuck catalogs for toilet tissue. They would bring one a month for each bathroom and the students would get into a fight because they would want the softer paper first so they would say, "Can you bring a catalog for the bathroom next week?" Someone would say, "We've got one I can bring," or, "We can bring newspapers." They would say, "Well, we'd rather have a catalog." They'd go out there and not come back and you'd think they fell in, but they'd be out



there paging through the catalog. There was no such thing as television or radio.

**Kurt:** Where did you get your water?

**Hilda:** In Albert and Shady Grove we did have a well but in Rush County we had a cistern. In September they would haul in the water and it would disappear through a crack eventually. At District 95 they used to bring in salty water, where ever they got the water it must have been very salty. You had to notify one of the board members when the cistern got low or if the water started to taste bad. There was no well water. We had a large container with a lid and each child had to bring his own cup. We had no hot lunches. Every child had to bring his own dinner pail. We had nails that we hung our caps and coats on. At District 62 there was a cistern and it had a crank pump that would bring up little cups of water and splatter it out. That stirred up the water from getting so old and tasteless. At Milberger we had a cistern but we wasted a lot of water because we had a larger wash basin with a drain and a bucket beneath the drain. The kids loved to fill that up and wash their hands and then take the water from the bucket and pour it out.

**Kurt:** Did you ever have trouble getting water in the winter?

**Hilda:** No, we always had water. The kids loved to eat snow.

**Kurt:** Could you keep the school warm?

**Hilda:** Yes, we had a coal stove. We didn't use wood because it would burn too fast and you would have to keep filling the

stove to much. One of the boys would bring in the coal and any of them could add coal to the stove if they saw it getting low.

**Kurt:** Did the students help out a lot?

**Hilda:** Yes, but they didn't do any janitor work. They always had to get home at night to milk cows and do chores and it took them a while to walk one or two miles home.

**Kurt:** Did you have a Library?

**Hilda:** I had a library at Shady Grove of twenty-five books. The State passed a law that you had to spend eighteen to twenty-five dollars a year on books so we ended up with four to five books a year.

**Kurt:** How about when you first started teaching?

**Hilda:** In Rush County, Milberger, Albert, and District 62 we might have had four or five books. We had a dictionary but no encyclopedias. We had to do for ourselves and they had to go dig for themselves. Like most farmers they recieved one news paper a week, usually a city news paper. I would assign them questions out of the paper. The kids had to read the paper. After about five years at Shady Grove a map making company moved in with I don't no how many trailers. They were their for two or three years. One morning I came to school and fourteen youngsters had come to school. The mother asked if we had a music, art, and, gym teacher. Well, we did have a music teacher, but I taught everything else. They were all ages and they came from Cincinnati and other



big cities and I didn't know what they knew. All I knew was that I couldn't teach fourteen more students. I called the school board and said, "Hurry, I have fourteen kids and three nails to hang them on." I didn't have any seats. They came to school and visited with the parents and they didn't know what to do. I told them to call up Superintendent Swartz in Great Bend to see if he could take the seventh and eighth grade. That would be fourteen less. Swartz said yes, but they couldn't send out a bus so we had to bring them in by car. The school board made arrangements. The following year they hired a first through third grade teacher for about three or four years and I had fourth through sixth grade. She moved and they finally found a man who would teach the upper grades so I took the lower grades.

**Kurt:** Could you send kids to other districts?

**Hilda:** Usually not, if they were in that district you had to stay there.

**Kurt:** Were the school buildings used for anything other than school?

**Hilda:** The 4-H used Shady Grove but the others were never used for anything else.

**Kurt:** What has become of the schools you've taught in?

**Hilda:** Shady Grove is still used by the 4-H.

Shady Grove is still an attendance center and belongs to Unified School District 428. We unified before I retired and the teachers got a little extra money because of mileage.

Since I first started at Shady Grove they've hired a janitor, art instructor, band and physical education instructors. They had all the things they had in Great Bend except each teacher had three grades. Countryside belongs to District 428 and and they lease the building out for community plays, its a fairly new building. All the others have been moved away and I guess the land went back to whoever owned it.

**Kurt:** What age did students start school?

**Hilda:** When I started there was no law concerning this. The age for first graders varied from five to eight years old. It dependend on when the parents wanted to start them. I never had one under five. Some went to school until fifteen and some just repeated the eighth grade twice if they couldn't go on to high school. When I first began teaching in Albert I walked into the school room that morning and here sat these six foot youngsters and they came to me and asked me where they should sit. Well, I thought they were kidding. I never had kids that big before. I ended up having about twenty-four kids in grades five through eight. They were well behaved youngsters. I met one of them years later at the Chyenne Bottoms Sporting Club and he came up to me and said, "Teacher I bet you don't rmember me." I said, "Where did you go to school?" When he told me he went to Albert, I said, "I bet you were one of my big ones, a Faulkert boy." I was right.

**Kurt:** Was there a dress code?

**Hilda:** I tell you they didn't have slacks or jeans. All the little girls came in little cotton dresses that were starched and their faces were scrubbed and shiney and haired combed back in in ribbon-bows. They didn't have bobbed haired. They had braids, one big braid down the back in a big ribbon that matched the dress. They usually only had two or three dresses. They would wear two, wash and iron them, and wear them again on Thursday and Friday. They wore long black stockings above their knees with garters. Boys usually wore biboveralls.

**Kurt:** Was that a requirement?

**Hilda:** No, thats just what they wore.

**Kurt:** Did students move in and out much?

**Hilda:** No, not to much in the rural areas. In Albert they did more so because I had quite a few Mexicans that moved in and out. They worked on the section. They were nice children.

**Kurt:** Did many go back to the farming after school?

**Hilda:** Yes.

**Kurt:** Who were some of your favorite students?

**Hilda:** I had a lot of favorites. I do have some that are Doctors.

**Kurt:** Did you have parent associations?

**Hilda:** No, but the parents would give little programs where people would get together and do a little singing and stuff like that.

**Kurt:** Who hired you?

**Hilda:** The school board hired and fired. I had my first contract that stated that I worked for eight months at so much money. At the end of the year they could say they didn't want you back. I still have all of my contracts.

**Kurt:** Did you have sporting events between schools?

**Hilda:** We had base ball games, but outside of that nothing else. I still get credit at Shady Grove for base ball. Everywhere I went thats what we played. I got chewed out one time by another teacher because her team didn't even score and we were really throwing them in fast. She came up to me and told me that professional base ball didn't belong in rural schools. I told her that we weren't professionals but she didn't believe me. She was really mad.

**Kurt:** Did you ever have any controversies?

**Hilda:** Only one time out at Shady Grove. A little fellow came to school with a splinter in his eye. The mother came up to me and told me to mind my own business, but that splinter was just ready to pop out. I called up the rural health nurse and she came out and looked at it and said that he could go blind and even. She went out to the house and they chased her off, so she called the law and they took him to the hospital and took out the splinter. The Doctor said he didn't know how the child could have lived with the pain. The child was watching someone chop wood. That was my only controversy and we had a real free for all.

**Kurt:** What was your salary when you started and ended your career?

**Hilda:** It was 90 dollars a month when I first started in my home school in 1928. I ended up making 9,200 dollars a year for 9 months at Shady Grove. I guess about 1000 dollars a month when I retired. When I first came to Shady Grove I was the highest paid teacher in the county. I was getting 375 dollars a month. In Albert I got 325 dollars a month and in Rush County I got 115. They liked what they heard of what I did in Rush County and how my students did on their exams so the superintendent came to me and asked me how I would like to switch jobs since I had been in Rush County for two years. Well I said, "I've been thinking about looking around." They usually keep you for two years and you would tell them that you were moving or they moved you. "Well," he said, "I'd like to get you to Albert for the upper grades. There are a lot of big kids and they need someone to calm them down and teach them." I told him it depended on what he wanted to pay me. He offered me 375 a month. Well, that was pretty good money. I said if every one agrees upon it when do you want me to come and sign the contract. He said, "Next week." I told my school board and I went and stayed in Albert for five years. I wanted to leave Albert sooner, but they gave me more money.

**Kurt:** How did they pay you?

**Hilda:** Once a month by check. Sometimes they would barter.

In Milberger and District 62 they would always try to cut your salary by offering free room and board. I said no, "I'd rather pay my own." I taught for thirty-five years and retired at age sixty-five.

**Kurt:** What did your Husband do?

**Hilda:** He was a farmer and brick layer. I drove from home except for when I boarded at District 62 and Milberger. I used to drive a horse and buggy when I lived at home. We had no barn we just kept the horses outside and brought a little feed. After Shady Grove hired a band, music, and art teacher I felt like, golly, what am I doing.

**Kurt:** What grades did you like the best?

**Hilda:** I liked the upper grades because I liked to teach math and history and things like that. One of my students when I first started at Shady Grove is a Doctor of Veterinary Medicine and another has a PhD in engineering and is in New York City.

**Kurt:** Did you have a lot of students go on with schooling?

**Hilda:** Yes, I had Lee Turner's, Doctor Brown's, Harder's, and the Esmiller's children.

**Kurt:** Do you have any advice for present day teachers?

**Hilda:** I guess their hands are tied just like the Doctors, they'll get sued if anything goes wrong. You can't do what I did to my students so your students will never turn out like mine. Times are different. The teachers can't do what they'd like to do. There are too many state hooks and the



parents look for any loop holds to tack down the teacher. You can't shake up a kid because of child abuse and the children aren't corrected in a lot of homes and its the environment that makes the kid act the way he does in school. They do what they see at home. If the child had some work to do at home they wouldn't get into all of this trouble. There's too much free time. Children used to have hogs, chickens and cows to feed, barns to clean. A poor child didn't have time to think about what to do next. There was no television or radio which causes a lot of the trouble. They see and hear it and then think that they can get away with it. If I was young I don't know if I would go into the teaching profession unless the State could come up with a law that would allow the teacher to go in and get the child under control. You have to get a child under control before they'll work for you and the good of the country. People call me all the time and I tell them the same thing I just told you.

**Kurt:** Did you like teaching in a one-room school?

**Hilda:** At the time I thought they were great. I still say, like some of the kids, we learned more there than any where else.

**Kurt:** Were you ever issued any special awards for teaching?

**Hilda:** I had a twenty-five year teaching certificate from the State.

**Kurt:** Any last thoughts?



**Hilda:** I was only sixteen hours short of my masters in Psychology and after I retired my friends told me I should go back and finish, but I never did. Fort Hays is a good old college.