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Interview with Margaret Rose

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Margaret Rose

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CHAPTER 2

MARGARET'S MEMORIES OF THE ONE-ROOM SCHOOL

The following is a transcription of an interview conducted on July 3, 1987. The subject of the interview is Miss Margaret Rose and her experiences as a teacher in one-room schools. To facilitate the flow of the transcript, the questions posed will be typed in all upper-case letters, while Miss Rose's responses will be typed in standard format.

The information will cover the years from 1932 through 1935.

I WOULD LIKE TO BEGIN BY HAVING YOU TELL US THE YEARS YOU TAUGHT IN A ONE-ROOM SCHOOL AND THE NAMES OF THE SCHOOLS THAT YOU'RE GOING TO BE DESCRIBING.

Well, I started the first year I was out of high school in 1932 at Twin Mound, District 47. Twin Mound was about five or six miles south of Lincoln. The other school was the Star school. It was, I believe, about four miles west of Barnard. Those were the two schools I was going to mention.

DESCRIBE FOR US A TYPICAL DAY FOR YOU AS THE TEACHER, BEFORE AND AFTER SCHOOL.

Well, the first thing of course was to get to school! Twin Mound was two miles straight north of where I stayed. It was the customary place for a teacher to stay. The only method of transportation was my two little feet. I walked to school every morning,

well, with the exception when the hired man would come along from one of the other farms and give me a ride. This I was most grateful to have on stormy days! I didn't have quite as far to walk at Star. There at Twin Mound the first thing I did was start in preparing for the day. Now the children, school started at nine o'clock, but if they had a ride to school, or if their parents were going to town to spend the day or for business or something, they would bring the children so as a general rule I could expect a child to show up at anytime from seven-thirty on. I had to be there ready for him, of course.

I always tried to do my custodial work at night. So of a morning it was my job to check the outhouses and make sure the ground squirrels were not in the girls' toilets, because some of the girls would scream and I'd have to go with a stick and get them out!

Of course in the winter time my first job was to build a fire. I nearly always waited until morning to take up the ashes for fear that I'd put hot ashes out someplace. You can imagine my disappointment one morning when I was walking to school and the snow was about three feet deep and I was trudging along and I saw a tramp coming toward me. He was so poorly dressed, I thought sure he was going to grab my nice warm cap off my head and my mittens off my hands, and probably grab my lunch pail, too. I put on my bravest smile and said to him, "Good morning" and he said, "Good morning". As I went to school the first thing I saw was the coal pails I had filled the

night before were completely empty, but the schoolhouse was nice and warm and he had left a bed of coals there in the stove, so all I had to do was refill my coal pails.

Then you say, describe a typical day for me. If I didn't get all my papers checked the night before that was the first thing I did. If a child came to school early, I went over his papers with him.

Then after school, that was the time to do your custodial work. I think I mentioned to you in my story there that one of the first things I always did at these rural schools was to put a screendoor hook inside the door, because as soon as the children left I hooked the door. I didn't want anyone coming in surprising me! In those days you never knew who was going to surprise you. YOU MENTIONED WHERE YOU LIVED WHILE YOU WERE TEACHING AT TWIN MOUND. DID YOU LIVE IN PRIVATE HOMES WHILE YOU TAUGHT IN BOTH SCHOOLS?

Oh, yes. Then after I had been in those two schools, and was going to a school connected with the town school, I decided I was through living in different homes and my dad went with me and that is when I bought my first car to drive to school.

HOW MUCH SCHOOLING DID YOU HAVE TO HAVE YOURSELF IN ORDER TO TEACH IN A ONE-ROOM SCHOOL?

None. I had taken Normal Training in high school, but as far as other formal education, that is a high school degree, of course,

but as far as college education, I didn't have anything. This was one of the things that our folks insisted on, on our going to school. My first year I went out to Hays, I worked at thirty-five cents an hour helping clean Cody Commons, the cafeteria. I stayed at Custer Hall and got through, I think I did nine hours credit that summer. Every summer from then on I went to school. As soon as I possibly could, it was the popular thing to do to take out a 30 Hour Certificate, a 60 Hour Certificate, and then keep going. Mother and Dad were very insistent that we continue and if we were working on a correspondence course, upstairs in the west bedroom-- no one was to bother us! At any time!

WERE YOU THE ONLY TEACHER IN THESE SCHOOLS AND DID YOU HAVE A PRINCIPAL?

I was the only teacher and I didn't have a principal. We were under the supervision of the County Superintendent who made a visit once a year....most teachers tried to find out when the County Superintendent was coming, but I really didn't care, because I knew I was earning every cent that I was being paid and that I was working just as hard as I could with the youngsters, so it really didn't matter.

WAS THERE A PROBLEM OF TEACHER TURN-OVER, AND IF SO, WHAT WAS THE CAUSE OF IT?

I don't believe we had very many teacher turn-overs. They had district policies and this first school where I went had a

district policy that two years was the limit, for which I was very grateful. The second school where I taught, the enrollment was going down so that they felt they couldn't really keep the school open another year. You taught just the time that was allowed.

DID THAT POLICY CHANGE FROM DISTRICT TO DISTRICT, OR WAS IT THE SAME?

No, it was pretty much the same throughout the county, although some schools did permit them to stay longer.

WHAT METHOD OF EVALUATION WAS USED TO JUDGE WHAT KIND OF JOB YOU WERE DOING?

It was mostly the County Superintendent came around, and if she thought you were doing a good job, then she put an "OK" by you. The rest of the time, you sort of listened to what was going on in the community. Whether you were being fair, whether someone was learning, and alot of this was community...what do I want to say?...disruption over whose child won something in 4-H, and another child didn't or something like that.

WERE YOU IN CHARGE OF ANY EXTRA-CURRICULAR ACTIVITIES OUTSIDE OF SCHOOL HOURS?

No, I don't think they knew what that was.

HOW WERE DISCIPLINE PROBLEMS HANDLED AND DID YOU INVOLVE THE PARENTS IN THE DISCIPLINARY PROCESS?

You know, some of these kids, especially the older children were almost as old as I was, within a few years and they either

respected you, or they were going to show you what they could do. I was very fortunate in having kids who respected me. I recall one little boy that came to first grade, and I could not keep him still, he talked constantly. I tried to be understanding, but I remember saying something to his mother one time. I told her that Larry just talked constantly and she said, "Well, that's your job to keep him still" so I never mentioned it to her again. But, especially in the second school I had, the older children were so helpful with the younger ones, and if a younger one held up a hand while I was having a class, an older child would scoot over and answer his question. There weren't the discipline problems in those two schools; later on in another rural school which I'm not really reporting on, the kids were absolutely the foulest mouthed I'd ever seen, but there was no point trying to change it because it came from home.

WERE THERE ANY MALE TEACHERS WORKING IN THIS DISTRICT AT THIS TIME AND IF SO, DID THEY DEAL WITH DISCIPLINE ANY DIFFERENTLY?

I really wouldn't have any idea. There were some male teachers at that time, but I wouldn't have any idea about their discipline.

You know you were asking about evaluation, are you going to go into the county examinations that were given at that time? I HAVE NO QUESTIONS ON THAT, BUT IF YOU'D LIKE TO SHARE SOMETHING ABOUT IT, YOU MAY.

They did have county examinations for the eighth graders to determine whether or not they could go into high school. They would choose teachers from the county to go to a certain place to give the examinations. The reason I wanted to tell you this one incident. I think one reason I was chosen was that I was one of the few teachers who wasn't working on Saturday, that is, for pay. Most of them were working in stores or something to supplement their salary. And another reason was that I had a car and could go most any place.

And so, a young male teacher and I were to give the examinations over at Barnard. The first Saturday that we went, we each took our lunch and found ourselves eating alone because all the kids had gone. That was a big thing for them to go down to the cafe someplace to eat. So we decided the next Saturday to not take our lunch. That we would go eat with the kids. So we went down there and were sitting at the counter and this boy looked at me and he said, "Margaret, have you ever seen beer?"

And I said, "No."

He said, "That's what they're putting in that glass up there."

I said, "Oh, my land! That looks just like the kind of stuff that's out in our horse corral."

And he said, "Well, I'll tell you something, it not only looks like it, it smells like it, and it tastes like it, too." I think I have used that instance with alot of young kids at different times, in trying to get them to see what it really was.

HOW ARE THE TEACHING HABITS OR SITUATIONS DIFFERENT IN A ONE-ROOM SCHOOL THAN FROM WHEN YOU BEGAN TO TEACH IN A REGULAR SCHOOL?

When I began to teach in a regular school, it was the first grade up at Osborne. Having the responsibility of one--just that one--group, where out in the rural school you had responsibility for all these different groups. You were out in nowhere almost, without a telephone, without a car, without anyone you could call on if a child became ill, or was hurt. In a town, you have access to all those things. It makes alot of difference if you have workers with you. That is, you can talk things over with other teachers. When you're out there you don't talk them over with anyone period.

HOW WERE THE TEACHERS EXPECTED TO CONDUCT THEMSELVES IN THE COMMUNITY OUTSIDE THE SCHOOL SETTING?

Well, the first school where I taught, I think they just wanted you to go to school, go home and hide. Because they didn't want to have anything to do with you, really, they didn't. And this place where I stayed, they waited for me to get there on Sunday night so I could stay with their three boys while they went to a card party. As a rule, they took their hired man with them, and he came home with help! I was not the bravest thing, just being out of high school.

Now the second school they treated me on a social level. Like I was really someone special. If they were going to come to Lincoln for a movie, they would ask me to come and they nearly always invited

someone else along, for us to have dinner and see a movie. It was really just—well, altogether different. I felt like a human being at the second school. I didn't at the first, and it wasn't all my fault, I didn't feel. It was just the difference in communities.

WHY DID YOU QUIT TEACHING IN THE ONE-ROOM SCHOOLS, AND WHAT DID YOU DO THEN?

I quit teaching in the one-room school because they had started in talking about consolidation and some of what I considered the "choice" schools were closing. Then too, the salaries had gone down terribly in the rural schools. We had a pastor friend who had moved from Lincoln to Osborne and he thought surely there was a Rose who would come to Osborne to teach. He told the superintendent about me and they pursued it, and I went. I was the last of the five Roses to leave Lincoln and then Blanche did come back then later from Hill City.

LET'S TALK A LITTLE BIT ABOUT THE CURRICULUM. WHAT SUBJECTS WERE STUDIED DURING THE SCHOOL DAY?

Now the first year, the first two years there, we did not have social studies. We taught reading as reading, and we didn't have language arts. We taught grammar as grammar, arithmetic as arithmetic, geography as geography, history as history, penmanship as penmanship, spelling as spelling all the way through. And sometimes you'd think you might have ten minutes for a class and you'd look and see it was going to be squeezed down to three minutes or something.

Then you'd just try and make it up the next day. This is one of the things I think children probably reported to parents in answer to questions when they got home. Did you have geography today? Did you have history today? And you just had to get those subjects in. That's all there was to it. Even if you just opened the book and saw the picture and closed it. There was absolutely no way you could correlate your classes. There was even criticism if you had third and fourth grade spelling together.

Then the second school, they were just introducing social studies. I thought this was great. We didn't have units to follow. We developed our own units. I thought, my land, if you're going to talk about the southern part of the United States for geography, why not include the history part of it, why not use the stories that you were going to have for reading to involve around that? So I was real thrilled with going into social studies. Then a little later language arts was introduced to include the reading, the grammar part, the spelling and the penmanship. I don't think we realized how cramped the day's schedule was. And you couldn't always hold true to that, especially if a child got a nosebleed!

HOW DID YOU DECIDE ON YOUR TEXTBOOKS AND WHERE DID THE TEXTBOOKS COME FROM?

These were all state adopted textbooks. The parents had to buy all the textbooks. Anything we used as extra it was what we as teachers took, either from the library or that we had in our own homes. And we went and bought alot of things like that; that's why I had so many

extra books!

DID EITHER SCHOOL YOU ARE SHARING INFORMATION ABOUT HAVE A LIBRARY?

No. They had bookcases that were just sparingly--well, there were generally encyclopedias and dictionaries. But as far as books to read, the only books that were there were books that I took from home, or I did check out five or six books at a time from the library.

WHAT WAS THE LENGTH OF THE SCHOOL DAY AND THE SCHOOL YEAR?

Well, the length, as I said, was supposed to be from nine until four. But it was sometimes from seven until--I never left a child at school until someone had picked him up.

One day, and I must tell you this, one day I looked out and here it wasn't four o'clock yet and the schoolyard was filled with cars. I could recognize the cars of nearly every child in the room. I wondered if something had happened and the parents were out talking to each other. So I dismissed the children and waved to the parents. They took them home and I felt very uneasy being there at school so I hurried through my custodial work and on the way home there was a house, a farmhouse there, and they did have a Lincoln telephone and I stopped in there occasionally to call home. I stopped in there to call home and the lady said she didn't want me to go on because there was a bank robber loose out here in this neighborhood and they thought he was in one of the cornshocks over in this field. So, as I said, that was the attitude they had toward the teacher--they were going to let me stay in the schoolhouse with a bank robber on the loose!

WE MENTIONED THE SCHOOL YEAR. HOW LONG WAS IT?

Eight months.

WHAT METHODS OF TEACHING WERE USED?

Well, I'll tell you--just anything that could get results! For one child I recall, I had to write all of his spelling words out, he was in seventh grade, out in syllables because he could not get his spelling any other way. Every spelling word he had I wrote for him beforehand in syllables.

Now as a rule, I always prided myself on my first grade readers. My mother and sisters had impressed upon me the importance of a child learning to read well. So I think I probably spent more time with them. Then, as I said, sometimes the older children would help and when they got done with their work, I'd ask them to take a younger child and have them read, just for the experience because I knew they weren't experiencing that at home or any place else.

But as far as the methods were concerned, we pretty much followed the textbooks.

OTHER THAN THE ENCYCLOPEDIAS AND DICTIONARIES THAT YOU MENTIONED, DID YOU HAVE ANY OTHER AIDS AVAILABLE FOR TEACHING?

Most generally a map and a globe and a yardstick!

WERE THERE ANY SPECIAL EDUCATION CLASSES OFFERED OR ANY SPECIAL SERVICES AVAILABLE TO YOU?

Not really, we had to go out and get them ourselves. We were lucky to have classes brought to Lincoln to attend on Saturdays.

HOW WOULD YOU DESCRIBE THE ATMOSPHERE OF YOUR PROGRAM--WAS IT STRICT OR KIND OF A LOOSE DISCIPLINE, OR WAS IT A WARM ATMOSPHERE IN YOUR SCHOOLS?

I would say that in the first school that it had to be strict because that's what the parents wanted. About the only time we had what I called a good time would be out on the playground. The children did enjoy, and I did too, the many games we played out on the playground. Of course, we didn't have the balls unless I took them from home and we didn't have the jumprobes unless I took them from home, but we did have the outhouses we could hide behind for hide-and-go-seek and we did have the ditches we could hide in for "wigggle-wiggle, I need a wiggle" and all those, and for New Orleans, of course we didn't need anything for that.

Then in the second school it was altogether different. There was one woman there who would surprise us every once in a while at noon, just bringing something special for all of us to add to our lunch pails. She was a delight. She was a mother, but she was interested in all of the children as well as her own. It was more of an informal school there. Mainly, I think, not only because of her, but because of an eighth grade girl who was a mother to all the little children and she was a delight to have.

WHAT ARE SOME OF THE RULES THAT YOU CAN REMEMBER THAT WOULD BE DIFFERENT FROM WHAT WE HAVE TODAY?

Oh, let me see, I think that we accepted anything that someone mentioned at that time, that is if they said, "Mother's going to

take me to Salina tomorrow," we didn't ask for a note, because we took them at their word. I think that's one of the main things. WHAT WERE SOME SPECIAL OBSERVANCES OF YOUR SCHOOLS, FOR INSTANCE CHRISTMAS PROGRAMS, SPELLING BEES, OR CONTESTS?

During that first year, we were having the three "D's"—the depression, and the dust-storms and the drought. The people weren't going as much so they got up the idea that we should have community meetings. At the community meetings sometimes the school would present the program and at other times the parents would present the program. Those met probably three or four times a year. Then the teacher was expected to have a Christmas program where everyone in the community came. We didn't have gifts because it was just a hard time--a depressed time. I never did have a box-supper there to raise money, but lots of the schools did have box suppers to raise their money.

Then at the second school we didn't have any community meetings at all. We did have the Christmas program and the last day dinner. YOU MENTIONED THE TESTS THAT THE EIGHTH GRADERS HAD TO TAKE, DID YOU HAVE ANY KIND OF GRADUATION EXERCISES FOR THEM?

No, in fact I don't think they even got a certificate. WE'LL TALK NEXT ABOUT THE STUDENTS THEMSELVES. WHAT WAS THE USUAL AGE A CHILD BEGAN SCHOOL AND DID THIS AGE VARY?

This was the state law, that they couldn't start school until they were five years old by the first of September. Occasionally, I don't think I ever had anyone hold a child back from starting

school, but there was a county superintendent at the second school, she called me and said that there was a child that had been permitted to start when he was four, the year before and that I was to hold him back until he was five. She didn't know that she was "bucking" Margaret, because I asked if she were aware of it and she was, so I said, "Well, you take care of it." I wasn't going into a new school and say, "Okay sonny, you can't come to school until you're five," after he'd been there one year. I don't think that the age varied too much. I can't think of any child who was held back while I had him. I think that there were children, as I mentioned there were these two boys, these brothers, and they had held the one back until the other one was ready.

DID MANY CHILDREN MOVE IN AND OUT DURING THE SCHOOL YEAR?

No, not at either of these places, because they were farmers and the only one that I had that moved in was when her mother and daddy were in the process of getting a divorce and she came to this first school to be with her grandparents. This was her first experience with a rural school and she was a darling child and a frightened child. But we just got along beautifully.

HOW FAR DID THE CHILDREN HAVE TO TRAVEL TO GET TO SCHOOL AND HOW DID MOST OF THEM ARRIVE?

Most of them walked and they did have anywhere from two to four miles. Now, at the second school some of the children rode with an older brother or sister who was going in to high school and they let them off on the way to school. But most of them walked,

even in cold and rainy weather they still walked, as did their teacher!

HOW MANY STUDENTS WERE IN THE SCHOOLS AND WHAT GRADE LEVELS DID THAT ENTAIL?

You know, I don't really recall how many were in each of these. I could look. It seemed like I had all grade levels. No, I didn't in the first school. Let's see, first, third, fourth, fifth, sixth, and seventh in the first school. In the second school, I'd just as well tell you here, I just had second, third, fourth and eighth. WHAT WAS THE AVERAGE NUMBER OF YEARS A STUDENT SPENT IN SCHOOL AND WERE THEY REQUIRED TO GO ANY CERTAIN NUMBER?

I think the majority of them were there the eight years. However, in many instances a child did take two grades in one year. I didn't have any happen like that, but it was not unusual because a little second grader would listen to everything that a third grader had and when he started third he already knew all of it so they took him on to fourth grade. WHAT KIND OF OCCUPATIONS DID THE STUDENTS GENERALLY TAKE UP AFTER LEAVING SCHOOL?

You know, I'm ashamed to say that I haven't followed all of the children. I do know that several of them went on to high school, but most of them became farmers. I know of two from the second school who were college graduates. I know of one from the first school who was a casualty in the Korean War. But I really don't know where the rest of them are.

DID THE STUDENTS OF EITHER SCHOOL COME FROM A PARTICULAR CULTURAL OF HERITAGE BACKGROUND?

Not all of them, but there were some at the first school who came from a German background and that was one whole family that was composed of three children. There were very strict with their children. I can't think of anyone else.

WHAT WAS THE DRESS AND THE OVERALL APPEARANCE OF YOUR STUDENTS?

You know, it was the same thing on Friday that they wore on Monday and it was all week long. The teacher had to be very careful about this because if she overdressed, then the people thought she was getting too much money. As long as you were clean, but these children generally wore the same thing all week long. A lot of them were washed in between times. Even though it was cold, or it was stormy and all, I don't think I ever had a little girl wear jeans. I think it was always dresses, and therefore, the teacher--I had a pair of snowpants that I wore, but I had to take them off, of course, as soon as I got to school.

WHAT WAS THE COST OF EDUCATION TO THE STUDENTS?

Just the books that their parents bought. It was to their advantage if they had a child in the grade above because then they would pass it on. I recall that the children did furnish their own crayons. This one family, and it wasn't at either one of these schools, but the older girl came to school and she was so angry because she had--and it was from a German family--she had a brother in the first grade and one box of crayons had been bought

by the parents that year, but they gave it to the eighth grade boy and she said, "That isn't right. The first grader should have had it--the crayons--because they'll have to take him all through his eight years. Instead of giving them to that eighth grader because he's already broken all of his." But she said that's the way it is in a German family--the oldest one always gets everything.

DO YOU RECALL ANY OUTSTANDING STUDENTS FROM EITHER SCHOOL?

Yes, I do. One of my sweet little first graders who came to school with her Shirley Temple curls is now employed as a special education teacher in the Lincoln school district. She was a darling child--she was outstanding. I had some others. Not long ago I had a workman come to our house and he identified himself as having been one of my pupils, which, good golly, I never would have guessed. A great big guy, and bald. I said to him, "Well, just look at my hair and see what you did to me."

He said, "Well, look at my hair, which I don't have any." And he took his cap off and he didn't have.

WHAT DID THE STUDENTS ENJOY DOING MOST DURING FREE TIME OR RECESS?

I think just playing games. You know one of the things, when it was stormy and we couldn't go out, we played games in the school-house that I'd been taught at home that these children had never been taught to play. Another thing I noticed about these children was they were just hungry to talk. And we talked an awful lot. Whether it was that they didn't get the opportunity at home to talk or not, but we just talked period.

WE'LL TALK NEXT ABOUT THE BUILDINGS AND SUPPLIES. WHAT MATERIALS WERE THE SCHOOLHOUSES BUILT FROM?

Well, this first school that we were talking about was a stone building to begin with. Then some men, I was told, in the community saw that the stone was crumbling and decided that they needed to cement it and they did. While they were cementing it some pebbles got thrown up on the schoolhouse and they decided that was a good way to stucco it so they all stood back and threw stones up on the schoolhouse. Now on the inside it was just plain plaster. I don't even recall if it was painted, but I presume that it probably was.

The second schoolhouse--I believe that school is still standing there, I haven't been out there for a long time--the second schoolhouse was a little frame schoolhouse and it had been kept up in appearance much nicer. I have often wondered what happened to it. But you know when they consolidated schools they started in and sold--and some of the buildings were sold "under the table" you know--and people had no idea what happened to them. But it no longer stands there.

WERE BOTH OF THESE SCHOOLS PUBLIC SCHOOLS?

Yes.

WHAT TYPE OF HEATING AND LIGHTING--YOU MENTIONED THE OUTDOOR TOILETS--
WHAT KIND OF HEATING AND LIGHTING WAS AVAILABLE?

There were pot-bellied stoves in the center of the room and they had these metal protectors around them. As far as lights were

concerned, you went without them. During those dust storms it got so dark that you really couldn't see in the room and they had to dismiss schools. Not only did they have to dismiss schools, they had to send crews in to clean the schools because the dust was so thick. But there were no lights.

WHAT ABOUT THE INTERIOR OF THE SCHOOLS?

Most of them were painted. Any decorations that were in the school were the ones the teacher did. I recall that some of us, about the first thing we did was to go and varnish the desks because they hadn't been varnished for years. Or at least clean them off and sand the desks. You really tried to be a good housekeeper and it was real hard sometimes because the material you used had to come out of your own pocket.

WHO WAS IN CHARGE OF THE UPKEEP OF THE BUILDING? IF YOU NEEDED REPAIRS, WHO DID YOU TURN TO?

You went to the school board and since there were three, you nearly always approached the chairman of the schoolboard. If he thought that it was something that had to be done he would contact the other two. But if he thought it was one of your--that is if you had a broken window, they'd get it put in, but if the window had just slid down a little bit from the top and it let a draft of fresh air come in, they thought that was good to let the fresh air come in, so they didn't do anything about that.

DID ANY CHANGES OCCUR TO THE BUILDINGS DURING THE YEARS THAT YOU TAUGHT?

No, not really. I don't think they were ever painted or anything.

YOU MENTIONED PUTTING A LATCH ON THE DOOR, DID YOU DO ANYTHING ELSE TO PERSONALIZE THE SCHOOL BUILDING?

As far as painting, no. As far as the equipment in the school, yes. I varnished several of the desks. I had several of the extra desks moved out to the coal shed instead of having all of those vacant desks. I was criticized at the first school for doing that, because then there weren't enough places for people to sit at the community meetings, so they moved the desks back in.

WHAT WERE SOME OF THE PHYSICAL PROBLEMS OF THE BUILDINGS BESIDES NOT HAVING LIGHTS?

Making sure that the children were warm, and making sure that the children were cool. There was just as much of a problem in cooling as there was in heating, because most of these schools--both of these schools--sat out in the middle of nowhere without any shade around. The second school did have a creek that ran along side of it, but after a water moccasin tried to come in the window one day, I didn't open too many windows after that!

HOW DID THE SCHOOL GET ITS WATER?

Just wells, dug wells, out in the yard. My dad always made sure that we went and pumped them out before we started using them. I never did want a water pail in the schoolhouse. So we tried to just pump the fresh water as we used it. I took large pitchers to school and I would pump the water into the pitcher and pour it into their cups. I fixed shelves in the anterooms for their lunchpails where there hadn't been shelves. And I fixed hooks in the anterooms for their cups where

there hadn't been hooks. I fixed mirrors out in the anterooms so the kids could comb their hair.

DO YOU KNOW THE SIGNIFICANCE OF THE NAMES OF EITHER OF THESE SCHOOLS?

Yes, Twin Mound was named for those twin mounds that are in sight of the school. I don't know why Star was named Star.

DO YOU KNOW WHAT HAPPENED TO ANY OF THE EQUIPMENT OR SUPPLIES AFTER THE SCHOOLS CLOSED?

No, I wish I did. I'm sure I could have collected quite a few books from either place.

YOU MENTIONED THE SCHOOLHOUSE BEING USED FOR COMMUNITY MEETINGS, WERE THERE ANY OTHER ACTIVITIES THAT THE SCHOOL WAS USED FOR?

Well, if general election came, they did dismiss school for general election because the schoolhouse was used for voting purposes. Occasionally there would be a meeting that I wouldn't know anything about, but the next day I would find cigar stubs and I would ask questions and someone would say, "Oh yes, such and such a group of farmers met last night to discuss something." But of course, it was not my building, it was their building, so if they wanted to have a group there, they had it there.

WAS THERE A SCHOOL BOARD FOR EITHER OF THE TWO SCHOOLS AND DO YOU REMEMBER ANY OF THEIR NAMES?

There was a school board for each of the schools and I do remember their names. I remember all their names.

I THINK WE HAVE THOSE ON THE PAPERS THAT I'LL RECORD AT THE END.

DID EITHER SCHOOL HAVE AN ORGANIZATION THAT MIGHT BE SIMILAR TO THE MODERN DAY PTA?

No.

WHO HIRED AND FIRED THE TEACHERS, AND DID ANYONE ELSE HAVE ANY INPUT?

It was the consensus of the three members of the school board as to who was hired. It was the--not in my instance, my case, but in lots of cases--it was the gossips in the neighborhood that fired the teacher. I was never fired, but I left of my own accord at both schools.

DID ANY ACTIVITIES TAKE PLACE BETWEEN SCHOOLS DURING YOUR TEACHING?

Yes. This one friend of mine I mentioned to you, we took the children, brought the children to town because we found out they didn't know anything about churches. We made arrangements for the children to visit the different churches and we were so embarrassed because some of them "rode" the altar as a horse and laughed at the robes that the priest showed. We decided that--never again!

At another school other than these two schools we did invite a neighboring school down to celebrate George Washington's birthday with us. That was the first time those children had met the ones from the neighboring school. But other than that, that was the extent. WERE THERE ANY CONTROVERSIES SURROUNDING EITHER SCHOOL?

There was in this one school. There was a jealousy of an elderly man who had young children. It was his second marriage. He felt that probably this family was given more attention. One reason that they

might have been given more attention was that they gave more. He was a bickering fellow. Since he had known my dad real well, I got along fine with him, but he had caused trouble the year before.

DO YOU FEEL THAT EITHER SCHOOL MADE ANY LASTING CONTRIBUTIONS TO THE COMMUNITY?

No, I really don't think that they did. The kids were starting in at that time to just as soon as they got through, got through high school, to go elsewhere. I don't believe if I were to go over the list of names that any of them stayed in the community to farm or to do anything else.

WHY DID THE SCHOOLS CLOSE?

It was because of consolidation.

WHAT WAS YOUR SALARY WHEN YOU STARTED TEACHING AND WHAT WAS YOUR SALARY THE LAST YEAR YOU TAUGHT IN A ONE-ROOM SCHOOL?

The salary my first year was sixty-five dollars (per month). Out of that sixty-five dollars I paid fifteen dollars for board and room, that is, for just the five days--made sure that I wasn't there on Saturday and Sunday--and then that's when it really hit as far as depression was concerned. They started in cutting salaries everyplace. I think that as I recall, my second year at the second school was fifty dollars. We were looking over some of the salaries there of people who had really dropped as far as salaries were concerned. This salary was determined by the school board. Sometimes you sort of had to "dicker" with them and I wasn't good at "dickering". But we noticed

where one teacher had apparently "dickered" because she got fifty-two fifty. I would say that she was holding out for fifty-five and the board was holding out for fifty, so they "dickered". But salaries really went down. And that's when they really started in talking about consolidation, and that's when I began to look elsewhere.

HOW DID YOU GET YOUR PAYCHECK?

With a great flair. The first school I taught, the treasurer made sure that he delivered it to me by hand. And I made sure he did, too! Right at the end of the month, too, not the day before. The second school, they would stop by anytime and give it to me just as long as it was in that month. It could have been the second week in that month, but there was no flair with it.

THIS BRINGS TO A CONCLUSION THE QUESTIONS THAT I HAVE FOR YOU. BEFORE WE FINISH DO YOU HAVE ANY OTHER INFORMATION THAT YOU WOULD LIKE TO SHARE THAT WAS NOT BROUGHT OUT IN OUR INTERVIEW?

I can't think of anything right now. Only that I will say this much, it was an experience. I could have gotten along very well without it. However when I went into teaching in graded schools, in town schools then, I would sometimes feel that something was wrong and then I'd think, "Oh boy, but look at this, I'm not doing my own custodial work, I'm not having all these grades to teach, I'm not having all that distance to walk. I'll take this anytime." They keep talking about rural schools, one-room schools being so wonderful for the children. I think they were, but I don't think they were so great for

the teachers. It wasn't that I hated my experience, it was just that I endured it. I didn't feel that I had any choice. As I said, I decided that I was through boarding and rooming places. I taught in this school then that was connected with Lincoln Grade School and the Lincoln Public Schools, and it was a nine-month school and I drove from home and that was all the difference in the world.

I WANT TO THANK YOU VERY MUCH FOR SHARING YOUR MEMORIES WITH ME.

You're very welcome. I'm sorry about my voice. I think sometimes I have to say that this is a teacher's voice, because I've gone to specialists and all and he tells me to just quit talking!