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Interview with Farrell Keas McClay

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Farrell Keas McClay

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COMMENT: OCTOBER 23, 1984. ORAL HISTORY INTERVIEW WITH FARRELL (KEAS) McCLAY, AGE 50.

Miss McClay: DO YOU KNOW WHEN THE BENEDICK SCHOOL HOUSE WAS BUILT?

FARRELL: WELL, THE ONE I ATTENDED I BELIEVE WAS BUILT BACK ABOUT 1910. I KNOW THERE WAS ONE BEFORE THAT THAT HAD TO BE REPLACED.

Miss McClay: AND HOW DID THE BENEDICK SCHOOL GET ITS NAME?

FARRELL: BECAUSE IT WAS LOCATED ON LAND THAT, UH, MR. BENEDICK HAD GIVEN TO THE SCHOOL DISTRICT FOR THEIR USE. AT THE TIME THE SCHOOL DISTRICT WAS CLOSED, THAT PROPERTY WENT BACK TO MR. BENEDICK.

Miss McClay: WHEN DID THE BENEDICK SCHOOL CLOSE?

FARRELL: IN 1946. I WAS IN THE SIXTH GRADE AND THAT WAS THE YEAR, THAT WAS THE LAST YEAR THEY HAD SCHOOL THERE.

Miss McClay: AND DO YOU KNOW WHY IT CLOSED?

FARRELL: WELL, THE SCHOOL DISTRICTS WERE CONSOLIDATED AND ALL THE COUNTRY SCHOOLS WENT INTO THE TOWN SCHOOLS AT THAT TIME.

Miss McClay: SO THERE PROBABLY WEREN'T ANY OTHER COUNTRY SCHOOLS THAT WERE OPEN.

FARRELL: NOT TO MY KNOWLEDGE, NO. THERE WAS ONE YEAR PRIOR TO THAT, WHEN I WAS IN THE THIRD GRADE, THEY WERE UNABLE TO FIND A TEACHER FOR THE SCHOOL DISTRICT AND, UH, WE WENT INTO TOWN THAT YEAR FOR SCHOOL.

Miss McClay: OK. WHEN YOU DID GO INTO TOWN, HOW DID YOU GET THERE?

FARRELL: UH, WE RODE WITH PEOPLE FROM OUT IN THE COUNTRY, OUT IN OUR AREA, THAT WAS GOING INTO TOWN.

Miss McClay: THERE WERE NO BUSSING SYSTEMS OR ANYTHING LIKE THAT.

FARRELL: NO, NOT AT THAT TIME.

Miss McClay: WHEN YOU WENT TO THE BENEDICK SCHOOL, WAS THE SCHOOL USED FOR ANY COMMUNITY ACTIVITIES?

FARRELL: YES, UH, VOTING TOOK PLACE THERE AND THEY HAD, UH, BOX SUPPERS WHERE THEY'D, THE LADIES, WOULD FIX NICE SUPPERS IN BOXES AND THEN THEY'D DECORATE THEM PRETTY AND THEN THEY'D AUCTION THEM OFF TO THE HIGHEST BIDDER.

Miss McClay: AND WHERE DID THE MONEY GO THAT WAS MADE AT THESE BOX SUPPERS?

FARRELL: WELL, I SUPPOSE A PORTION OF IT WENT TO THE SCHOOL DISTRICT PROBABLY.

MISS McCLAY: WHAT DISTRICT WAS THE SCHOOL IN?

FARRELL: UH, 105.

MISS McCLAY: AND IS THAT THE NUMBER OF THE DISTRICT NOW? AROUND THE PLAINVILLE DISTRICT.

FARRELL: TERI, I COULDN'T ANSWER THAT. I DON'T KNOW WHAT THAT SCHOOL DISTRICT IS.

MISS McCLAY: WAS IT REQUIRED THAT ALL THE CHILDREN WENT TO SCHOOL?

FARRELL: WELL, I WOULD ASSUME SO, YES.

MISS McCLAY: DID YOU KNOW OF ANY KIDS THAT DIDN'T GO?

FARRELL: NO, I KNOW OF NO ONE WHO DIDN'T ATTEND.

MISS McCLAY: WAS THERE A PRINCIPAL AT YOUR SCHOOL?

FARRELL: NO, UH, THERE WAS A COUNTY SUPERINTENDENT WHO LOOKED OVER THE AREA AND IT WAS ALWAYS A VERY SPECIAL DAY AND EVERYBODY HAD TO DO EVERYTHING JUST RIGHT WHEN, UH, WHEN THE COUNTY SUPERINTENDENT WOULD COME TO VISIT. SHE'D SPEND THE DAY.

MISS McCLAY: AND WHAT WAS HER JOB?

FARRELL: WELL, SHE WENT AROUND TO THE DIFFERENT SCHOOLS AND I SUPPOSED CHECKED TO MAKE SURE EVERYTHING WAS BEING DONE IN THE CORRECT PROCEDURES AND HER OFFICE WAS AT STOCKTON. AND THAT'S WHERE SHE DID MOST OF HER WORK.

MISS McCLAY: OK. HOW MANY TEACHERS TAUGHT IN THE SCHOOL YEAR?

FARRELL: WE ONLY HAD ONE EACH YEAR THAT WOULD TEACH.

MISS McCLAY: WHAT WAS THE MAJORITY OF STUDENTS THAT ATTENDED THE SCHOOL? WHAT NATIONALITY OR RELIGION?

FARRELL: UH, THEY WERE, WE HAD SEVERAL CATHOLICS THAT ATTENDED THE SCHOOL AND, UH, PROTESTANTS, AND NATIONALITY, I REALLY COULDN'T TELL YOU WHAT THE NATIONALITIES WERE.

MISS McCLAY: OK. UH, DID THE TEACHERS HAVE A DEGREE THAT TAUGHT YOU?

FARRELL: UH, NOT THAT I KNOW OF. I KNOW ONE OF THE TEACHERS, THE LAST TEACHER AT THE SCHOOL SYSTEM, HAD BEEN IN COLLEGE, BUT WHETHER OR NOT SHE HAD GOTTEN A DEGREE, I DON'T KNOW.

MISS McCLAY: HOW LONG WAS YOUR SCHOOL YEAR?

FARRELL: WE WENT TO SCHOOL FROM SEPTEMBER UNTIL MID APRIL, BECAUSE UH, IT WAS KIND OF FUN BECAUSE WE ALWAYS GOT OUT ABOUT A WHOLE MONTH BEFORE THE OTHER KIDS AROUND THE TOWN WOULD GET OUT.

MISS McCLAY: AND WHY DID YOU GET OUT IN APRIL?

FARRELL: I DON'T KNOW UNLESS IT WAS BECAUSE OF THE FARM WORK THAT WOULD BE DONE ABOUT THAT TIME PERHAPS.

MISS McCLAY: AND WHEN YOU WENT TO SCHOOL, HOW LONG WAS YOUR SCHOOL DAY?

FARRELL: WE WENT FROM 9:00 O'CLOCK UNTIL 4:00. WE WOULD HAVE A 15 MINUTE RECESS IN THE MORNING AND IN THE AFTERNOON AND AN HOUR FOR LUNCH.

MISS McCLAY: A WHOLE HOUR FOR LUNCH. DID YOU STAY AT SCHOOL?

FARRELL: OH YES. WE STAYED AT SCHOOL ALL DAY AND, UH, WE DIDN'T SPEND THE HOUR EATING LUNCH, BUT WE'D GO OUT AND PLAY MAYBE A HALF AN HOUR AFTER LUNCH.

MISS McCLAY: WHAT GRADES WERE TAUGHT IN THE BENEDICK SCHOOL?

FARRELL: ALL EIGHT GRADES IF THERE WERE STUDENTS THERE FOR THAT GRADE.

MISS McCLAY: WAS FIRST GRADE THE FIRST GRADE?

FARRELL: UM-HUM.

MISS McCLAY: THEY DIDN'T HAVE ANY KINDERGARTEN.

FARRELL: NO. NO KINDERGARTEN AT THAT TIME.

MISS McCLAY: HOW OLD WERE YOU WHEN YOU STARTED GOING THERE?

FARRELL: WELL, I WAS SIX YEARS OLD. UH, I DID HAVE A BROTHER WHO STARTED AT FIVE YEARS OF AGE BECAUSE, UH, HE WAS GOING TO BE THE ONLY ONE IN THAT CLASS AND BECAUSE THERE WAS ALREADY, UH, SOMEONE STARTING THE YEAR HE WAS FIVE AND THEY WENT AHEAD AND PUT HIM IN FIRST GRADE THEN.

MISS McCLAY: HOW OLD WERE YOU WHEN YOU STOPPED ATTENDING THE SCHOOL?

FARRELL: WELL, IT WAS IN 1946.

MISS McCLAY: OK. UH, WHAT GRADE WERE YOU WHEN THEY STOPPED THE SCHOOL?

FARRELL: MY LAST YEAR THERE WAS IN THE SIXTH GRADE.

MISS McCLAY: AND THEN YOU WENT ...

FARRELL: I WENT TO, UH, THE GRADE SCHOOL AT PLAINVILLE.

MISS McCLAY: OK. WHAT TYPE OF HEATING WAS IN THE SCHOOL WHEN YOU WENT THERE?

FARRELL: THERE WAS A BIG POT-BELLIED STOVE. THEY USED COAL IN IT.

MISS McCLAY: OK. AND WERE EVER THE CHILDREN INVOLVED IN GETTING THE SCHOOL HEATED UP OR ANYTHING, OR WAS THAT THE TEACHER'S RESPONSIBILITY?

FARRELL: IT WAS THE TEACHER'S RESPONSIBILITY. IF SHE HAPPENED TO BE LATE OR SOMETHING, WE WOULD GIVE HER ASSISTANCE IF WE WERE THERE AT THE TIME SHE WAS DOING IT.

MISS McCLAY: WHAT TYPE OF LIGHTS WERE USED IN THE SCHOOL?

FARRELL: WE HAD KEROSENE LAMPS. THEY WERE NOT NORMALLY USED BECAUSE THERE WOULD BE ENOUGH LIGHT IN THE SCHOOL, BUT IF IT WAS A BAD, CLOUDY DAY OR SOMETHING OR IN THE WINTERTIME, MAYBE THEN WE HAD IT.

MISS McCLAY: WHAT KIND OF TOILET FACILITIES DID YOU HAVE?

FARRELL: TWO OUTDOOR PRIVIES. ONE FOR THE BOYS AND ONE FOR THE GIRLS.

MISS McCLAY: WHAT KIND OF FURNITURE DID YOU HAVE INSIDE? SO THAT, LIKE FOR THE STUDENTS TO SIT ON OR DO YOUR WORK ON.

FARRELL: WE HAD JUST OUR REGULAR SCHOOL DESK AND THE TEACHER HAD HER LARGE TEACHER'S DESK UP IN THE FRONT OF THE ROOM.

MISS McCLAY: HOW DID THE SCHOOL GET ITS WATER?

FARRELL: WE WENT DOWN TO, UH, THE BENEDICK'S AND GOT IT. THERE WAS NO CISTERN OR NO WELL AT THE TIME, AND IT WAS KEPT IN A LARGE BUCKET AND WE DRANK OUT OF A BIG DIPPER. EVERYBODY USED THAT DIPPER.

MISS McCLAY: WHO WAS IN CHARGE OF KEEPING THE SCHOOL CLEAN?

FARRELL: WELL, I GUESS THE TEACHER DID THAT. THE STUDENTS WOULD HELP WITH CLEANING THE BLACKBOARD AND I GUESS THE REST OF IT WAS UP TO THE TEACHER.

MISS McCLAY: DID THE SCHOOL HAVE MORE THAN ONE ROOM?

FARRELL: NO. IT HAD A HALLWAY WHERE YOU WENT IN AND YOU LEFT YOUR

COATS IN THAT HALLWAY AND YOUR BOOTS. AND, UH, THEN THERE WAS A, JUST A LARGE, BIG ROOM AND WITH A STAGE UP IN THE FAR END OF IT.

MISS McCLAY: WHAT WAS THE STAGE USED FOR?

FARRELL: WELL, TO PUT ON CHRISTMAS PROGRAMS OR, UH, THE AUCTIONING OF THE BOX LUNCHES AND THINGS LIKE THAT.

MISS McCLAY: WAS THERE A LIBRARY IN THE SCHOOL?

FARRELL: NO, THERE WAS NOT.

MISS McCLAY: WHAT TYPE OF REFERENCE MATERIALS WERE AVAILABLE?

FARRELL: WELL, I WOULD ASSUME THERE WAS PROBABLY A SET OF ENCYCLOPEDIAS, BUT I HONESTLY DON'T RECALL.

MISS McCLAY: DID YOU EVER DO ANY WORK IN DICTIONARIES OR ANYTHING?

FARRELL: OH, YES.

MISS McCLAY: IF SCHOOL WAS CANCELLED FOR ANY REASON, HOW WERE YOU NOTIFIED?

FARRELL: WELL, I GUESS IF IT WAS REALLY STORMY AND WE COULDN'T GET TO SCHOOL, WE KNEW THE TEACHER WOULDN'T BE THERE.

MISS McCLAY: WAS IT EVER CANCELLED WHILE YOU ATTENDED IT?

FARRELL: NOT THAT I REMEMBER.

MISS McCLAY: DID YOU EVER HAVE TO MISS SCHOOL FOR A PROLONGED PERIOD OF TIME FOR ANY REASON?

FARRELL: UH, YOU MEAN WEATHER-WISE?

MISS McCLAY: OR ANY OTHER THINGS.

FARRELL: YES, AN ILLNESS. WHEN I WAS IN THE SECOND GRADE, UH, MY BROTHER AND I WERE SICK AND, UH, I WAS IN THE HOSPITAL. IT WAS OVER EASTER VACATION. I REMEMBER THAT BECAUSE I GOT A LITTLE EASTER DECORATION ON MY TRAY AT THE HOSPITAL THAT MORNING. AND, UH, WHEN WE CAME HOME, WE HAD TO STAY HOME FOR SIX WEEKS.

MISS McCLAY: SCARLET FEVER?

FARRELL: YES. HE HAD SCARLET FEVER AND I HAD SCARLETINA.

MISS McCLAY: OH, I SEE. HOW FAR DID YOU LIVE FROM THE SCHOOL?

FARRELL: UH, ABOUT TWO MILES.

MISS McCLAY: HOW DID YOU GET BACK AND FORTH EVERY DAY?

FARRELL: WELL, WHEN IT WAS NICE ENOUGH WE WALKED. IF IT WAS REALLY BAD, DAD WOULD TAKE US. WE RODE IN THE CAR AND, UH, MY BROTHER AND SISTER, MY OLDER BROTHER AND SISTER, WOULD RIDE THE HORSE WHEN THEY WENT, BUT, UH, WE NEVER HAD TO RIDE THE HORSE.

MISS McCLAY: HOW MANY STUDENTS WENT TO THE SCHOOL WHEN YOU ATTENDED?

FARRELL: WELL, IT VARIED. UH, I SUPPOSE PROBABLY FROM EIGHT AT ONE POINT TO 14 OR 15 AT ANOTHER TIME.

MISS McCLAY: WHAT SUBJECTS DID YOU LEARN IN SCHOOL?

FARRELL: WE HAD READING, WRITING, ARITHMETIC, UH, ENGLISH. WE HAD MUSIC AND SPELLING.

MISS McCLAY: DID YOU EVER HAVE SCIENCE?

FARRELL: I'M SORRY, GEOGRAPHY ALSO. UH, PERHAPS. IT JUST DOESN'T COME TO MY MIND THOUGH.

MISS McCLAY: WAS THERE ANY EQUIPMENT IN THE SCHOOL LIKE TYPEWRITERS OR FILM PROJECTORS OF ANY KIND?

FARRELL: NO, WE DIDN'T HAVE ANYTHING LIKE THAT. I THINK IT WAS OUR LAST YEAR IN COUNTRY SCHOOL WE GOT WHAT WAS CALLED A MAGIC SLATE WHICH WAS QUITE EXCITING FOR THE KIDS BECAUSE YOU COULD WRITE ON IT. AND THEN YOU LIFTED THIS TOP PAPER AND IT WOULD ERASE EVERYTHING THAT WAS ON THE SLATE.

MISS McCLAY: AFTER PASSING THE EIGHTH GRADE, THEN WHAT DID YOU DO?

FARRELL: I DIDN'T GO THROUGH THE EIGHTH GRADE THERE. UH, THE STUDENTS WHO HAD GRADUATED FROM THE EIGHTH GRADE WOULD TAKE THEIR TESTS AT ANOTHER SCHOOL, LIKE THE SCHOOL IN TOWN AND THEN GRADUATE WITH THE GRADUATION CEREMONIES THERE.

MISS McCLAY: AND THEN, PAUSE, YOU FINISHED EIGHTH GRADE IN TOWN.

FARRELL: YES, I WENT TO SCHOOL FOR SEVENTH AND EIGHTH GRADE.

MISS McCLAY: AND THEN WHAT DID YOU DO?

FARRELL: AFTER THE EIGHTH GRADE, I WENT TO HIGH SCHOOL IN PLAINVILLE.

MISS McCLAY: WHEN YOU WERE IN SCHOOL DID YOU TAKE HOME GRADE CARDS?

FARRELL: UH, YES. WE HAD REPORT CARDS. EVERY MONTH THEY WOULD COME OUT.

MISS McCLAY: WHAT KIND OF CLOTHES DID YOUR TEACHER WEAR?

FARRELL: UH, THEY WORE DRESSES. WARM CLOTHING IN THE WINTERTIME.

MISS McCLAY: WHAT WAS THE DRESS OF THE STUDENTS?

FARRELL: WHATEVER THEY HAD, TERI. SOME WOULD WEAR OVERALLS. I CAN REMEMBER WE ALWAYS WORE THE LONG WHITE COTTON STOCKINGS AND, UH, MOSTLY DRESSES.

MISS McCLAY: WHAT DID THE BOYS WEAR?

FARRELL: OH, THEY HAD THE OVERALLS THAT THEY WORE AND WORK SHIRTS.

MISS McCLAY: WHERE DID YOU GET YOUR CLOTHES?

FARRELL: WELL, I SUPPOSE FOR THE MOST PART WE ... SOME WERE MADE. THEY USED FLOUR SACKS IN THOSE DAYS TO MAKE SOME CLOTHES AND WE, ALSO, WOULD GO OVER TO STOCKTON TO THE PENNEY'S STORE AND BUY OUR CLOTHING OVER THERE.

MISS McCLAY: WERE YOU EXCUSED FROM SCHOOL EARLY TO HELP WITH FARM CHORES OR ANYTHING?

FARRELL: WELL, WE NEVER HAD OCCASION TO, BUT I'M SURE THERE WERE PROBABLY TIMES WHEN SOME STUDENTS WERE.

MISS McCLAY: WHEN YOU WENT TO SCHOOL, WHAT SCHOOL SUPPLIES DID YOU HAVE TO TAKE?

FARRELL: WELL, WE FURNISHED OUR OWN BOOKS. AND WE HAD A PENCIL BOX WHICH HAD A PENNY PENCIL IN IT, AND CRAYONS, AND A RULER, AND, UH, INK AND A PEN, AND WE ALWAYS HAD A BIG FIVE-CENT BIG CHIEF TABLET THAT WE WOULD GET THAT WAS PROBABLY AN INCH THICK, AND WE GOT IT FOR FIVE-CENTS.

MISS McCLAY: YOU SAID THAT YOU HAD A RECESS IN THE MORNING AND IN THE AFTERNOON. DO YOU REMEMBER THINGS THAT YOU DID AT RECESS?

FARRELL: WELL, THERE WAS A NICE SWING SET OUT IN THE SCHOOL YARD AND, UH, IT HAD A TEETER-TOTTER ON IT AND A TRAPESE BAR AND SWINGS AND WE ENJOYED THAT. AND WE WOULD PLAY GAMES LIKE RED ROVER, RED ROVER AND HIDE AND SEEK. WE PLAYED A LOT OF BASEBALL, SOFTBALL.

MISS McCLAY: OK. WHAT DID YOU BRING FOR LUNCH?

FARRELL: WELL, WE HAD SANDWICHES OF LUNCH MEAT. WE HAD EGG SANDWICHES, PEANUT BUTTER AND JELLY. WE'D TAKE, UH, A PIECE OF FRUIT. SOMETIMES COOKIES OR CAKE. I REMEMBER AT ONE POINT WHEN WE WERE ... WELL, I WAS IN THE SIXTH GRADE. THIS WOULD HAVE BEEN THE LAST YEAR OUT THERE. SOME WAY OR ANOTHER WE HAD ANOTHER STOVE BROUGHT IN AND,

WE WOULD HEAT UP CANS OF SOUP FOR LUNCH SO THAT WE COULD HAVE A HOT LUNCH OR WE'D EVEN, SOMETIMES, HAVE HOT CHOCOLATE ALONG WITH OUR LUNCH.

MISS McCLAY: WAS IT LIKE CAMPBELLS SOUP?

FARRELL: YES. WE'D EACH TAKE DIFFERENT SOUPS AND THEN, UH, EACH DAY THE TEACHER WOULD OPEN UP A DIFFERENT CAN OF SOUP FOR US.

MISS McCLAY: OH. HOW BIG WERE THE FAMILIES OF THE STUDENTS THAT ATTENDED THERE?

FARRELL: WELL, IT VARIED. ONE FAMILY ONLY HAD ONE, ONE LITTLE GIRL, AND SOME FAMILIES HAD, UH, WELL, IT VARIED. ONE FAMILY HAD EIGHT CHILDREN. SO IT RANGED ... THERE WAS QUITE A RANGE.

MISS McCLAY: DID YOU ATTEND SCHOOL WITH THE SAME KIDS FROM THE TIME YOU STARTED UNTIL THE TIME YOU ENDED.

FARRELL: UH, NO. WE HAD, UH, DIFFERENT STUDENTS COME IN AT DIFFERENT TIMES. UH, I THINK THAT THERE WAS JUST ONE FAMILY THAT WE WENT ALL THROUGH SCHOOL WITH.

MISS McCLAY: SO THEY DIDN'T LIVE LIKE HERE IN PLAINVILLE OUT ...

FARRELL: NO. THE STUDENTS THAT CAME TO OUR SCHOOL ... WE WERE THE FARTHEST THAT LIVED FROM THE SCHOOL AT THE TIME. THERE WERE OTHERS, GOODNESS, MAYBE AN EIGHTH OF A MILE. ANOTHER FAMILY MAYBE A QUARTER OF A MILE.

MISS McCLAY: BUT THE FAMILIES DIDN'T STAY VERY LONG AROUND HERE? OR OUT BY YOUR SCHOOL?

FARRELL: WELL, (PAUSE), SOME OF THEM DID, YES. BUT THERE WERE OTHERS WHO MOVED IN AND, OF COURSE, BY THAT TIME, UH, THE SCHOOL CLOSED, OF COURSE, WHEN I WAS IN THE SIXTH GRADE SO, UH ...

MISS McCLAY: WHAT WAS THE EMPLOYMENT OF MOST OF THE FAMILIES?

FARRELL: FARMING.

MISS McCLAY: OK. HOW WAS IT GOING TO SCHOOL IN THE DEPRESSION?

FARRELL: I DIDN'T GO IN THE DEPRESSION. I WAS BORN DURING THE TIME OF THE DEPRESSION.

MISS McCLAY: (LAUGHING) SORRY, MOM.

FARRELL: (LAUGHING) GRANDDAD COULD TELL YOU MORE ABOUT THAT.

MISS McCLAY: WHAT WAS THE ROUTINE OF YOUR SCHOOL DAY?

FARRELL: WELL, WE STARTED WITH THE PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE AND THEN, UH, IT SEEMS READING WAS THE FIRST CLASS WE HAD FOLLOWED BY MATH. UH, WE WOULD HAVE ENGLISH, UH, I BELIEVE WRITING WAS WHAT WE HAD JUST BEFORE LUNCH. AND WE WOULD HAVE GEOGRAPHY AND MUSIC AND SPELLING WAS THE LAST CLASS OF THE DAY.

MISS McCLAY: WHICH ONE DID YOU LIKE BEST?

FARRELL: OH, I THINK SPELLING WAS ALWAYS MY FAVORITE.

MISS McCLAY: YOU WERE A GOOD SPELLER. WHAT KIND OF REWARDS DID YOU GET FOR HAVING GOOD GRADES?

FARRELL: GEE, I DON'T EVER REMEMBER GETTING REWARDS FOR GOOD GRADES.

MISS McCLAY: DID YOU PLAY ANY TRICKS ON YOUR TEACHERS?

FARRELL: I'M SORRY TO SAY ... NO, I DID NOT. (LAUGHTER)

MISS McCLAY: WELL, WERE YOU EVER GIVEN ANY PUNISHMENTS OR ANYTHING WHILE YOU WERE IN SCHOOL?

FARRELL: OH, SOME ... I DON'T ... SEVERAL OF THE STUDENTS, SURE. YOU'D GET STOOD UP IN THE CORNER OR, UH, SET ON A STOOL UP IN THE CORNER OR SOMETHING LIKE THIS BECAUSE YOU WERE TAKING OR PLAYING AROUND.

MISS McCLAY: WOULD YOU SAY YOU WERE A TROUBLE MAKER IN SCHOOL?

FARRELL: WELL, NO, I WOULDN'T SAY I WAS A TROUBLE MAKER, BUT I WASN'T A PERFECT STUDENT EITHER.

MISS McCLAY: BUT YOU NEVER DID ANYTHING BAD TO THE TEACHER?

FARRELL: (LAUGHING) I DON'T THINK SO.

MISS McCLAY: WHERE DID YOUR TEACHER LIVE?

FARRELL: WELL, UH, SOME LIVED IN TOWN. THE TEACHER THAT WAS THERE THE LAST YEAR, UH, WAS WITH ONE OF THE FAMILIES THAT, UH, THAT I HAD GONE TO SCHOOL WITH SO SHE LIVED APPROXIMATELY, UH, THREE-QUARTERS OF A MILE AWAY FROM THE SCHOOL.

MISS McCLAY: DO YOU KNOW HOW MUCH THEY WERE PAID?

FARRELL: NO, I DON'T HAVE ANY IDEA.

MISS McCLAY: WERE YOUR TEACHERS STRICT?

FARRELL: I WOULD SAY TO A POINT, YES, THEY WERE STRICT.

MISS McCLAY: DID THEY HAVE ANY DISCIPLINE PROBLEMS?

FARRELL: FOR THE MOST PART, NO. THERE WERE DAYS YOU KNOW, THAT STUDENTS WERE A LITTLE MORE RAMBUNCTIOUS THAN OTHER DAYS.

MISS McCLAY: WHAT FUN THINGS DID YOU DO IN SCHOOL?

FARRELL: WELL, I DON'T KNOW. WE HAD PROGRAMS THAT WE PREPARED FOR, UH ...

MISS McCLAY: DID YOU HAVE SPELLING BEES?

FARRELL: OH YES. WE HAD SPELLING BEES.

MISS McCLAY: DID YOU COMPETE WITH OTHER PEOPLE FROM OTHER SCHOOLS OR OTHER AREAS?

FARRELL: OH YES. THROUGHOUT THE DISTRICT WE HAD, UH, THE SPELLING BEES.

MISS McCLAY: DID YOU EVER MISS SCHOOL, IF IT WAS LIKE DURING HARVEST OR IF THEY NEEDED HELP AT HOME?

FARRELL: UH, NO. I DID NOT BECAUSE WE LET OUT IN APRIL. UH, THE FIELD WORK WAS JUST, AT THAT POINT, BEGINNING.

MISS McCLAY: WHAT WAS THE USUAL AGE THAT A CHILD BEGAN SCHOOL AT BENEDICK SCHOOL?

FARRELL: SIX YEARS.

MISS McCLAY: DO YOU THINK IT EVER VARIED?

FARRELL: UH, YES. IT SOMETIMES ...

MISS McCLAY: OH, YOU TOLD ME ABOUT YOUR BROTHER.

FARRELL: YES.

MISS McCLAY: HOW MUCH TIME DID YOU GET FOR VACATION OR HOLIDAYS?

FARRELL: UH, IT SEEMS TO ME WE HAD TWO WEEKS ALWAYS AT CHRISTMAS TIME.

MISS McCLAY: AND DID YOU GET OFF OTHER SPECIAL DAYS, LIKE THANKSGIVING OR EASTER OR ANYTHING?

FARRELL: WELL, YEAH. WE GOT OFF GOOD FRIDAY ALWAYS. AND THANKSGIVING WE HAD A WEEKS VACATION.

MISS McCLAY: WHEN YOU WERE AT SCHOOL, DID YOU EVER HAVE ANY WEATHER PROBLEMS LIKE TORNADOES OR DUST BOWLS OR BLIZZARDS OR ANYTHING?

FARRELL: WELL, IT WASN'T UNUSUAL TO HAVE, UH, SNOW STORMS. UH, DUST STORMS, NO I DO NOT RECALL ANY OF THEM. UH, TORNADOES. NO, I DON'T REMEMBER ANY OF THEM EITHER.

MISS McCLAY: YOU SAID YOU AND YOUR BROTHER HAD SCARLET FEVER AND SCARLETINA. WERE THERE ANY OTHER SERIOUS EPIDEMICS THAT YOU CAN REMEMBER?

FARRELL: WELL, THERE WAS YOUR USUAL MUMPS AND CHICKEN POX AND MEASLES. YOUR ORDINARY CHILDREN'S DISEASES.

MISS McCLAY: WHAT WERE THE SOURCES YOU HAD FOR THE NEWS?

FARRELL: WE HAD A BIG BOX RADIO THAT WE LISTENED TO ALWAYS. IT WAS RUN BY A BATTERY.

MISS McCLAY: ANYTHING ELSE? DID YOU GET A NEWSPAPER OR ...

FARRELL: OH, WELL THERE WAS, YES. THERE WAS THE LOCAL NEWSPAPER THAT CAME OUT WEEKLY.

MISS McCLAY: YOU HAD A RADIO AT HOME. WAS THERE ONE AT SCHOOL?

FARRELL: NOT THAT I RECALL.

MISS McCLAY: DID YOU HAVE A TELEVISION AT HOME OR AT SCHOOL?

FARRELL: NO, UH, WE DIDN'T HAVE TELEVISION AT THAT TIME.

MISS McCLAY: DID THEY HAVE IT BEFORE YOU GOT OUT OF HIGH SCHOOL?

FARRELL: NO. IT WAS, UH, ABOUT 1953 WHEN IT CAME OUT. THAT WOULD HAVE BEEN A YEAR AFTER I GRADUATED FROM HIGH SCHOOL.

MISS McCLAY: WHAT DID YOU DO WHEN YOU GRADUATED FROM HIGH SCHOOL?

FARRELL: I WENT TO SALINA TO A BUSINESS COLLEGE. WHEN I GRADUATED FROM THERE I GOT A JOB AT FARMERS STATE BANK IN HAYS, WORKED OVER THERE AND THEN I GOT A JOB AT THE PLAINVILLE STATE BANK IN PLAINVILLE. CAME BACK AND WORKED THERE UNTIL ... WELL, I GUESS IT WAS JUST BEFORE THE BIRTH OF MY FIRST DAUGHTER AFTER I GOT MARRIED.

MISS McCLAY: AND WHEN DID YOU GET MARRIED?

FARRELL: IN 1954, AUGUST.

MISS McCLAY: WHO DID YOU MARRY?

FARRELL: MAX McCLAY.

MISS McCLAY: AND WHERE DID YOU GET TO KNOW HIM AT?

FARRELL: WELL, WE HAD GONE THROUGH SCHOOL TOGETHER AFTER I WENT TO TOWN AND HAD KNOWN EACH OTHER ALL THOSE YEARS.

MISS McCLAY: HOW MANY KIDS DID YOU HAVE?

FARRELL: WE HAVE FOUR DAUGHTERS.

MISS McCLAY: AND YOUR LIFE HAS TAKEN YOU TO WHAT AREAS?

FARRELL: WELL, WE LIVED IN PLAINVILLE, UH, FOR TEN YEARS AFTER WE MARRIED AND THEN WE MOVED TO GREAT BEND, KANSAS FOR 5 YEARS. FROM THERE WE WENT TO SPRINGFIELD, MISSOURI. WE LIVED THERE 9 YEARS AND AT PRESENT, WE HAVE BEEN IN DES MOINES, IOWA FOR FOUR YEARS.

MISS McCLAY: DO YOU REMEMBER WHAT YOUR FAVORITE TEACHER'S NAME WAS IN SCHOOL?

FARRELL: YES. HER NAME WAS MARTHANNA ROBERTS. SHE WAS MY SECOND GRADE TEACHER IN THE COUNTRY SCHOOL AND THE YEAR, THE NEXT YEAR THEY DID NOT HAVE A TEACHER OUT THERE AND I WENT INTO TOWN SCHOOL AND SHE WAS MY TEACHER THERE, ALSO.

MISS McCLAY: AND WHY WAS SHE YOUR FAVORITE?

FARRELL: I REALLY CAN'T ANSWER THAT. UH, I REALLY HAVE NO REASON, I GUESS. SHE WAS JUST SOMEBODY THAT I THOUGHT WAS VERY SPECIAL. I REALLY HAD A LOT OF GOOD TEACHERS. I HAVE NO COMPLAINTS ABOUT ANY OF MY TEACHERS.

MISS McCLAY: DID YOU EVER HAVE ANY SCHOOL DANCES OR GET TOGETHER WITH YOUR FRIENDS AND DO ANYTHING?

FARRELL: OH YES. UH, WE DIDN'T HAVE SCHOOL DANCES. EVERYBODY WENT TO TOWN ON SATURDAY NIGHT AND YOU'D GO TO MOVIES. UH, THERE WERE A FEW TIMES THEY HAD BARN DANCES IN SOMEBODY'S BARN IN THE AREA, AND WE'D GO TO THAT. THERE WAS JUST A LOT OF SOCIALIZING. YOU'D GO TO DIFFERENT PEOPLES HOUSES AND VISIT.

MISS McCLAY: DID ANYBODY DRINK ALCOHOL OR ANYTHING AT THOSE EVENTS?

FARRELL: I DIDN'T KNOW ABOUT IT IF THEY DID. THERE COULD HAVE BEEN, BUT I WASN'T AWARE OF IT.

MISS McCLAY: THEN IT WASN'T SOMETHING THAT HAPPENS LIKE TODAY?

FARRELL: No.