

YOUNGSTOWN STATE UNIVERSITY

ORAL HISTORY PROGRAM

Early Education Project

Teaching Experiences

O. H. 568

SARA KNIGHT

Interviewed

by

Caroline Wilms Hall

on

April 29, 1980

SARA PHILLIPS KNIGHT

Sara Phillips was born in Haddenville, Pennsylvania on March 15, 1921. She attended elementary school in Brier Hill where she was transferred from second to third grade after six weeks of school. She remembers a predominance of single female teachers in elementary grades, but had married teachers in high school. There were many children of immigrants in her classes that were often held in portable classrooms because enrollment had outgrown the original buildings. She attended Redstone Township High School where she graduated in 1938.

Sara attended California State Teachers' College for three years to earn her teaching certificate in 1941. While in college, she was a traveling student, or commuter, but enjoyed playing tennis among other physical education activities. She continued courses during summers while teaching and earned a Bachelor of Science in Education from California State Teachers' College in 1946. During these years she had been teaching at Fairfield School near Columbiana, Ohio. She returned to Pennsylvania where she married Raymond Knight. Later they moved to Columbiana, Ohio where she was employed by the Columbiana Exempted Village Schools for a year. She then taught in Leetonia Schools for thirteen years before coming to the Salem city schools to complete nineteen years of teaching.

After thirty-nine years as a teacher, Sara is looking forward to her retirement in June of 1980. She has two married children and grandchildren who live with her or in Nashville, Tennessee.

She also likes to dance, bowl, golf, and play cards in her spare time.

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INTERVIEWEE: SARA KNIGHT

INTERVIEWER: Caroline Wilms Hall

SUBJECT: Courses, student teaching, activities, a typical school day, major changes

DATE: April 29, 1980

H: This is an interview with Sara Knight for the Youngstown State University Oral History Program on Early Education, by Caroline Wilms Hall at my home on April 29, 1980, at 7:00 p.m.

Sara, would you tell us something about your parents?

K: My parents were very strong for education. When I started to school my mother wanted me to do so well because her sister-in-law and her sister were teachers. My two brothers proceeded me in school and they always came home with good grades and we always had to sit down at the table and start immediately on our work. So when I came along, I wasn't as studious as my brothers, but I went to school. I remember the first day of school--my mother knew the teacher; her name was Hazel--I said, "Good morning, Hazel. I'm going to be a teacher just like you." She said, "Well, Sara, it's all right for you to be a teacher, but you must call me Miss Minto." My mother always had teachers out for dinner and she would visit the school. It so happened that my mother was a very beautiful lady and she would come to school dressed beautifully. This made me feel so proud when my mother came to school.

My dad had to have three jobs to keep up with my mother's high standard of living. He farmed and he worked in the coal mines and he was also the custodian of the school. The custodian had many minute duties to do as well as firing the boiler. When something was dusty, the teacher would summon him to do the dusting.

Second grade was one of my traumatic experiences. Mrs.

Fell, my second grade teacher, was one of those who never moved from her desk. She hardly ever mingled with the second graders. I was the kid that always had to go to the toilet. It was the days when you put one finger up and two for more exotic things. So I put one finger up and I thought she had nodded "yes", so I trotted my little second grade body downstairs to the toilet area and when I came back Mrs. Fell was waiting for me. She shook me up against the cloak room door and just went back and forth, back and forth and I went home and told my mother that. It was soon after that--my mother came to talk to the principal--that I was transferred to third grade.

I had a formidable teacher by the name of Miss Rosenberg who was an excellent teacher, as I look back now. We had a store in our room, you know. We bought and sold things that we had at home. I brought one of those log cabin syrup things as I remember and I see now they are collector's items at flea markets. Everything Miss Rosenbuerg taught was for mastery of grade level materials, so it took me a while to come from nineties in second grade to that level in third grade. Third grade was pretty hard to come from six weeks of second grade to third grade. Well, then I went into fourth grade and that was quite ordinary and boring. Fifth grade is where I met a teacher of the stern discipline school.

Three R's and the BIG D for discipline were Mrs. Hampson's policies. We were still getting immigrants because I went to school in a coal mining town. I had a mile and a quarter to walk from the country to this school. I was probably two in the group that had a name you could pronounce easily. The rest were Budinsky, Dolansky, Bytosh, Topakovich, so I was really a minority. One day a tall, strapping boy came in to join our big class. In the old country he had been in 8th grade, but our principal transferred him to 5th grade because he couldn't speak English. We were in a portable building. The main brick building was where we had to go to the restrooms. Well, anyway, this immigrant came in and he couldn't speak English so Mrs. Hampson took it upon herself to teach him English as well as the reading, writing, arithmetic, geography, history and all that we had.

First of all, with Mrs. Hampson, you had a routine. She was queen of the room. When she came in it was your duty to hang up her coat, to take off her boots, to give her homage. The discipline was this: When you took your seat you were not to utter one word unless you were called upon. Well, coming back to this boy, he gave her some kind of opposition one day and she was going to hit him. She didn't hit him, but she made him sit sort of hunched up on the railing that went around our room for almost an hour it seemed--it probably wasn't that long. The end result was that Joe learned to speak English and went on with us to sixth grade.

Another one of her favorite tricks--this was the only time I got a 100% in spelling--was if you missed a word you all lined up and got a crack over your hand for every word you missed. If one little thing was wrong with an arithmetic problem, you stayed in. If there was a penny lost, you stayed in until that penny was found. At lunch time she inspected your lunches to see if they were nutritionally packed and et cetera. She took over every part of your life from the moment you came in until the moment you left.

It so happened that this was Mrs. Hampson's last year. We didn't know that. It came the last day of school and we could bring out sisters, our brothers, our dogs, our cats, everything. She had given me a little sea shell from the cupboard and asked me if I would give it to a little girl; she didn't have anything to give the little girl and I saw that Mrs. Hampson was crying and I thought, "Why would that teacher be crying?"

Now really and truly, I took all the hard discipline because I was disciplined at home and even though I wasn't disciplined that strictly it didn't seem to make much difference to me because it was learning. But I imagine, looking back now that those who had difficulty, the Mekan boys . . . Some had been held back in Pennsylvania schools like two years in a grade and by the time you got to fifth grade some of them were old enough to shave it seemed. But be that as it may, that lady taught me discipline that I've never forgotten. I don't approve of what she did all the way, but I must say that the results were amazing and not once did I ever see any irate parents come to school.

Coming now to sixth grade, she was not a good teacher. We were departmentalized in sixth, seventh, and eighth. Now again I met a gifted teacher, Miss Stevens. She had a different approach. She got across the same facts and learning probably that Mrs. Hampson did, but she was kind. Now right at sixth, seventh, and eighth grade is when the Great Depression hit. In fifth grade I was taking mandolin lessons and we were still living in our new home. In sixth grade my mother died and we lost our home and all of those various things and my brother. This was the time in school that we lined up for the chili and so forth. Of course, coke ovens were stoked and all the mushroom of dirty, sooty air over the coal patch was gone. You didn't choke as you went through Brier Hill and it was all quiet, but that meant no jobs. When FDR came into power and put the miners on WPA, there wasn't a home without his picture hanging up close to the crucifix.

Miss Stevens organized a club, and she would take us on hikes on Saturdays. And I thought looking back, there's

not been a teacher . . . Even I have not given my Saturdays outside of a conference to do something like that. I just thought she was probably the most inspiring. I never wanted to become a teacher like Mrs. Hampson, although I would like to get the same results and achievement of material. But Miss Stevens was excellent. Now our principal [eighth grade] was a teaching principal. He would leave school mysteriously at noon and when he would come back he would be in a pretty foul mood. I don't know why that was. Later as an adult, I learned he drank. When we were let out at recess time, all the doors were locked. Teachers enjoyed their freedom, I must say.

On to high school now. I think high school at those times, because the effects of the 1930's were still with us, there were bread lines and the whole thing. There was a high demand for teaching jobs and I do think I had exceptionally well, qualified teachers through high school and an exceptionally good foundation in education through grade school and high school. Of course my uncle and aunt who reared me felt that a woman's place was in the home. My uncle said, "No woman should go to college. Stay home! Get married!" I said, "I'm going to college." My dad and brother were living at a farm doing tenant farming then, so dad had traded some Irish sweepstakes tickets in on a cow. My dad was a trader then of cows and horses. He carried these sweepstake tickets around and he won. In those days, seven hundred dollars went a long ways toward your college education, particularly when you traveled to the school which was about sixteen miles away in little California, Pennsylvania. My aunt saved the egg money and my dad's Irish sweepstakes and my working on NYA at a quarter an hour put me through three years of State Teachers' College in California, Pennsylvania, as it was called then.

I came out with the name of Phillips. Three counts were against me. I was Anglo-Saxon Protestant and a Republican. I want to tell you about the interview. I had to interview each school board member. One had a car dealer agency. I understood if you bought a car you were almost sure of getting a job, but I didn't have enough money to buy a car. The rest of them I interviewed in beer parlors. Then I went to each school board member and they interviewed me, why I wanted the job. Well, I did get a job as a substitute, but it was for all year in the coal mining town of Royal, Pennsylvania, not where I went to school, but in a neighboring one.

H: What was the name of the town?

K: The name of the town was Chestnut Ridge, Pennsylvania. It was commonly called Royal. The post office was Chestnut

Ridge. The town was called Royal and there were thirteen coal mining towns in our Redstone Township School District. They all had an elementary school, first to eighth grade. So that first year of teaching was . . . There were two out buildings like our school at Brier Hill, and then a main brick building.

That first year I'm afraid was a disaster for me. First of all, I came through the teaching curriculum of methods courses with all progressive education and Dr. Spock and a lot of that business. When I was transferred to a traditional school, it was a disaster, a pure, simple disaster. First of all, in this out building there was third and fourth grade. Who would be my buddy on the other side, but Mrs. Fell who was still teaching, who racked me up the cloak room in second grade, who still sat at her desk and didn't care very much at all whether she taught the children anything or not. She was still there and she was my fellow teacher.

Then everything had to be posters. You had to make a poster for every subject and put up exactly what the child got.

The teachers were very friendly and they all said you had to come over to the main building to eat. I was so super conscientious, and I just wanted to charge in there and get something accomplished not realizing that it takes a while to master anything.

The next thing, the teachers went on a strike because they weren't paid. It was a very troubled time for the teachers and supervisors. We had a lot of supervision. The superintendent of schools came to visit and the principal. All of those teachers told me how easy teaching was and not to take it so seriously. They said, "Oh, teaching is the easiest job you can have." And I still to this day, 38 years later, have not found their secret. (Laughter)

H: You mentioned two brothers. There were three children in your family?

K: Yes, three children.

H: When did you start school?

K: I was born in 1921. I started school six years later, 1927.

H: Where did you go to school? What was your hometown?

K: The hometown was Brier Hill, Pennsylvania. Brier Hill made the coke for Sheet & Tube out here. You know Brier Hill was the coke provider for the steel mills in this area.



H: You mentioned being graded by percent.

K: Right. We had our report cards once a month; I still have my report card. If you made one hundred in spelling, you got one hundred. Now I didn't get a one hundred as my average for all subjects, but my average there that year was a ninety-eight. You got a percentage grade average each month. You also took a midterm exam and final exam. That was the same from first grade through to high school, all percentage.

H: Now this was in the school system?

K: The school system was Redstone Township. There were thirteen elementary schools, grades one through eight, and one high school, Redstone Township High School. There was a township supervisor responsible to the larger system of Fayette County Schools. Supervision came from the county also via the county superintendent's or assistant county superintendent's regular visits to the classrooms.

H: So you got to see them as you went through school too?

K: Right. I mean they came to visit in your classroom, the county superintendent or the assistant county superintendent, or the township superintendent plus your principal. So you really had a lot of people telling you what was wrong with your teaching. They put evaluations on it too.

H: Did they do written evaluations or were their evaluations oral?

K: No, they told you verbally. I don't remember of any written ones, but they probably gave a written one to the principal.

H: Why did you decide to become a teacher?

K: I went to live with my aunt and uncle. My Aunt Margaret, who I was named after, was a school teacher and everybody held Aunt Margaret in such high esteem. Her things were still in the farmhouse even though she had been dead for many years. You know you could wander through the farmhouse and find her things about astronomy and sea shells. And when I went to a local church everyone would say, "Well, you act like Aunt Margaret." I mean my aunt must have been wonderful, the way people talked about her. She died before I was born. I considered it an honor to be named after a person who was so esteemed. Then my Aunt Katherine was a teacher, so those two inspired me. I loved my Aunt Katherine that lived in Coolspring, Pennsylvania. I just wanted to be a teacher. I don't know, I just always wanted to be. Then the teachers that I went to school to inspired me. They were always so well

dressed and they seemed so eloquent, particularly Miss Stevens that I had in seventh grade who I really admired and respected. Also, Miss Kobasa, senior high history. She organized many fun-filled evenings of entertainments to raise money for our field trip to Washington D.C.

H: Were most of your teachers, especially the female teachers, single?

K: At the time in elementary, yes. In high school, no. Most of my elementary teachers were single at the time. I thought they were old, but they were not too old; they were young. They did get married afterwards. That Mrs. Fell was married, but I think she was the only one of the staff at that time that was married when I went to school. So out of eight teachers, seven were female and one had the title of Mrs. The principal was male.

H: You went to grade school in your hometown. This is the way that it was set up in your county or township?

K: Right. Brier Hill School, but I lived a mile and a quarter beyond and they were kind to let me go. You lived within a mile of your particular school that you went to, like Brier Hill, but it was about a mile and a quarter. We had to walk. In high school you did have bus transportation, but you had to walk about a half mile to get the bus.

H: Was the high school then centralized for every county?

K: Right. There were thirteen coal mining towns. All thirteen went to the centralized Redstone Township High School. Now my eighth grade, only about half would have gone to high school; they dropped out in eighth grade. So you could say that you had about thirty in the classroom and thirteen went on to high school. That's how many would be in your freshmen class plus others that may have come in. There were about two hundred in my class.

H: Were the times, because it was Depression by that time, what you feel caused these children to drop out or was there a high dropout rate?

K: Well, I think that at the time, whether it be Depression or not, they would have dropped out. Some of the girls I've never seen; they went on to do housework in Pittsburgh or New York or some big city and the fellows got jobs after graduation from the eighth grade. My brother--there was five years difference between us--went to the same high school and his class was about the same as mine so there might have been more dropouts during 1934 than there would have been five years before that.

H: How many did you graduate with?

K: Two hundred.

H: And that was a large class?

K: No, there were three hundred and some at some schools.

H: How big was your class when you were back in Brier Hill?

K: Brier Hill, our class was a little smaller. It was about twenty-seven, but in fifth grade there was about 33. It was a big class for that portable room. It varied though, among classes. It varied in size just as they do today.

H: You say you went for three years to college?

K: Right. I went three years and got a teaching certificate. Then I went back every summer, except the summer of 1944-- I worked for the United States government in defense work-- and got my degree in 1946 at the same college.

In 1941 and 1942 I taught at Royal. Then my father died that summer of 1942. I nursed him through cancer. He had cancer of the stomach and was sick all summer. He was bedfast for two weeks only before taken to his death. My brother and I made arrangements for the funeral and everything.

During the war, my cousin from near Uniontown, Pennsylvania, and her husband came out here to Newton Falls. He had taken a defense job. She said, "Oh, Sara, won't you please get a job here. I'm so lonely." Eleanor never left the farm and she was very mother-attached. I was here in August of 1942. On the way back by bus to Lisbon I stopped in the county office and interviewed Mr. Roberts and was hired by Fairfield Centralized School. Well, I had never seen Columbiana, the closest town to Fairfield, but I went home and told my aunt about it. She was sorry that I was going to leave, but she said, "Okay." So I came out on a Friday and found room and board with Mrs. Ferrall on Duquesne Street and went to the organizational teacher's meeting. Mr. Evans was superintendent, Dr. Evans' father. On Monday I started to teach and loved every part of Columbiana and Fairfield.

H: Where did you have these three years of training?

K: At California State Teachers' College.

H: And where was that located again?

K: California, Pennsylvania. It is now California State. There were thirteen state teachers' colleges then too:

Indiana, Slippery Rock and all those.

H: So their basic curriculum was for teachers?

K: That's right, but each one of the state teachers' colleges at that time specialized in something. Our's was special education and industrial arts; Indiana was music and Slippery Rock was physical education. But California was the closest. It was sixteen miles away, near Brownsville, Pennsylvania. we traveled; we had a carpool. It is interesting to note that I didn't have a car, so when I did my student teaching my uncle got me a ride with the county detective of Fayette County. I didn't hitchhike, but I was sort of in a hitchhiking part.

I didn't tell you a very interesting thing. The teacher before my first year assignment had been murdered in the classroom, the portable room, the year before. That same year I was doing my student teaching and riding with the county detective, he was checking on that murder. Another disturbing thing, in the portable room, there was this big spot of blood. They were wooden floors, you know. There was a little hallway between the third and fourth and there was this great, big spot of blood where the enraged lover had called Carolyn DellaMae out in the hall and shot her right there. The kids jumped out of the window--the portables were low you know. Even a year afterwards when I went in to teach, I thought it was gruesome.

H: Did you get a rag and cover it up?

K: I didn't get a rag and cover it up. I just walked over the spot. (Laughter)

H: Tell us more about your college, your training that you received.

K: All right. My college and my training, now mostly there was 62 hours approximately or 66 hours of educational courses, teaching of reading, teaching of handwriting, teaching of math, teaching of English, et cetera. You had to go through everything that the children were going through. In other words, you were sort of like the students and the teacher would instruct you in the methods. Now in the teaching of handwriting for example, it was Palmer's System, so you had to pass the certificate. Now the big thing was handwriting. I mean you had to submit a specimen once a month, and everybody in your classroom when I taught had to have an acceptable form of penmanship. Palmer System you had to learn to write arm movement. I came through the Peterson System, and I never learned to write arm movement and at the college degree I almost flunked that because that took a while to learn to write with the ball of your arm in approved

arm movement.

In the teaching of reading, there was much controversy. We had a pretty radical professor at the time, Dr. Bontrager, who had written several books saying that basal readers were nothing, that to go through phonics was nothing. He believed that in reading the only way you got any results was the motivation of reading. Everybody would have to be interested in what they read and did something with what they read and they had to be on their level of what they read. Therefore, you had to have a multitude of books to accomplish this goal or very little learning would take place. So all the student teachers had to go to this place in Brownsville, where a very gifted teacher, I must say, had books almost from the bottom of the floor to the ceiling in all different levels of reading. Now if the child was interested in dogs, why, he was reading on dogs and conducting his own research on dogs and learning to read in this way.

The emphasis at college at that time was on unit work. Everything was around units. They had a demonstration school there. It was called Noss Laboratory School and the boys and girls from Middle California, as it was called, went to that school plus professor's children. Now they tried out everything that was taught by the professors in the college. This reading, for example, the unit would be on apples. One would be Johnny Appleseed in literature and arithmetic would be all in fractions of cutting the apples and they would make applesauce and apple cookies and all that deal. Every subject had to be around the unit that you were on.

H: But when you taught the unit, you tried to incorporate all those things?

K: All those things. You had to correlate all subjects. That heavy book that I brought tonight was your student teaching manual where you wrote out your units, you listed your questions, your tests, et cetera. And if they didn't measure up to the standards, you had to retest and so forth. But you might have had a play too in connection with this. You had some connotating activity of the play or whatever you chose. The music was incorporated, the art. That first year I didn't have an art teacher, but I did the other years at Pennsylvania when I went back in 1945 to marry Ray who had come home from the service. I taught at Irwin and there was an art supervisor and a music supervisor and they were still on this unit deal which was the big thing.

Now coming back to the reading, not everyone agreed with Dr. Bontrager, but he was the chief of the reading school. They had a head of each department like English and so forth. He was quite emphatic about his methods which we bought from him in paperback form. We had a reading clinic there too.

He pointed to the fact that there were so many nonreaders because we were trying to put them through certain paces at certain times and he was very much against everybody being on the same page at the same time and going through the hoops, as he called them.

H: So it sounds as though he may have been one of the fore-runners of the individualized education?

K: Right. He wanted individualized reading. That was his goal. He said all should be individualized. Right, to get results you must think of the individual. There was a great emphasis on the individual, and I was a very strong disciple of Dr. Bontrager. Then I went in this situation of traditional schools where you had to hand in advance six weeks your lesson plans and you were expected to accomplish so much and you were to be on page 108 at this time. See, that was my conflict, I couldn't be on page 108 and think about that individual all the time and where he was.

H: Now was this a county requirement that you had to be on a certain page at a certain time?

K: Yes.

H: Or was it a statewide requirement?

K: Yes. You were expected to cover the books. Pennsylvania schools had competency tests and you were expected to measure up to them. I mean we had tests all of the time. Not only teacher made tests, but tests like Iowa Basics, only they were competency tests which were given in grade school and high school. Before you went to high school you had to take a test and that determined your placement, whether you were going to take academic or general or vocational-- it wasn't called vocational, but we had industrial arts-- you were put in that grouping and you weren't changed.

H: You were put in your program and not changed?

K: Right, but then I did change from academic. I was put in the academic program, but I wanted to take typing and to take typing I had to change to general. I wanted to take cooking and sewing, but the classes were too crowded with the people there. Our school was very crowded. We didn't have gym because there were so many students they had to take the gymnasium for the students, you know, at the high school. They needed to expand, but they didn't have the money to expand because of the poor times.

H: They couldn't just delegate money as some districts did and say we need more money for books and buildings and go

ahead and do it?

K: Well, that's the way Pennsylvania schools operate. The people don't vote on the bond levies in Pennsylvania. You are told. The state says the new schools should be built, but remember the whole state was practically broke at that time so there wasn't any money for building these new classrooms that they desperately needed in the high school. As I said before, the gym had to be taken for a classroom and that's why we didn't have physical education in high school.

H: So you graduated?

K: I graduated in 1938, went three years to the State Teachers' College and came out in 1941.

H: With your three years you had a teaching certificate?

K: Right, a temporary teaching certificate.

H: What do you mean by temporary?

K: Well, it meant that you could teach at any school in our counties in Pennsylvania. You had a Pennsylvania teaching certificate for the three years, but you could only teach say four years without going back to school. Now I went back to school immediately to get my degree earning my money to do so. The teaching salary for the first year was a thousand dollars, but they went on strike because the school board didn't have the money to pay. The teachers went on strike because they weren't getting their pay regularly. For example, you might wait three months before you got paid. Now my uncle wouldn't let me go on strike. I was twenty when I started to teach. So the principal, Mabel Lincoln, and I were the only three at the building that day out of eight teachers.

H: How long were they on strike?

K: I think about two days.

H: Did they get their pay?

K: No. Not for the days they were off. I don't think we got our pay much quicker than what we did before, but that first year I did more with my money I think than any year because I put electricity in on the farm and tried to modernize the farmhouse a little bit because I was very grateful to them. Then I bought a typewriter because I earned my way through school by typing and I thought it might come in handy again. See I was out here in Ohio, but each summer I went back to the farm.

My aunt died the first year I was out here.

H: That was in 1944?

K: 1942. Then I went back just to visit my uncle and went to school. Then in the summer of 1944, the kids that I had gone to college with--twelve of us--went to work in civil defense, to get them paid. You know the motto, "Get them paid." My job was a file clerk. The new sixteen floor Prudential building in Newark, New Jersey was the clearing station for all paychecks to the servicemen and officers.

H: Is there anything else you would like to tell us about your college days, courses that you took, experiences that you had, restrictions?

K: Well, restrictions. I didn't live in the dormitories, except in the summertime. In the summertime, even though I was employed as a teacher I still had to go by the eleven o'clock curfew and several times I missed it and I was called into the Dean's offices. I thoroughly enjoyed college plays. In high school see, because I lived four miles from the school and didn't have a car, I couldn't be in the plays. At college, it was different because they were held in the daytime as there were a lot of traveling students. Now the traveling students had a room which you went to . . . I don't know what minority were traveling students, but there were a lot of us. However, the plays were so that you could enter into all the activities. I particularly enjoyed the physical education program because we had archery and basketball and rifle practice and all of those things and the tennis courts in the summertime. I wish I would have kept with that instead of going into golf because I really enjoyed tennis. The way I had learned to play tennis was back at the farm. I had a tennis racket and a ball and I practiced one hour every night hitting the ball up against the side of the barn. When I went to college I could play almost as well as they did who had the tennis courts here because I had practiced on my serve. I really enjoyed my college days. They were fun.

Ray had started with me to school also at college and then he went into the service. Everything about college was delightful to me because I enjoyed going to school and the professors and I enjoyed learning. We had a whole gang of us, twelve of us; we still have the round robin letter. Several of them are in California. I haven't been out to see them yet, but we had a little reunion last summer of all the girls that had gone to school together and we had a ball. Now four of those girls had gone with me to Newark, New Jersey. We lived in East Orange and of course we were very close. For example, this weekend I'm going to a wedding of the daughter of one of those twelve college girls at Belle Vernon, Pennsylvania.



California State Teachers' College furnished the teachers. Now it has changed to liberal arts more or less for Fayette County. But then it was strictly for the training of teachers.

H: They had no other programs that they could enter into?

K: No, I don't think so at the time that I went because it was called State Teachers' College. You went there with the primary purpose of entering some field of education either supervision, liberal arts, or special education. There was a placement service which you could have, you know, to be placed anywhere in the State of Pennsylvania. The teachers were given high ratings because I feel they did turn out a quality teacher.

The campus of California has changed a lot. Now they do all forms of degrees.

H: What was your student teaching experience like?

K: Well, my student teaching experience was at a school called Craig School in Uniontown. When the county detective let me out again, I had a half of a mile up a steep hill to walk. I taught in sixth grade and my teacher was Hazel Baer, a very good teacher. There was two of us. We always went in pairs to do our student teaching. We had a full semester of student teaching. We had observations to make, case studies to make, a diary to keep, lesson plans to write and our units to write. As I said though, again, I should have seen the handwriting on the wall in the student teaching days because again through practice what I have been taught, I couldn't do it even in that situation. The whole thing about preparing that thick manual and so forth, I found it hard to do. However, my directing teacher said I was coming along very well and gave me encouragement. Really and truly, I was hit by a case of inferiority; I just felt I couldn't do it even though all of my life I wanted to be a teacher. It was such a disappointment to get into the real thing. Now in student teaching days, it was good because I had a strong teacher, but when I went in the real situation and I was in charge, I just thought, "I can't do this. I just can't do it!"

H: Why did you go in pairs, or why did they send the student teachers in pairs?

K: I do not know. I guess they felt one would help the other.

H: Were you both in the same classroom?

K: Yes, we were both in the same classroom, but we had fourth, fifth, and sixth grade in departmental setup and you had experience in fourth grade, fifth grade, and sixth grade.

Now the demonstration school though you had to take half of that semester in upper elementary and half in primary, then you decided which one you wanted; I wanted upper elementary. When we went to these neighboring schools, like Uniontown, Brownsville and the neighboring cities around, they picked out their best teachers in those outlying districts and that's where they sent their student teachers because there were too many to take their training at the laboratory school, demonstration school.

H: The demonstration school was on campus then?

K: Right. The demonstration school was on campus and there you had to take all the grades in practice teaching. You had to take first through sixth teaching experiences. The school that I did my student teaching was first through sixth grade, but I had to go to every school in Uniontown--there were five schools--and make observations. And if they needed a substitute you also . . . It was only in an emergency, but one day both of us, Miss Leichliter and I were called to substitute in the high school. I had the study hall and it was huge; it was mammoth. There must have been three hundred in that study hall. I was scared. I wished the floor would have swallowed me up. (Laughter) One day we even substituted in the home economics room.

H: This was while you were student teaching?

K: Yes, while we were student teaching.

H: Then basically was the demonstration school run in conjunction with your methods course?

K: Yes, with this teaching of English, teaching of reading, teaching of handwriting, teaching of mathematics and the whole works. You went over there frequently while you were taking the courses to see how the "experts" did it.

H: Where did they get the students for the demonstration school?

K: They got them from the town of California, Pennsylvania and from the professors' children that lived on the campus.

H: So it was a combination of the town children plus the professors' children?

K: Right.

H: It wasn't strictly professors' children?

K: No, it was a cross-section of any typical small town, which

was about the size of Columbiana, Ohio. Now, also, we had the president of the college and . . . I went to college when they still had the dining room and the round tables where you dressed for dinner. You went down and you had receptions at the president's home, which was on the campus.

H: When you say dressed for dinner, what do you mean?

K: Well, I mean that you had to--this was the day before blue jeans--put on a dress and, you know, just dress for dinner, like Sunday clothes on.

H: Did you have to have a hat and white gloves?

K: Well, you did have to go with the hat and white gloves when you went to the receptions, you know, like the teas and so forth. Yes, it was formal, a more formal atmosphere. When I went back to school in the 1970's, you know to Akron, and the University of Toledo and those different schools from the 1940's to the 1970's, I could see quite a contrast in how the campus was different in those days.

Toledo, the dormitory that we stayed in even though it was coed was not as nice as the dormitory of the 1940's, it was an old part of the University of Toledo. The summer I went there in 1977, it really wasn't as nice as the college room that I had in California, Pennsylvania in the summertime. Now we had air raid drills and they were always interesting when that old air raid siren went off and you had to go to the basement for the air raid.

We did a lot of things. One time a girl friend and I moved all the beds out in the hall. The Dean had a few words to say about that. After the moving, the air raid sounded. I mean you had a matron that was on the floor and she certainly checked your rooms and made sure they were cleaned and in the evenings you were in by eleven o'clock and all that.

H: Were there any other social restrictions that you had as a college student that you can think of?

K: Well, I don't think that you were allowed to do, live-in and all that deal. You had the love life, but of course . . . You see, I went to school during the war and naturally from 1942 to 1945 when I went back to get my degree things were, because of the war everybody, as far as social restrictions . . . You met a soldier and you corresponded with the soldier and all of that deal. It was a time of greater freedom probably than it would have been had it not been a war.

H: You didn't stay on campus in your first three years?

K: No, only in the summertime. I went back in the summer and that's when I stayed on the campus because I was teaching out here at Fairfield and I just stayed on the campus. I went to school all summer and I went to school also in the winter while I was teaching at Royal. I took a course for a semester.

H: When you started teaching in Royal, what was your typical day like as a teacher?

K: Well, my typical day started with opening exercises. You had to read ten verses of the Bible, had the Lord's Prayer, the Pledge of Allegiance, a poem; sometimes you had them say the Beattitudes or whatever you decided you wanted to do. Now in Redstone Township they gave you a folder and they had it highlighted, these are the ten verses to read without comment, but later on then I would take like the story of Mary and Joseph and Jesus' life and read that and I did ask the children about the sequential events of their lives and so on.

After that you went directly into your subjects; your reading generally came first and then math. You tried to get your heavy subjects out in the morning. Now there was a stove in the back of the room, and the janitor did fire the stove and so forth, but again I was way ahead of my times even then. My girl friend, whom I traveled to California with, taught the same year as I did. She had to sweep her own room and take care of that stove in her room. So what I had of the grade school from first, second, third on was not typical for the people of my time really.

My cousin, the one who lived in Newton Falls, she went to a one-room school in Menallen Township, with the water bucket in the back and the dipper and you all drink from the same water bucket, and had the same teacher from first through eighth in the one-room school. But I didn't; I had first, second, third.

This one, by the name of Jimmy, was a kleptomaniac and when I would go to the teachers classroom to eat with them, when I went back, there wouldn't be a pencil in the whole area; every desk had been raided. The children ate in the room without supervision because we weren't in there. So I called Jimmy's mother in and we had a long talk and she said, "Well, he's a kleptomaniac, can't do anything about it."

Also in starting to school you had health inspection. You had to have every little hand out and look at everybody and look if they were clean and neat. This one kid's hand was always dirty and I wrote a note home to his mother and it said that he must come to school clean. She wrote back in Russian and I couldn't understand it; I had to get an interpreter to understand that. She said, "While he was

waiting for the bus--they did come by bus some of the outlying parts--that he fed the pigs and he didn't come back in the house to wash his hands." That's why he was so dirty and she would see that he was cleaned up.

H: So you ran a health inspection. Was that every day?

K: I don't know whether it was every day about once a week.

H: Did they have recesses?

K: Yes. We had morning recess and noon recess and I think maybe afternoon recess.

H: How long was their lunch period?

K: Well, I think the lunch period probably wasn't more than forty-five minutes long. It might have only been a half an hour because we ate our lunch and talked a little bit and then went right back to teaching. The day started at nine and ended at four.

H: Most of the children walked, but some were bussed?

K: Some were bussed, but there were very few bussed because we lived right in the coal mining town; the school was right in the town. In other words, there were houses, company houses on the other side, like right across the street there were company houses.

H: Did they have a playground around the school?

K: Oh, yes, there was a playground, swings and so forth. Sliding boards in Royal and then, of course, you had some wide areas like that where you could play Red Rover and whatever you did.

When I went to school we always had a big playground. We played ball and so forth. To show you why I know that the teachers had the room locked--I turned my head momentarily and a ball hit me in the pit of my stomach. I was knocked out, and to get me through they had to get me through the stage--we had a stage in eighth grade--and I had to be slid through the window.

H: Sounds like fun. Did you have more than a stomach ache after that?

K: I don't remember that, but I want to tell you about that stage. Once a week each room came to this big auditorium. There was a moveable door between seventh and eighth grade and they opened that door and every week a different room put on a program of recitation songs, et cetera. So that's where I got my beginning on the stage, at dear old Brier Hill.

Royal had programs too. You had Parent's Day where you invited the parents in to see some little plays. Now at California, the demonstration school, we had big productions. They had Maypole dances. They would take children to see, at that time it was "Gone With the Wind." They took the children to see that and field trips and so forth. We didn't take field trips at Royal, but the demonstration school did and at Craig School we did. We went to the Coca-Cola bottling plant and the newspaper and things like that. I don't think we had bus transportation for field trips. At Fairfield I took them on nature hikes because it was so beautiful there. I'll never forget I had my little group of third graders out and a ruffed grouse jumped right in front of me. I was scared because I wasn't expecting a big bird to come up like that.

H: Was this out at the . . .

K: Centralized school, Fairfield Centralized School.

H: On the road to Columbiana?

K: Yes, on the road to Columbiana.

H: When you first started teaching, your first year, you're talking about Royal? Did you teach all of the subjects or was it departmentalized?

K: I taught all of the subjects. Miss Centafonti and I were good friends--we had gone to college together--and she taught my art and I taught her music.

H: What grade was she teaching?

K: She was teaching second grade and I had third grade. There was only one of each grade. So she taught third grade art and I taught second and third grade music.

K: Well, were you in the same . . .

K: No, we had to leave. I was in this portable and she was in another portable. First and second were in a portable; third and fourth were in a portable; fourth, fifth, and sixth were in the main building, the brick building. All the schools were brick, for the main buildings, but the portables were wood, something like McKinley School, you know, like the portables back there.

H: Well, had the schools grown so much, sizewise?

K: Yes, the schools had grown so much sizewise because there were still immigrants coming in at the time and they were just growing so they put up these temporary buildings.

H: With these immigrants coming in, were they still coming in when you started teaching? Did you have any children that had a language problem?

K: No, but I had trouble with the sounds. It was "dis and dat and des and does" and I could not hardly get the "th" sound taught.

I want to tell you an interesting experience my first year. This one boy was so bad and his father owned the company. You know in the coal mining towns, in 1941, they were not working. Still they were working at other places and at Royal they still stayed on, but you know you owed your life to the company store. There was generally one baron that owned everything. I had the coal baron's son who owned the company store and controlled the city of Royal. His son was very mischievous and not very attentive so I said that he was going to get a paddling. He ran around the room. So I had the two bigger kids hold the door so he couldn't get out and I captured him and turned him over my knee and paddled him. Well, in the process he tore my silk stockings that I was wearing. So I marched down to the company store to tell Mr. Moody about his son and the fact that he would not listen and I had to take disciplinary measures and I expected a new pair of stocking for the damage. He gave them to me and promised that his son would be better.

H: You're talking about paddling. Were there many discipline problems?

K: Well, yes, there were discipline problems from the time I started. Now the paddle, I mean when you felt that you had to paddle . . . At our school and at Brier Hill, the principal did the paddling. The principal when I taught at Royal was a woman and she let you take care of your own discipline problems in the room and when you paddled you did it right in front of everybody--turn them over your knee and paddled them. When I went to school though, they called them up in front of the room, you put your head over your desk and then the teacher worked on you that way. But when the principal paddled for something . . . One boy had drawn an obscene picture on the board at recess time and Miss Allen reported it to the principal. I never heard such a paddling as that and the boy never came back to school. But it was very obscene. It would have done Hustler magazine good form.

H: So basically you handled your own discipline when you started teaching?

K: That's right. That's correct. You handled your own discipline problems.

H: Did you find a major difference when you came to Ohio?

- K: Yes. I found a major difference when I came to Ohio because Pennsylvania schools and the curriculum were very, very strict. These are the subjects you must teach and there were many more standards of achievement than Fairfield where I went to teach. Although Fairfield had an excellent staff and they were well trained--the teachers had been experienced there--and well versed in their subject matter. Of course, they had taught the same subject, you know like Evelyn Albright had taught first grade; she never changed from first grade. LuLu Bierman second grade, same thing. So I came into third grade and I think my discipline was quite different. I was much more free than some of the other teachers were, even though I did paddle if they got too bad. But I didn't have everybody sit hands folded in military style.
- H: How much were the parents involved in the schools at that time?
- K: Absolutely none at Royal unless you called them in. Now you did write to them and they did come in and they might come in to see you. I want to tell you though, in 1945 things had changed drastically. When I went back to Pennsylvania, parents were in all the time because it was the business about incorporating the schools. Now Fairfield had a very active PTA; that was the way the parents were involved. Monthly PTA meetings parents would come up and ask how their child was doing. If they saw you in the street, they asked you. And in Columbiana if you say some parents, they wanted to know how their child was getting along. But they came at the program days and they came to the PTA and they came if you invited them and you sent a letter home, but you didn't have regular scheduled conferences and things like that.

Now when I went back to Irwin there was a big fight because Irwin and North Huntington Township wanted to be consolidated. The big thing in Pennsylvania schools was they kept consolidating and consolidating until they got a horrendous big district like eight hundred in a class of the senior high school. The parents of North Huntington Township didn't want to be consolidated with Irwin. The PTA meetings would be packed and they were really angry, and had big fights over consolidating.

My principal was a woman then. She went walking through the hall with a paddle. She again was one that demanded you eat with her. Whatever the principal said, you did. The children ate in their rooms.

Now this was my setup then in 1945 at Shaw School, Irwin, Pennsylvania. I taught third and fourth, fifth and sixth, seventh and eighth in departmental setup. I mean I had



third and fourth in one room, fifth and sixth in one room, seventh and eighth. In reading, in geography, and I think, I had math. A man was hired and then he took the math and I had some other subject. I forget what it was.

H: So you had three different groups and three different subjects?

K: Right. The school board and the community were in a turmoil over a consolidation problem. The citizens of the town were upset. The school board was on the firing line, so the school ~~based~~ came to visit in the classroom too. They wanted a first-hand picture of the educational system. I didn't know at the time that I was hired in Irwin. I was teaching at Fairfield and I wanted to go to be with my brother to start a home and wait until Raymond came home from the service. He lived in Westmoreland County and I went home and we started a home together, my brother and myself, and then Ray came home from the service. I had written to Irwin about this job. Well, Mr. Piersol, the county superintendent, was visiting out in Cleveland and he came a day earlier--he was supposed to come on Friday, but he came on Thursday--to Fairfield School to see me teach. Then he hired me and I moved back to Irwin and taught at Shaw School, North Huntingdon Township. Then I went to teach at that school district, but again I was in turmoil because of the upsetting conditions.

Miss Cipra, our principal at Shaw School, never backed down an inch. She was a very strict disciplinarian and if the kids didn't follow what she said to do they were paddled. At noontime, if a child came down to the principal's classroom where we all ate and said that a child was misbehaving in the room, she would go back and she would draw a big circle and a little circle and you would put your nose in there and stand there for the time that was necessary. The parents would still come to school and they would sometimes argue with her about the discipline and she would state in no uncertain terms what she felt about it. Now I still correspond with this principal; she's in Florida now and retired. She thinks the biggest difference is in the parents trying to run the schools rather than the teachers and the administrators running the school; that's her theory. But she was very good, very strong in music. We had a lot of music and a lot of art.

H: Did you have extra instructors for these classes too?

K: Yes.

H: How often did they have these extra classes or was it part of the day . . .

K: It was once a week, for music and art. You had an art supervisor and a music supervisor in Irwin, Pennsylvania.

H: Did they have a physical education supervisor?

K: No.

H: And so you had to teach your own?

K: That's right.

H: When the children went out to recess were you responsible for being out there keeping an eye on them?

K: Right.

H: Was it one person?

K: No, all the teachers went out. You were responsible for your own group. At Fairfield when those children came running down the hall from the bus, you were in the room to greet them; they didn't go to any centralized place; they came directly to the classroom. Say it was quarter after eight, those were your children; you were responsible for them; you taught them. Now at Fairfield you had a music supervisor, but not an art teacher, so you taught your own art, but you had music. At noontime you took them out on the playground; you took them down to the cafeteria and you ate lunch with them; you came back in the room and you were responsible for getting them in the bus line. I mean there wasn't a sharing of duties, you took care of your room. Now remember at Fairfield there was pretty low enrollment. One year I had nineteen. The year I had your sister I had a big room, but again it varied. Columbiana, when I came back to Columbiana, I had 38 second graders. Columbiana always had a big enrollment, like 38 or 40 in a classroom.

I liked Columbiana so well I persuaded Ray to come out to Columbiana. So we came out and we had an apartment. I taught in Columbiana that year and became pregnant in January. School was over May 31st in those days. Then I decided that I would resign after I had Jim and I stayed home a year. Then I decided that wasn't for me and I wanted to go back to teaching. Ray's mother was with us, so she could take care of Jim and I went back to teaching at Leetonia where I stayed for thirteen years.

That was an interesting experience because at that school I had six superintendents in the thirteen year span. All these superintendents were interested in getting their masters degree and in some cases working on their Doctor's degree, so therefore, they were trying everything in the book on the teachers to see how well it worked. Mr. Hayes was the most dynamic of all the superintendents. Mr. Rummel was the outgoing superintendent. Mr. Hayes said he didn't come to fill his shoes, he came to fill his own shoes and

he proved it by building the new school. The teachers helped in the planning of it.

H: Which school?

K: The Orchard Hill School. He had the campus type school which of course energywise wasn't too good because the primary level was down where old south side was. The campus type Orchard Hill had the primary and middle school and the junior high. There again, we had a gym, but you had to teach your own physical education. You had showers--you took showers after your gym--which we haven't done since that time. But Mr. Hayes was great on the correlation of everything. He didn't believe in teaching English from a textbook. You were to write a newspaper or compose a book, very revolutionary for his times. For example, in the new school you didn't have a teacher's desk, you had a countertop just like a kitchen and you were expected to mingle around and you had tables in your little groups and committees and sub-committees and he brought his assistant superintendent, Lee McMurren, who wasn't quite as radical. So he sort of provided the stabilizer that was needed.

H: Did the teachers ever get desks?

K: I don't think they ever did at Orchard Hill. We never did when I was there, but when I went over to the junior high . . .

At Leetonia, I came in at first and second grade and then I just progressed up the ladder--second to third, third to fourth, fourth combination. Then in 1954, I became pregnant again, in second grade. That's why I didn't take a second grade ever, because in both second grades, I became pregnant. Remember, it was second grade in Columbiana also in 1947.

Vivian, our daughter, was born in August. Six weeks later, I went back to teach in Leetonia on a half-day basis. As there was an overflow of students in third and fifth grades, our superintendent decided to have a third-fifth combination room. The kindergarten teacher taught a half-day, and I the other. What an interesting setup that proved to be.

Of interest during my pregnancy was the time we put on the super musical, "Pinocchio", at the high school auditorium where we had to walk our children up the steep hill with my huffing and puffing due to surplus weight. Another teacher was in the same condition so we could share our clumsiness at that time. (Laughter)

H: How long have you been teaching now?

K: Thirty-eight years.

H: So you have seen some major changes in education?

K: Right.

H: Which ones stand out in your mind?

K: Well, I think probably the training of teachers and the parent's attitudes toward school. In my early years of teaching, a teacher was held in great respect. In the coal mining town the important thing was to bring home a good report card and what the teacher said went and if got a paddling at school, nine cases out of ten you got one at home. Now we have seen it come down to where teachers are held, I would say, modest on a scale of zero to ten, probably three to five. Whereas the teacher is not, maybe he or she should be the extreme authority that they were, but the complete lack of respect for teachers I don't think is good because it has rubbed off on the pupils. In other words, what the children used to do in high school, they do in junior high and what they used to do in junior high has now come down to the middle school and what the middle school used to do has now come down to the primary. You didn't have open defiance in primary grades. I mean you still went to school in the primary and you thought all the teachers were the greatest. I think the teacher still should try to work up to the greatest because, after all, you are a model for the children and that's the way I was trained to teach.

H: Now you also mentioned something about the parents?

K: Yes, now the parents would come to talk to you, but they wouldn't say as one parent said this year, you know, criticizing certain methods that I had in the classroom. I mean we all realize we're individuals in working. The parents read more extensively, watch the specials of television, et cetera, but they do not have their bachelor's or master's degree in education. I think the media has been largely to hold for this. They publish articles of education; sometimes they have the facts and sometimes they don't. Parents read these periodicals and they think they have all the answers to why Johnny can't read and why basics aren't taught. Again it used to be in teaching that you felt . . . I felt that I couldn't fulfill what the professors have taught me. Now I feel I can't fulfill what the parents expect of me. They expect me to take their child and take care of him in a different way than what I think I was trained to do. It's hard enough to teach the children of today without the constant pressure of parents.

H: What would you like to see changed, or how would you like things to be changed?

K: Stop overloading the curriculum. Make sure basics are taught well with all available resources at hand. Make sure that all directing personnel have had experience in the language, arts and math areas so that they know what to expect when they observe. Do not embrace a new approach to teaching of the basics until it has been tried and proven. I'm referring to new math, open classroom, all project method, et cetera.

If you want to try new methods, give parents the opportunity of an alternative--the traditional structured classroom or the new approach and tell the parents what will happen in each.

Longer teacher training than one quarter. All visual materials carefully screened. Films and filmstrips are fine but they cannot replace teaching on a one-to-one basis.

Also, training for parents. Since teachers feel that discipline starts in the home, that's where the colleges and universities could help as well as the schools in providing seminars on how to deal effectively with children.

We are dealing today with a whole new concept of single parent homes, both parents working, of baby-sitters in control. Children need guidance. They want it and deserve it.

Public relations for the schools should be a prime concern. That doesn't mean we need to have parents in and out of our classroom all the time. We should let them know we're in charge. We know what we're doing when their child needs help, let them know what they can do. Tell them, "Here are the facts to drill upon. Here's the books to read. Here's his Dolch word list for study every day."

I still think home visits in the primary grades were a good idea.

H: Is there anything else? We have a few minutes left. Is there anything else you think that we have missed that you would like to make a few final comments on?

K: The sixties were as turbulent for me as the rest of the country. Coming from a new school at Orchard Hill, Leetonia, to the old school of Fourth Street, I failed to see or appreciate what the community felt of this historic and yes, beautiful architecture. I saw the unsafe conditions, the creaking steps, the leaking ceiling. Added to this was the "permissive" discipline or so it seemed to me of the school. The intercom was in each room where the lovely golden voice of our principal would report on buttons found and various other nonessentials, or so I thought at the time. I wanted

to go into my classroom and teach and not have all these interruptions.

Also, at this time I was in school politics--secretary of one organization and president of another--also on a state committee which added to adjusting to a new community and a new school system. It was hard.

Mr. Smith, our superintendent, was trying to put in the non-graded school system which he had observed in Leetonia, but it did not work in Salem. Primarily, because the teachers were not well enough informed on its workings.

Also, at Fourth Street, the classes were grouped in high, average, and low. Only certain teachers could have the high groups. So coming in new, I had the average in sixth grade until one of the sixth grade teachers got married. I moved up the ladder which was a real joy to find a classroom eager to learn. This was short-lived, however, as a terrific windstorm hit Salem and Fourth Street on February 19, 1967. Shortly after this, Mr. Wood, our superintendent, condemned the school, and all of the teachers and pupils were transferred to churches or, as in the case of sixth grade where I was teaching, to the junior high school building to finish out the 1966-1967 school term.

In the fall of 1967, I was transferred to the junior high to teach seventh grade science. To this day I still don't understand why this happened as my college science courses met only the minimum standards and many others wanted this position with better qualifications than I had. Again school politics reared its ugly head. My husband left the Salem Industrial Arts program at the Salem Senior High in a dispute with Mr. Wood, the superintendent. I suppose he thought he could say "good-bye" to me as well with this difficult assignment, but I studied every night and survived seventh grade science.

When the 1968-1969 term rolled around, we had a new superintendent, Mr. Pond. I had a conference with him and he agreed to let me go back to elementary with my old gang of Fourth Street which was being transferred from their church buildings to the new school at Southeast.

Before we could start at Southeast, we had to spend six weeks at Reilly Elementary School until our building was completed. Fourth and fifth grades were assigned to the cafeteria. Mr. Miller and I (fifth grades) decided on the team-teaching approach and we continued this at our new building until 1978 with trying many ways to make it work. Mr. Miller and I worked very well together. I would consider these years to be my happiest even though the new school was noisy with the gym in the center of the school and walls between classrooms where sound traveled easily.

Again in 1978 when school dismissed, our principal, Mr. Jones, said there would be only one fifth grade as a result of decreasing enrollment and one of us fifth grade teachers would have to take fourth grade. I elected to take fourth grade with the understanding that there may be a realignment of the school district as a result of the defeat of the school levy to build a new school at McKinley.

As was predicted, our Southeast School was changed from a neighborhood school of kindergarten to sixth to a middle school with four grades each of fourth, fifth, and sixth graders, plus two special education classes. Added to this new situation of starting all over again with new teachers, a new curriculum, et cetera, had been the death of my husband in February, 1977.

Again, I had almost a repeat of the first year of teaching. As I look back now, the traumatic death of losing your mate (Lou Gehrig's disease), plus the inner resentment that I felt at being locked into fourth grade, when there were four fifth grades, really upset me.

Fortunately, having been through upheavals all along my 38 years of teaching, I did bounce back and adjust. During the 1979-1980 school year, I found fourth grade delightful. It was hard for everyone to adjust to the middle school so there were many who could lend a sympathetic ear and give help. Teaching is still the greatest regardless of all its ups and downs.

H: Fantastic.

END OF INTERVIEW