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Interview with Margaret Unruh

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Margaret Unruh

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Recommended Citation

Milligan, Karen; Wheeler, Kathleen; and Unruh, Margaret, "Interview with Margaret Unruh" (1985). *College of Education One-Room Schoolhouse Oral Histories*. 41.

<https://scholars.fhsu.edu/ors/41>

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AN ORAL HISTORY
OF
MRS. MARGARET UNRUH

by
Karen Milligan
and
Kathleen Wheeler

In partial fulfillment of the requirements
of the degree, Master of Science, Department of
Education, Fort Hays State University
Summer, 1985

CHAPTER I
INTRODUCTION

Purpose of Study

The purpose of this study was to collect historical information from Mrs. Margaret Unruh through the use of the oral history technique. She taught in a one-room schoolhouse for four years in Haskell county, near Copeland, Kansas.

Variables

The independent variables used in this study were:
The teacher--the person who has taught in a one-room schoolhouse.

The students--the children that attended the one-room schoolhouse and the range of their ages.

Curriculum--the subjects taught and the materials used.

Grade level--the various grade levels taught in the one-room schoolhouse.

Facilities--the physical arrangement of the school room, lighting, heating, plumbing, and the water source.

Supervisors--the persons to whom the teacher was responsible.

Salary--the salary paid the one-room schoolhouse teacher.

Preparation--educational requirements of the teacher.

Calendar year--the length of the school year.

Discipline--the manner in which rules were enforced within the classroom.

Professional conduct--the rules which the teacher was required to follow.

Living quarters--the teacher's living facilities.

The dependent variables of this study were the questions used in the oral interview. This interview was recorded on cassette tape and then transcribed. The interview served as a tool to gather information concerning teaching in a one-room schoolhouse.

Background

We found this particular topic very interesting as professional educators ourselves. The historical value of this paper provided for a stronger understanding of the relationship of these past experiences on the teaching profession today.

Significance of Study

This study provided information about how a one-room schoolhouse teacher conducted her teaching assignment. The information developed a better understanding of what teaching was like in a one-room schoolhouse.

Objectives

The objectives of this study were to:

1. Identify the teacher's responsibilities in a one-room schoolhouse.
2. Identify the curriculum used in a one-room schoolhouse.
3. Describe the facilities of a one-room school.
4. Determine what disciplinary measures were used.
5. List expected teacher conduct.
6. Determine the educational background required by the teachers to teach in a one-room schoolhouse.
7. Determine the salary paid a one-room schoolhouse teacher.
8. Identify grade levels that were offered in the one-room school.
9. Identify the length of the school day and year.
10. Determine how the school was financed.
11. List school policy regarding starting age of students.
12. Determine the jurisdiction of the school.
13. Describe community use of the school facility.

CHAPTER II
ORAL INTERVIEW

Milligan: This is an interview with Mrs. Margaret Unruh taped on July 4, 1985.

Milligan: When and where were you born?

Mrs. Unruh: I was born in Herrington, Kansas, September 2, 1914.

Milligan: Have you lived in Kansas all your life?

Mrs. Unruh: Yes, I lived here all my life.

Milligan: How old were you when you started teaching?

Mrs. Unruh: Eighteen.

Milligan: How long did you teach in a one-room school?

Mrs. Unruh: I taught four years in a one-room school, between 1932 and 1936.

Milligan: What years were these? (Laughter)

Mrs. Unruh: In 1932 through 1936.

Milligan: What was your salary?

Mrs. Unruh: Oh! I earned the princely sum of seventy-five dollars a month. (Laughter) This was during the, the big depression years and the next year, although they were satisfied with my work, they couldn't even pay me that much, so they paid me as much as they could and it

was, uh, an odd number. It was sixty-seven dollars and fifty cents. And after that it would go up a little bit 'til I think I got up to about ninety dollars maybe in the last year of teaching in a one-room schoolhouse.

Milligan: How much schooling did you have to prepare you for teaching?

Mrs. Unruh: I graduated from Garden City Junior College, so I had two years of college. (Laughter) Uh, a lot of the teachers that taught at that time, that taught in those one-room schools didn't go to college. They had a normal training class that they could take in the summer. And then they had an exam and if they could pass it they could get their teacher's certificate. I think it was kind of like...what are these tests they give the teachers now that the teachers don't want to take?

Wheeler: Tests for certification?

Milligan: Competency tests?

Mrs. Unruh: Yeah, that's what it is. I, I never had to take one because I had the college, but there's... so a good many teachers never had college.

Milligan: What subjects did you teach in the one-room school?

Mrs. Unruh: Mmm. I taught everything except music.

I didn't know anything about music (laughter) so our music was just singing songs like "America" and "My Bonnie Lies Over the Ocean" and things like that. But I taught, uh, reading, and arithmetic, and spelling, and English, and...I can't remember that we had any science, but maybe we did. We had history, and geography. And we had a class in physiology. Maybe, maybe that was the closest we came to science.

Milligan: What grades did you teach?

Mrs. Unruh: From the, the first to the eighth.

Milligan: How many students did you have on the average?

Mrs. Unruh: I started out my first year was twenty-two, I'm sure, and I, probably they averaged around twenty. There was a quite a few children in those schools.

Milligan: How did you organize your classes?

Mrs. Unruh: I didn't quite understand what you meant. (Tape was stopped to give explanation.) Well, I had my schedule made out, of course, and I think we always had our reading classes first thing in the morning, and start with first grade. Call first grade and they'd come up and sit on the recitation bench and I'd teach their reading and tell them what to do, and they'd go back to their seat and then the second grade'd come up

and that's the way it'd go. And then... at first I'd have to announce the class. I'd say, "First grade reading," or something. But, of course, after a while they just knew automatically that that's what happened, and they just came up. And our classes only lasted, I think about ten minutes which sounds terrible, but I don't know how, we did it. And we didn't, uh, I wonder now why we didn't combine some classes, but I can't remember that we did. You know, we could have taught, say uh, fourth grade geography one year and fifth grade the next year, but we didn't do it that way.

Milligan: Was there a principal for your school?

Mrs. Unruh: No, there was no principal. We had a County Superintendent of Schools and she was over all the country schools.

Milligan: Was there any kind of teacher evaluation?

Mrs. Unruh: Well, she visited, uh, once or maybe twice a year and she'd sit in your class, classroom, and watch what you were doing and she had a pad and wrote things with. Just what they were, I don't know. (Laughter) So perhaps we were evaluated in some way. And then she'd always, uh, tell you, you were doing a good job, or something like that. I can't remember that she

ever said anything bad to me. It was always a day you would always look forward to with anticipation and maybe a little bit of dread. (Laughter) You know, you didn't know what was coming. I think I had the same County Superintendent the whole time. She was, her last name was Williams, I can't remember her first name.

Milligan: Did you have to meet with the school board?

Mrs. Unruh: No, we never had to. If they met, they met by themselves. No, we never had to.

Milligan: What kind of records were you required to keep?

Mrs. Unruh: I think about the same as I did in the, in the town school. It was attendance records and grades. These were recorded and sent in, I think, every month to the County Superintendent.

Milligan: Did you have any teacher duties other than classroom or playground management?

Mrs. Unruh: Oh, yes! You had a lot of janitor work. (Laughter) Uh, this was also... when I was teaching was when we had those big bad dirt storms, you know? So I learned not to, not to sweep the floor in the evening. I'd go early in the morning to sweep and sometimes, why it would take a shovel there was so much dirt. But now,

the, the school was always nice and clean when the first day, you know. I think, I know when my children were going to school, it was the patrons that came in and would clean the building. They washed windows, scrubbed down everything, waxed floors, and all that. But, after that, it was up to the teacher to keep things as clean as possible.

Milligan: How did you get your textbooks and supplies?

Mrs. Unruh: Uh, some of the textbooks were furnished by the school board, but see, the district was very poor too, I told you about the troubles at that time. So I can't remember that books were all that cheap even then. They were undoubtedly a lot cheaper than now, but still they cost quite a bit. So the school district supplied some of them, some of them I had, and some of them I didn't even have a textbook. I had to borrow the student's copy.

Milligan: What other equipment was provided, such as maps, piano, playground equipment?

Mrs. Unruh: Could I back up and tell you a funny story?

Wheeler: Please do.

Mrs. Unruh: (Laughter) Well, this one time, course there wasn't a great deal of time to make, uh, lesson plans either for all those subjects, that would be an

impossibility. So, uh, sometimes, when I'd, uh, make up a test or something, I'd do it, oh, how would you call it, I'd just do it as I went along. I'd write the test on the blackboard. We didn't have a Xerox or those kind of things either. So, this one time I was writing a history test and I didn't have a history book. I was just writing the questions. And there was something I wanted to check, so I turned around to this boy in the front row, and I held out my hand. And for a minute I couldn't think what it was I wanted, so here I was with my hand out. And he just looked as guilty as could be and reached in his desk and pulled out a sack of popcorn. (Laughter) I guess he'd been eating it. He thought that's what I wanted. (Laughter)

Milligan: How long was the school day?

Mrs. Unruh: We started at nine o'clock in the morning and went until four.

Milligan: How long was the school year?

Mrs. Unruh: Eight months.

Milligan: What was the dress and general appearance of the children?

Mrs. Unruh: Well, no one had much money in those days, so, we weren't what you'd call well-dressed. I wasn't either. But the children were clean and presentable.

The girls wore, generally wore cotton dresses. The boys, that was before jeans time, it was generally bib overalls and shirts.

Wheeler: Uh, were your needs for supplies and teacher aids met, Margaret?

Mrs. Unruh: No. Uh, once a year we had a, uh, Halloween program with a box supper, or a pie supper. You know what those were?

Wheeler: Uh-huh.

Mrs. Unruh: And the money we'd make, we'd buy our supplies. And I could pick and choose whatever I needed to buy. I used about half of it for books, and then we had, uh, playground ball equipment, so we'd buy balls, bats, mitts, and, uh, a lot of the teachers aids things, of course, we knew nothing about those days, so we made, we made our own flash cards, we had to ourselves, you know. These things they have down at school, I don't even know what they're for. (Laughter)

Wheeler: Yeah. Right. Uh, how did you handle discipline problems?

Mrs. Unruh: That really stumped me when I saw that question. I know one trick that I learned, uh, when I was in, in college. I think the teachers told me. And I think I controlled my group by, by control, I

guess you'd call it, and if someone was misbehaving, all I'd do is just look at them, and just keep looking. They'd get more and more nervous and (laughter) and of course, that's for simple problems and I can't remember the hard ones. Surely there must have been some bad ones but I remember the good and forget the bad, maybe. I don't remember any really serious problems I had. And in the country there, the first day of school, the parents would bring their children to school and almost without fail, every one of them would say, "Now, if he doesn't mind, just let me know," you know. And they stood back of you. I know one time I did have some trouble with, uh, cheating on spelling tests. And I, I kind of regretted it, but I said that the next one's going to get a spanking. And wouldn't you know, it was one of the seventh-grade girls that's about as big as I was and I didn't want to do any spanking. And, as I remember, I just give her one swat on the (pointed to her hand), not a hard one, with the ruler, now that I think of it. (Laughter)

Wheeler: Uh, did men teachers differ in their handling of discipline in those days?

Mrs. Unruh: I, I doubt it. I, I don't really know because I didn't observe the men teachers. There were

some men teachers in our county, but I imagine the differences was no more different than what there would be between two women teachers. Whatever the differences would be, I don't think it had to do with their being men or women.

Wheeler: Were there any rules imposed by school hierarchy? If so, what were they?

Mrs. Unruh: We were pretty much free to do what we wanted. I can't... they hated change. You know, one, one year, well, the children were getting to school at eight-thirty. And I couldn't see why we couldn't start school then and, and get out at three-thirty. But that was a "no no." Parents didn't want that. They liked things the same all the time.

Wheeler: It was a nine to four setup, or...?

Mrs. Unruh: Nine to four.

Wheeler: Uh, was the school part of the the public school system?

Mrs. Unruh: Yes, uh-huh.

Wheeler: How much area did it serve?

Mrs. Unruh: Well, I asked my husband that because I couldn't remember. He thought it was probably between, maybe it was about four miles by four miles, or it might've been four by five. So that's be about sixteen

square miles or twenty, so that no one would be more than three miles from school.

Wheeler: I see. How was the school financed?

Mrs. Unruh: I think, through taxes.

Wheeler: Did the students have to pay fees?

Mrs. Unruh: No, they had to buy their own books, though. I know it got to be quite a problem with our group in the time before they started furnishing books at school. As I said, I don't believe books were all that cheap because I can remember that we'd have to find forty or fifty dollars, which was like several times that much, you know, for children who were starting with their school books. They didn't pay any fees but they had to buy all their own supplies and all their own books. Of course, there were a lot of handing down too.

Wheeler: Uh-huh, within the family. Who hired and fired the teachers?

Mrs. Unruh: The school board. A three-member school board. One of those questions asked if I remember who the school board was, and I do. Do you want the ones, or...?

Wheeler: We'll get there, I think.

Mrs. Unruh: Ok. (Laughter)

Wheeler: Ok, where did you stay while you were teaching

at the school?

Mrs. Unruh: I stayed, uh, with some people named Nort Kisners and I remember I paid, uh, twenty-five dollars a month for board and room. And they were lovely people and I stayed, I lived with them for three years. And they treated me, me more like a daughter than a boarder. She always made real good lunches. I took my lunches to school and she always packed my lunch. Even when, if it was a very cold day, why Mr. Kisner would get the car out and take me to school. They just treated me real well.

Wheeler: How far did you have to travel to get to school?

Mrs. Unruh: Two and a quarter miles.

Wheeler: Was school ever canceled due to weather or impassible road conditions?

Mrs. Unruh: It stands to reason, it surely (laughter) was, but I think they had a different attitude about that than they do now. They expected the teacher to get to school somehow, unless it was just horrible. So, I remember going to school when it was kind of bad. We never turned out school. We didn't miss many days I don't think. And that was one of the things when they were talking about teachers that they'd talk about.

That, that she's there every day (laughter) and that they knew if she wasn't.

Wheeler: You said Mr. Kisner took you on real cold days. How did you get there on other days?

Mrs. Unruh: Well, for awhile, I walked, and then I had a horse, (laughter) and I rode horseback and so did the... and so did some of the children who lived farther away. We had a place to keep horses in the school barn... to keep horses in during school. Another thing Mr. Kisner would do for me would be he'd always saddle my horse in the morning.

Wheeler: Nice, very thoughtful. Uh, if the students couldn't get to school, I presume then, that that's when school was cancelled or when you just didn't have classes?

Mrs. Unruh: I just can't remember that we ever had, that we didn't have school, but I think that surely there were some times that we didn't. I remember one time going to school and having only one student there. He lived about a quarter of a mile from school. He had perfect attendance, and he wasn't about to break his record. (Laughter) He was there, so we had school, had all his classes and did a lot of visiting. (Laughter)

Wheeler: Do you remember having a severe storm during school time, like a tornado?

Mrs. Unruh: No. Never had any.

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

Mrs. Unruh: Well, they didn't have any of those strict rules that you read about, you know, that you couldn't date or anything. I think I... they did expect you to have nice behavior, I'm sure, and be something of an example. But, uh, I dated, oh, once or twice a week and I went to the parties with the young people my age and it wasn't unreasonable.

Wheeler: Uh, what did you do with your leisure time during those years?

Mrs. Unruh: What do you mean... in summer, or...?

Wheeler: Well, evenings, you said you dated, and uh...

Mrs. Unruh: We went to their parties and we, uh, at the place where I boarded, there was another teacher who stayed there too. Oh, we'd play checkers, and games like that. (Laughter) And we had young people over too. We had our friends, we could entertain our friends there. And I don't know, it seemed to me we always enjoyed it. We had a good time. We went to church on Sunday, and had a young people's meeting and I'd go to that.

Wheeler: All the regular community functions.

Mrs. Unruh: Uh-huh, yes.

Wheeler: Would you describe the textbooks that you used at that time?

Mrs. Unruh: I found some down in my bookcase this morning.

(At this point, the recorder was turned off and we examined three texts. There was a Bobbs-Merrill Reader, a spelling book, and one titled Physiology and Hygiene. The publishing dates were from 1928 to 1931. All were printed by the State Printer of Kansas.)

Mrs. Unruh: Uh, in the country schools we had a book we called the Course of Study. It was a big, thick book, and it had all the subjects that we were teaching, for all the grades. And it would tell us how far we were to get each month in our textbook. And I know it gave hints, teaching hints on reading and things, because I used it a lot for that. And when the County Superintendent made her yearly visits, she always checked to see if we were in the right place with the Course of Study. I always thought it was sort of the teacher's bible.

Wheeler: Right.

Mrs. Unruh: Is that all right?

Wheeler: I think that was great. Was there a library at the school from which the children could check out

books?

Mrs. Unruh: I'd call it more a bookcase. It was just... and... there weren't too many interesting books as I remember, at the school where I was but, uh, each year we'd get to add a few after our program and these were thick books. That was from the state list, too, that came out that we could pick from. And we never checked the books out. We just read them, and put them back in when we were through. And I, I brought books from home that I had and we'd read those, and I'd sometimes check out from the Garden City Library, some things... but that was about it. That wasn't any big library. We didn't have too much to read.

Wheeler: At what age were children allowed to begin school?

Mrs. Unruh: They were supposed to be six. And, I think that meant six when school started.

Milligan: Was the school for all the children in the district?

Mrs. Unruh: Yes.

Milligan: Were the majority of the students of a particular religion or nationality?

Mrs. Unruh: Well, at East Banner when I taught it the first time, I think was mostly Methodists and

Lutherans. And we had, uh, one Mennonite family. And when I taught it the second time, it was almost entirely Mennonite. I guess you're more interested in the one-room schools than the two-room.

Milligan: What was the average number of years a student spent in school?

Mrs. Unruh: I think most of the students out there went to high school, so that would be, uh, twelve years.

Milligan: How many of your students go on to college?

Mrs. Unruh: Clyde and I was trying to think that, we couldn't think that any of that first group that we were sure went to college except for one. I don't think they went to college, there might have been some. It wasn't the thing to do. (Laughter)

Milligan: Did any become prominent or outstanding citizens?

Mrs. Unruh: I taught three ministers. (Laughter)
Huh?

Wheeler: They're all outstanding.

Unruh: And one was, was a very good, well, he is a very good Evangelist in the Mennonite Church. He's a really, a pretty outstanding person, I'd say. And others, I think, uh, it was a farm community and most of them, the girls married farmers, and was farmer's

wives and the other, the boys farmed or were interested in some farm-related job.

Milligan: How was the school room lighted?

Mrs. Unruh: Well, we didn't need... well, you mean... lighted. We had, uh, windows on both sides. Is that supposed to be improper lighting as far as lighting is? (Laughter) We had, uh, windows on both sides for lighting and we only had one or two evening affairs, and I think we used Coleman lamps then. We didn't have electricity. I think we used Coleman lamps.

Milligan: How was it heated?

Mrs. Unruh: With a coal stove, in the middle of the room.

Milligan: Was there indoor plumbing?

Mrs. Unruh: Are you joking? (Laughter) No, we had two little houses on the back of the lot. I think they were three-holers. (Laughter) We had little fences built out in front so if anybody wanted to be naughty and peek, they couldn't, you know, so... No, we didn't have indoor plumbing. I think very few of the families had it even at home.

Milligan: What was the source of water for the school?

Mrs. Unruh: Oh, at East Banner, we had a, a hand pump. It was the best water! I'd like to have a drink right

now. Say, would you like one? (Laughter) (Inside, we had a) storage tank. It was nice cold water, and, uh, it was so good. I, I wrote about our sanitary cups. It always gave me a, they al... they'd make this list for school supplies and sanitary cup. Well, that was one of these little old aluminum collapsible ones. Well, they never got washed all year! (Laughter) How sanitary can you be? (Laughter) And everybody passed them around (laughter) to anybody else that needed a cup. That was our water supply. At that second school where I taught, they didn't have a, a well and we had to carry water from a neighbor across the road. We sure missed that well. (Laughter)

Wheeler: Did you have to carry the water from across the road?

Mrs. Unruh: Well, one of the big boys generally did.

Milligan: What was the physical arrangement of the school room?

Mrs. Unruh: Well, school rooms were expected to look like school rooms. (Laughter) And we didn't have any (laughter) bean-bag chairs. (Laughter) But we had desks, uh, well, they were the kind of desks that had a little open place where you put your books, and they had a ink well in the corner. And uh, uh, mine there at

East Banner were fastened down with boards so you, you stayed in rows, you didn't (laughter) have chairs every which way, and... (laughter) Kathleen knows what I'm talking about. (Laughter) I was talking about my discipline, I could get eye-contact with my students, you know, with that arrangement. When they're all every which way (laughter) that doesn't work. But, uh, we had... there were a few of the old-fashioned double desks in that school where two would sit. And they were just like the singles except they were longer where two would sit anyway. Of course, friends would always like to sit together, you know. (Laughter) Then, let's see, uh, teacher's desk was in front, of course, and recitation bench and there was this organ. I never did see the purpose in it. (laughter) there in front too. It was something the kids played with once in a while, but that was it. But why that was so important to have an organ in the room... And the stove in that building was right out in the middle. Is that what you mean by the physical part? We had plenty of maps and things on the wall, and a few pictures, I think, of Washington crossing the Delaware and stuff (laughter) like, you know. We had a few pictures of that nature. When we won first place at

track meet, we got a picture that was the prize that we got. We usually got first place.

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

Mrs. Unruh: I was.

Milligan: Was the facility used for anything other than school-related activities?

Mrs. Unruh: My school wasn't, but a lot of the one-room schools were used for church on Sunday, quite a few of them. But, mine wasn't.

Milligan: When and why was the school closed down?

Mrs. Unruh: Well, uh, there was two schools in that district, and, uh, I think the buildings were getting pretty run down and they decided they needed something else, so they bought a two-story, not a two-story, but a two-room school and moved it in kind of half-way between the two schools, put it together and made a two-room school. That's where I taught in a two-story, in a two-room school. But I think it was just because of the upkeep and maybe, maybe they thought that this idea of the two teachers would be better. I'm not sure just what it was.

Milligan: For what purpose was it used after it was closed?

Mrs. Unruh: I asked Clyde, and he couldn't remember what happened to that school, but I can't remember that it was destroyed, so, I, it probably was auctioned off to a farmer, who used it for a shed or something like that, and had it moved. The land had been given... I think that was one of the questions wasn't it? The land had been given for school purposes, so after it was no longer school purposes, it reverted back to the owners for other purposes. So, it's farm land now.

Wheeler: Ok. Did any activities take place between your school and other schools in the area?

Mrs. Unruh: Uh, our two closest neighbors, Colusa and Independence, we'd play ball, uh, softball or baseball, I'm not sure which it would be. We'd play them about once a year. Then, in the county seat, or, that is, in Sublette, we always had a county spelling meet. We'd send our students, well, they'd have a spell out at school and then the best would go to the county spelling meet. We had that, and we had a county track meet in the spring, and, uh, my school, we really had some good track kids there. We'd get first prize every year. I'm not joking. And then we had a county fine-arts festival, or contests for singing and saying a, uh, poems and stuff like that, and that's where this

neighbor, this wife of the school board member that was the musician, she'd come and help with that. And the class was always in it and we'd always get some prizes there, too. I know, one year the contest piece was "Brahm's Lullaby." (Laughter)

Wheeler: Rather difficult to do.

Mrs. Unruh: And I think maybe that was all the activities that we had outside of our school.

Wheeler: Were there any special observances at your school like Christmas programs, and you said you had spelling bees, or spelling contests for the... things like that.

Mrs. Unruh: Uh-huh. Well, we always had a Christmas program. As it was in, in hard times and people couldn't go to shows and things, just couldn't afford it even though it was just a quarter, but still, they really looked forward to Christmas programs. And we'd uh, plan a program with psalms and pieces and singing. And we'd play to a full house. Everybody'd come. Just... the school would be just packed. And, uh, well, it would be the same with the other schools. You'd get to see two or three programs, you know. And then, we'd have, we had one other program, like I said. Ours generally was on Halloween. I think, sometimes

they had theirs at Thanksgiving or Valentine's Day or something, but ours was always Halloween. We used the money for supplies and things.

Wheeler: Uh, did you have graduation exercises?

Mrs. Unruh: Oh, yes! We had, uh, our eighth graders went to Sublette and then we had a combined, uh, all-county graduation. And the girls would always have new dresses, and of course, we didn't... And they had an honor-roll. If you made a ninety on those tests I was telling you about, ninety or over, you're on the honor-roll. And it was a big affair, really. I think they looked forward to it more than they do now days.

Wheeler: Uh-huh. Uh, was there any organized arrangement for you to meet with parents?

Mrs. Unruh: Uh, no organized, but, uh, like I said, they, they might bring their children to school occasionally and they'd come in and talk to you. We didn't have any parent-teacher's conferences, or anything like that, it was just very informal. I think we kept in close contact with our parents more than we do now. We saw them more often and we'd visit with them.

Wheeler: Were there any special classes or unique

educational services offered at your school?

Mrs. Unruh: I put down, "You must be joking."

(Laughter)

Wheeler: Ok.

Mrs. Unruh: I don't think so.

Wheeler: Very good. All right. Do you have any information about the origin of the school?

Mrs. Unruh: All I can remember is my father saying that he used to go to dances there when they first built that school, so it was probably about thirty years old when I taught there. It was an old school. And I have no idea who built it, or how it was financed. But, but Clyde said the land was given because it has already been reverted back to the original owners, now.

Wheeler: How much land did you say that was?

Mrs. Unruh: That was in, ooo, I don't know how to measure. Maybe, uh, it was about as big as our yard. That's about...

Wheeler: About three acres?

Mrs. Unruh: That was about... No, I think we have an acre and a half here.

Wheeler: Oh, an acre and a half.

Mrs. Unruh: Maybe two acres.

Wheeler: Ok, Ok, very good. That concludes our interview.

Mrs. Unruh: Oh!

Wheeler: Thank you so much for giving your time. It's been very interesting.

Mrs. Unruh: Thank you.

CHAPTER III

BIOGRAPHY

Born Margaret Potter on September 2, 1914, Margaret Unruh (Mrs. Clyde Unruh) had lived all her life in Kansas. She was born in Herrington, Kansas of farm parents and has lived most of her life on a farm.

After teaching two years, she met and married Clyde Unruh, a farmer, and has had twelve children.

Having been tutored by her mother, Margaret learned to read before going to school. Teachers promoted her to second grade immediately and her aptitude for schoolwork led to further acceleration so that she graduated from high school at age fifteen.

After attending Garden City Junior College for two years, Margaret began her teaching career at East Banner School, a one-room school located in Haskell County twelve miles north of Copeland, Kansas. She taught at East Banner School from 1932 to 1935.

Her second teaching assignment was at Lone Star School where she taught for one year before returning to East Banner in the fall of 1936. There, she was one of two teachers in the newly established two-teacher school teaching grades four through eight.

Her entire career of twenty-two years has been as a teacher in and around Copeland, Kansas.

Margaret currently lives with her husband in Copeland. Since retiring in 1977, Margaret enjoys traveling, doing crafts, attending local club meetings, and writing. She is currently writing a family history on her immediate family. She also spends time visiting and hosting her twelve children, twenty-nine grandchildren, and two great grandchildren.