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Fall 2013

# ATMOSPHERE FOR LEARNING UNDISTRACTED Rural Schools of Nebraska

Charles W. Guildner

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Guildner, Charles W., "ATMOSPHERE FOR LEARNING UNDISTRACTED Rural Schools of Nebraska" (2013). *Great Plains Research: A Journal of Natural and Social Sciences*. 1276.

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## Photo Essay

### ATMOSPHERE FOR LEARNING UNDISTRACTED

#### *Rural Schools of Nebraska*

**Charles W. Guildner**

*Independent Photographer*

In the spring of 2002, while traveling in Nebraska making images for my "Lives of Tradition" photography project, I saw a small rural school. It occurred to me that there could be no more traditional lives than those of people attending a small rural school. This one, Round Hill School, is located about 15 miles south of Broken Bow, Nebraska.

I stopped to ask if I might visit and photograph. Mary Jane Graham, the teacher, welcomed me in to meet the students, learn about their school, and make photographs.

During the four years that followed, after researching the locations of other still active rural schools, and with the cooperation of state and county school authorities, I

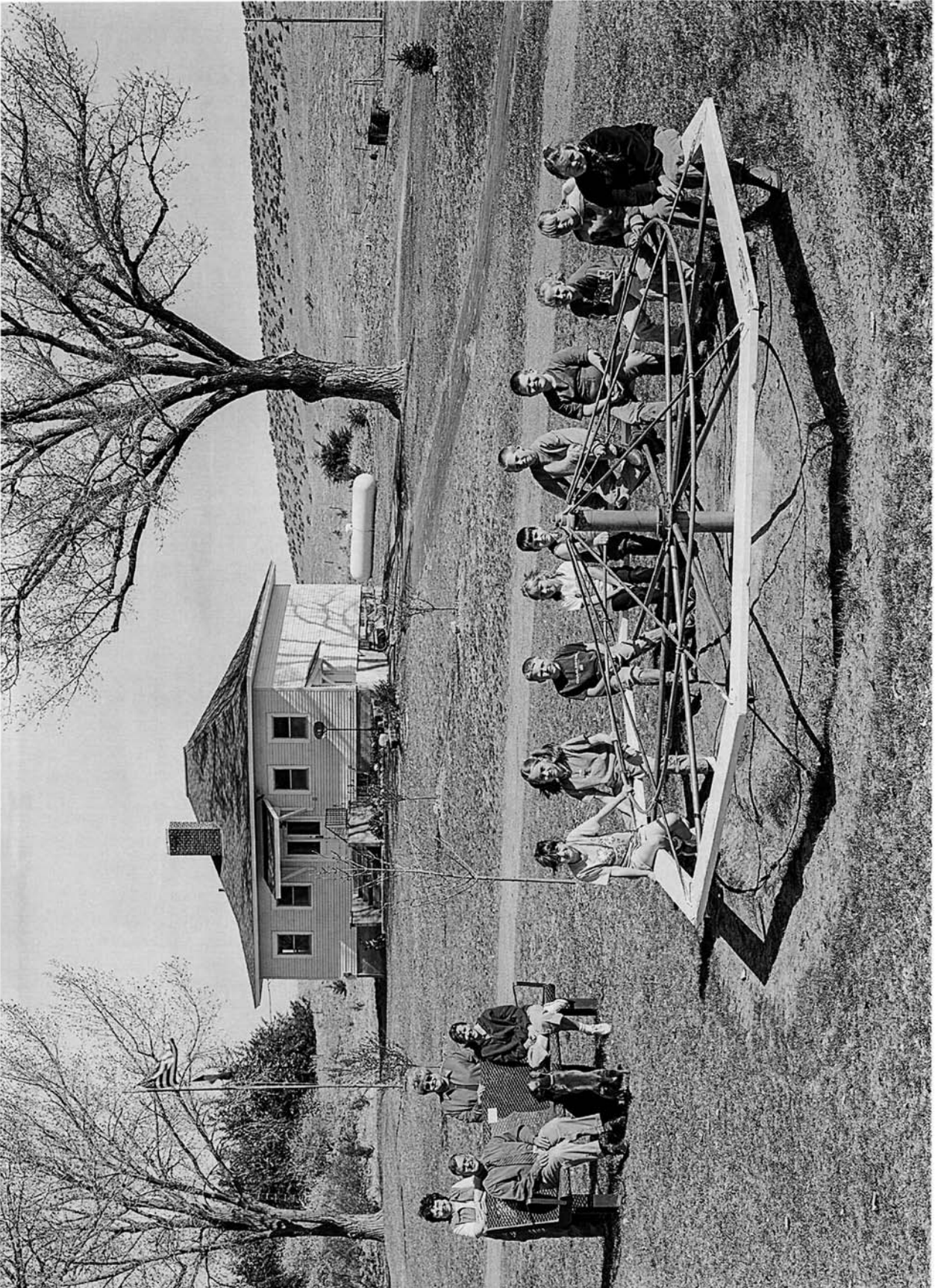
was able to contact teachers and gain permission to visit. I recorded nearly 40 of these rapidly disappearing schools.

Their remote, often bleak isolation provided an atmosphere for learning, undistracted by many of the issues affecting students in larger, more urban schools. Equally impressive to me is the unique relationship of students, ages 6 to 12, studying together. The younger students gain early exposure to subjects and activities soon to be accessed in more detail. The older students gain by being able to contribute to the teaching of the younger ones. Lasting impressions of this collective experience are represented in these images.



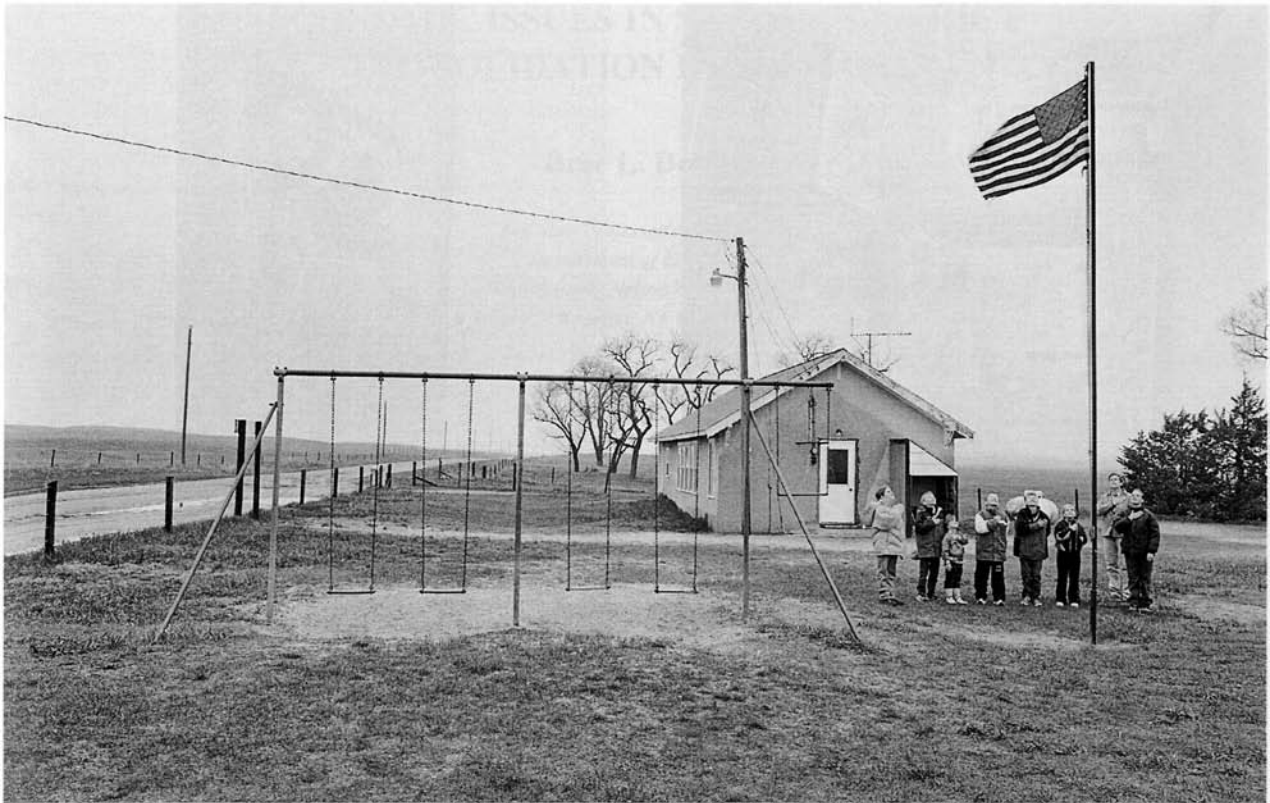
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