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Fred Vinson

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ORAL HISTORY

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Date 4-20-76

Fred Visson
(Signature - Interviewee)

R+1 Boyl
Address

Genoa, W. Va. 25401

Date 4-20-76

Stella Kay
(Signature - Witness)





#131

ORAL HISTORY

GIFT AND RELEASE AGREEMENT

I, Ruby Osborn Vinson, the undersigned, of
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Date 4-20-76

Ruby Osborn Vinson
(Signature - Interviewee)

Rt 1 Box 1
Address

Genoa, W. Va. 25107

Date 4-20-76

Stella Ray
(Signature - Witness)



This interview was conducted with Mr. and Mrs. Fred Vinsen of Genea, West Virginia. This is a small community in southern Wayne County West Virginia. Mr. and Mrs. Vinsen are both eighty-six years of age. Mrs. Vinsen is the former Ruby Osborn. She taught school for two years and then raised her own seven children. Mr. Vinsen taught school for twenty-four years.

The interview pertains to the early life of the Vinsens in rural West Virginia eighty years ago. It also contains a discussion of education and educational procedures in this area.

This interview was conducted, edited, and transcribed by Stella Ray.

SR: This interview is with Ruby Osborn Vinson and it is being conducted at Geneva, West Virginia, that's in Wayne County.

RV: Do you want me to repeat that?

SR: No, I'll just say it and that way...

RV: Okay.

SR: This is April the 20th 1976. And this interview is being conducted in the evening about six o'clock. And I'm Stella Ray, the interviewer, I will also be editing and transcribing the tape. Uhm, Mrs Vinson is a retired school teacher, a former school teacher. And um she has also been a housewife. Um. How many children do you have?

RV: Seven.

SR: Seven, um, boys or girls?

RV: Boys and girls. Four boys and three girls.

SR: Okay, Four boys and three girls. Uhm, you are eighty-six years of age, is that right?

RV: Yes.

SR: When did you first start teaching? When was your first teaching?

RV: When I was seventeen.

SR: Okay, uhm, that would have been about what year?

RV: Oh, about 1907, I guess.

SR: Okay, what kind of things did...what what schooling did you have before you became a teacher?

RV: I just had elementary school and uh country school.

SR: Uh huh.

RV: Not any high school just...we had a first class elementary school in the country. At a place called Effie.

SR: Effie.

RV: And our studies included almost everything you would get in high school today at that time.

SR: Uh huh.

RV: And when we were through we were equal to any eighth or ninth grade student you have now.

S₁: I see. Uh...this went to the eighth grade. Is that right?

RV: Yes, well we weren't even graded.

SR: Oh.

RV: We just began, first reader primer, first reader, second reader, third, fourth, and fifth.

S₂: Oh, I see.

RV: That's the way the way it was graded.

SR: Oh, when you finished the material you graduated?

RV: Yes.

SR: About how many children went to your school?

RV: Oh, the first school I had about twenty.

SR: You're talking about students?

RV: And the second school I taught there was forty-five enrolled.

SR: And that's all grades?

RV: All in one room and all grades.

SR: I see. Now you're talking about schools that you taught?

RV: Uh?

SR: Is that school that you taught?

RV: N^ot now it isn't.

SR: Oh, I see. But uh you had forty-five pupils?

RV: I had forty-five pupils, oh yes. I had forty-five pupils.

SR: I see, uh how did you go about dividing your time? I know it is hard to cover all that material with that many kids.

RV: Well, it's hard to tell how I did do.

SR: Yeah.

RV: We had...The different grades, the little ones usually come first.

SR: Uh huh.

RV: And then they went on up to the higher grades.

SR: Uh.

RV: As I came to them. So many before the morning recess and there'd be so many between morning recess and noon and then in afternoon we went to the other grades and come down. And we had the primary grades usually about the last thing.

SR: Oh, I see. How did they stay, did all the students stay at the school all day, though?

RV: Oh, yes.

SR: Well, I knew, being a teacher, that it's hard to keep a student occupied if you're not right there. Uh.

RV: They are.

SR: Yeah, What...they had work assigned that they did, is that it? While you were is busy.

RV: Well, their work was assigned to them because

SR: Uh huh.

RV: there was so much laid out in each lesson in their book and they were supposed to get that...and learn it.

SR: Uh, did you get help from the elder students with the younger ones?

RV: No not nothing to amount to anything.

SR: Yeah.

RV: You done it yourself.

SR: Yeah.

RV: You had to teach it yourself.

SR: Uh, about uh would you mind telling us about how much a beginning school teacher made about that time or do you remember?

RV: Yes. I remember distinctly, I got thirty dollars a month. That was according to the grade of certificate you had. That was the least I could have get because I had the least grade of certificate to begin.

SR: Oh, I see. Your pay was based on...

RV: Yes.

SA: the kind of certificate. Uhm, that uhm that's still true today, that your pay is based on your certificate. Uhm, now just so we'll have it. Nw what...you had reading, you taught reading?

RV: Yes.

SR: Did you use the McGuffey Readers?

RV: N, McGuffys had gone out, ether books had come in after before. Before I began teaching school we had done away with the McGuffey books they had and bought Stickneys Readers and so on, I think, like that.

SR: Uh huh.

RV: Stiekneys was the reader and they changed most all the books I can't remember just what they all were.

SR: Uh huh.

RV: I knew we had Stickneys Readers.

SR: Uh uh you taught reading and uh math and...

RV: Reading and math and history, Geogrophy, Physiology, Spelling and I guess, just anything, I can't think at all. I had so many.

SR: Uh huh.

RV: I had I had...at first I had the little primer and what we called the ABC class and we had a chart and then we went from that to a

first reader for the little beginners. And then the second reader and then the third, and fourth and fifth reader made up the grades.

SR: Uh. Did you uhm, did you have many students that uh had difficulty reading?

RV: Did I have any difficulty with them?

SR: Did you have any difficulty uhm with them learning to read, some of them?

RV: Well some were slower than others, yes, some were quick enough, some were much slower than others.

SR: Uh uh. Uh, okay, you um if you... I know ...how did you uhm.. what sort of heat did you have in these buildings? Did you have to um take care of the buikding itself?

RV: They had a janiter that teek care of the building and built the fires and se on.

SR: Uh huh. Did you live near the school?

RV: No, I boarded.

SR: Oh.

RV: Fairly close to it.

SR: Uh huh.

RV: Yes.

SR: Now, was that with a family in the community that had some children in school?

RV: They had on little bey in school that year.

SR: Oh, uh huh.

RV: His first year.

SR: And this uh was it...were you paid by the state or the county?

RV: Huh?

SR: Were you employed by the State Board of Education or by say Wayne County?

RV: Wayne County District Board.

SR: Uh uh. I see. Uh, if a student graduated from say your school where would he go if he went on after he finished his material?

RV: Well, uh, he uh might go to high school sometimes, now we didn't have a high school closest so no pupil, not many pupils ever went to any other school after they finished the eighth grade.

SR: Uh huh.

RV: Because there wasn't any high school for them to go to. We didn't have any in Wayne County.

SR: Uh huh.

RV: Some of them that were able went away to Medical school and to Law schools and...

SR: Uh huh.

RV: And became editors and one thing and another. Not any of my pupils but some I did go to school with that way did that.

SR: Uh huh.

RV: But that was all the opportunity they had.

SR: Yeah, uh say if a person uh a man finished the eighth grade what sort of opportunities, if he didn't go to school, what sort of things would he do? What kind of opportunities were open?

RV: Well, he either studied, got a certificate and taught...

SR: Uh huh.

RV: or he farmed, or he might go away from home and work on the railroad.

SR: Uh huh.

RV: Or I don't know. I can't remember back what they could have done.

SR: Yeah.

RV: That's been several years back.

SR: Okay, uh, now let's talk a little bit about how many brothers and sisters did you have?

RV: I had four brothers and three sisters.

SR: Uh huh. And you said your maiden name was Osbern.

RV: Huh?

SR: You said your maiden name was Osbern? Is that? Osbern?

RV: Osbern. O-s-b-e-r-n. Osbern.

SR: Uh huh. Uh did most of the families that lived around you have several children?

RV: Oh, yea. Most all of them had some children.

SR: Uh. All right, as a girl still growing up at home, what kind of responsibilities, what duties did you have? You know being a daughter in a large family. What kind of chores did you have to do?

RV: I'd hate to tell it.

SR: Uh.

RV: Well, I helped to cook, I helped Mother cook, I helped her with the laundry. We done housework and some, very often after we were old enough we helped with the garden work and things like that.

SR: Uh huh.

RV: But when we were little, not able to do all that, we played. My little brothers and me.

SR: Uh, you know kids today have all kinds of toys and games and everything.

RV: Oh, no. Just a homemade something that we played with. A rag doll that Mother had made.

SR: Yeah.

RV: Or a little toy that something that the elder beys had cut out with their knives. You knew.

SR: Uh huh.

RV: Made with their knives.

S⁺⁺: Uh huh.

RV: We had no toys, eh, after I was six or seven years old I got my first doll, store bought doll.

S⁺⁺: Oh.

RV: The rest of the time M_cther would just roll up something and make us a doll.

SR: Uh huh. Made it out of what ever you had at home.

RV: We didn't have toys like they have now.

SR: Yeah. What sort of games, can you remember any of the games? I knew my mem used to talk about, said they played marbles and...

RV: Oh, yes. They played what you call, uhm town ball, I reckon. And after we got up a little older, about grown and I was in school why we had croquet and we played what they called base and ball.

S⁺⁺: Uh huh.

RV: And the elder ones did that and the little ones just played.

SR: Yeah.

RV: That's all I knew.

SR: Uh, now did...what child.. how many elder brothers and sister do you have?

RV: How many?

SR: I mean how many are elder than you?

RV: Four.

SR: So were any married before you left home?

RV: NO.

SR: Oh, okay.

RV: No.

SR: Did uh did most of your brothers and sisters settle around your parents house or did they all move away?

RV: My elder brether was in the army for a number of years.

SR: Uh huh.

RV: And the ether boys get away from home. One of them was a lawyer and he worked here yander and elsewhere. And another brother taught school a year. The next brother taught school a few years and then went south.

SR: Uh huh.

RV: And joined an association, a Christian associatien and made a preacher.

SR: Uh huh.

RV: Quite a quite a preacher tee. That was the one we named Zene.

SR: Zene?

RV: Zene.

SR: Uh huh.

RV: And my eldest brothers name was James, and the next ones name was Jehn, my sisters name was Elizabeth and she was a school teacher fer I guess she taught scheel for close to thirty years.

SR: I see. Se, then your family had no objections to the daughters working.

RV: No.

SR: Did most of the girls you went to scheel with work?

RV: They just worked at home, honey, we had nothing else to work at, it was in the country and they was nothing ele to work at.

SR: Yeah, I see. Uh, you mentioned that your brother became a lawyer uh, where did he go to school? Do you remember?

RV: Washington and Lee University.

SR: Oh, Washington and Lee University.

RV: I think that's in Virginia.

SR: Uh huh.

RV: I think that's where but he didn't live long, there's not much use to, he wasn't known. He died.

SR: Uh huh, I see.

RV: He died young and he wasn't much known.

SR: I see.

RV: All my brothers are dead and my sisters dead.

SR: Uh huh. Did uh say in a pretty good sized family like that did you have other relatives that lived with you? Your grandparents er?

RV: We lived real close to my grandparents.

SR: Oh.

RV: And I had a bunch of uncles.

SR: Uh huh.

RV: And an aunt or two but they were mostly married.

SR: Uh huh. Uh huh.

RV: Well, the uncles wasn't married then for several years after Grandfather... Let's see, I'm trying to think. Do I have to give the whole family history?

SR: Oh, no no.

RV: Well, I....

SR: Just what ever you want to tell us that's okay.

RV: Well, the family scattered so.

SR: Uh uh.

RV: I can't keep up with them.

SR: Yeah, uh huh.

RV: Two of my uncles went west when they were real young. And uh one of them made an educator, he taught school and he was an editor of a paper for a number papers. He died when he was editor of the Herald-Dispatch, uh, a column in the Herald-Dispatch.

SR: Uh huh.

RV: He was editor there. And the other brother died, Uncle Will, the second oldest one was a soldier. He was in the army feryears. He was a Captain.

SR: Uh huh.

RV: He died in the state of Washington. After his retirement.

SR: Uh huh.

RV: And the other brother, his other brother, younger brother, died at Camden-On-Bauley where he lived. I don't remember what was wrong with him.

SR: Uh huh.

RV: He just died there.

SR: Uh, what about servants er boarders who came er would stay in your house? Did you have people who...?

RV: No.

SR: Okay.

RV: No, we had no boarders.

SR: Okay, uh, was it mostly the mens responsibility to keep care of the garden and things like that?

RV: Oh, yes.

SR: And the girls mostly worked inside?

RV: Well, we managed to have enough to do one way er another.

SR: Yeah, yeah, I'm sure you did. Uhm, what about times like Christmas and ah holidays like that, did you have visters come to your home and stay? Er, what kind of celebrations did you have?

RV: Well, at that day and time people didn't do too much celebrating Christmas unless, but they always managed to have something to give us for Christmas.

S⁺: Uh huh.

RV: We would hang up our stockings and we'd get a little something in that and Mether always had plenty baked.

S_B: Uh huh.

RV: Cookies, cakes, so on and , uh, eourse we had visitors around but I just, neighborhood come in and out.

SR: Yeah, uh huh.

RV: But not too much of that on Christmas.

Sr: Okay, was it, it was difficult to uh, that dees.

RV: Fer entertainment we went to church and Sunday School. That was our entertainment. Almost every Sunday it was Church and Sunday School.

S^R: Uh huh. Hew many times a week would you go, just on Sunday?

RV: Just on Sunday. Church and Sunday School. Oh, probably Saturday night if they happened to have service that night.

S_{..}: Uh huh. About how far did you live from the church, was it?

RV: Two miles.

SR: Two miles.

RV: I did.

S^R: Uh huh. Uh, was that mostly the community meeting place? If you wanted to see your neighbors?

RV: Uh huh.

SR: Okay.

RV: Yes it was.

SR: Uh, did uh, uh, if like a wedding occurred or uh other things like that uh was that a fairly big celebration or a ...?

RV: NO. Weddings were usually very quiet. And maybe you didn't know about them till they were all over.

SR: Oh, not big affairs like they are sometimes?

RV: No, not too big. Oh, I've seen one or two weddings that way that they made a big affair ever but not many.

SR: Uh huh. Uh, do you think that was mostly due to people weren't interested in it or they...?

RV: Well, it's country, honey, and people didn't live too close together. Times were hard and we had to go quite a distance and people were not able to...

SR: Yeah.

RV: Put on much of a show. People were, well I'll just say poor or you might say hard up or something like that.

SR: Uh huh.

RV: They were not rich.

SR: Okay, uh it was, un, in a .. this applies to both the school you in and in your family, how was discipline handled? If you had a student in your school that you were having a discipline problem with, did you have to deal with it or..?

RV: Well, if I could. If they were too difficult or required punishment of some kind that I was not capable of doing or if they needed expelling from school I had three trustees that seen to the school and all I had to do was to call the trustees and they taken care of them.

SR: Oh, these trustees were just in charge of like the one school?

RV: Just the Yes, they just had that one school.

SR: Uh huh.

RV: They were just trustees, had control of that one school.

SR: Uh huh. Just in the community these... I see. Uh, did you have trouble with uh, you know?

RV: You mean serious trouble?

SR: Uh huh.

RV: Oh, no. I had no serious trouble. Well, you needn't print this but a couple of boys or three got out of line and did a few little things they shouldn't and I had the trustees come in and they straightened them out .

SR: Yeah.

RV: Otherwise I would have had to expelled them.

SR: Yeah. Well, I know sometimes you have.

RV: Sometimes you do have difficulty now I didn't in my school, but I've I've seen others have.

SR: Uh huh.

RV: Terrible times.

SR: Yeah. Uh, did it seem to you that more girls finished school or did more boys? Go all the way through?

RV: Well, as a general thing it was more girls, more girls finished school.

SR: Do you think that was because the men went out to work or?

RV: Well, it was probably something like that but not, not that all together. They were not inclined to care too much whether or not they had an education. And parents were not too interested in it.

Times were so much more different then to what they are now.

SR: Uh huh.

RV: Quite a bit different.

SR: Well that's one thing we'd like to hear.

RV: Yeah, well while you would find one family that would send every child they had to school and keep them there regular. Over here on the other side of the hill, why there would be another neighbor that probably wouldn't send to school, oh, thirty days out of the whole term.

SR: Huh.

RV: They would just keep their children at home. They didn't think an education was altogether necessary.

SR: Uh huh. Were there any laws requiring that they go?

RV: No, there were no laws then forcing them to send.

SR: Uh huh. I see.

RV: That was not the law then.

S: Uh huh. Uh, I forget what I was going to say. Uh, if you had a uh large family and they were uh, you had several students in school did...mostly they all come, you know, whole family come or were they more likely to send the elder kids and leave the little ones at home?

RV: To school?

SR: Uh huh.

RV: Well, uh, they might in some circumstances but uh in my home we went as we got old enough.

SR: Uh huh.

RV: When we were old enough. We had to be six years old before we were considered old enough to go to school. But you went from any

age you wanted to from six years on up as long as you wanted to go, if you was twenty-one it didn't matter.

SR: I, your family who settled the discipline, you know, having several children in the home, you knew, there's usually a....

RV: I don't know.

SR: Oh, okay.

RV: I don't know.

SR: Okay.

RV: That's a question I just couldn't answer.

SR: Well, that's, that's fine. Uh, okay, if... about what age... You said you were about seventeen when you finished school.

RV: When I taught my first school.

SR: When you taught your first school. Uh, was that about the normal age for kids to go out and find themselves a job, er?

RV: Well, it was if they could find anything to do, but it was a hard matter then, there were no jobs only on the farm around.

SR: Uh huh.

RV: There were no jobs to find.

Sr: Yeah. Did you, uh, you said this school you taught was several miles from where you lived?

RV: Yes it...the first wasn't very far, it was just down the road here a little piece and up the holler.

SR: Uh huh.

RV: But that was about six or seven miles away from home. After all eight, something like that.

SR: Uh huh.

RV: And the other school was up Twelve Pole here at a place called Licklebe. We had to ride the train to get there.

SR: Oh, is that the means of transportation you used if you had to go any distance?

RV: Yeah, unless we rode horseback all the way. And that was a pretty good ride.

SR: Yeah.

RV: You ask Fred, he knows about how far it is to ride.

SR: Okay.

FV: What was it?

RV: You won't record that.

SR: That's, that's.... We were just talking about the distance you had to go to get a school, to travel to go to - to find a place to uh teach or find employment.

FV: Well, you was lucky sometimes if you found one within four or five miles.

SR: Yeah.

FV: Maybe eight or ten miles. Maybe you had to go and board, maybe you could stay at home.

SR: Uh huh.

FV: I rode from three to five miles all the time nearly when I taught school.

SR: So your average distance was three to five miles?

FV: Yeah.

SR: Uh, if you boarded with someone did they have responsibilities you had to take care of in the house or was?

FV: No.

SR: Just the fact that you taught?

FV: Just the fact that they wanted what little money they could get out of you.

SR: Oh, you paid your own board out of your...

RV: Yes.

FV: Sure.

SR: I had heard that sometimes you know they just boarded a teacher in the community just so that they would have a teacher. But you paid?

FV: I stayed at one, cough, at one certain place and you, and you paid your board. You always stayed at one certain place. I know what you're talking about.

SR: Uh huh.

FV: Some of the older people at that day and time would go and stay in the neighborhood, you know.

SR: Uh huh.

FV: J^ust a few nights here and ever yender. Johnson's here and Peck's back here.

SR: Yeah. Yeah, I had heard that and I didn't know if it was true for you or not.

FV: That's right. Some of them used to stay with my grandad. Because they went to school there and they as they called it, Far Perk of Twelve Pole ever on Stitler. Anyway....

SR: Uh huh. It was here in..?

FV: Up in that section of the counryu.

SR: Uh huh.

FV: Where I, the first year I boarded where I boarded at they had, uh, big old seda bisquits for breakfast.

SR: Oh, uh, was that uh, did they get up and eat big breakfasts?

FV: Huh?

SR: Did they get up and eat big bteakfasts? And have big meals?

FV: Yeah, they did.

RV: They sure did.

FV: They get up at four o'clock, he, ah, he worked on a railroad, on a section. He had about three miles to walk and he'd start in time to get there at seven o'clock, you know.

SR: Oh, yeah.

FV: And they'd have to get up and get breakfast and get his lunch and send him to work. And I'd have to get up and eat breakfast or do without it one.

SR: Yeah.

FV: A, a general thing I get up and eat breakfast and then went back to bed.

SR: Oh.

FV: And stayed till nine o'clock.

SR: Oh, what time did school take up?

FV: Nine o'clock.

SR: Nine o'clock. And what time did you let out?

FV: Four.

SR: Uh, we were talking about discipline problems, did you, do you think it was easier for a man teacher to teach and not have discipline problems rather than a woman?

RV: Yes.

FV: I don't know. Sometimes I guess it was. Some of them .. them was. You know some of them liked to have their own way. And they was mere, just a little bit mere, afraid of a man teacher then they were a woman.

SR: Uh huh. Did you usually settle your own discipline problems rather than?

- FV: Yes, had to. There wasn't nobody else to do it for you, I'll tell you. Cough. You get many up larger and they jump on you and run you off, you was just gene, that was it.
- SR: Yeah, had to defend your...
- FV: There wasn't anybody to take your part.
- SR: Yeah, Uh...
- FV: I never had much trouble with any of them.
- SR: Uh, how many, about how many students did you have in an average class?
- FV: Oh, there'd be...you mean average?
- SR: Yeah, Just....
- FV: Probably eight or ten most of the time.
- SR: Uh huh.
- FV: I had fifty-seven there in that enrolled in that school, in the school.
- SR: Fifty-seven.
- FV: Just teach them in groups, you knew. They'd have them in a class, so many of them. First, second and so on.
- SR: Uh huh. Uh, how many people...how many members of your family were there? How many brothers and sisters did you have?
- FV: Three half sisters, didn't have any brothers.
- SR: Did that leave a lot of responsibility on you being the only boy?
- FV: NO. I stayed at my grandads most of the time.
- SR: Oh, I see.
- FV: After my mother married why I stayed at my grandads.
- SR: I see. Now you taught school for how many years?
- FV: Huh?
- SR: How many years did you teach school?

FV: Twenty-four.

SR: Twenty-four. Uh, did you usually stay at the same school or did you move?

FV: No, I moved around. They was, they wasn't over three or four. The first school I taught was clear away from home.

SR: Uh huh.

FV: The rest of them way I could just get to them by riding horseback like everybody else did.

SR: Yeah, I see. Uh, what other types of jobs did you do, you know, after you taught school? What other kind of jobs would have been open to you?

FV: Well, you know, its like she said there wasn't any jobs to find.

SR: Yeah.

FV: But after I quit teaching school I went to work for the state read commission.

SR: Uh huh.

FV: I spent thirty-two years there.

SR: I see. Uh, she mentioned traveling by train, uh, now was that the main way of traveling if you weren't going by horseback?

FV: If you went to Huntington or Kenova or Williamsen you'd always be on the train.

SR: Uh huh.

FV: If you wanted to get out of the country, in other words, you'd always be on the train.

SR: Uh huh.

FV: But anywhere in the country, six, seven, or eight miles you'd go by buggy or rode horseback.

SR: I see. About what would the fare have been from, say, here to

Huntington on a train?

FV: You mean what the fare would have been?

SR: Uh huh.

FV: It was around a dollar.

SR: I see.

FV: Maybe a little more, I don't remember.

SR: Uh.

FV: Somewhere along that.

SR: I see.

FV: You would have to go to Keneva.

SR: Oh, eh.

FV: You could go to Huntington, but you'd go to Keneva and take the streetcar from Keneva to Huntington or Keneva to Ashland.

SR: Uh huh.

FV: When we ran away to get married we went to Ceredo...

SR: Uh huh.

FV: and caught the streetcar and went to the lower end of Keneva and went to my uncles. And went from there back on the streetcar and over to Cattlesburg and over..

This ends side one of the tape.

The tape did not record the first part of the next sentence.

SR:to get your teaching certificate. Were these certificates granted by the state?

FV: Yes.

SR: Uh huh. Now do you, did you have to renew your certificate?

FV: Yes. They just last so many..so long, you knew.

SR: Uh huh.

FV: Uh, uh, you had first, second, and third

RV: Class certificates.

FV: grade certificates.

SR: Uh huh.

FV: Third grade was one year, second grade was two or three years, I don't know which, and first grade was five years.

SR: Uh huh.

FV: Then after, I don't know, they passed so many laws and made so many changes finally the first grade teachers had life certificates, you know, they was..

SR: Uh huh.

FV: I don't think they had to take any examination or anything. They just...

SR: Uh.

FV; They passed a law some way, somewhere, anyway they all got life certificates. They never had to take any more examinations.

SR: Oh, you had to take an exam every time you renewed your certificate?

FV: Yes.

SR: All right, you're teaching ah say you finished a teaching year now if you were going to stay in that school did you reapply for your job in that school?

FV: Well, you could, yes, but you knew they had three people, three trustees they called them...

SR: Uh huh.

FV: After that they had a Board of Education.

SR: Uh huh.

FV: But you had to get, uh, two of these trustees to sign your contract or you had to go and apply to the Board after the law changed.

SR: Uh huh.

FV: You had to go to the Board of Education. Well, if you had voted just right and they liked you why they'd give you maybe the school you wanted, maybe they wouldn't. They'd change you, maybe they wouldn't give you one at all.

SR: Oh, I see. You didn't have tenure then.

FV: No. Not for years.

SR: Uh huh, so..

FV: You were just lucky, uh, you knew, if there was a supply of teachers.

SR: Uh huh.

FV: Or an over supply or not enough, not enough why maybe you'd get a choice school, maybe you wouldn't.

SR: Were there, uh, usually, uh, too many teachers? Did you find a lot of competition?

FV: No. Not at that time there wasn't.

SR: Uh huh.

FV: Oh, there was enough, yes. But some years, you know, some of them would drop out.

SR: Uh huh.

FV: And some wouldn't. Some take the examination and want to teach and couldn't make a certificate.

SR: I see. Uh, were these...

FV: It was pretty rough, getting a, getting a certificate of any kind at that time because you were just out of school, out of grade school at that. You never went to high school and you'd go to the eighth grade and finish the eighth grade and if could... if you were scholar enough you might pass the examination and get a certificate.

SR: Uhm. Now, Marshall did have a school for teachers at that time, didn't they?

FV: Yes.

SR: Did you have to compete with these people for jobs?

FV: No. They, they, you know, Marshall teachers at that time, all that went to Marshall, they wouldn't want to get out in the country, in the hollers and you know.

SR: Uh huh.

FV: Take the snow and ice and everything. If they could get somewhere else.

SR: Uh huh.

FV: You hardly ever, uh, out...back where we were you hardly ever had to compete with a Marshall graduate.

SR: I see. Uh, was there...

FV: In other words they were kind of a class to themselves.

SR: Yeah, they would prefer...was there much..were there many people from the community here, say, who went to Marshall to go to school?

FV: No, not too many.

SR: Uh, of the people who did or went away to college were there scholarships or did the family usually support these people?

FV: Well, the family usually done it. They never had scholarships.

RV: They had to pay their own way.

SR: Uh huh. Uh

FV: That's one reason so many of them didn't go to college because they wasn't able to. Their parents couldn't send them because, well, they just wasn't able to. But a few of them did. Now a man in neighborhood where we lived they was several of them that left and went to, I mean go through school and either taught school or

went to Marshall, or went and found a pretty, you knew, most of them was intellegent enough to get out and make their own.

RV: It was later years, long after I had quit teaching school, they all done that. Things got better for the teachers, they had better opportunities.

SR: Did they, uh, did... were there things or in Huntington, say, or in the cities to draw the young people to go there to work or did they mostly stay around?

FV: No. They wasn't many jobs in Huntington at that time, oh, now and then you might find a job. But they was pretty scarce.

SR: Uh huh.

FV: You know most of the neighborhood that to... that out to find a job they'd either go to the railroad or the army or something like that.

SR: Uh huh.

FV: Now they was quite a few of them that left out of the neighborhood and went to the railroad. Hired on as brakeman or firemen or something like that.

SR: Could they stay in the community and work for the railroad or did they have to move?

FV: No. They'd ...they was mostly single people, you knew, single men and they'd go, they'd stay where ...they'd stay at Pertsmeuth. That's where most of them went to pertsmeuth.

SR: Uh huh.

FV: Really, that's where I wanted to go too and my mammy wouldn't let me.

SR: Oh. Uh, when I was here before, uh, you discussed some^{of} the students you used to have and uh have you kind of kept track of

any of them or have most of them..?

FV: No, I haven't. I run on to one now and then that they'll come and talk to you and speak to you and talk to you and you don't know who they are or where they come from or anything about them. I run on to one not very long ago at Mill Creek at a funeral and after he told me even I couldn't hardly place him, I had to study about it a long time. But just now and then..

SR: Uh huh.

FV: You know, at this time you just run on to them. But there is so many of them I can think about that went to school that has died. A whole lot of them in the last few years.

SR: Uh huh. Now, did you teach in other schools besides a one room school?

FV: Yes, we had a two room school, our own school, you know, that we had. But yes I did, two or three schools that they called double schools or two room schools.

SR: Uh huh.

FV: They had up to the fourth grade in one room and from then from there on up to the eighth grade in the other room.

SR: Did you serve under a principal?

FV: Yes.

SR: Uh huh.

FV: They called him a principal.

SR: Did he teach? Was he a teaching..?

FV: Oh, yes. He or she which ever one it happened to be yeah they taught all the time. Just like I did. Ah, I thought I was, well maybe I was teaching a little bit. I don't know. But times.... it's different then from what it is now. Maybe some of them learned

maybe they didn't, I don't know. I guess they learned a little by getting together anyway.

SR: Yeah, yeah. Did principals, uh, have to pass a different test?

FV: No, no. If he had the certificate why and was lucky with the Board of Education and trustees why he was all right.

SR: Oh, I see. So they...

FV: But he was over the rest, the school, you and the other teachers.

SR: Uh huh.

FV: But most of the time you get along with them all right. I never had any trouble with them, the principals.

SR: Uh huh. Uh, in school, if you had a principal would he take care of the discipline problems or would that be your responsibility?

FV: In his room.

SR: Oh.

FV: But in your own room, why, if you had to paddle one you just had to paddle him.

SR: Um. Now if you paddle a student you have to fill out several forms, did you ever have any problems with parents^y from, you know, discipline or were they pretty cooperative?

FV: Sometimes they would, sometimes if you whipped one too hard, why, they'd swear you just about beat it to death and it was blue all over, you know, and sometimes they'd take a warrent for you and sometimes but most of the time they wouldn't, they'd just talk.

SR: Yeah.

FV: I never did have one take a warrent for me. I expect sometimes, though, I whipped them pretty hard.

SR: Would you get any kind of backing from the Board if they did that? Were you just on your own?

FV: They said to heck, that wasn't their business. They wouldn't have anything to do with it.

SR: That was your responsibility. Uh, what kind of occupation like did you have people in the community who worked as say blacksmiths or uh or you know, the stereowners, people who were not farmers?

FV: Yes, we had, we always had one blacksmith in the country where you took your horse to have shoes put on him. And they was one or two carpenters in the neighborhood, cough. Some of them that, well we had about two didn't we that made...

RV: Yes.

FV: caskets for people, you know.

Sr: Yeah.

FV: When they died they made homemade caskets. We had two or three of them in the neighborhood that did that. And then you'd have a carpenter, he thought was a carpenter, any way, but these who made the casket, the coffin, they were called coffins then. They'd make them homemade and line them up with black. They'd get handles and put on them, you knew.

SR: Did they have, ah, now did their children seem to go into their occupations, did their sons follow that?

FV: Ne, hardly ever. And we generally had a country store and, you knew, a country post office we went to. Leafed and where you get your letters and mail.

SR: Uh huh.

FV: My granddad kept the first post office ever there. He kept it in a little square box like that. Oh, about so high, just a few shelves in it, you knew, about a half a dozen.

SR: How did they get the mail out?

FV: They carried it to the railroad...

RV: Post office.

FV: ever here at Genea. It was a five mile trip, I think, from the post office to the post office at Genea.

SR: And then?

FV: They'd catch the train and go down on the train and the mail would come back up on the train the next morning. They'd be there and take it across the hill.

SR: Oh, were...did it take... I mean did they move pretty good? I mean pretty fast?

FV: Well they come up in the morning and if you mailed a letter in Huntington, like, last night why they'd get it today. Sometime about one o'clock they'd get it.

Sr: Uh huh.

FV: If they mailed it last night they'd get it today about one o'clock. At that time the mail came in, wasn't it? Along about noon or one o'clock all the time. They would have to wait till the train come up which was nine or ten o'clock.

SR: Uh huh.

FV: And then they had to ride over there.

RV: They didn't get back till twelve or one.

SR: Uh huh. And everybody had to come in to the post office?

FV: Oh, yes. They'd come around. Everybody had to come because there wasn't no delivery.

SR: Uh uh. Uh, how was, getting back to your education...to your teaching a little bit, uh, after teaching so many years did your salary increase in relation to how many years you had taught?

FV: NO, not not to how many years you had taught but oh it was

a long time before your...Well, Lincoln district, it was split into districts, Wayne County was, and Lincoln district had two railroads go through it. They collected taxes and paid the largest salary of any district unless it was Ceredo and Keneva, in the county. Everyone wanted to teach in Lincoln district because they'd get more money. There was more, as they say, revenue come in from it.

SR: Uh huh.

FV: Oh, they didn't pay very much but then it was, you know, about all there was going anyway and I guess it was quite a bit. If you had to work on that now you wouldn't be around long.

SR: Uh, so it was based on where you taught how much you made?

FV: Yes.

SR: And paid strictly by the taxes.

FV: And the grade of certificate you had

SR: Oh, yes. I see.

FV: Your certificate if you had a first grade certificate would be more than you would if you had a third grade certificate.

SR: Uh huh. I see.

FV: Forty dollars, I started out at forty dollars and think when I quit it was eighty or eighty-five dollars. Eighty-five dollars.

SR: I see, in twenty-four years time.

FV: Four dollars, four dollars and a quarter a day.

SR: Oh.

FV: Twenty days, you know, out of the month.

SR: Four dollars and something a day.

FV: Yeah.

SR: Uh.

FV: Think about it. When I first started out was two dollars and I paid ten dollars a month for board.

SR: So you had to work uh a whole week to make your^yboard.

RV: Five days a week.

SR: Did that include your board included your feed, is that right?

FV: Huh?

SR: Your board included your room and your feed?

FV: Yes.

SR: I see. Uh...

FV: And my squirrel hunting on Saturday morning.

SR: Oh, was that one of the ways, uh, you had for enjoyment or one of the ways of recreation?

FV: Huh?

SR: Was that, uh, a kind of recreation, uh, a way you spent your time off?

FV: No, I don't think so. You always had something you had to do over the weekend and of the evening too, after school.

SR: Uh huh.

FV: Study about how in the dickens you were going to get through the next day.

SR: Ha ha.

FV: Saturday and Sunday you just took it easy if you could. Went to church like she said.

SR: Yeah.

FV: If you had a girlfriend why you'd go to church.

SR: Oh, I see.

FV: That's so you'd get to see her.

SR: Did they have things for the kids to do at school like, you

know, outside activities? That you were responsible for?

FV: No, they didn't.

SR: How about dances or anything like that? Community dances, did they have very many of these?

FV: They had community dances only the adults generally had dances on S^turday night. They would all get drunk and have a big shooting match, a fight or two. But that happened every once... every nearly every Saturday night. Not right in our neighborhood, it wasn't as bad in our neighborhood as it was in just a few miles away in another section of the county.

SR: Where would they get their liquor?

FV: Make it.

SR: Oh, they made their own.

FV: Yes.

RV: Well, they didn't always.

SR: Oh, sometimes. Did you have much trouble with the law for things like that?

FV: No, there wasn't any law, they never bother you unless someone killed somebody or something like that. Why they might arrest you but, ah, if they had a fight it didn't make any difference why which ever one wen they'd get even with him in a day or two or lay around and watch him for a month to get the advantage of him.

SR: Uh huh.

FV: Fight back. But they wasn't no law to bother them.

S^t: Oh, I see. You said they might have a shooting match, now...

FV: Why, they would get out and shoot their pistols. Yeah, they'd get mad one over yonder on that hillside and one over here and they'd shoot at one another, course they knew they weren't going

to hit one another. But they'd shoot at them anyway. Make a big racket.

SR: Did a....

FV: And carry their guns. It didn't amount to anything if they wanted to put a pistol on their hip why it was all right. They really felt important, you know, that way and there wasn't any law to keep them from it.

SR: I see. So it was pretty...pretty fairly common to see some one with a gun?

FV: Oh, yes. It didn't, you didn't pay anymore attention to it than notice somebody wearing a necktie now. They just had their guns.

RV: Well maybe they'd shoot a lot and not mean to hit either.

FV: Oh, they didn't mean to hit you.

RV: To scare you.

FV: To scare and quarrel and use all kind of language.

SR: Uh huh.

FV: Sheet.

SR: Did they ever have any serious, you know, disputes?

FV: Yes.

SR: Large disputes?

FV: Yeah, every once in a while somebody would get killed or get hurt bad.

SR: Uh huh. Did it seem like the family took that up or was it mostly an individual thing?

FV: Well sometimes it was a family feud, sometimes it wasn't. Sometimes it would just be an individual or something like that.

SR: Uh huh. Now, the law at that time, there was a county sheriff?

FV: Oh, yea. But heck he was in Wayne and he was fifteen or twenty

miles away, you know.

SR: Uh huh.

FV: By the time you get down there and notified him and he crawled around and get up there on horseback or on the train and rode over there why everything would be hid, gone, or...it wasn't.

SA: What about, uh, you mentioned they made their own their own liquor, now the federal people didn't?

FV: They never bothered them. They wasn't no, I don't know. You never heard tell of any federal.

SR: Uh huh.

FV: Once in a great while why you might hear of the United States Marshall coming in after somebody.

SR: Uh huh.

FV: Maybe one trip that was all for a long time.

SR: Uh huh. How about, uh, did you have many people around here if they found, were going somewhere else to seek work that would, say, go to the coal fields and work? In the coal fields?

FV: Yeah, there was a few but not too many.

SR: Uh huh.

FV: Seemed like the mines didn't attract them like the railroad or something like that.

SR: I see.

RV: All that was years ago, honey.

SR: Yeah.

RV: It's toned down now.

SR: Yeah, yeah. When did, ah, Mrs. Vinsen said she started teaching at seventeen, were you about the same age?

FV: Yes, about seventeen or eighteen. Eighteen I guess.

RV: I taught school before he did. He taught the next year.

SR: Uh huh. Is that mostly when your responsibilities as an adult began?

FV: Yes.

SR: Uh.

FV: That's when it should have began, I guess it did. I didn't pay much attention to it.

SR: Uh, you and Mrs. Vinson, when I was here before you mentioned that you went to the same school, is that right?

FV: From the time we were about six years old, yes, until.

SR: Uh huh.

FV: We grew up, you knew, and she got a certificate and went to teaching and then I got one and went to teaching.

RV: Effie, they called to Effie "high" school because it was a two story building.

SR: Oh.

FV: Oh, they just nicknamed it that.

SR: Oh.

RV: It was the only two story building in, well I guess it was about the only one in the county at that time.

SR: Oh, I see.

RV: And when you was ready from first, second, and third grades downstairs and when you was ready, could read in the fourth reader and ready to take up the work with the fourth reader why you get to go upstairs.

SR: Oh.

RV: My, my that was quite a thing.

SR: Oh.

FV: But you know that, where we went to school, grew up, there was a lot of pretty smart guys left out of that school there.

SR: Uh huh.

FV: There was some of them made teachers, lawyers, doctors. Boyd Jarrell was editor of the Herald-Dispatch, Dr. Rife was...

RV: He was a graduate.

FV: Rife Hospital, Ferguson-Rife Hospital in Kenova.

SR: Uh huh.

FV: And ah.

RV: J. T. Lambert, Prosecuting Attorney of Wayne County for years, a cousin of ours. A graduate of Effie "high" School. That's where he got his beginning. He went to law school then.

SR: Uh huh.

FV: (undecipherable) Prosecuting Attorney, J. T. Lambert, Prosecuting Attorney. All raised up there and went to school together.

SR: Uh huh.

FV: There was a generation just before we were. But we went to school when they were teen. But they were grown up and ready to leave and we were just starting.

SR: Uh huh. I see. When these people finished their schooling did they usually come back to the community? You mentioned the doctors and lawyers?

FV: Naw, they didn't stay. They hardly ever came back.

RV: They would visit back but they never settled there.

FV: They never settled in there.

SR: I see.

FV: That's what's the matter with the county now they just kept drifting out and staying till....

SR: Yeah.

FV: They took the whole thing out.

SR: Yeah. That several people...

FV: They took the biggest part of the intellect out.

SR: Yeah. Uh huh. I know what you mean. I was going to ask you about you and Mrs. Vinsen, went to the same school, now did most ah the boys in the community marry girls from their neighborhoods, people they went to school with?

FV: No. Some of them did, not very many.

SR: Um.

FV: We did. I kept track of her all the time. But ah there wasn't very many.

RV: No, there wasn't come to think of it.

FV: In our generation there wasn't many.

RV: Well there was one girl, Oney Thompson married Willie Pauley.

FV: Yeah, there was one or two.

RV: They went to school together there.

SR: Ah, how would you meet a girl in another neighborhood that didn't live near you?

FV: Huh?

SR: How did they meet girls that lived in another neighborhood?

RV: Oh, gee that wasn't hard.

FV: They would meet them at church, go to church. Some kind of social gathering, entertainment, ice cream supper, something like that.

SR: Uh huh. So it was mostly through the church they would meet somebody else. I see.

FV: If you traveled eight or ten miles to church sometimes, especially

if there was a revival going on...on horseback.

RV: Or a big meeting on Sunday.

FV: Make a date with a girl and get her to ride behind on the horse and get to know her.

SR: Oh, I see. Uh, if you were courting a girl who lived several miles from you about how often would you see her?

FV: Well, just as often as you could but it would just depend on what kind of horse you had and whether you could ride or not.

SR: Oh, I see. So it was up to your transportation.

FV: Yes.

SR: Uh, when did...uh, did couples usually work for a while before they got married or did they marry right out of school? Was that?

FV: They generally, you know, stay a year or two before they, they wouldn't hardly ever just get out of school and marry.

SR: Uh huh.

FV: They'd go around a year or two and see if they couldn't make a dollar.

SR: Oh, I see.

FV: Get into something or ether.

SR: Was it unusual for the family to pay doweries then? Did you ever pay a dewry? Something like that?

FV: No.

SR: Okay. When a young couple starting out would they immediately move to a house of their own or did they tend to stay with?

FV: Sometimes they did, sometimes they'd stay around with their daddy-in-law and mother-in-law.

SR: Uh huh.

FV: Till somebody gave them an old rooster and a hen and a few things

to get together that they thought they could housekeep. And sometimes they'd kick them out they had to get out.

SR: Oh.

FV: Now, you're laughing. My grandad and my aunts give me two hens and a reester when we went to housekeep.

SR: Well that.

FV: That...

SR: It would furnish you eggs.

FV: Yes, it was a start anyway.

SR: Yeah.

FV: That's the way it was.

RV: At the same time my mother give us twelve hens and a reester.

FV: Now shes got to blow about it.

RV: I don't blow about that. Mother she gave us that many chickens. Whew, that's funny. If everything goes down and goes in that story that you told it will be a corker.

SR: That's all right. It was up to, you knew, they the family gave them gifts, the newlywed couple.

FV: N't like they do now, though.

SR: Oh.

RV: You were talking about social life a while let, weren't you?

SR: Uh huh,

RV: Well, we had, ah, church and Sunday School was our main meeting place and the school house where we went to school. But now and then some girls, some family would give wharthey called a social.

SR: Uh uh.

RV: And invite so many young people. All the eligible young boys and girls in the neighborhood to come for a social at their

house. Where they played games and sang songs.

SR: Uh huh, uh huh.

RV: Things like that. We didn't dance.

SR: Uh huh.

RV: But we all managed to have a good time and laugh a lot.

SR: Yeah.

FV: Get kissed a little bit now and then.

SR: Oh.

RV: Played games, yes, like thimble and I don't know what in all now.
We had a good time.

SR: Yeah.

RV: Just as good time as much fun as they have now and run miles and miles.

SR: Uh huh.

RV: And then we had entertainments at school. We had a big entertainment at Christmas. And we had Sunday School, ah, children's days where all the children had a party and a big play and we'd have hundreds of people come.

SR: Uh huh.

RV: From all around. Where the children had parades, you know, where children would work together, little ones. The elder ones then had different things to do. We'd have speeches, preaching, and prayer. And beautiful music if we did all make it.

SR: Uh huh, now...

RV: Beautiful church music.

SR: Did you have an instrument or did you just sing?

RV: We had an organ.

SR: Oh, I see.

RV: When we could borrow one we had an organ. After we was up some size why Fred's aunts get an organ.

SR: Uh huh.

RV: And when they wanted to have nice music at church why they would loan them the organ.

SR: Uh huh.

RV: They lived one on one bank over here and one over at the church over yonder and they was over here just a little piece. And they would take their organ.

SR: Oh.

RV: And they were good singers. And two of the girls were real good organists. We had beautiful music.

SR: Uh, did you sometimes have groups from other churches come and sing?

RV: Oh, they would come but they didn't take part in the entertainment.

SR: Oh.

RV: They would be there by the...well I've seen the time when I know there was over two hundred people there. From all way round where ever, they could hear tell of that entertainment they'd come.

SR: Yeah.

RV: If they had a horse to ride. And it was good and...

SR: Yeah.

RV: And then sometimes we would have ice cream socials at school. If we wanted to raise a little money for something why we'd have an ice cream social.

SR: Uhm.

RV: Have homemade ice cream and cakes. Everybody would bake a cake. And we would have a man come and make the ice cream. So we had ice

cream socials that was another good social....