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1988

### Interview with Eleanor Burnison

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Eleanor Burnison

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## Chapter 2

## · THE INTERVIEW

**CYNTHIA:** This is Saturday, June 25, 1988, and I am interviewing Eleanor Bunnison, a teacher in a one-room schoolhouse. Since you also attended a one-room school, let's begin by discussing your school background. Would you please state the name of the one-room school that you attended and the years that you attended that school?

**ELEANOR:** I attended Wolf Creek School, District 121, McPherson County, and I started school when I was seven years old, so it must have been 1920, when I started.

**CYNTHIA:** Would you describe the school building?

**ELEANOR:** Well, it was just a wooden building. I imagine it was about twenty by forty feet. We had about four windows on one side . . . five windows on one side and five windows on the other side straight across. The front had a platform. We always had our piano at the side of this platform and the furnace was in the front, by the platform. We'd hang our mittens on the outside of the furnace to dry and we'd play snowballs and put our boots underneath to get warm or dry out so we could go out again. We had about three rows of desks and they were double desks so we could sit two by two. Sometimes there weren't enough boys and girls so then we would each get a single desk. Then we had lots of room to store our goodies. In the front there was always a recitation desk. We always came to the front to recite. And then in the back was a shelf where you set your dinner pails. Sometimes they'd get cold.

There was a little hallway, a little division out there, and there's where you hung your coats.

CYNTHIA: Were the walls painted inside?

ELEANOR: Painted. No curtains, but they had hail screen on the outside. The pioneers must have been very conscious of hail. So, it was always hail screen on the outside and a bell on the top with a big belfry.

CYNTHIA: What about the bathroom facilities?

ELEANOR: There were little houses built on each corner of the school ground. The girls had the one on the south side, the boys had one on the north side of the playground. The playground only consisted of one acre. And in the bathrooms, there were usually four holes. And there was a little shield built around because boys and girls still liked to peak to see what they could see. And they were painted—just wooden. They were cleaned every now and then. Some farmer would clean them out. But they were just plain old johns.

CYNTHIA: What about the number of students that went to school and what kind of grade range was there?

ELEANOR: There must have been around fifteen . . . eighteen pupils in our school. Our district was rather small since it was divided from another district down there. And we had all the grades. Sometimes we would miss . . . some kid wasn't in a grade, well, then we'd miss that grade. Usually, all the grades were there.

CYNTHIA: Was there a library?

ELEANOR: Very meager library. I can remember having encyclopedias, dictionaries . . . just one big dictionary, not individual. And, I'd say twenty or twenty-five story books. We didn't get library books every year. They just accumulated — just a few.



- CYNTHIA: How many teachers taught in the school?
- ELEANOR: One.
- CYNTHIA: Do you remember his or her name?
- ELEANOR: Lillian Linderholm was my first teacher. My second teacher was Myrtle Tinkler . . . and Ebba Nelson, she is still living. And then . . . Ruth Alstatt . . . she became my sister-in-law. She taught there for three years, and then we had a man teacher, Harold Hedstrom, and we were all scared of him!
- CYNTHIA: How did the students get to school?
- ELEANOR: Walked in the days when I went.
- CYNTHIA: Was there any equipment on the playground that you had to play on?
- ELEANOR: Swings and teeter-totters was all.
- CYNTHIA: What type of bats or balls did you have to play with?
- ELEANOR: We had just a regular baseball and bats . . . no basketballs.
- CYNTHIA: What kind of games did you play?
- ELEANOR: We played tag. We played Pump, Pump Pull-a-way. You won't know what that is. We called it . . . changed the name to Black Man later and we played Dare Base, we played Red Rover, Ante-Over. We had a coal shed, where they kept the coal, and that was the best place to play Ante-Over.
- CYNTHIA: Did your teacher supervise the playground or did she do other things?
- ELEANOR: Some of each. Some teachers would be out and play with us all the time. One teacher we had . . . baseball was her big suit and, of course, she played with the boys and the big girls and the rest of us teeter-tottered and played little girl games, I guess.

**CYNTHIA:** Did you have any extracurricular activities that the community and students were both involved in, such as box suppers or anything like that?

**ELEANOR:** Oh yes! We had box suppers, pie socials, and programs, and I just hated them because I would have to sit by a boy and eat.

**CYNTHIA:** Did you have any activities between the country schools?

**ELEANOR:** Not when I went to school. No, we were just glad to get to school and get home. We were tired. When you walked a mile or two miles home. That was the end of the day.

**CYNTHIA:** What was the length of the school day and the length of the school year?

**ELEANOR:** School started at 9:00 and out at 4:00. School year when I first started was seven months. We started in September and ended our school year in March. We always had a big last day of school dinner. Then, I think the last two years I went to school we had eight months.

**CYNTHIA:** Do you remember a schedule of events for a typical day, such as, what you started out with?

**ELEANOR:** In the morning, the first thing, the teacher would read something from the Bible and then we would have a prayer or usually we would say the Lord's Prayer. Then we would give the Pledge of Allegiance to the flag. Sometimes we'd do some singing in the morning, if the teacher could play, we would sing. Then, we would start with our classes. Our first class was usually reading. We'd have that until recess time. Everybody read. Then we'd have math, or arithmetic we called it, then after lunch we'd have writing, language, then the geography classes, those that took



geography, history, civics, physiology, that was in the afternoon, and spelling.

CYNTHIA: It sounds like you had a full day.

ELEANOR: We were busy.

CYNTHIA: Did you have a book for each subject that you had?

ELEANOR: Yes, and you finished that book and that was what you learned.

CYNTHIA: Did each grade use a different book for each subject?

ELEANOR: Yes.

CYNTHIA: Do you remember how the subjects were taught? For instance, were the reading grouped according to their abilities, or how did she handle that?

ELEANOR: No, you just went through the stories. No ability . . . everybody just learned.

CYNTHIA: Do you remember the name of the book that you had . . . like the name of your reading book?

ELEANOR: McGuffey. I think we started out with the McGuffey readers and then I can't remember the others.

CYNTHIA: Did you have handwriting as a subject?

ELEANOR: Yes.

CYNTHIA: Did you have a certain book?

ELEANOR: Yes, we had a certain book, I can't think of the name of it, but it was cursive writing. We started out with cursive. Started the first grade . . .

CYNTHIA: With cursive?

ELEANOR: Oh yes. No printing at all. And no phonics!

CYNTHIA: In English, did you write stories?

ELEANOR: Well, if our book told us to write a story, we wrote a story. Otherwise, we would find subjects and predicates, describe things, and learn how to use is and are and all basics like that.

CYNTHIA: In math, was it taught mostly by drill?

ELEANOR: You did the pages in the book. If the book told you to learn the times tables, you learned the times tables. I can remember my mother drilling us on the times tables while we washed dishes. Of course, we wiped dishes then! She would wash and we would wipe them and she would drill my brother and I on the times tables.

CYNTHIA: In geography, what area did they emphasize - state, local, or world?

ELEANOR: They usually started out in the fourth and fifth grades studying the United States and the sixth and seventh grades was more world geography.

CYNTHIA: Did you have maps that were available?

ELEANOR: Yes, we had wall maps and . . . there were maps in the geography books.

CYNTHIA: Do you remember having a lot of homework as a child?

ELEANOR: No homework! We had chores to do when we came home!

CYNTHIA: If you finished your lesson early, what did you do?

ELEANOR: Listen to what you do in the next grade so it would be easy. You could just as well take all four grades at once because, if you finished your work, then you could listen and you would learn how to do what was coming up.

CYNTHIA: Now we have discussed your experiences as a student, let's talk about your experiences as a teacher in a one-room schoolhouse.



First of all, how long have you been teaching - the total years experience.

ELEANOR: I taught twenty-four years.

CYNTHIA: In order to begin teaching, what requirements did you have to fulfill?

ELEANOR: I attended Emporia State University for one year. I taught three years and then I went back and got my life certificate.

CYNTHIA: How did you get your life certificate?

ELEANOR: You had to have so much experience and then go back for one more year of college work.

CYNTHIA: When did your teaching career begin?

ELEANOR: In 1932.

CYNTHIA: How did you get your first job?

ELEANOR: I went around and asked for it. I had to go to the school board. This was during the depression, so jobs were mighty scarce and I was glad that I could come back to my home community and they did consider me as a teacher.

CYNTHIA: What were the names of the one-room schools where you taught?

ELEANOR: Wolf Creek and Langley.

CYNTHIA: Do you know if there is any special significance for each of those schools?

ELEANOR: Wolf Creek, I think the pioneers named it because there were a lot of coyotes and wolves. There is a creek that comes down through there and that is called the Wolf Creek, named for the wolves that were down there and that's where the school got its name. Now, I don't know about Langley.

CYNTHIA: Where did you live while you taught at Wolf Creek and Langley?



ELEANOR: At Wolf Creek, I lived with my parents. At Langley, another teacher and I had a room. We lived with a family.

CYNTHIA: How did you get to the school where you taught?

ELEANOR: At Wolf Creek, I walked.

CYNTHIA: About how far did you walk?

ELEANOR: One whole mile. I had one sister still in school, Sarah Jane, and we would meet the neighbor kids coming along a little path through the fields and we would all walk together. At Langley, my dad would take me up to the rooming place and I would stay all week and then he would pick me up.

CYNTHIA: Do you know how the school district acquired the land where the schools were built?

ELEANOR: It must have been donations for Wolf Creek and I'm sure Langley was too. When the school was disbanded, the school went back to the original owner.

CYNTHIA: Do you know when the schools were built?

ELEANOR: Wolf Creek was organized in 1892, in Marquette Township. It was organized because those patrons around Wolf Creek wanted a larger building and Swan Hart and his neighbors thought the distance was too great to send their children in all kinds of weather so, they built their own schoolhouse.

CYNTHIA: Now let's talk about the actual schoolhouses. Let's begin with Wolf Creek, were there any structural changes in the building from when you were a student to when you taught there?

ELEANOR: I believe we had curtains and they did purchase a little coal oil stove, where you could have hot lunches and when they had

programs and box suppers, they could make coffee on that stove. So that was one improvement.

CYNTHIA: Who was responsible to get the heat going in the winter?

ELEANOR: The teacher. You carried your coal in and banked your fire the night before. We always burned coal. There was a little shed called the kindling shed hooked on the side of the coal building. The school board would see that there were loads of coal in the school building and that there was kindling and you started the fire and saw so it worked.

CYNTHIA: Please describe the exterior and interior of the Langley schoolhouse.

ELEANOR: The Langley school was a wooden building. It had two rooms. It was a much nicer school and a bigger school. There was a large basement where they would serve their lunches when they had box suppers or programs. We still carried our water and we still had the outside johns and they had more equipment. A two-room school was just bigger and better.

CYNTHIA: What type of lighting did they have in the school?

ELEANOR: At Wolf Creek, we had lamps. The teacher's job, when you had a program, was to see so those lamps were filled with coal oil and be sure that the chimneys were clean and that the wicks were clean. Then towards the end, they got some kind of Coleman lamps; and I think up at Langley, we had Coleman lamps. They lit up much better or brighter.

CYNTHIA: When both schools closed, you said that the land went back to the owners, what about the supplies that were inside the schools?



**ELEANOR:** At Wolf Creek, they had a public auction. I am fortunate that I have the bell that was rung when my father went to school and when I went to school and taught there. At Langley, I think they had a public auction and they consolidated. They built a new schoolhouse and they took quite a bit of their equipment over there, that you could use in a new school.

**CYNTHIA:** Where did the students attend school after the schools closed?

**ELEANOR:** District 42, Marquette.

**CYNTHIA:** Do you know how the school was supported financially?

**ELEANOR:** It must have been through taxes. The building at Wolf Creek, I am sure, that the land was donated and the patrons down there just got busy and built a schoolhouse because they didn't want to build a larger schoolhouse for the other district, so they organized their own. I think the rest of it was through taxes.

**CYNTHIA:** Who handled the finances of the school? For example, who paid the bills, purchased the textbooks and paid the teachers?

**ELEANOR:** One school board member, who was the treasurer, usually took care of the money. As far as the textbooks, the parents bought the textbooks and passed them down. No help at all there! My dad used to get mad at me if we used too many tablets. We would have just so much tablet paper - not notebook paper, just plain old tablet paper. I can remember one time we thought someone was stealing paper and we numbered the sheets in our tablet. We bought penny pencils and used those. We couldn't waste them. We had to be sure we didn't use them uselessly.

**CYNTHIA:** When you taught, were you paid by the week, the month, or the year?

- ELEANOR: The month.
- CYNTHIA: How did you get your check? Was it hand delivered or through the mail?
- ELEANOR: The treasurer or his wife would bring it up.
- CYNTHIA: Were you paid on a certain date?
- ELEANOR: At the end of the month . . . not by weeks.
- CYNTHIA: Do you remember what your beginning salary was?
- ELEANOR: Sixty-five dollars a month.
- CYNTHIA: How was your salary determined?
- ELEANOR: You just went around and asked for a job and that is what the district paid. If you would have had more experience, maybe you would have gotten a little bit more. Each year they, maybe, gave you a five dollar raise.
- CYNTHIA: Did you have any voice in your salary decisions?
- ELEANOR: No, you took what they offered or else go on.
- CYNTHIA: Do you have any idea what your ending salary range was at the end of your teaching career?
- ELEANOR: I think \$18,000. Sometimes us old teachers just couldn't imagine getting a check for over a thousand dollars a month, when we taught for sixty-five.
- CYNTHIA: Were there any enrollment fees for the student?
- ELEANOR: No. Just the textbooks and paper.
- CYNTHIA: Do you have any idea how much the textbooks may have been?
- ELEANOR: I would say two or three dollars would buy most any book. But that was a lot of money for parents and we passed books down the family.
- CYNTHIA: So they used the same textbooks for a long period of time?



- ELEANOR:** Oh yes, a long, long time!
- CYNTHIA:** The board of education is always of interest to the teachers and the community. How many members were on the board of education?
- ELEANOR:** Usually three. There was a clerk, treasurer, and secretary.
- CYNTHIA:** Do you remember any of their names?
- ELEANOR:** At my first school was Rupert Carlson, Arthur Sellberg, and Chet Lindstrom. They were all gone except Chet Lindstrom, and he is up there in years. He's blind now. And Langley, Lawrence Hulse, Paul Loder and I can't think of the other one right now.
- CYNTHIA:** Who was responsible for hiring and firing a teacher?
- ELEANOR:** The school board.
- CYNTHIA:** Did you go through any interview process?
- ELEANOR:** You just went and asked for the job and if they liked you, they would let you know that you were considered . . . that was it!
- CYNTHIA:** Did you have a county superintendent?
- ELEANOR:** Yes, in all schools, we had county superintendents, from the beginning . . . until I went to the city school . . . then we didn't.
- CYNTHIA:** Do you remember her name?
- ELEANOR:** Hattie Heckathorne was my first county superintendent. She was a little short lady with very beautiful handwriting, I can remember that of her. She told good stories when she would come and visit the boys and girls. We weren't alarmed when she came. Then we had Annie Lovett, and she was a good superintendent and then, we got a man and, of course, the teachers were a little more concerned when a man came to visit them.
- CYNTHIA:** What were the responsibilities of the county superintendent?

ELEANOR: They just checked to see whether the school was working and that was about all.

CYNTHIA: Were the county superintendents elected or appointed?

ELEANOR: I think they were elected with all the other county officers like the county clerk and the county treasurer.

CYNTHIA: Was there any parent-teacher association or a similar group?

ELEANOR: No, just social gatherings. Now you are talking about the one-room schools? No, just our pie socials, and our box suppers, and our programs. We would always have a Christmas program and then the last day of school, we would have a great big dinner. The boys and girls would all go to school in the morning and then the mothers would come with the food, and they would set up the tables. We got to eat and we played ball, and then we would go home around 4:00.

CYNTHIA: Were there any county teacher associations, or did you have any meetings between the county teachers?

ELEANOR: When I first started to teach, we would have Institute in McPherson, for a week. As the years went on, then we would have more reading circles. We would read certain books that teachers were supposed to read.

CYNTHIA: What school related activities did you have? For example, sports, music, or spelling bees or anything like that.

ELEANOR: We would have spelling bees, arithmetic matches, within our school. We would play ball. We didn't have basketball. Basketball must not have been very prominent out in the country in those days. In the rural schools, they didn't have basketball goals.

CYNTHIA: What was the usual age when a child began school?



- ELEANOR:** Six.
- CYNTHIA:** Did that age vary?
- ELEANOR:** Oh, sometimes they would send them when they were age five.
- CYNTHIA:** What grades did that include? Did they begin with Kindergarten or begin with first grade?
- ELEANOR:** First grade. When I went to school, they went from the first grade until ninth grade. But by the time I got up to the eighth grade, we got to quit on the eighth grade.
- CYNTHIA:** What was the greatest distance traveled by any student to get to a school that you taught in?
- ELEANOR:** Oh, two and one-half, or three miles.
- CYNTHIA:** Were there many children that moved in and out during the year?
- ELEANOR:** No, they usually stayed when they found a farm to live on. This was out in the rural areas. When they found a farm, they usually stayed unless there was a death or something, then the family separated.
- CYNTHIA:** What grade levels did you teach?
- ELEANOR:** In the country school, I taught all grade levels. At Langley, I taught the lower grades and then I went to Geneseo, and taught 19 years, first grade.
- CYNTHIA:** What type of occupations did the students take up after they got out of school? Such as did most of them farm or something else?
- ELEANOR:** Usually, they farmed. We were in the rural community and they would follow their father's footsteps.
- CYNTHIA:** Did the students of either school come from a particular cultural or heritage background?

- ELEANOR: No, they were kind of mixed-up. Down at Wolf Creek, there were a lot of Swedes. 'Of course that was a Swedish settlement. At Langley, there were just sort of mixed. Good people!
- CYNTHIA: What was the average number of years spent in school?
- ELEANOR: Usually eight!
- CYNTHIA: How many years was a student required to go to school?
- ELEANOR: Eight years, or sixteen years old.
- CYNTHIA: Did many students, after they completed the eighth grade, go on to high school, or was there a high school available?
- ELEANOR: Oh yes, there was always a high school. The majority went, now one of my classmates didn't go. She worked in a cafe.
- CYNTHIA: Where was that high school located?
- ELEANOR: Marquette.
- CYNTHIA: Did the students then have to walk to get there, or did parents have to take them; how did they get to school?
- ELEANOR: We usually stayed in Marquette.
- CYNTHIA: During the school year?
- ELEANOR: You stayed the whole week there, Monday through Friday. Then, if the weather was good, Dad would come in and pick me up. Then I would get to go home. Sunday I would go back again.
- CYNTHIA: Who did the students usually stay with in Marquette, if they lived in the country?
- ELEANOR: If there were any relatives, you stayed there. Now, my sister stayed with my grandmother. I had a room with three other girls. There was four of us. We did our own cooking. Then when my brother got old enough to go to school, and could drive, then we



drove back and forth. The roads weren't very good, I can remember that!

CYNTHIA: Did you stay in a rooming-house then, or did you stay with someone else?

ELEANOR: No, she was an elderly lady and we had the two front rooms. . . we had two beds in the one room, and we had a stove and a table in the other room. No refrigerator, though, we had a window box to keep our food cold on the north side. A little box stuck out of the window, and that was the window box. Pull it down. When it was freezing weather, then you took your milk in, you didn't leave it out.

CYNTHIA: Do you remember any outstanding students that you had from either school?

ELEANOR: Oh, I had a lot of good students! A lot of them are in business. A lot of them are teaching. The biggest thrill is when they acknowledge that you were their teacher. Several times I have had calls at Christmas time. One boy called me and he said, "I just wanted you to know that I was thinking of you." He has some job in Iowa. He said "you took care of me when I was the little boy across the tracks." He lost his mother and he had a lot of problems at home. He must have appreciated what I did for him.

CYNTHIA: What was the dress and overall appearance of the students?

ELEANOR: Dresses and overalls.

CYNTHIA: Did they wear many different dresses?

ELEANOR: No, they had one or two dresses and that was what we wore.

- CYNTHIA: Now that we have discussed the students. Let's talk about the actual school business. Did the length of the school day and year change from when you were a student until when you taught?
- ELEANOR: Yes, when I started to school, we only had seven months. Now it's nine months.
- CYNTHIA: How about when you taught in the one-room school, how many months did you teach?
- ELEANOR: Eight months. We started in September and ended in April.
- CYNTHIA: You said earlier that when you were a student, your day was nine until four.
- ELEANOR: The same, it's always been the same.
- CYNTHIA: Were there any specific amount of days that you had to attend? Such as now, it's 180 days.
- ELEANOR: We just went the eight months, and that's what you went. If it was a snow day, that was a snow day and you didn't make days up.
- CYNTHIA: Were you in charge of any extracurricular activities? Like any extra music programs, extra sporting event?
- ELEANOR: When I attended school . . . you're asking about teaching? We had a music teacher. Uarda (Thompson) came out to Wolf Creek, once a week. She took care of the music program out there for us. No help otherwise. You just did what you were supposed to . . . played with them and enjoyed them.
- CYNTHIA: Were there any other teachers that came in?
- ELEANOR: No.
- CYNTHIA: Was there a principal for any of the schools?
- ELEANOR: No. You were the principal.
- CYNTHIA: Was there an evaluation system for the teachers?



- ELEANOR: No, as long as you had your certificate, you could teach.
- CYNTHIA: How were student discipline problems handled? Did you ever have to involve any parents in that process?
- ELEANOR: You didn't have discipline problems out in these rural schools. Kids were good and parents would see the kids were taught at home to mind. They would come to school and they would do just what the teacher wanted them to do. The teacher was set up as a little higher than the children, and they were to respect her. That's what they were taught at home.
- CYNTHIA: That definitely makes a difference.
- ELEANOR: Oh, yes!
- CYNTHIA: Do you think female teachers handled discipline differently than a male teacher? First of all, were there many male teachers at all then?
- ELEANOR: Not very many. My dad tells about a teacher that they had. He would have a big stick across his desk and, boy, if anybody stepped out of line, you tasted that stick. Sometimes the teacher would go out and chew some tobacco and he would stand out there and chew. You didn't do anything in the schoolroom, because you knew that you obeyed the teacher. A lot of female teachers were run out in the early days. When you had boys, seventeen and eighteen years old. They take charge!
- CYNTHIA: As a teacher, what was your daily schedule?
- ELEANOR: Go to school in the morning, and you would see that you had fires, if it was in the winter time. If it was in the spring or fall, you would see that the windows were opened up. Then you would always ring the bell. In this community, we would ring a half-hour

bell at 8:30. You had to ring that bell for five minutes. You rang it so if there were any children coming, they knew that they had 30 minutes to come to school. At 9:00, you started school. You started with your school program, opening exercises, your songs, your prayers, your Pledge of Allegiance. You started your reading classes, then your math classes, and writing and language, geography, world history, down the line. Then at the end of school, you'd tell everybody to put away their books and face the front, then turn, rise, stand, and out the door they went with their buckets. Then teacher's job was to put sweeping compound on the floor, and sweep the floor. If it was winter time, you would bank the fire for the next day and be sure your coal and kindling were in. And if it was in the spring and fall, then you closed the windows, and locked the doors, and went home.

**CYNTHIA:** How did you handle teaching subjects with so many different age levels?

**ELEANOR:** You spent about five or ten minutes with each class, and that was it.

**CYNTHIA:** The rest of the time the students worked on their work?

**ELEANOR:** Worked on the assignments or listened to what the class before them were doing. They would know what was coming up. Sometimes in the first grade, you had to give them a sheet of paper to draw or write, but that was it.

**CYNTHIA:** Did many students do group projects, or was it pretty much individual?

**ELEANOR:** All individual.



CYNTHIA: Were there any competency tests or similar tests taken to pass a certain grade?'

ELEANOR: There were when you got to seventh and eighth grade. You had to go into Marquette, which is about six miles from where Wolf Creek was located. You had to go into Marquette and take a test at the seventh grade. You took reading, physiology, geography, and if you made a grade above 60, then you would go on to the eighth grade. Then you went back in the spring, when you were an eighth grader, and take tests on two different Saturday mornings. These tests were put out by the county superintendent. She would grade the papers. The papers were mailed in. Your teacher wasn't there.

CYNTHIA: Do you think each county had similar tests or was each test developed by the county superintendent?

ELEANOR: Each test was developed by their county superintendent. She would have some of the teachers help write them.

CYNTHIA: What if the student didn't pass the test?

ELEANOR: They would go back the next year.

CYNTHIA: Who decided on the textbooks that were used?

ELEANOR: I think we used the textbooks that were available. More than likely, the State printed a lot of textbooks and those were the ones we used. Kansas had a printing press and they would make a lot of our textbooks. Those were the ones that we were required to use.

CYNTHIA: Were the texts changed very often?

ELEANOR: No. They were so glad to get one that worked. I remember going all through school and we had the same texts as when I taught. So see that was eight or ten years and nobody ever changed them.

CYNTHIA: Did the school have a graduation exercise?

**ELEANOR:** In McPherson County, they would go to McPherson, for May Day. When they started, they would have a program in the Community Building and you would get your certificate. They had a dinner for the graduates. We would first come in the morning and we marched in a parade, walked down the street, all eighth grade graduates. That was a big thing. Then they would take us to dinner and then they would have a program in the afternoon. That's when we would get a diploma.

**CYNTHIA:** Did you have any extra teaching aids? Such as maps, or charts, things like that?

**ELEANOR:** Not charts, you made your own, as a teacher. I can remember using one board as a kind of chart for the first and second grades. We always had maps, chalk.

**CYNTHIA:** Did you ever have any workbooks for the kids?

**ELEANOR:** No, no workbooks, you studied your text and that was it.

**CYNTHIA:** Looking back upon your teaching career, what were some advantages and disadvantages of the one-room schoolhouse?

**ELEANOR:** The advantages were that they were just like a family. You didn't have discipline problems. You just loved every one of them. You could play games. We always had more fun playing. And of course, the disadvantages were that we didn't have library books. We didn't have other resources that they have now days.

**CYNTHIA:** Can you think of some of the teaching methods that might have changed from when you taught in a one-room schoolhouse?

**ELEANOR:** When I taught in a one-room schoolhouse, we just followed the text. There just wasn't time because you only had three, four, five minutes with each class. Remember, you didn't group them



together in those days. When I finished teaching, we would group them together according to ability, we would test them. We knew which kids could read and the kids that could read in first grade, you would give them more work and push them along. All those fun things that we did.

**CYNTHIA:** Considering all of your experience, what advice would you give to today's teachers or future teachers?

**ELEANOR:** Don't teach unless you love children.