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Interview with Ina Hurley

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Ina Sauers Hurley 1915-2013

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CHAPTER TWO

ORAL INTERVIEW WITH INA HURLEY

RON: Ina, the questions that I'm going to ask you to begin with will deal with curriculum. What subjects were studied?

MRS. HURLEY: Well, of course, reading was a prime course, I think, and we obviously had reading. We didn't call it math, we called it arithmetic, and, of course, spelling, and we always had English. We didn't call social studies, social studies, we called them plain geography. I cannot really. . . I think there was some science, but as I first started, I really don't believe we had a science textbook. Now, I'm not saying that we didn't have one. There could have been, but I really don't remember it. Then occasionally, if the girls' school, where I started, had a teacher who was so musically inclined, we had music about once a week. I think we had. . . am I getting into maybe another question here? We had a form of art once a week and we always had penmanship. That very definitely. It seems to me that that pretty well covered all the subjects.

RON: What was the length of the school day and the school year?

MRS. HURLEY: Well, when I first started, the school year was eight months and I've forgotten just how many days that we had to have. Did we have to have one hundred fifty? I think we were supposed to have one hundred sixty but I think that they would allow us to get by with one hundred fifty. Now, I could be wrong on that, too. The length of the day was from nine o'clock sharp until four, with an hour out for noon. Then we always had a fifteen minute recess both morning and the afternoon. Many a time, because I loved to play with the kids, it developed much more than a fifteen minute recess. But that's what it's supposed to have been.

RON: Did this change while you were teaching?

MRS. HURLEY: Now in the rural schools, no. But, of course, when we went into Ellsworth, in the later years, yes. I've forgotten just what our time was. Would it have been eight thirty?

RON: Probably eight twenty-five or eight thirty.

MRS. HURLEY: Eight twenty-five--something like that, and then out earlier in the afternoon. But all the time when we were in the rural schools, it was from nine until four.

RON: What teaching methods were used?

MRS. HURLEY: Well, when I first started, the school year was eight months and I've forgotten just how many days that we had to have. Did we have to have one hundred fifty? I think we were supposed to have one hundred sixty but I think that they would allow us to get by with one hundred fifty. Now, I could be wrong on that, too. The length of the day was from nine o'clock sharp until four, with an hour out for noon. Then we always had a fifteen minute recess both morning and the afternoon. Many a time, because I loved to play with the kids, it developed much more than a fifteen minute recess. But that's what it's supposed to have been.

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RON: What teaching methods were used?

MRS. HURLEY: Well, I doubt very much if they would stand up to the teaching methods that we have today. But I think mainly we assigned a lesson and we expected them to read it, and then we came to class and we would talk about what we read. Of course, those were on the subject matters. Like with math, we did much drill and lots of that at the blackboard. I've always found that in drill work, if we would have a race or the idea of a game, always they learned so much better if it were--they thought they were. Of course, in the rural school, the lower classes listened to the upper classes, and the upper classes, vice-versaly, listened to the lower. If they didn't get it the first year, when it was explained the next year they a lot of times would say, "Well, now I can see that this year, but I could not see it last year." So that's a real advantage of the one-room school. We didn't have too much in projects. We just more or less just read our lesson and then talked about it. I think you could say that was mainly my method of teaching.

RON: What teaching aids were made available?

MRS. HURLEY: Well, very, very few. I don't know, there are pros and cons to that, too. We would have an

atlas and we always had maps. But, as far as films or anything this way, we just didn't have them. We did have, I remember, a picture file, and I was continuously saving pictures and it's taken me years to get rid of all those pictures that I had saved through the years. You had to use things like this because you didn't have the methods that the . . .the things that the teacher has today.

RON: Most of the teaching aids and materials then were ones that you had saved or collected?

MRS. HURLEY: Yes, I think so. Well, of course, each school that I went to always had a good set of maps, or they had maps. I wouldn't say they were so good, but with what was available then, they did the best that they could at that time.

RON: Were there any special classes or unique educational services ordered, such as Special Ed., or L.D. classes, or Title Reading programs?

MRS. HURLEY: Oh, no, not at all.

RON: Describe a typical school day curriculum.

MRS. HURLEY: Well, are you wanting more or less the, say for instance, the schedule. . .

RON: Yes.

MRS. HURLEY: . . .of a day? Well, as I remember it, we

would usually start the day out with what I thought was the most important subject, and that was reading. We would have all of our reading classes first before recess, and then by the time we'd gotten most of the reading classes over, why, we were ready for recess. Then, after, I don't know. I think it's just plain old habit. I think I followed this year after year. The next period, from what, about ten thirty or something like that, until noon, we would go through all the math classes. If there was time, I think I'm right on this, before noon, we would probably slip in fifteen minutes or twenty minutes of spelling. I never was a good speller and I'm wondering if my children ever learned anything on spelling. But we didn't spend much time with spelling. Then, in the afternoon, of course, we would have English and the rest of the subjects then, and geography, and writing, and if there was any other subject, we stuck it in there somewhere.

RON: Were competency tests or grade level tests taken for promotional purposes?

MRS. HURLEY: Yes, at the end of the year. I think that only in the eighth grade. . .I think everything was left up to the teacher. There was no standardized

tests or anything of this order. But at the end of the year, children going into high school, the eighth graders, had to go to a designated school and take the county eighth grade tests. It was important that they pass those tests. If they didn't pass those tests, then they were not promoted into high school. So I'm telling you for sure, the last six weeks of school, we spent a lot of time reviewing.

RON: How was it determined which school they would go to to take the tests? You said, "...the designated school. . ."

MRS. HURLEY: I think the county superintendent appointed that designated school.

RON: Did Clear Creek School, where you taught, have a library?

MRS. HURLEY: Yes, I'm sure they did. But I imagine, as I remember it, it was a bookcase, probably four feet high, or maybe a little higher than that. I'll say six feet high, and I think that's stretching it, and maybe four feet wide with two or three shelves. You know, just big enough to. . .and some of those shelves probably weren't full.

RON: Do you have any idea on the number of books. . .

MRS. HURLEY: Number of books?

RON: . . .in the library?

MRS. HURLEY: No, I really haven't. But I suspect that it would be stretching it pretty good if we said they had fifty.

RON: How did you decide upon textbooks?

MRS. HURLEY: Upon textbooks?

RON: Uh-huh.

MRS. HURLEY: That, as I remember it, that was decided by the state. I'm quite sure. I don't think I had anything to do with the textbook. The teacher didn't decide if. . .no way.

RON: Where did the textbooks come from?

MRS. HURLEY: At that time, as I remember it, they were published by the state of Kansas. There was the state editor. I'm pretty sure, [???].

RON: What was the atmosphere of the educational program? How would you describe the atmosphere of your classroom?

MRS. HURLEY: Well, I assume that it was good. I think if you say that the teacher enjoyed it, then surely the children must have enjoyed it, a little of it, anyway.

RON: Did you consider yourself a strict teacher?

MRS. HURLEY: Well, I had to learn, don't you know. You've gone through this. The first years that I taught school. . .I remember once my mother came to

visit me and she drove up in the yard. When she got home that night, she said, "Why do you talk so loud?" She said, "I could hear you before I ever went to the door." That was some of the best advice that I ever got. I began to realize that a loud voice was not necessarily the control of the classroom. In the later years, especially when my voice began to play out, and that's one reason I had to quit was my voice just gave out and I couldn't, but I learned that if you speak only loud enough for them to hear and they have to be quiet to listen, why, it really helps. But now will you give me your original question? I think I strayed off of that question.

RON: What was the atmosphere of your classroom? Would you consider yourself a strict teacher?

MRS. HURLEY: I think in today's, course I'm a good one to judge today's classroom because I don't go back to visit and I don't really know what's going on, but I think you could say that I probably was a strict teacher because I could not see how children could learn when there was commotion going on in the classroom. If the child was having recitation as we had at that time, then he had a right to talk, but the rest of them had to be still.

RON: What were some of the rules of the school that may be different from today's rules?

MRS. HURLEY: Well, again, I think in discipline. Dad said to the child, "If you get in trouble in school, you're in trouble at home." And they knew that. Many a time, all I had to do was go to the parents and say, "I'm having a little trouble. Can you help me out?" The thing would straighten itself out because Dad and Mom were right behind you, where I don't feel that this is true today. I think there's an altogether different attitude in the home and that makes a different attitude in the school. Also, you could keep a child after school, and if need be, you could give him some swats, which I did a time or two. But I didn't think it was too successful. There may be a place on here later for me to tell about a few of those. Does that cover it, do you think, good enough?

RON: What were some of the special observances of your school, such as programs and . . .

MRS. HURLEY: Oh, yes.

RON: . . .spelling bees?

MRS. HURLEY: Yes, I think in every rural school that I ever taught at, we would have community programs.

We would have them once a month. Of course, we'd have a special big one for the end of the year. Then we'd have a Christmas one, which would be real special. One of the outstanding things, and I think some of the town schools have really kind of carried this over, was the last day of school picnic. Did you ever have one? Do you remember those. . .

RON: Yes, yes.

MRS. HURLEY: . . .where everybody would bring a potluck? We'd eat together and play ball. Everybody would play ball in the afternoon. It was a real treat. In the schools that I taught, I don't remember them associating with other schools too much--meeting together. Along towards, oh 1950, in the fifties, they began to do that. They began to compete one school against the other. But only occasionally along towards the latter part did they. . .although I can remember, way back in about 1940, along in there, they were playing baseball one school against the other.

RON: Did Clear Creek School have a graduation exercise for the year?

MRS. HURLEY: No, well, yes, I would say. We had a county graduation exercise and the children from the rural schools would meet at the courthouse, not courthouse

but city hall, and they would have a speaker and they'd have an occasion at the end of the year.

RON: Now I'm going to ask you some questions, Ina, that deal with expectations of the teacher by the community and the parents, and also discipline.

MRS. HURLEY: Uh-huh.

RON: Describe a typical day before and after school.

MRS. HURLEY: You mean, what took place before school started. . .

RON: Yes.

MRS. HURLEY: . . .and what took place after school started?

RON: Yes, what was expected of you?

MRS. HURLEY: I think we were expected to be there, if school started at nine, I'm sure we were expected to be there by eight. Not fifteen minutes till, or two or three minutes till. When the children started coming, we were responsible for them the minute they landed on that schoolyard until they got home, which, I'm sure is true today. A lot of times, we would be out on the schoolground with the kids having to supervise. Or, if we didn't do that, we had them under our wing in the schoolroom. Then after school, of course, it was always our desire that they go out the door and go on home. We really made that a rule--that school

was out so you go on home--unless they had to stay in or if we had permission. . .I mean the parents had asked that they stay, of course, then it'd been different. So there was not any supervision after school that I can remember of, they just went home. But before school started, we were responsible.

RON: How are teaching ways or habits different now than when you taught?

MRS. HURLEY: Well, I don't know as they're a lot different. Of course, today, you have so many more, what shall I say? Projects. . .not projects, what do I want to say?

RON: Extra-curricular activities?

MRS. HURLEY: Yes, uh-huh. You have your movies and you have. . .I suppose you still even have TV, and you have slides and you have so many more things that we didn't have. And, of course, the subjects have changed, and you have more experimental work. The children get to experiment, don't you think, where we didn't do that, or at least I didn't too much. Along towards, well I've forgotten just when was it, about. . .was it in the forties that geography began to change to social studies and they had all kinds of wild projects? Kids could make castles and they could do all these things that got them out of their

seats and I often wondered how much really--it was pretty hard for me to change--I wondered how much real learning they were doing, but I'm sure that there was some.

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

MRS. HURLEY: Well, to me it's an altogether different world. Just as the home has changed and our attitude towards the home and the school has changed, so has the attitude of the teacher of the community. I remember having in my college work one of the ladies at Sterling, one of the women teachers say that, "You are a professional. . .a professionalist. . .you are a member of the profession," . . .that's what I should say. And she said, "You would never expect a doctor or a lawyer to appear on the street in his everyday clothes." And she said, "If you're a teacher, you are in a teaching profession and it is your job to work to raise the standards of that profession. So when you're raising the standards of that profession, your appearance and your whole life, outside of the schoolroom should improve, too." She got it across to me--and I really believe this--that if you demand respect because you are a teacher, then you've got to

do things that will demand that respect.

RON: Was there much of a problem with teacher turnover?

MRS. HURLEY: Well, in thinking about this, Raymond and I were going over the number of schools that there were in this little township and a township's just six miles square. We can count, I think it is, five schools within this one township. So there was a constant turnover. Many of the girls graduated from high school and just started teaching school. The first thing, they wanted to get married, and of course, a married teacher in those days was almost an oddity. I think there'll be questions on this-- where each district had their own school boards. It was pretty hard to please all those school board members, and especially, to please both the wife and the husband. It was harder to please the wife by far than it was the husband.

RON: Did more than one teacher work in the school?

MRS. HURLEY: Up until after the war, I would say one-- up until that time, it was one teacher in the school. But then about the time, oh, I'd say about '43, '45, from then on, in those rural schools, they were beginning to reach for music teachers. They would hire a music teacher to come in and teach, but as far as I know, that's the only outside help.

RON: Were there many male teachers?

MRS. HURLEY: No, I can remember two or three. We had a male county superintendent and I can remember two or three, three or four men in that time, but no, not many.

RON: Was there a principal for the school?

MRS. HURLEY: No, not in the rural schools. The county superintendent acted as the principal.

RON: What evaluation system was used to evaluate teachers?

MRS. HURLEY: Well, the county superintendent, I think, would come and visit. I'm not sure, I think she came about twice a year. Usually, it seemed to me, that they would let you know that they were coming, but occasionally they would just step in. I can remember looking up and seeing the county superintendent in the room and my heart started beating and if I had any teaching ability, it went out the window.

RON: How were discipline problems with children handled and how active were parents involved in the discipline process?

MRS. HURLEY: When I think back to some of the crazy things I did for discipline, I think I should have been fired the first year I taught. I would do such things as make them stand in the corner. I've even

been guilty of making them stand at the board with their nose in a ring. I can remember one time having a little girl who was just invariably a daydreamer. I remember telling her one time, "If I look back there again and see you daydreaming, I'm going to give you a good licking." Of course, the next time I looked back there, that daydreamer was still daydreaming. So I thought, "What you said you'd do, you'd better do." If you think I took that girl out of daydreaming, you got another guess coming. But as far as discipline with the parents, the parents were quite cooperative. I remember one time, we were out playing hide-and-go-seek and a bunch of the eighth grade girls slipped back in the schoolroom during the noon hour and when I came in, there were those girls back in that schoolroom when they were supposed to be out on the playground. I kind of hit the ceiling right then, and I remember one of them said, "I'm going home and tell my dad." Well, I don't know if she did, but nothing too much ever came of it.

RON: Did all the teachers handle discipline the same way?

MRS. HURLEY: Well, I couldn't tell you that. I think they did, pretty well.

RON: Where did you live while teaching at Clear Creek School?

MRS. HURLEY: I always lived at home. I don't know why. First year I taught school I bought a Model-T Ford. I got sixty dollars a month and I bought a Model-T Ford--a Model-B, I believe it was--a roadster. Believe it or not, I paid for it the first year and had a little money left over. But I drove back and forth from home and that way I didn't have to pay board and room. No wonder I could buy a car.

RON: How much schooling did you have to have in order to teach?

MRS. HURLEY: When I first started out, I had no normal training. I just graduated from high school and I learned that if you took the county exam and passed it with a certain average, they'd give you a certificate. I believe it lasted two years, that's what I did. Then you could accumulate your grades, any good grades above, say for instance, ninety, you wouldn't have to take that test on that subject again. So if you kept taking those tests and you finally got your grades above ninety. . .you could take them every year, two or three times a year, I think. . .I had a much better certificate than I did when I got my degree, because I had a life certificate. I finally worked up at taking those exams to a life certificate.

RON: Would you explain how you were trained to teach?

MRS. HURLEY: Well, I really think that I got my training more or less from the institutes. I think it was about five days we would meet each year just before school started. We always started the first Monday after Labor Day. That was just a set rule. So the week preceding that we would meet for this institute in Ellsworth, the county seat, and that county superintendent would work on a program. She would try to bring in teachers in all areas who would demonstrate how to teach. Many times they would have children come in and they would hold classes. I think I learned as much from those institutes as . . . more probably than I did with the college work that I did.

RON: Now I'm going to ask you some questions about the building that you taught in and how supplies were purchased and so on. When was the schoolhouse built?

MRS. HURLEY: Oh my, there you got me. I don't know.

RON: Do you know who built it?

MRS. HURLEY: No, I would assume, just people in the community. We were on a picnic with our neighbors last night, and I was asking Ed Slaight, he's about eighty, how the first schoolhouses were started and he said, "Well, people in the community just built

them. If they wanted a school, well they built a schoolhouse. They usually built it near the family that had the most children."

RON: What materials were used to build the schoolhouse?

MRS. HURLEY: Well, all that I ever taught in were wood. . . were frame ones, such as this one down here. That one down there was an old rural school.

RON: Where did the materials come from?

MRS. HURLEY: I would assume these came from the lumberyard. We do have some rock schools, you know. I don't know, I suppose you've had some brick ones, but there are some stone buildings still left from some of the old original schoolhouses.

RON: Was Clear Creek School a public school?

MRS. HURLEY: Yes.

RON: What type of heating, lighting and restroom facilities were available?

MRS. HURLEY: Well, you can hardly believe this, but it's true. When I first started, there were, for lighting, the windows on both sides. There was just a four by four, I mean a rectangle-shape schoolhouse with a little cubbyhole out there for the hallway and lights. The windows were on both sides. But for any evening services they had the

little frames on the side of the walls that would hold the coal oil lamp. I don't remember they ever used those. I think even when I started, they had gas lights--gas lanterns. It seems to me that they did. But, of course, we didn't have too many programs at night. Now you asked for the lighting and what else?

RON: Restroom facilities.

MRS. HURLEY: Oh, restroom, of course, was the little privy. Two privies outside, one for boys and one for girls.

RON: How did the school get its water?

MRS. HURLEY: We had a pump. Most of them had a pump and some of them had a windmill.

RON: What's the significance of the school name?

MRS. HURLEY: That's interesting. I'm sure a lot of them were named for people in the community. For instance, this Clear Creek was on this creek down here and this creek is called Clear Creek. There was another school about two miles north of that was called Cottonwood Grove. Well, it was there because it was in a grove of cottonwood trees. But then you go two miles north of that and there was a school called Nebraska. Now why it was called Nebraska, I have not the slightest idea. There was another

school in this township that was known as Shamel and I think there were people there by the name of Shamel. There were more schools I guess in this little old six mile square than you can imagine. Isn't that strange?

RON: Could you describe the interior of the school?

MRS. HURLEY: Yes, I think most of them had wainscoating up to about four feet high. From then on, as I remember it, they wallpapered. Then they had kind of a wainscoating ceiling, wood ceiling.

RON: How was it furnished?

MRS. HURLEY: Well, there was always the teacher's desk and the teacher's chair and the teacher's chair was certainly not padded. Most of the schools had a piano. I don't think I ever taught in a school that didn't have a piano. A good many of them would have a stand for maps. They'd have a stand where you could flip the maps over, or they'd have a rack of maps where they could be pulled down. The desks were always the old-fashioned desks where they slipped the books in under, and they would be about six or seven or eight of those desks fastened to a one by four board. Then they could slide the whole thing. Maybe some of them were permanently fastened to the

floor, but I think most of them were just on those boards and then when it came program time, they could just move those desks.

RON: Who was in charge of the upkeep of the building?

MRS. HURLEY: The school board--on the upkeep. Now if something went wrong with the stove, or if a chair broke or something on that order, or if a desk broke and I had to have somebody to help me, I would go to the school board and they were responsible for it. Otherwise, I was responsible for the janitor work.

RON: What special events happened at the school?

MRS. HURLEY: What special events? Well, Christmas was always the big event and we usually, if there was a holiday, any kind of a holiday, we would try some-time during the day to talk about why it was a holiday and discuss appropriate stories or poems or something on that order, we would use for that day. For instance, I can remember, that we always made a little of Arbor Day. I doubt if children today even know what Arbor Day is. Of course, there's not the need of it now that there was then. We would study Columbus Day just as you do today, so it's not much different.

RON: What physical changes occurred to the schoolhouse during the years you taught there?

MRS. HURLEY: At those particular places? In the rural schools, not much, I don't believe. As time went along and you went into the town schools, of course, there was a big change. There had to be because of the increase of the classrooms.

RON: What were some of the physical problems of the building?

MRS. HURLEY: Well, to me, one of the biggest problems was the stove. We had a big old round stove in the middle of the room--warm in the wintertime if you sat right next to it. But all the ashes and the coal and every so often we'd have to take time out to throw in the wood or throw in the coal. But, every school was like that, so you didn't think a thing about it, you just did it. Of course then, the job of sweeping. One of the jobs that I hated the most was keeping the erasers clean because we used the blackboard much, much more, I'm sure, than they do today. There was always that chalk dust and those aluminum erasers would have to be dusted. We'd take them out and pound the dust out of them on the side of the schoolhouse. I usually let some kid get out of school a little bit early if he had his work done. I'd ask him if he'd like to go outdoors and dust the erasers, why he'd fly outdoors and get that done.

RON: Who owns the school building now?

MRS. HURLEY: I believe that some of the buildings were sold, especially after the war where people were looking for housing. Some of the buildings were sold and they were moved off of the premises and they were changed into homes. Others have been used for graineries or just let go to pieces. The one across the road down here is used as the community building, supposedly.

RON: What happened to the equipment and the supplies after the school closed?

MRS. HURLEY: Some of it was sold and some of it was given to a school that was going to continue. Some of the people in the community would just come in and get it and it just deteriorated.

RON: What happened to the school's records?

MRS. HURLEY: They were supposed to go into the county superintendent, but I'm not so sure that all of them have gone there. I have found down in this little schoolhouse down here, some records are still down there. But I think that at the end of the year, at least I always had to do that, I'd take my records in and give them, even over the summer, to the county superintendent, and then in the fall, go back and get them.

RON: Now I'm going to ask you some questions about the students. What was the usual age that a child began school?

MRS. HURLEY: Usually, I think you had to be six by the first day of January, and then later that was changed to September.

RON: Did many children move in and out of the school during the year?

MRS. HURLEY: Not too many in my district, in the rural district. Had one family who had about eight children and they worked more or less as a farmhand type. I don't know how many different times I taught those children because each time I moved to a different school, they seemed like they moved in. They were working for a different farmer. But, as a rule, I don't think there was much turnover.

RON: What was the greatest distance traveled by any student?

MRS. HURLEY: Oh, I don't think over two miles. I could be wrong, but I don't believe it was much more than that. Most of them were able to walk. They were close enough they could walk.

RON: How did the students who were not able to walk to school get to school?

MRS. HURLEY: Well, some of them would ride horses. I just don't think I ever taught in a school but

what they weren't able to walk. Well, if you've got six miles, you got five schools, six miles square, that's just three miles. . .the whole township is six miles square, isn't it, yeah. There are five schools in that--at least five--they wouldn't have to walk too far.

RON: How many students went to the school?

MRS. HURLEY: The first year I taught school, which was 1936, I taught two years there and then it closed. We had four students. Then the most I ever had was twenty-one, so it varied.

RON: What grade levels did you teach?

MRS. HURLEY: I never taught in a rural school where I had all eight grades. When I had twenty-one I had seven grades. But never all eight grades.

RON: What type of occupations did the students usually take up?

MRS. HURLEY: In life? Oh, boy, that completely varies. Many of them were farmers, I think. Some of them became nurses. Just as today's rural life.

RON: Did many students go on to college?

MRS. HURLEY: No, not too many.

RON: Did the students of Clear Creek School come from a particular cultural or heritage background?

MRS. HURLEY: No, those children didn't. I have taught in Bohemian communities. But those children, those don't have special cultures.

RON: What was the average number of years the students spent in school?

MRS. HURLEY: Eight in the elementary school. Eight, I would say.

RON: How many years was the student required to go to school?

MRS. HURLEY: Wasn't he required to go to either finish eighth grade or until he was fourteen, I think.

RON: What grade. . .

MRS. HURLEY: Is it still that way?

RON: I think it's age sixteen now.

MRS. HURLEY: Sixteen? I think it was that, too.

RON: Are there any outstanding students from Clear Creek School--any students who went on to become famous citizens?

MRS. HURLEY: Not necessarily from that school. But from my rural teaching, yes. I think I laughed and said one time, "I've had them from everything from bank robbers to college professors." But I really think that most of the rural children, when they went to high school, did just as well as the children from the town schools, and if not, maybe a little better.

RON: What was the dress and overall appearance of the students like?

MRS. HURLEY: Well, a typical country boy and girl, it wasn't unusual for them to come to school in the fall bare-footed and they would be barefooted until the frost came along. In those days they wore overalls and then later they went to jeans, the boys did. But the girls always wore dresses in the beginning and then as time went along, their dress changed, too.

RON: What was the cost of education to the student and his family?

MRS. HURLEY: Well, he had to furnish his pencils and paper and his colors and anything like that. But it seems to me that the books were supplied by the school, weren't they? I believe they were.

RON: Was there any tuition or enrollment fees that they had to pay?

MRS. HURLEY: No. They could go from district to district if it was agreeable by the school board, then it didn't make any difference what school they attended. But I think they had to have permission from the school board if they were going to a different school.

RON: Now I'm going to ask you some questions that deal with the school district and the community. Why was the school built?

MRS. HURLEY: Well, I suppose there was a need for it.

I would gather to be close enough to the children in that particular community to

RON: What were the boundaries of each school's jurisdiction?

MRS. HURLEY: I knew you were going to ask that. I do not know. In going back a while ago with you, from one school district to the other, it seemed like, in this one, there's about two miles distance. Now whether that was true of all schools. . . I think it varied with the number of children. I read in the World Book that before the townships, in the formation of the United States, that one section out of every township was to be held back for school purposes. So I don't know how they divided that one section up, but I suppose that that might have given them the money to be able to go ahead and build all these different schools, if that's the way.

RON: Was the schoolhouse used for community social activities as well as for education?

MRS. HURLEY: Oh, yes, very much so.

RON: What were some of those special activities?

MRS. HURLEY: Well, in my case, it was merely social functions or we would have the community meetings once a month. That was the highlight in that

community. It was a time when that was the only place that they went, was to that community meeting.

It really meant a lot to those people and we'd have crowds that you couldn't hardly get everybody in the schoolhouse.

RON: What were some traditions peculiar to Clear Creek School?

MRS. HURLEY: Peculiar to it? Oh, that one. . .well I'd better stay to Clear Creek. I don't think it was any different or had anything outstanding about it any more than any others.

RON: Was there a school board for your school?

MRS. HURLEY: Oh, yes.

RON: How many members?

MRS. HURLEY: Three.

RON: Do you remember any school board members' names?

MRS. HURLEY: Oh, yes.

RON: Would you give those to us?

MRS. HURLEY: Well, yes. The first school that I had was Clear Creek. Come to think of it, all three of those members are dead. There were two Bates on it-- Lynn Bates and Russell Bates--and a Lawson. Only one of those three had children in school.

RON: Did Clear Creek have an organization similar to a PTA?

MRS. HURLEY: No, no. As near as you had of that would be a community meeting.

RON: Who hired and fired the teachers?

MRS. HURLEY: The school board.

RON: Did anyone else have input?

MRS. HURLEY: I think the county superintendent. They pretty well listened to what the county superintendent. . .if the county superintendent recommended that you be moved, I think you would be moved, unless they didn't agree. They could've gone above her or him.

RON: Did any activities take place between schools?

MRS. HURLEY: Well, occasionally we'd have a ballgame and then a little later we would have spelling contests between the schools. We'd have games of all kinds. Other than that, that's about all that I know.

RON: Are there any controversies surrounding Clear Creek School?

MRS. HURLEY: Controversies? Not that I can think of right now.

RON: Did the school make any lasting contributions to the community?

MRS. HURLEY: Well, I think any school could make lasting contributions if the child gains in his education

and is able to perform in society, the school has made a contribution, hadn't it?

RON: When did the school close?

MRS. HURLEY: Let's see, '36. I told you I started in '36. I'll bet that was '35. I taught there four years and then it closed, for lack of children.

RON: Lack of children is why the school closed?

MRS. HURLEY: That's right. See, we only had four. Four for two years in a row.

RON: I have some questions to ask you that deal with finance. Was the land purchased or given to the school?

MRS. HURLEY: You know, I really don't know that. In talking with our neighbors last night, he thought that most of it was given. In this particular case down here across the road, he said he was on the school board when. . .this school is a relatively new school. They consolidated several of these schools around here and he said in this particular one, they bought the land. The land down here came from this farm. Raymond tells me that in the abstract or legal papers that go with the farm, that if they ever decide not to use this as a community building, then that land down there goes back to the original farm.

RON: Where did the funds for the construction of the school come from?

MRS. HURLEY: I would assume from taxes.

RON: Did the community help finance the construction?

MRS. HURLEY: Well, they had to. I'm sure they would have. Pinpoint how long ago they were built, I suppose.

RON: How much did it cost a student to enroll in Clear Creek School?

MRS. HURLEY: Nothing.

RON: What was your salary when you first started teaching?

MRS. HURLEY: I got sixty dollars a month.

RON: What was your salary your last year of teaching?

MRS. HURLEY: Oh, man. Isn't that terrible? I quit in 1976 and I suppose it was four thousand eight hundred dollars or something like that? Fifty? I don't know what it was, really I don't. Isn't that awful?

RON: How was your salary determined?

MRS. HURLEY: Well, you would go to the school board and it depended upon how badly you wanted a job. The first one, I took anything that they offered me. They said they'd pay me sixty dollars a month, I took it and I didn't argue about it. The first year I applied to every school in the county and didn't get a school--the first year I was out of high school.

Then the next year, I got this one, so I didn't do any arguing. But then, after I got experience and got my reputation established a little bit, then I would tell them what I would teach for and if they wanted me bad enough, that's what I got. If they didn't, they hired somebody else.

RON: So you had a voice in salary decisions after you got some experience?

MRS. HURLEY: That's right.

RON: Did you get regular raises?

MRS. HURLEY: Yes, I think so. I'm not so sure. It seems to me that the first year I got sixty dollars a month and I probably got that for two years. Then when I went to the next school, that school closed, it went up to eighty. I'm sure that from then on, it has risen.

RON: How did you get your paycheck?

MRS. HURLEY: Well, in all those rural schools, I would have to go after it. Not only that, we had to have a warrant. We would have one sign it and then I'd have to take that around to the next one to sign it, then take it to the treasurer and he'd finally give me the check. I had to run it down.

RON: What was the length of your contract?

MRS. HURLEY: All just a year at a time. Never did have one for more.

RON: Ina, we would like to thank you for helping us with this project.

MRS. HURLEY: You mean you're done?