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Interview with Pauline Gillmore

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Fort Hays State University

Pauline Gilbore

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049

Oral History
of
Pauline Gilmore

Class: History of American Education

Student: Rex G. Cooper

Instructor: Dr. Allan Miller


Date: July 8, 1985

Oral History


of

Pauline Gilmore



INTRODUCTION (By Rex Cooper): This is an interview with Mrs. Pauline Gilmore, wife of Ed Gilmore. 

The topic we will be discussing is her history as a student and/or teacher in a one room school. She was recommended to me as a subject by a former principal of hers, Mr. Jim Buxton, who is currently Superintendent of Schools at Southeast of Saline in/from Gypsum, Kansas.

Cooper: Hi. I'm Rex Cooper, and this, this interview is to complete an assignment for the class: History of American Education under Dr. Allan Miller. 

Cooper: Um, I guess to start with, Mr. Buxton told me that you were either a student or a teacher or something in a one room school.

Gilmore: Yes, both.

Cooper: You were both - great!

Gilmore: I went to school to a one room school, and then - all my life until I was in the seventh grade. And then, when I started teaching, I taught in the same school I had gone to.

Cooper: Fantastic! We can get a lot of history on that one school. What was the school called? Do you remember?

Gilmore: It was Crown Point School, and it was in Ottawa County.

Cooper: Ottawa county? Where is that?

Gilmore: That's north of Saline - right straight north.

Cooper: Minneapolis, in that range?

Gilmore: Yes, Minneapolis is the county seat.

Cooper: Do you - Could you tell me roughly how that - how far that is from Minneapolis? How many miles out?

Gilmore: Well, it's about, uh, ten miles south of Minneapolis, and it's three and a half miles east of Culver, Kansas.

Cooper: OK, ah, let's start off then as a student. Ahhh, at what age did you start going to school?

Gilmore: I started school when I was five. Uh, I started to school at near Delphus, Kansas, and I went to Pike Creek for two years and then we moved east of Culver about three and a half miles and, uh, I went, uh, to the school called Crown Point, and uh, and uh ten years later I was in, went there until I was in the seventh grade, and then ten years later, I taught there. And uh, I taught right out of high school, see. I took a state exam, and taught when I was eighteen.

Cooper: All right, well, let's stick with student, then we'll come back to

Gilmore: OK, I went to this school, and there was about thirty six, ah, pupils in that school at that time, and one teacher.

Cooper: Uh, how many different classes were going on at the same time?

Gilmore: There was all eight grades. We had all eight grades, and ah, the teacher, we had a recitation bench at the front of the school house, and, ah, she would have first grade, and then, on up through the eighth grade, like, say reading, and then the next - after recess - we have one through eight math, and, uh....

Cooper: So they would have the same class going on at different levels, all at the same time. Everybody was working math, only at differ....

Gilmore: Yes

Cooper: different levels of difficulty?

Gilmore: Yes, and she'd have the first grade. And while she was having the first grade, well then all the other students would be working at their desks. And then, ah, when she finished the first grade, she'd call up the second grade, and on down through the eighth.

Cooper: You mentioned thirty-six students. Did it seem crowded to you then?

Gilmore: No, I didn't notice it being crowded, but we had double desks, and, ah, I, I, ah, we - two at at desk. We sat two in the desk, and I can remember I sat with my girl friend in the desk, and, but, and I had my books on one side, and she had her's on the other.

Cooper: Could you imagine, of course you went on - stayed in education a long time - teaching thirty-six students in the same class about the time you got out?

Gilmore: No! Well, I had twenty-three.

Cooper: OK, ahh, Let's get some more specifics on what school was like. What time of the day did school start?

Gilmore: All right, now, at, ah, 8:30 they rang the half-hour bell. It was a big bell, big bell pulled by a rope, and I'm sure the teacher didn't enjoy this, but she never did say anything. We'd all try to get there, in time to get to ring that bell at 8:30, and then school took up at 9:00, and, ah, then the first recess was at 10:30. Then we had an hour at noon, 12:00 to 1:00. And then at 2:30 we had another 15 minute recess. And then, 4:00, school was out.

Cooper: OK. How far did you have to go to get to school?

Gilmore: I walked a mile and a half.

Cooper: Were there any that walked further?

Gilmore: Well, no not really. I don't think so. About a mile and a half - two maybe.

Cooper: OK. ahhh, how did you find out if you weren't going to have school? Suppose a blizzard came in, or something like that, Was there any way that they would notify students.

Gilmore: Well, no.

Cooper: (Laughing) you either didn't go or you did.

Gilmore: Yes, well I can't ever remember missing. Why we'd go - dad'd take us in the lumber wagon with the horses. I can't ever remember not having school.

Cooper: OK...What did you bring for lunch?

Gilmore: For lunch? Well, I can remember, ah, we lived on the farm, of course, and I had plenty of pork. I can remember pork sandwiches, and, ah, I can remember, ah, my mother always baked cookies, and I had great - she made big ones - big round cookies, and that pork sandwiches, and, ah, home-made bread, if we ever had lunch-ham and boughten bread, we thought we really had a treat.

Cooper: What did you take lunch to school in?

4

Gilmore: I had a little dinner bucket. It was oval shaped and it was orange, and, ah, I carried that little dinner bucket. Uhhuh, but some of the kids brought, I was lucky I guess I had a dinner bucket, we called it a dinner bucket. Ah, they brought their's in lard cans. Put it in an old tin lard can - the lid was on the top, and, ah, we, ah, sat them on a little shelf in the back of the room. It was cold in the back of the room. By noon, everything would be real cold.

Cooper: That raises another question, we don't even have down here. What was the - how was the heat provided in the school?

Gilmore: In this particular school, we had a furnace, a coal furnace, in the basement, and, ah, we, ah....

Cooper: Was it pretty effective?

Gilmore: Yeah, we was always warm. I'd, but you see, we wore a lot more clothes than kids do now days, and, and, ah, it was a coal furnace, but, uh, we all wore lots of clothes, so I'm sure that it wasn't too warm.

Cooper: What was the school made out of? What construction materials?

Gilmore: It was just lumber-just a wooden frame.

Cooper: (At same time as preceeding statement): Standard wood frame? All right.

Gilmore: And then there was an old well. The pump was just outside the door, there, and, ah, we all had a tin cup hanging on a nail. Each one of us had a tin cup hanging on a nail, and whenever we got thirsty we had to go out and pump a drink. (laughter)

Cooper: Ahh, what, what kind of grade system did they use? Or rewards? Did you get As Bs Cs or what?

Gilmore: We had, ah, we didn't get As Bs Cs. We had number grades, and we got pictures of artists. If we go a month without missing, and then we'd have a little picture of an artist.

Cooper: Was your teacher particularly fond of art? Was that one reason, or was that just her thing?

Gilmore: No, must have been just her th---, I ah, we never had much art.

Cooper: Ok, ah...

Gilmore: Well, our art was on Friday afternoon. Friday afternoon, after the last recess, we'd have either art or, ah, geography, or a spelling match.

Cooper: OK, ahhh, did you ever get into trouble when you were in school?

Gilmore: (laughing) I can't remember - only once. And I dropped my pencil, and ah, we weren't allowed out of our desks at all, and I dropped my pencil, and it rolled out in the middle of the aisle, and I went and got it, and I remember she, ah, she corrected me for that. I about died, and then (laugh), one other time, ah, at recess I got into a fight with a girl over the basketball, and, ah, I never will forget, I, we really had a fight I guess, and the teacher told me if there will be any slapping to be done, she'd do it, and (laugh) I never forgot it.

Cooper: What kind of punishments did she give out, for somebody that really needed punishing?

Gilmore: Well, you know I really can't, I can't ever really remember. I don't, you know, back in those days, it just wasn't much discipline problems. I can't ever remember any kids getting in trouble.

Cooper: Hum. Did you ever pull tricks on the teacher, or any of the kids you knew pull tricks on the teachers? You were just a good student weren't you? (joint laughter)

Gilmore: Well, see when I got older in the seventh grade, then went into town, I think that's when, ah, tricks went on. I, I, then in town, we had a man teacher, and I don't remember.....

Cooper: OK. Uh, what was your favorite subject?

Gilmore: (Pause) My favorite subject? I suppose was spelling. Cause, ah, if we got a hundred for a month, then we'd get a little, oh, ah, a little certificate.

Cooper: Did you have any special duties as a student, around the school?

Gilmore: No, not as a student.

Cooper: Later as a teacher, you did. We'll get to that. OK. Ahh, What were, what can you remember as the most fun things you did as a student?

Gilmore: The most fun thing was in the winter, when we'd have, ah, a snowball. We'd choose up sides, and have snowball fights. That was fun, and across the road, and down the road a ways, in the dead of winter, why this little pond would freeze over, and we'd all get to go there and slide.

Cooper: Did you have any playground equipment?

Gilmore: Oh yeah, we had a merry-go-round, and, ah, and then, we played ball, and I remember we had a sponge ball and a board for a bat.

Cooper: OK, ah, do you remember anything special about your teachers?

Gilmore: Oh yes! I can remember my, all my teachers. I liked em. My second grade teacher, this is when I went to school near Delphus, She boarded at our house, and I thought she was wonderful, and I never could go up to her room, though. I had, her room was upstairs, and I was to stay down stairs, and, but I can remember on my birthday, why she, ah, told me to come up to her room, boy, I thought that would be something, and she gave me a pair of green beads for my birthday, and I'll never forget that, uh-huh...

Cooper: Yeah, go ahead....

Gilmore: And then, ah, another teacher I had, ah, in the third grade, ah, I liked her. I can't remember just very much about it.

Mr. Ed Gilmore: (Walking into room): Hi There.

Gilmore: And, ah, then my fourth, fifth, grade teacher, at this school where I taught, ah, she was, I suppose my favorite, but I don't know what she did...

Mr. Ed Gilmore: Taping?

Gilmore: Yeah.

Mr. Ed Gilmore: OK.

Gilmore: What do you want?

Cooper: Ahh, just to explain here, We had a robin return home, so we were interrupted for a little bit there. OK.

Gilmore: OK, then my fourth, and fifth grade teacher, ah, I guess she was my favorite. I don't really know why, but, ah, that she did anything so different, but she used to come to our house. Her and her family used to come to our house for supper lots of times. And then, uh, my sixth grade teacher, Florence Stevens, she still lives up at Culver, ah, she was a beginning teacher that year, and, ah, really, I can't put my finger on anything, but I think when I had her as a teacher, that's when I decided I wanted to be a teacher, and I guess I just, she was just a likable person. Real, very strict in the classroom. Something about her I liked.

Cooper: You mentioned that when you were in the second or third grade, your teacher boarded with you. Did most of the teachers board out with families in the district?

Gilmore: Yes, most of them boarded with someone, and lived right in the district. However, this, ah, fourth, third, fourth and fifth

grade teacher, she, ah, lived in Culver, and drove out. But most, all the rest of the teachers I had, out in the country, lived in the district and boarded.

Cooper: How many days did you go to school in a year?

Gilmore: Oh, we went eight months, just eight months. Yeah, we went eight months.

Cooper: What, ah, month did you start?

Gilmore: Oh, we started after, ah, Labor Day and went through April.

Cooper: All right. We'll probably come back to some of these questions later on. I wouldn't be surprised if I don't repeat some, but let's go to you as a teacher for a while. Ahh, How old were you when you started teaching?

Gilmore: Well, I was seventeen when I started, and then I had my birthday in November, and uh, I uh, went to high school at Culver, Kansas, seventh and eighth through senior, and then our senior year we took a course called "normal training," and, uh, we had to take a state exam put out by the state. Come up from Topeka, and it took us two Saturdays to take it.

Cooper: What kind of questions did they ask?

Gilmore: Oh we had, well, we took a math course, and it was just ah, the problems that we worked were the problems in the seventh and eighth grade that you taught...eighth math. And then we took a course called "Methods in Management," and they asked like what would you do if a child did, oh, some kind of discipline problem that you'd have. What would you do? And then you'd have to answer that: what you would do. Those were the kind of problems we... And then in geography, we had to locate, it seems like every city, lake, and everything, all the continents. It was a geography course.

Cooper: All right, ah, now did this...what kind of certificate did you get?

Gilmore: Then I got a certificate. It was called a "Normal Training Certificate," and it was good for two years, and then you had to get one - eight hours of summer school.

Cooper: When was this?

Gilmore: I got that certificate in 1940.

Cooper: 1940...right during World War II.

Gilmore: Well, just before.

Cooper: (Laughing) that's right, ahh,...

8

Gilmore: I got, well, the reason I can remember that, see, I taught like home school, and I, ah, felt real lucky to get my home school, and they paid me sixty dollar a month, and, uh, some of the girls that was in my class they, they, uh, had to go and stay in a community, pay room and board, and one - one girl only got 45 dollars a month, and some more got fifty-five. Some of us got sixty, and we thought we was really great, and then, uh, we taught two years. I taught two years at sixty dollars a month, and then the second year, December, see, war was declared, and then the following year, why, I went to Crawford, uh, to Lyons County, Kansas. That's over by Marquette, and I taught a school by the name of Crawford, and I, then everything had raised on account of the war, and then I made a hundred and ten dollars a month.

Cooper: Was that still a one room school?

Gilmore: It was a one room school. I had all eight grades. I had twenty three children, and, uh, it was a frame school house, and, uh, we had a big, old pot-bellied stove in the middle of the room.

Cooper: I want to get back to that in a moment. You were talking about your pay. How were you paid? I mean other than the amount. When, and in what way?

Gilmore: Oh, at the end of the month I got my sixty dollars, and, uh, I usually had to go over to one of the school board member's house to pick it up.

Cooper: In cash?

Gilmore: No, they paid me by check. Yeah, I was paid by check.

Cooper: Ahhh, you mentioned the pot-bellied stove. Did you have any special duties, extra-curricular duties, related, well, around the school, maintenance, or anything like that that you had to take care of?

Gilmore: I had to get there about 7:30 in the morning and build a fire? Is that what you mean?

Cooper: Yeah, that type of thing.

Gilmore: Yes, I had to get there about 7:30 in the morning, and, and, uh, get the fire built in this old stove, and get the school house, uh, warmed up, and get the ashes carried out, and all that, and, uh, this particular school I didn't have any water on the school ground. And I had to carry my water from my neighbor's house. Oh, it's just about, oh I suppose equivalent to a block down the street. And, uh, we had, uh, crockery water fountain that you just pushed a button, and the water came out. Each kid had a cup, and, uh, then after school.... You want to know about sweeping the floors?

Cooper: Sure, everything.

9

Gilmore: After school, well then, uh, I had to, uh, sweep the floors, and, and uh, dust the erasers and wash the boards, and uh, then every Friday, we, uh, had something called sweeping compound that was kinda oily, oily sawdust, or something. That's what it looked like, oily. And, uh, every Friday, after the last recess, I'd sprinkle that all over the floor, and then the kids, they'd slide for a while on it. That would shine up the floor, and then after school I'd sweep it out. They were just old boards. They weren't.... They were just real oily boards, and there was about a quarter of an inch crack between each board, and then you swept it out, and it was kind of oiled the floor, and it was easier to sweep then for a week. But the desks were all, uh, bolted down to the floor in rows, and uh, you had to sweep under each one of those desks. That was kind of a trick. We just had an old broom, just plain, old kitchen broom, to do it with, you know.

Cooper: Ok, any other duties that you had, other than teaching?

Gilmore: No, Uh, they had church at this school, and they, and I, I went to church. I think I was probably expected to be there, but I didn't have to help do anything.

Cooper: Ok, How did you start out the day, as a teacher. I mean the class day, school day?

Gilmore: Oh, all right. Uh, every morning, why, uh, we'd ring a, this particular school we didn't have no bell on the top that we pull with a rope. We just, uh.... This school, where the pot-bellied stove was, we'd, I just had a hand bell, and I'd ring that at five till nine, and that's what they called the five minute bell, and everybody went out to the, uh, restrooms out on the north forty (laugh), and, uh, got their drink with their tin cups, got in their chairs, or their seats, and uh, then we always said the flag salute. Never missed a day. We stood all together and said the flag salute, and then sometimes they'd sing, we'd sing "America," and sometimes we'd sing for fifteen minutes. I must have been tre-tremendous. I can't sing a note, and uh, anyway we'd sing loud and long for about fifteen minutes out of the old "Golden Song Book." And then, uh, we'd start classes. There are some times, if we didn't sing, then I'd read a chapter in a real good story book to them, and then we'd start our classes. Start with the first and go through the eighth.

Cooper: What were the subjects and the order they taught? Can you remember?

Gilmore: Well, I always had reading, first thing in the morning was reading, and uh, then uh, after the first recess was math. Called it arithmetic in those days. And then, uh, after dinner, well, we'd have reading for the littler ones, and then we'd have history and geography for the older ones. Agriculture. And we always had writing class. Uh, never a day go by we wouldn't have writing class. And the older ones, fourth grade on up, had their bottles of ink with the old pen holders and the pen points that you slipped in there, and uh, we always had our writing classes. And the last thing, we always had

spelling.

10

Cooper: Did you? I don't even know if I can make this make sense. Do you find through the years that you've taught that you still taught basically the same things at the same times. For example, levels of difficulty. Did, did education change that much, from then to the present, as far as the types of things you taught and when you taught them?

Gilmore: I think, well, we taught them about the same time, but we just, um, back then we had a certain reader for a certain class, and naturally there was some kids that was slower than the others. But somehow we got through the books, and uh, the slower ones, the little ones, the little children that were slow, why, we always had some eighth grade, eighth graders, that would help them and flash cards to them, that sort of thing, and uh, everybody helped everybody, and everyone played with everyone. Everyone was needed for something, you know, and even the slower ones, they didn't know they were slow. And uh, the upper grade girls or boys, either one, that would be helping them, just didn't think any thing of helping them. That was just part of the daily work. And they had no idea that maybe they weren't important, and needed, and wanted. They didn't seem to realize like they do nowadays, you know. And uh, well, we always had programs, you know, twice a, at least twice a year you'd have a big program. Christmas and last day of school, and, and uh, everybody would have at least two important parts, big in the program, cause there was no favorites, you know. Why everybody at least had two important parts, and it would just take the slower, slower ones a little longer, but sometimes the slower ones were the best, the very best in a play.

Cooper: What...was that what your Christmas program usually was just a play?

Gilmore: Oh, it was dialogues they called it, and we'd have four or five dialogues, and songs, and this sort of thing.

Cooper: Did you ever have any other types of programs like that? Christmas, or any other types of things along those lines? Maybe Easter, or....?

Gilmore: Oh, sometimes at Halloween, we'd have a program. But every month we had what they called the P.T.A. And uh, the last Friday in the month, or something like that. And uh, lots of times we'd get maybe one number ready for the program. We always had a program. And uh, maybe we'd have one number, but there would be outside.... The big...adults put on plays and things and come, come, and we always had some kind of program, and then we'd have, uh, lunch, and it wouldn't just be the, like P.T.A. nowadays. It would be everybody come. Mothers and dads and grandmas and aunts and uncles, and it was a really big thing, and uh, the kids all come, too, to the P.T.A. I'm ambleing around here. You'll probably have a terrible time writing this.

Cooper: Oh thats, thats ok. Uh, you mentioned sometime back about getting your paychecks from the school board. That made me think: How did you go about getting a job?

Gilmore: Oh, to get the job, uh, there was always three on the school board, and to get the job back in those days, you wrote a letter of application and sent it to the Clerk of the school board. And then you followed that up. You didn't, you didn't just have a meeting with them all some evening. You went, uh, to see em, and you nev, never were uh, told them you were coming. You were sent this letter, and you followed it up, and if they were out in the field, you just walked in the field, climbed over the fence and talked to em, and you went to all three of em, and talk, talked to em. I been over the fences, out in the wheat fields, and into the milk barns, and all this. And uh, thats, and then they would have a meeting, I guess. And, if you got the school, then they'd come let you know.

Cooper: Did you ever go to school board meetings, or, how often did you have to meet with the school board during the year?

Gilmore: Never did. I never had anything like that.

Cooper: Did you ever find them interfering with your job in ways that you resented, or....

Gilmore: No. No, they just.... No, I never had any of that trouble. Now, I, I never had any discipline problems, but I know of some, I just never. I was lucky. I didn't get into a district like that, where they had a bunch of discipline. But sometimes friends of mine did, and uh, the school board would kinda meddle into business,

Cooper: OK. You mentioned discipline. Uh, how did you handle teaching students. Did you teach high school students?

Gilmore: No.

Cooper: Oh, so you didn't have the problem teaching kids that were as big, or bigger than you? You were always...

Gilmore: Well, they were eighth graders. I went up through the eighth grade. I had some pretty tall boys, I was just always lucky, I guess. I never had any discipline problems.

END OF SIDE A -- BEGIN SIDE B

Cooper: To repeat that question, How did you handle discipline problems when you ran into them?

Gilmore: Well, they could stay in five minutes at recess or five minutes after school, because they didn't have to meet the bus, you know. They always walked home. And, if they got themselves into trouble, why then they could stay in five minutes, or, if uh, they was, something, maybe just put em back in the corner of the room.

12
Just kind of isolate them for a while.

Cooper: Did you ever have to use corporal punishment?

Gilmore: Oh no, I, I, back, back in those days, I don't know, I guess maybe they were a little more milder then, or bashful, you know. Little country kids were more bashful, a they wouldn't do anything, cause they looked up to the teacher, you know.

Cooper: Didn't even have to bring the ruler over the nuckles, or anything like that?

Gilmore: Oh no, nothing like that. No. And I can remember the first graders always wanting to run in the school house, and, well, if you had nineteen, you know, all of em running you know, you just couldn't have em run in the school house, and about all you ever had to do if they run, well, just tell them to come back and walk, and that took care of that. They were, they didn't have TV you see. They weren't as...they just weren't as brazen, or something.

Cooper: OK, (laughing) save the comments on TV, I guess. Uh, what kind of textbooks did you use? Did you have any special texts that you can remember, or....

Gilmore: Uh, see, well, we really didn't have too many workbooks. We had just a book, and uh, then what ever else I could find to go along with it. And uh, we uh, the first grade had a primer and a first reader, and we didn't have any pre-primers to start with. Later years then when I taught we did, but the first years I just had a primer and a first reader. And uh,...

Cooper: Did you send home much homework at all?

Gilmore: No, no I didn't. I just, I just never did send too much homework home, cause I figured they worked hard during the day, then they didn't need to go home and work some more. And uh, at recess, uh, we'd get out and play hard, and then when recess was over, they'd come in, and tell them now's when we work. And we worked, and we never played games. We never played games to learn something. I, they did it just....They just never played games in the school house and in school time. I, then at recess, we'd go out, we'd always go out, and we'd play hard, you know. Play ball and play pump-pump, pull away, and then when they come in, I always stressed: Now we work. And I never, uh, They played games. I guess they didn't know it. They'd get back in the corner, flash flash cards to each other and things like that, but we didn't call it games.

Cooper: They didn't need that then? Uh, how, when did you prepare your lessons and grade your papers?

Gilmore: After school. After I got the sweeping and the, and all the janitor work done, then I did my paper grading. Then I took some home with me and do it after supper, and that was it.

13
Cooper: OK, Ohhh, gosh, (pause), Do you remember anything about the way the schools were financed at that time? How the school was financed, they raised their money for salaries, and upkeep?

Gilmore: Well, I really don't know. I guess I never thought of it. Just the same as nowadays, just the same as now. And then if we needed extra supplies, I know one year we needed, Oh erasers and maps and globes and all of this sort of thing, and there was no money for it and so we had a, uh, sort of a box supper I guess you'd call it, and we all took a box and uh, uh, there was all women took boxes, and they were auctioned off. And then we had that money, and we bought new eras.... It was really great. We had new erasers, and new maps, and a new globe, and a new dictionary, and then there was some money left, and we got a new radio. That was really living.

Cooper: How were teachers supposed to conduct themselves in the community?

Gilmore: Well, the teachers were looked up to, and, and they were expected to, to go to church, not go to dances, and (pause) just be - not be seen in the bars or the pool hall or anything like this. You didn't dare. If you did, you didn't have a school the next year. And uh, when I first started teaching, if you, if the girl, if some of the girls did get married, but they, they didn't tell anybody till after school was out. You didn't dare be married.

Cooper: Oh, you couldn't be married and teach?

Gilmore: No.

Cooper: Well, how did you manage to run into a husband?

Gilmore: Well, uh, I uh, that was the first years, you see, and then later on they didn't get. They kinda forgot about that, and that's. See I taught three years, and then I went to California and worked the aircraft factory.

Cooper: During the war?

Gilmore: During the war. And when I came home, well, they, they kinda forgot about whether you was married or not.

Cooper: OK. Uh, Did you, was there any real problem of teacher turnovers. Uh, for example, did they last? Didn't last very long in the field?

Gilmore: Oh yes. They lasted long in the field, but you never taught in one school over three or four years, then you move on to another one.

Cooper: Why?

Gilmore: Well, I don't know. I guess it was just sorta the, of uh, the thing to do.

Cooper: Ok.

Gilmore: Uh huh.

Cooper: Were, was it the teachers choosing to leave? Or, couldn't they get salary increases, I wonder?

Gilmore: Yes, they always managed to give you five dollars, uh, at least, salary increase those first years, and I don't really know why they moved on. Only, I know I didn't want to teach only but two years at this school, and I moved on. (pause) But I got a better wage, but I was...everybody did at that time. Uh huh.

Cooper: Uhh, we've already talked about how teachers are hired. Uh, who fired teachers? Did you ever hear of any teachers being fired?

Gilmore: Yeah, this sch..uh, I heard of that, and it would be the school board. They just wouldn't.... They'd just tell them that they didn't... They'd just write em a letter I guess, and tell them they wouldn't, wouldn't be needed the next year.

Cooper: Ok.

Gilmore: Uh huh.

Cooper: And I, is it safe to assume that the school board pretty well ran the entire school system?

Gilmore: Yeah.

Cooper: Were there anythings like principals, or....

Gilmore: No. We had a county superintendent, and they, and the, and the school board did run into trouble, or anything like that, then they go to the county superintendent, and he was as.... He acted kinda like a principal acts nowadays over the whole, whole county.

Cooper: All right. Uh. Did you ever witness any ex..., any unfair treatment of teachers. Something you would have pictured as extremely unfair, or...?

Gilmore: No.

Cooper: You thought they were pretty well handled then? Ok. Back to your building for a little bit. Did it have any physical problems, the school building itself, that had to be dealt with?

Gilmore: Well... They weren't the best, uh, in the world. You know they had the bare, bare necessities, if that's what you mean. And,

and then, uh, it was a law came out, I don't know. It was in the, uh, fifties whereby schools had to be fixed up and have hardwood floor put in, and until that time, they...

Cooper: Who would, uh, take care of, or pay for it, if say a kid knocked a ball through a window? Who was in charge of repairs?

Gilmore: Oh, the school board.

Cooper: OK. Then, they would hire a local person to come and do it?

Gilmore: Probably do it themselves, uh huh.

Cooper: OK. Uhhhh, you don't remember when either of these school houses were built, do you?

Gilmore: Yes, uh, this old Shipple School out here in Saline County, where I taught for nine years, was built in 1880s.

Cooper: Now, is, have we talked about this school yet?

Gilmore: No.

Cooper: OK.

Gilmore: This is, I taught this school, then, after I got married, see. After I came home from the working in the aircraft factories, I taught one year, and uh, I didn't like to stay away from home up there in the country, you know. And so I worked out here at the PX, and then I got married, and then I worked here in Saline County ever since. And the first school I taught in Saline County, after I star, started back to teaching was out here at this Shipple School. And it was, uh, three miles north-east of town.

Cooper: Is, was it a wood-frame building, as well.

Gilmore: It was a wood-frame, and it was built in 1880s.

Cooper: Uh, do you remember when eith, either of the other buildings were built?

Gilmore: I don't know when they were built. Probably about the same time though, I imagine.

Cooper: OK. Uhh, do you know, was the school board the owner of the school houses, or do you even know how the ownership was handled?

Gilmore: No, that was nev, they weren't the owner. That was the, it was a certain section, or a certain amount of land, each section or something was set off by the State, or

some.., no one really owned that land. And, and uh, now what was the question?

Cooper: Well, I was just.... They suggested trying to find out the ownership of the school house, and I think probably that....

Gilmore: No that wasn't owned by any....that was the State.

Cooper: Yeah. I think what this question, now that I look at it, is probably implying is, since it's closed down, have any of these schools continued to exist?

Gilmore: Oh, there, no, they were closed down, and they were, uh, consum..., consolidated, see. And then they were sold.

Cooper: OK.

Gilmore: This school was sold, and, and the money went into the district that was consolidated into, and uh, it was just sold at an auction.

Cooper: OK, uh, (Cooper humming: hu, hu hu). Did you use any special teaching methods while you were teaching? Techniques?

Gilmore: Well, just followed the manual, you know, and that's about all you, I got, I, I uh.... Techniques? Just follow the manual and, and, used the.... They got their lessons, why you praised them, and I didn't, uh,.... We had, every Friday afternoon, if everything went well, then after last recess we always had art, or, or geography. We always did something different, you know.

Cooper: OK. How did you evaluate students? How did you give grades?

Gilmore: Well, there was kind of a trend there for a while. If, uh, the kid did the very, very best he could, you know, why, you didn't flunk him. And uh, that was the best...they were doing to their ability, you thought they were doing up to their ability, well then you just passed them on, cause everybody couldn't. It's that way yet today. You just, they do their best, and then, uh, we had seventh and eighth grade exams that was put out by the State or the county. And you had to know those books inside-out for those kids to pass those exams. And then we had an eighth grade graduating exercise. And they, they had to make an ave, average of 80 or they didn't pass. And we..when were in the seventh and eighth grade, well a lot of times we worked for an hour after school in the spring-time getting ready for those, uh, tests. We worked every night after school for about an hour and learn. They had to know the authors of every story they

read. They had to know the loc, location of, uh, well like fifth, well I don't. Like the geography, they had to be able to locate all the cities and rivers, and, and uh, and uh, in the reading, I can remember they had to know the characters in each story and be able to say something about them, and it was quite a.... And writing and penmanship, they had to know, uh, what letters were made a certain way, and all this. We had to really work in order to pass them through those exams.

Cooper: Having been through them, how do you feel when you hear people talking about going back to some kind of a testing system now?

Gilmore: Well, see, I'm of the "old school." I don't think that hurt a thing, because I, I, I believe that you should be able to memorize things. I, I believe that you should be able to know where to look, and how to look it up, and look it up. But I still think it's all right to have a few things memorized in your head.

Cooper: Did you stress a lot of memorization in your classes?

Gilmore: Yes. Yes. We had to memorize that stuff in order to pass those exams. And, when we did programs, why it would be amazing what the kids could learn of the parts in the play, and, and then all the little ones would speak a reading, you know, and they could memorize it and not make a mistake. They'd get up there and say it. And, I, I'd just said the last years I taught, well they had a program, and the little kids, some of them, had just three and four lines, and they could not say them.

Cooper: You didn't feel like they were trained?

Gilmore: I didn't feel like they knew how to memorize anything.

Cooper: Ok.

Gilmore: But see, that's of the "old school..."

Cooper: U-hu (laughter).

Gilmore: that's frowned on, but I believe that, you know. And I, I was amazed when I was teaching, uh, these last years of the little fellows that come to me. Course I had the Title, Title I, Title I. But, they had never been read to. They, some of them, had, had no idea what the nursery rhymes were. And they had no idea how to say the Humpty Dumpty or anything like that, you know. Now, I do think you have to tax your brain and memorize things.

Cooper: OK, that's, that's interesting. Uhhh, some of these questions while were just talking. Did you have a library of any kind in your school?

Gilmore: That was a joke. The libraries were a joke. We had about, uh, when I went to school, we had, oh I suppose, thirty books up on the shelf, and the same way the early years I taught. We had no, nothing. But every week, we could go to the county seat, and uh, to the county superintendent's office and check out five books. And nearly every week I'd make the trip to Minneapolis or here in Salina to check out five books, and the kids would read those.

Cooper: You, so you had your own little mobile library?

Gilmore: Sort of, uh huh.

Cooper: Uhhh, did you have any traditions in your schools, particular traditions of your school houses, like a....

Gilmore: Ohhh, such as uh...traditions?

Cooper: Oh, I don't know, tricks, or uh, prideful things, or some schools are, have some thing that they do every year. I don't know.

Gilmore: Oh, Ohhh...Like track meets?

Cooper: Perhaps, yeah.

Gilmore: And spelling bees, and.... Oh yes, every, every year we did uh, we entered the track meet. Why, here in Saline County, I, this is always my pride and joy. I had sixteen pupils, and uh, we, we were, uh up against all the schools in the county: Gypsum, Bavaria, Falun, Smolan. We got third that year out of the whole county with sixteen kids. We, we really went into out there at my old Shipple School. I liked to.... And then, uh, we played ball in the Spring and the Fall. We had a ball team, and we....

Cooper: Were you the coach?

Gilmore: Yeah, I was the coach. What a team, man. I can't play...I can't throw a ball as far as across this room, but we, we played ball anyway, and we'd go (laugh) we'd go to other schools and have ball games, and, and Friday afternoon we'd have a ball game, and that was fun. My next door neighbor now, south here, I had her in the fifth, sixth, seventh, and eighth grades, she was my pitcher. (unclear) . . . ball team. Yeah, we had a good time.

Cooper: Girls and boys on the same team?

Gilmore: Oh yes. Mixed. First graders up through the

19
eighth. Everybody counted, when we, or you couldn't have a team. You know, there wasn't enough to have a team.

Cooper: Other than a track meet like that, did you ever compete against any other schools in any way?

Gilmore: No, just ball and trackmeet. Then, for Valen, Valentines Day, we, we'd go to the next school, Humbarger School, we'd go over there and have a valentine party together.

Cooper: Uh, did uh, change of topic here for a little bit.

Gilmore: All right.

Cooper: You were a female teacher. Did you ever, uh, have a chance to compare with male teachers as far as how they handled? Or did you ever know any male teachers at that time?

Gilmore: Yes, see my brother and I both taught school, and uh, we graduated together. He was sick when he was, uh, in the eighth grade, and he layed out a year. He had heart trouble. And then we went through high school together, and uh, we taught school then, cause if you didn't take "normal training" at this school, you just didn't take nothing. That was it, you know. So he was a teacher, and I was a teacher, and he taught west of town, west of Culver, and I taught east. He'd take me to school, and then he'd go to his school, and we, uh,...

Cooper: Did he handle problems any differently than you did?

Gilmore: Well, not that I know of, really. He had a, a, he had a little retarded girl come. Well, they come and ask him if she could come, and he said well, he didn't care. And she came, she was just to come in the mornings. And uh, she was quite a hand-full, but he got very fond of her, and before the year was over she, she, she came all, all year, all day instead of half a day. But, uh, as far as discipline, er, oh I don't know, we was just taught to, we just uh. This "method and management" class we took in "normal training" we just taught a few tricks, you know, like to isolate them, stay after school, or, or they have to sit by the school house and not play the game or something like that. That's about it.

Cooper: You raised an interesting point with the retarded girl. How did teachers in one room schools deal with handicapped children?

Gilmore: Well, they didn't come unless the teacher said they could. They just stayed home, you know. Nothing was done with them at that time. And uh, if the teacher said "ok they

can come," why then they did. But, other than that, they stayed at the home, just stayed home. And this little thing couldn't talk when she came, to my brother. And he taught her to say a few words. And then, uh...

Cooper: Was it possible to individualize at all with somebody like that with that many kids in the school?

Gilmore: Yeah, he took a little time for her, every day. Uh huh, you did, somehow. Some, you know, the classes, when you had eight math classes, you was putting them through pretty fast. You didn't have very long for each class.

Cooper: OK, Ahh. You, we talked probably about two or three different schools now. Do you know if there are any remains of these buildings left out there at all, or have they been torn down, or do you have any idea?

Gilmore: The, the remains of my old school where I went and where I taught first, that school house is still there.

Cooper: By Minneapolis?

Gilmore: It's by, east of Culver.

Cooper: Oh, OK.

Gilmore: Crown Point School. It's still there, just kind of crumbling down. But the old Shipple School out here east of Salina, uh, when it was sold, it was tore down, and now that's just wheat field.

Cooper: Do you know if any of the records are left of these schools? Like grades, or...

Gilmore: I don't know.

Cooper: All right, uhh (pause) hummm. Let's go back to the Shipple School.

Gilmore: All right.

Cooper: Uh, can you describe the interior of the school building? Were they all pretty-well? typical, or the same.

Gilmore: Yeah, they were about all the same. Every school I taught was about like this one. And you went into it from the, uh, east. The front was on the, faced, the east. When you went in there was a hall way. And that's where the kids hang, hung their coats. And that's where the water, water fountain thing was. The fountain that you pushed the button. I filled it up every morning, and uh, then you went, then you went into the school room. It was just a big room, and rows of desks. And then later on, when, in the fifties, then

about the third year I taught there, well, there was a law where they had to put in new floors, you know, and kind of spruced them up a little, which they did. And then we had running water. That was a, and a sink, and that was great. Cold. And uh, then they put in butane gas. Before that it was just de, oil. I don't know. Diesel oil or something. Some kind of oil furnace, and then they put in butane gas, and put a hard wood floors, and a sink, and the running water, and that was, that was really nice.

Cooper: Did you always just operate with out-houses out on the north forty?

Gilmore: Yes, out on the north forty. And, uh, the first years I taught, all we had was a Sears and Roebuck Catalog, but (laughter). Really! And then, uh, in the fifties, then they had regular toilet tissue. Yeah.

Cooper: Looking back on your students, what types of occupations did most of them go into?

Gilmore: Well, I've had so many, that... I was thinking about that earlier. I've had (unclear) everything. I have one boy that, uh, is some kind of uh, of a big wig in the Navy. I have two that are scientists back east somewhere. One works with forestry. Uhh. There's only one, that I know of that turned out to be a, a criminal. And, uh, the rest of them are, even the slow learners... This girl lives south here was a slow learner, and I was thinking of that. Out in the old country school, she was the best ballplayer you ever did see. She could do real good in dialogues. She was the best dial...actress, and she was two grades behind herself. Every year she gained a grade, but she was always two grades behind herself. But she's a, she didn't realize that, you see. Back in those days she was needed. She was needed for the play. She was needed for any games we played. She was needed to pitch that ball. And she became a nurse's aide in the hospital, worked in the hospital, and uh, and on the baby floor. And she saved her three babies' lives, uh, up there. And she's a good mother, a good homemaker. And I was just thinking about that. And then some of them, the really brilliant ones I had turned in, they were the scientists, and uh, worked in the forestry. And, I have one that was a State Representative, Janie Alyward. I had her in the first grade. And I had, uh, I had one, I have one of my students is on the school board in El Saline, Russell Burger. You've heard of him, probably. And one of my first graders, I had, was on the school board at Southeast, Jerry Seim. And uh, Oh, they're just in all walks of life.

Cooper: Uh, did you have any particular religious domination in your area that you taught? For example, were they all of one type?

Gilmore: Oh, no, ah, I never had any.... I never had any of that, uh, there was just all.... I never had a Jehovah Witness, or anything like that in my old one room.

Cooper: Were they all pretty mixed as far as type of....

Gilmore: Just mixed. Uh huh.

Cooper: Uhhh.

Gilmore: I never had any, when I taught in the old country schools, I never had any, uh, Blacks, uh, Mexicans...(unclear).

Cooper: Did you ever have any itinerant, or migrating workers that came through?

Gilmore: No, see I did, I...I....

Cooper: All pretty well stable - permanent? All right. Uh, what type of graduation exercises did you have?

Gilmore: Well, in the old country schools, see, they took those exams, and then they went to the county seat, and uh, went up to the county seat, and they had, uh, all the eighth graders in the whole county would go and to these graduating exercises. And of course, they all, the boys was all spruced up with the new suits, and the girls would be their first high heeled shoes, and, and uh, the county superintendent he, he took care of all the program. They have a program and a speech, and the kids would all be up on the stage. I had nothing to do with the program, or anything.

Cooper: Ok. Uhh, we're about to run out of tape.

Gilmore: Shoot.

Cooper: I have a list of questions. Do you have any things that really come to mind to you about one room schools, or the country schools that you think are important?

Gilmore: Well, it's more one to one tutoring. I, you never had so many kids that you couldn't just take care of. It was, it was, uh, more in.., you got acquainted with the families. You knew, you knew each family. You knew each child's background. You were, you were their friends. I mean you knew them more than they do today. Today, they have a room full, and some you never go to their homes. You never go in....

END OF TAPE - SIDE B