Preface

This manuscript is the product of a tape recorded interview conducted by Marjorie Taylor for the Oral History Office on April 16, 1973. Kathie Back transcribed the tapes and Marjorie Taylor edited the transcript.

Teaching has occupied more than twenty years of Ruth K. Brasell's life. Her career began at the small country school of West Point, Illinois, after she attended Western Illinois Teacher's College in 1910. Following a 14 year interruption, she resumed teaching in 1928. In 1948, she witnessed the merger of her country school with the larger, in-town district of Arenzville. She continued to teach in Arenzville until her retirement.

Mrs. Brasell recalls the uniqueness of a one-room schoolhouse where children ate winter lunches warmed on top of the coal furnace, while teacher served as janitor, nurse, and surrogate mother. Between her marriage in 1914 and 1928 when she was widowed, she was a full-time farm wife. She recounts those days; the raising of Rhode Island Reds and selling their eggs, her early failure--then success--at breadmaking, and the preparation of thresher dinners for up to fifteen hungry men.

Readers of the oral history memoir should bear in mind that it is a transcript of the spoken word, and that the interviewer, narrator and editor sought to preserve the informal, conversational style that is inherent in such historical sources. Sangamon State University is not responsible for the factual accuracy of the memoir, nor for views expressed therein; these are for the reader to judge.

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Ruth K. Brasell, Arenzville, Illinois, April 16, 1973

Marjorie Taylor, Interviewer.

Q: Mrs. Brasell, I would like for you to begin by telling us something about your own educational background, and perhaps it too included one-room schools, and then your professional training as you prepared for teaching. Did you go to a country school?

A: Oh no.

Q: Where did you go to school?

A: I went to school in Plymouth, Illinois. Then we moved to Beardstown and from the third grade on, I continued there until I graduated in the spring of 1910. And in 1910 I attended Western Illinois Teacher's College. Then I continued year after year after year--well, I wouldn't say that either--for several years until I was married. I was married in 1914. I taught for three and one-half years. Was married January 27th. Of course, I married a farmer and I quit teaching then. Had I been living in this age, I would have continued teaching even though I was married; but at that time I thought, and my husband thought, that a farmer's wife should be a farmer's wife. He married me to take care of me, not to help make the living. (laughter) So that ended my teaching career then. But in 1914 . . .

Q: Where were you teaching at that time?

A: West Point, Illinois. It's straight out the boulevard from Beardstown about ten miles.

Q: And you quit teaching in the middle of the year then?

A: Yes I did, in January.

Q: Did you come here to this house then?

A: Oh, no. No, we lived on the farm. My husband was a farmer and I enjoyed farm life immensely. I've always loved the country and loved teaching in the country. The school was beautiful at West Point with timber all around it, the country children coming in. It was a great joy to me. Then, after my husband's death in 1928, I began teaching again at West Point where I began in the first place. And I continued there until . . . for twenty years and there I had all eight grades. However, not all at the same time because some of the grades were combined. I found it a great pleasure to teach in a country school. I had always gone to school in town and I really feel that a teacher who has never taught a rural school has really lost something valuable.

It's wonderful to teach in a country school and have the children of all ages and one might think, "Well, how could you do it?" But where there's a will, there's a way. I seemed to fit right in with it so nicely that I noticed that even the little ones-we didn't have workbooks then as we do now, you know, but the little ones learned so much from the older ones. For instance, one day-it was at recess or the noon intermission--I walked past the desk of a little boy who was still sitting there. He was in the lower grade, I think second, maybe third, with a book open to a poem that he just loved, but either the seventh or eighth grade had, I forget which it was. But anyway, it was about a horse and that boy loved horses. I was amazed, extremely amazed when I saw that the child could read it, but he was just enthralled with his story and he kept on reading. I didn't think he could, but he could read it and to this day Wilbur still deals with horses. I venture to say you know him--Wilber Parlier.

Q: Oh, yes. Now he has a couple of boys doesn't he?

A: One, I think just one. I met just one--David. Does he have two?

Q: Well, then I'm wrong. I know who you mean. Back in the second grade?

A: Yes, oh yes. I had him all through the eight grades, also his brother, Melvin.

Q: And he picked his hobbies early, didn't he?

A: Yes! Oh, he has show horses; he goes all over, and Marilyn, the sister--they only had one sister--she's interested, too. She has a very valuable horse and he was showing his horses some place or other and was unable to have help and Marilyn went down to help him. Very capable.

Q: So it was a horse that really taught him to read?

A: I presume, and you should have heard that boy read it. It was marvelous!

Q: Is that right?

A: It was just in him.

Q: He saw a need to read?

A: Yes.

Q: How many pupils would you have in this country school?

A: I'm afraid to say for sure. I thought it was between 32 and 34, but let's not exaggerate. I'll say 32--the most I had at any time--and I believe that is correct; but, of course, as the years went on, it dwindled down until we only had a few and then we had to go in with Unit 27.

A: Is that Arenzville?

A: Yes. Of course, Unit 27 hadn't existed all this time, but I always considered myself in Unit 27 because it takes in that area and more, too, of course.

Q: Did you go to summer school?

A: Oh yes, year after year after year after year I went to summer school. Most of my credits are from Western Illinois, and then I took extension work with ISNU [Illinois State Normal University] and University of Illinois, and then . . . Manhattan University of Kansas.

Q: University of Kansas at Manhattan, I guess.

A: Yes. And, another course . . .

Q: Did you work for a degree, or did you work for courses you felt would help you in your teaching?

A: I worked for the courses that I thought would help me in what I was teaching. That's what I worked for, and I enjoyed it.

Q: Well, you saw something that would help, and that's what you did.

A: Oh, yes.

Q: Did you go up to Macomb and stay in the summers?

A: Oh yes. There was only one year that I went the whole summer, that is the two terms. But year after year after year after year, I took extra work.

Q: You probably had more credits than needed for a degree if they'd just been spread around a little differently.

A: No, I didn't. I called Mr. Brim this morning to make sure. I wondered if I was very sure about it, so I called the superintendent in the year of 1927, of Triopa [consolidated school district], and he said 102-1/3.

Q: That's not far off.

A: No, but I was always sorry that I didn't have a degree but I had--not boasting at all--but I had a marvelous experience that was a marvelous help.

Q: I think people were fortunate to have had you for a teacher.

A: Well, thank you. I've been told that many, many times.

Q: I've heard that many times. As someone said, "You must get Mrs. Brasell, she's had such wonderful experiences teaching." (laughter)

A: Well, I loved it. Any teacher must love the children and love their work and put their whole life into it, and that's what I did.

Q: Do you think that teaching has become such a business now that we've lost that little touch?

A: I think some of them may have, not all though. I'm very positive of one that hasn't lost it. (laughter)

Q: Your daughter.

A: Yes. She's a very diligent teacher, very, very, very much so. She's dedicated. There's no mistake about it.

Q: Could you tell me about the curriculum that you had in the country?

A: I can't see that there was much difference. We had a good curriculum; we had a wonderful library. Our library was said to be one of the best in the county, of the rural schools. My directors were very, very good to get what I asked for until we were well supplied. I had wonderful directors, they cooperated so.

Q: Who were some of them?

A: William Niestradt was one of the first ones, and Mr. Hackman--I forget his first name, he's long gone now. Earl Hackman's father. Later, Earl was a director. And William Winkleman, and then later after they passed on, there was Arthur Niestradt, Ed Dahman, Amelia Talkemeyer, George Winkleman, Earl Hackman . . . and that's really all I recall.

Q: They probably stayed on for quite some time.

A: Oh, they did. They did. They were very good and conscientious directors. They kept the school up and, of course, when I first taught, I taught in the old building. When I went back to teaching again after my husband died, there had been a new building put up. It was a lovely school, however, two years ago it was burned.

Q: Did this new building have facilities for heating food at noon, or how did you handle that?

A: Yes, we heated food at noon. Our furnace--there was a place on top where we could set something, and I used a bucket to put water in, and the children would bring whatever food they wanted warmed in jars. At recess, I'd put that bucket up there and put the jars in, and when noon came, they had a nice, hot lunch.

Q: It wasn't any bother to anybody either.

A: Oh no, no, and they enjoyed it so much. (laughter) I took a grate over--it was raised up along the edge, you know--and I could put that grate across there. I think I took it out of my old icebox. I made toast for the youngsters. The government would give us butter and honey, the best honey you ever could have eaten, and those children how they

brought their bread--no, they brought their own butter, I believe--bread, butter, and honey. It kept me kind of busy making the toast, but I didn't mind. They loved it and I loved to do it and the smell of the toast was good. (laughter)

Q: Well, this was the surplus commodities during the depression time.

A: Yes.

Q: Did they ever assign a cook to your school?

A: Oh, no. No.

Q: I know some of the schools did. Well, you just handled it yourself then.

A: Oh yes. Oh, yes, another director was Henry Hansmeier. Lula Hansmeier, perhaps you knew her, she taught--Lula Roegge now. She taught, too. Henry was one of the directors. However, those commodities were cut off because one of the directors didn't approve of it, because well, somebody--the taxpayers--were paying for that.

Q: You weren't very happy about that, were you?

A: No, it didn't matter to me, but to the children because they enjoyed that honey. It was first grade honey, now. (laughs)

Q: Not much money involved either, was there?

A: No, and the children enjoyed it. It was good for them. (laughter)

Q: Did you have water in the school building?

A: No. No, we brought it from the pump, and about the washing facilities, I heated water also. I had a pitcher there and I'd heat water in the bucket and put in in the pitcher. So at noon, when they washed their hands, I poured the warm water over their hands. We didn't have paper towels then, they brought their own towel, and they had clean hands to eat their lunch.

Q: What about their water, their cups? Did each child bring a cup, or did you have paper cups?

A: Yes, each child brought his own cup.

Q: Did you have any program for immunization or anything of that kind?

A: No, we didn't.

Q: And no public health nurse to come around?

A: No.

Q: Well, I think you took care of them, though. (laughter)

A: Well, I think we never had anything contagious in the school that I know of, unless you might say pinkeye. I just remember one or two had pinkeye, I believe. One boy had it and, bless his heart, he didn't want to acknowledge he had pinkeye, so he thought that he'd gotten gasoline in his eye. (laughter) By the way, I had the boy's three children in school, too. And my neighbor that just moved out to a new home a short time ago--I have new ones here now--I had him and his other brother and two sisters in school. Then, when Bob moved over here, I had their eight children in school, but I had them after I went to Arenzville school, but I had all eight of them.

Q: What family was that?

A: Bob Clark's. Bob was in the bank in Arenzville.

Q: It doesn't sound like you ever had any disciplinary problems.

A: Well, I didn't to speak of, I don't believe. I can't think of any, at all. We got along real nicely. Oh, sometimes they'd get out of line. Of course, I had to talk to them, but not punish them. They knew I liked them; they knew I loved them, and they'd come across and I'd talk to them. Oh, there was one boy, one day he got quite out of humor because I asked him to be quiet when I was explaining some arithmetic problem to another child, and he continued and I asked him again, and he went out and banged the door. I don't remember if I talked to him about it or not. But anyway, for a few days he wouldn't speak to me, and each morning when he came to school I always greeted him with a cheery, "Good morning." Finally, he came across and he was one of my best friends. After he finished the eighth grade, he'd go by with the farming implements and he'd wave the biggest, you know.

Q: He probably wished he was back.

A: I'd venture to say. You have to take into consideration a great many things, and look over a lot, and have compassion, and feel that the way the child feels--kind of take their part into your own heart and think it over. But that didn't amount to anything.

Q: I've heard stories about the bad boys who would go to the winter term of school. Have you ever heard those stories?

A: (laughter) I've heard of them, but I never had any that just came to the winter school. (laughter)

Q: I wonder when that practice stopped. You said you began teaching in 1910.

A: We had six month school to begin with and, of course, there was no spring term. I don't remember when it was, then we had seven months, and then we went on until at last we had nine months.

Q: What was the pay in 1910?

A: The marvelous sum of forty dollars.

Q: Since you, yourself, didn't attend one of these very early country schools, you just don't know about the bad boys in the winter who put the . . .

A: No. I had some good sized boys, but not overage, not oversized. Some were pretty good sized for their age, but not oversized.

Q: What percentage would you say went on to high school at that time? Was it the general thing to go on to high school, or to go back to the farm?

A: It was the general thing to go on to high school, but I would be afraid to venture on the percentage. (pause) I think away back when . . . I would say not more than 25 percent in 1910.

Q: Now, something else-this was in the Arenzville community-would they go to the parochial school for a year, to the Lutheran school? Was there much of that?

A: Not a great deal, no. Now, let's see. There were--I had two children over here that came first to me--the Wessler children--and then went on to parochial school, before they went into high school. That was after I left in 1910. They didn't go to parochial school until after that. Well, and not immediately after because I remember seeing Albert. When I went past school, Albert was standing there, in class, standing up, and he looked out as I went by. (laughter)

Q: Well, that would be preceding confirmation then, that they'd go to the school?

A: Yes.

Q: I'm wondering how closely you cooperated with other schools. Were there any organizations among rural teachers?

A: No, not especially. We had our regular reading circle meetings, and then that included a great area of Cass County, and we always enjoyed them. Of course, [at] the reading circle meetings, we'd give book reports and so on. I remember when I had my first book report to give. I was rather nervous about it until it came time to give it, and then I wasn't at all. I could have talked and talked and talked.

Q: Do you remember the book?

A: No.

Q: Were those books that related to the philosophy of education.

A: Oh yes, yes.

Q: Techniques of teaching?

A: Oh yes, and early educators and the like of that, but I don't remember the one that I happened to report on at that time.

Q: Did the list come from the county superintendent's office--the books that were to be approved for reading?

A: I'm sure it did.

Q: Now, this would be in addition to the regular teacher's institute?

A: Oh, yes. Yes.

Q: So it was really an in-training situation.

A: Oh, yes. Yes.

Q: Was there cooperation and exchange with students, for games and picnics and things of that kind?

A: No.

Q: You each did your own?

A: That's right. We did our own.

Q: Would you have special programs during the year?

A: Always. Always. We always had a big Christmas program, and they were lovely. There was a teacher from Chicago or a suburb of Chicago. She had a relative that lived there in our district . . . it seems to me a relative of Richard Niestradt. You know Richard, don't you? No, no, no. Maybe a sister-in-law of Richard's, she was the one who came. She said it was the best rural program that she had ever seen.

Our Christmas programs were based on the Christmas idea, not Santa Claus. Our programs would have done for a church any place. The people loved it and the children did so beautifully. I had some very, very good singers--[among my students] Katherine Niestradt, Mrs. James Dick, and there were many others. And among the boys, I had some boys with wonderful voices. Oh, how they sang! Our programs were simply beautiful. When Mr. Chapman was our superintendent, I invited him to come to our program, and he did and he was pleased. I think he was greatly surprised.

Q: Did you have a piano there in the building then?

A: Yes. Yes, and Katherine's mother would come to play for us--I didn't play--Katherine's mother would come and play for us day after day after day. Oh, we did so much practicing to have it just right. I remember when we had "We Three Kings of Orient Are," you know, and how they marched around and all, and, of course, the manger and all, and the little girls at each end of the manger. Oh, it was beautiful! And the wise men and all. It was beautiful, just beautiful. Mary was so good--Katherine's

mother--so good to come and practice, to play for the children to practice, and Richard was good, too. He made the shepherd's crooks. After West Point was closed, I gave the crooks to our St. Peter's Church and they used them there. Well, I guess they were still there and burned when our church burned.

Q: That was a tragedy.

A: Oh yes, but we have a beautiful church now.

Q: I've seen it from the outside and it's lovely.

A: Come sometime and visit us. We have a marvelous minister there now.

Q: I heard him play the organ one time. I thought he was just tremendous--he and his wife both.

A: Oh yes, he and Mrs. Wegehoft, too. They're both very talented.

Q: You're fortunate.

A: I should say. We have a marvelous minister.

Q: Would you have refreshments at this Christmas program?

A: No, we didn't have refreshments. Of course, the children always got a good-sized treat, but we didn't have refreshments.

However, occasionally in the country school, we'd have a potluck dinner, and, oh, how the children enjoyed the potluck dinner. And, of course, there were some of the dishes to be heated, you know, and we could heat them. They enjoyed them beyond measure and, of course, there were always things left over. And one time one of the children said, "Well, we have enough for dinner tomorrow. Why don't we just leave it for tomorrow?" And we did. It kept very nicely. It was in the winter, you see, so it kept cold and nice.

Q: Would these dinners be at noon or at night?

A: At noon.

Q: Parents would come in and share the lunch, then.

A: No, just the children. They had potluck. I know there was one little girl who had a very delicate appetite, (laughter) but she would eat. One boy--he lives in Alaska now--when he came back, he came to school to see me, too. (laughter) Bless his heart, I just loved him--he and his brother, too. We had homemade ice cream one time and so he told this little girl--it was time for the dessert--and he said, "You can't have it until you clean up your plate, until you eat everything on it," and she cleaned it up. Her mother was thrilled to hear it because she really had a delicate appetite, and she was so happy to hear how she did eat. If they happened to have a delicate appetite when we had those potluck dinners, they didn't have a delicate appetite.

Q: That took care of it. (laughter)

A: And, oh, the children just got a world of joy out of it.

Q: Did you have box supper, too, sometimes?

A: In the early years. In the first years I taught, we had box suppers then, and I don't know if I had more than one or not. I remember I had one box supper. Of course, we had a program. If you hadn't mentioned it, I would have forgotten that we ever had a box supper. (laughs)

Q: The Christmas program was your big program?

A: Oh, yes.

Q: Would you have other programs when the parents would come in in the evening during the year?

A: We didn't have any evening programs. You see, we had no lights.

Q: Well, what did you do on dark days?

A: Well, we had plenty of window space. (laughter) I was very proud of our West Point building. All along the north side were the big windows, you know, and then on the south were the smaller windows. I don't believe that we ever suffered for light. I think we always had plenty of light. I know no one ever complained. I never even thought of it, because we weren't accustomed to it at school, you know.

Q: Did you have a lamp or something for an emergency?

A: No, we didn't.

Q: Nothing?

A: No.

Q: What kind of fuel did you burn in your furnace?

A: Coal.

Q: And who carried the coal?

A: I did.

Q: And carried out the ashes?

A: Yes.

Q: And who swept the floor?

A: I did.

Q: You were really everything.

A: I never felt myself abused either. I wouldn't want anyone to say, "Oh, the poor thing," no. I enjoyed everything I did. I kept my schoolroom clean, and there was many a time when I left the school that the first star was shining. Much of the time I walked. I loved to walk. I cut through the field, across the fields. Later on, I drove, or when my daughter was teaching--when June was teaching--she would take me first and then come and get me. Maybe she came and got me and maybe she didn't. It all depended. She would if I wished her to, but I liked to walk. I liked to walk through the country. I loved the country so that--I'd see all sorts of things, or saw all sorts of things along the way that were of interest. I didn't walk along as if I were just blind to everything around me, but it was beautiful and I enjoyed every bit of it. It didn't make any difference if it was raining--I was prepared for it. If it was snow, I was prepared for it, and it made no difference.

Q: Were you ever forced to close school because of the deep snow?

A: No . . . maybe one time. That could have been on a Friday, I don't remember. I can't say for sure, but there was one time when such a bad storm came--a blizzard I would say--there was only one little boy there, that lived near, and we watched the snow that day as it drifted and drifted up as high as the fence. Well, that evening after school, his father came for him. I can't remember how he got through, but anyway, he insisted that I go home with them. And I did, and I stayed all night; then my son got me the next day. But if there was school the next day--if it was a school day--we didn't have school. I've kind of forgotten whether or not that was a Friday or not, but that was the only time it was snowbound.

Q: Well, that's quite a record, I would say. Did the children mostly walk to school, or did people bring them?

A: Oh, in the early days they always walked. Later on though, they brought them, many of them, but there were many of them walked, too. Walking was good for them.

Q: Didn't hurt a thing.

A: That's what I always thought, and when my children went to school--they went to West Point, too, the first year--they walked most of the time when the weather was good, otherwise their father would take them.

Q: Is West Point up there on that Arenzville-Meredosia road?

A: Oh no! It's out this way, north and west of here.

Q: I wasn't sure. What school was that up there on that road? Was that Waggoner Bridge?

A: No, that's not Waggoner Bridge. Waggoner Bridge isn't there anymore. That was . . . I was going to say Lakeview, but no. Well, I can't think of the name of that school now . . . over there on the bluff.

Q: Well, they're nearly all gone now. Of course, West Point burned last year, didn't it?

A: Yes, and oh, that was such a pity. My brother-in-law bought that--well he owns that farm there and he bought the school and all. While it stood, Ora kept the yard well mowed, well taken care of. He's very particular about things of that kind and he always kept it in good condition.

Q: Is it on the same road as St. Peter's Church, only down further?

A: No, you go on further and to get to it, you go past St. Peter's and the first turn to the left, you cross the bridge, and on past the first house there on the left, and then the first road in through--past what used to be a timber but I think they've cleared that timber off--and there's a road back, then, to the West Point area.

Q: Now, how far is that from here? How far would you be walking?

A: Well, when I walked, I'd estimate it a mile and a half perhaps, cutting across through the field. But around the road--well, I never did walk around. When we drove, we did if the road was too muddy through the field. But going through the field, I would say possibly a mile and a half, I think at least that much.

Q: What time would you leave home in the morning?

A: Well, (laughter) in the wintertime I left about sunup, but I always got to school early. I wanted to have the schoolroom warm when the children got there, and there was always things to do.

Q: Would you bank the fire and it would still be there in the morning?

A: Oh, yes. Yes, I always banked the fire, and then in winter I would go on Sunday afternoon and build a new fire and have it so it would be warm Monday morning.

Q: They just didn't know what they had when they had you. (laughter)

A: Well, I loved it. That was just my life, my children and school. That took up my time.

Q: I'm sure it did. Now, when did the talk of consolidation begin? When did people begin considering that?

A: When they first began considering it, I didn't like the idea at all, because I was afraid it would take us in, and I loved West Point! Let's see, we went in--I believe it was 1948 that we met in the town--and I think they began talking about it in 1946 anyway. I know over at Western one summer, Dr. Bailey talked about the wonderful buses and all that, and I wanted to stop my ears. I didn't want to hear it, about our children being taken into town, you know. I had to listen, but I wanted to tell him how wonderful a school we had, because in our class there were many told about their schools and about the work that the teachers did to get

their buildings ready for school. I was amazed that I said nothing about it, but our directors always took care of our school, and I was amazed. But that was over, I think, in Schuyler County or Hancock, one or the other, that those teachers were talking about, and I was amazed at the work that they did to get their schools ready.

Q: What kind of work was this?

A: Well, I think one even spoke of doing some plastering. I don't know how much, maybe patching the plastering; I don't remember what all it was. At the dentist's office one day, one teacher said she put a great part of her salary back into the school. Well, I didn't! I put my energy into the school, but not my salary. I had three children to bring up, because when the children's father died, my son was only a freshman in high school and he was young then, because he graduated when he was nineteen and he was only--sixteen or seventeen. I won't say for sure, but he was young and I had my two daughters in school, you see. I had those three children to bring up, so I couldn't have put my salary back into my school, and my directors wouldn't have heard of it anyway.

Q: Well, what kind of salary did anybody get that they expected them to do all that?

A: I wondered. I didn't ask the lady; I didn't know her. We just talked about school and I didn't even know the lady's name, but she was in Dr. Pence's dentist office and I was too. But those ladies that did so much to get their building ready, they were telling about it in class, you know, and I thought, "Well, I don't do that. My directors always see to that."

Q: What did Dr. Bailey say about their putting as much on the building?

A: I don't remember any reply that he made. If he made a reply, I don't remember what it was.

Q: They'd have to clean the building and I suppose do some painting.

A: I suppose. However, my children and I--after their father died and I went back--my children and I always went before school began and gave the building a thorough cleaning, but then everything else was taken care of.

Q: Were you paid extra for being janitor or was that just included?

A: Oh no, that was included with my salary. I didn't ask for anything more. When we were under the supervision of Unit 27 for one or two years, I was suppose to have received remuneration for taking children back and forth, because they always rode with me when I drove, you know, and I think janitorial work was included in that, but I never realized it.

Q: (laughter) Oh, it was one of those promises.

A: It was one of those promises. So I guess that was overlooked and I didn't even mention it.

Q: Then, when the consolidation came, did all the teachers go into town, or just those who were interested?

A: I'm not sure if they all went in. Well, I don't think so, because there wouldn't have been enough positions for them. But it was understood . . .

End of Side One, Tape One

Q: . . . and about the teachers who were in the country and the things that they did following consolidation and where they went.

Q: Well, I don't really know what they did, but when the Unit 27 board went to see my directors about taking our school into Arenzville, of course, they felt much as I did. But it was to be done, it was one of those things. So, my board made an understanding with them that when West Point went, I went too, and that I was to stay and not just for one year and then be turned off. So I stayed. Twenty years. That is, until I broke my hip. My principal said, "If that'd happened at school, I'd have died."

Q: How many children were there at West Point when that happened, when you transferred?

A: I think perhaps ten or twelve, something like that. I don't remember the exact number.

Q: Was the decline in enrollment one of the reasons that . . .

A: Oh yes, that was the reason. And then, too, another reason in forming this unit, they wanted to bring all the country schools in. Despite the enrollment, they wanted to bring them all in to one unit.

Q: Was this good or bad?

A: Well, I think it was a good thing. It was very hard for me to think so for a while, because I loved the country and I loved West Point so. I loved the country system. But as I looked at it afterwards, I knew it was a good thing . . . although I feel sorry for the urban teacher who never had a chance to teach in the country and know what a rural school is really like and teach there long enough to find out what it really was like. Because, in my eyes, it was a wonderful experience I had. Now, all rural schools weren't alike, but mine was marvelous.

Q: If they could have all been like yours, perhaps we'd never had changed.

A: (laughs) Perhaps so. My directors were so good, so kind. I remember at first, they'd always come--the three would come on the day that I was to receive my monthly check. I remember one day, the first one that came, and he called me "Sissy," and I thought, "Bless his heart."

Q: Was that your very first school?

A: Yes. I had his children and grandchildren and great-grandchildren. The great-grandchild I had in the second grade.

Q: Now, what family was that.

A: Winkelman. Winkleman. This was Junior Winkelman's. Yes, Dianne was the granddaughter--Junior Winkleman's daughter Dianne.

Q: Four generations of Winklemans!

A: Yes . . . No, three generations.

Q: And then a school board member at the beginning to head it off.

A: Oh yes, yes. But this little Dianne, oh she was such a darling. I just loved her, and do yet. I receive birthday cards from her. She's just darling. Her mother is a teacher. Perhaps you know her--Helen Winkleman?

Q: No, I know the Garland Winkleman family, Garland and Emily.

A: Oh, do you? Well, Garland is one of that very same family.

Q: He was one of yours?

A: No, I didn't have Garland. Garland . . . Well, let's see . . . I don't know if he is Lawrence's brother and Al's, or if he is Bill Winkleman's son. I can't remember, but I didn't have Garland. I think he must have been the baby of the family. I had Lawrence, though.

Q: He has a lovely family.

A: Yes. his son lives up here in this trailer, right up the road. Oh, Dianne is such a darling. Oh, I just loved her. Her mother is a home ec. [economics] teacher at Triopa. She's such a nice person.

Q: Was it much of an adjustment when you moved into town, plus the students?

A: No, not that the students bothered me at all, but everything just seemed so different. But I had a wonderful principal, Alvin Hiedbrink. Perhaps you remember him. He was wonderful and a wonderful help. Oh, he gave me so much encouragement, and problems would come up and so on--no problems that amounted to anything--but he was encouraging.

Q: It was just a different situation. If you wanted paper, you went to the office to get it.

A: Yes, but they were always very free with it, I never had to beg for it. But as far as the principals were concerned, there were ever so many principals while I was teaching in Arenzville, but I liked every one of them and we got along beautifully together.

Q: Which grade did you teach?

A: Second. First, I had second and a half of third, and that continued for about two years or maybe three, and then the board decided that they could afford another teacher, so that the grades wouldn't have to be split. One thing that made my work so pleasant was such fine principals--just very, very good principals. And we got along beautifully as well as with the superintendents. I never had a word with any of them, only a kind word.

Q: Were there eighth grade teachers in Arenzville, then?

A: Yes.

Q: But there wasn't any kindergarten then, was there?

A: Oh no. No.

Q: When did that come along?

A: Let's see . . . quite a number of years ago. I believe at least ten years ago. Emily Shew is the kindergarten teacher there and she's a splendid one. Well, let's see, she didn't teach kindergarten when she first came, though. She taught first grade over in the primary building. I was in the middle room there then, and then third grade's on the other side of me, and then finally, after junior high went to Triopa, then we just had the six grades in town and the primary building--well, that was used for a kitchen and music room and kindergarten and the rest of us were over in the other building.

Q: What did they do with the furniture and the equipment that you had at West Point, when the school consolidated?

A: I think, for the most part, that it was destroyed.

Q: In the fire?

A: No. It was taken out, but I think it was destroyed. I think it was brought to Arenzville and destroyed.

Q: It wasn't utilized then?

A: Not to my knowledge.

Q: Not even your library?

A: Oh, the library, it was brought, but the desks I was thinking of.

Q: The antique dealers want them now.

A: Yes! I should say so! I know there were many things destroyed. I know the janitor wanted a piece of furniture--I think it was a table--and he wasn't permitted to have it, but it was knocked to pieces and burned.

Q: Was there some state order out on that, or do you know?

A: I don't know. I never could understand.

Q: I hate to see anything destroyed if someone can use it.

A: I do, too! I do, too.

Q: Did you change textbooks when you went into town?

A: Some of them, not all though, because our textbooks were quite much like we had here in town. When I knew we were going to move into town, I was sort of disturbed. I thought, "Oh my, will my pupils know as much as they do? Will mine be up with them?" Well, I found they were. I found my children could read, and I found my children knew--they had their arithmetic or their mathematics as it's called now altogether, I think. (laughs) But they knew and they were ahead in some of their subjects. I know Mr. Hiedbrink . . . . There was one of my girls--he taught eighth grade and was principal, too, then. She was such a beautiful reader. He said, "I could sit all day and listen to that girl read." Whatever book it was she was reading, he says, "Those big words, she just went right over them like that. She reads beautifully!" And she did.

Q: Was this change made at the beginning of the school year or during the year?

A: At the beginning.

Q: In the fall?

A: Yes.

Q: The fall of 1948, you think?

A: Yes. My grandson was in second grade then.

Q: You had your grandchildren. Did you ever have your own children in your classroom?

A: Oh yes. I had both Lois and June. I had Lois in sixth grade and on through the eighth and June in the eighth, but I had two of Lois' children in the country school. Well, even after we moved to town--I forgot about that. After we went to town that first year, I didn't have straight second grade then. I mixed things up, because I did departmental work then. I had first grade in handwriting and art--second grade that is, and first grade too, because I taught them to write. Fifth grade, I had in geography and English and language. Sixth grade I had in geography and spelling.

I know there was one little sixth grader I'll never forget. I'd love to see him now. He was the superintendent's--Mr. Chapman's son, Tom--and I just loved Tom. He was such a sweet boy, but it was just kind of hard for him to grasp all of his subjects and his mother said one time, "Well, Tom knows who his friend is." (laughter)

Q: Back in the country school, what was the arrangement made for a child who was slow? We would say now that they're probably retarded. Was there any arrangements? Did they come on to school, or what was done with those children?

A: Well, I don't believe I had any retarded children, that I'd call retarded.

Q: It's a very fine line, and I always said I could never tell the lazy ones from the dumb ones.

A: That's it. You know there are many of them that are thought to be retarded and they're not, but they're just kind of indolent.

Q: Or a little shy sometimes and don't like to speak up.

A: Yes, and I think many times one thing they need is much interest shown in their work at home, to see that they get their work. Perhaps they may have some homework, of course, now, some teachers do not permit homework, but I believe that the home has much to do with it.

Q: Did you ever have children in school whose parents were illiterate, or do you know?

A: No, I never did have any illiterate parents at all, to my knowledge.

Q: This was a prosperous community.

A: I think so.

Q: And people wanted things for their children.

A: Yes, of course, there were people that moved in, but I'll tell you there were some mighty fine ones that moved in, too. Yes, there were.

Q: Can you think of anything else about school, because I want to talk about you as a farm wife? (laughter) If you can tell me about when you were first married, you moved to the farm, and tell me something about your life at that time, what you did, about your garden and your milk and your chickens and so on. Can you remember some of those things?

A: Oh, yes! I was thrilled about taking care of the chickens and raising little chickens, and I didn't use an incubator. I never had an incubator. I wouldn't have wanted one. I suppose if I had been up to date, I would have, but I liked to set the hens and take care of those little chickens. I just loved the work! I had a friend who said, "I couldn't bear to touch a little chicken."

Q: What kind of chickens did you raise?

A: Rhode Island Reds. I just loved to work with the chickens, and garden! My husband always helped me with that. He always got the garden all ready to plant, you know, and very often helped plant it. We always had a big garden, more than we could use. We had strawberries. Our good

neighbor gave us 85 strawberry plants that had been dug up out of his strawberry patch, that he didn't need. We set those out, those 85 strawberry plants. They grew to an immense big bed of strawberries, and we had strawberries by the big bucketful to give to the neighbors. We didn't sell them; we gave them, and if they didn't come, we took them.

Q: Did you make preserves?

A: Oh yes, we had preserves, and oh, the strawberries! We always had strawberries three times a day, for everybody just loved them. There was one man who worked for my husband. One day, he thought maybe I didn't have time to pick strawberries that morning, and I'll declare if he didn't stop and pick strawberries in his hat! (laughter) Because he wanted strawberries for dinner. Well, I don't know whether I already had some or not but, anyway, that was it. And strawberry preserves galore! Then, I canned strawberries, too. Now, many people think that canned strawberries are no account. Well, when they canned them like I did, they were some account and they didn't fade. They were bright red when I took them out of the cellar, too.

Q: How did you can them?

A: Well, I put [them] in a pan, a separate pan. I'd just cook for one quart at a time. I'd can them in quart jars, of course. I would put the sugar on that I thought they should have, and then when a little syrup was formed, then I cooked them and I just heated them enough to be heated through right well. But I put no water in at all and they retained their bright red color.

Q: That's open kettle canning?

A: Yes.

Q: What kind of jar lids did you use?

A: Just ordinary Mason jars.

Q: With rubbers.

A: Yes. Later on I used the others, but at that time I'd just use Mason jar lids. I didn't know there was any other kind.

Q: Did you use them for pie in the winter or just use them for canned fruit?

A: Canned fruit.

Q: Did you put cream on them?

A: Oh yes! We had cream. My husband always did the milking and then we'd use a separator and oh, we had nice thick cream, and butter--good homemade butter. We had more butter than we could use and we sold some and one of the merchants in town, where my husband took the butter, he said, "I wish you'd get more cows. I'll take all the butter you can make."

Q: How much did you get a pound for it?

A: I don't remember at all.

Q: What kind of cows were they? Jersey?

A: Holstein . . . no, they weren't Holstein. We had one Holstein. I don't know if they were any particular breed or not, but anyway, there was a lot of cream on the milk.

Q: What kind of churn did you use?

A: A little Dazey churn.

Q: I think antique dealers are collecting them too, now.

A: Is that right? I guess I gave mine to Lois when they were first married, because I didn't need it anymore.

Q: Did you make your butter in molds or did you just cut it?

A: No, I didn't put in in molds.

Q: That was a littler earlier, I guess, that they used those fancy molds.

A: I guess they did, but I never put mine in molds. When I sent it in to the store, I sent it in a crock.

Q: Did you ever send cottage cheese in to the store?

A: No. We used our cottage cheese, but I never sold any. We liked cottage cheese so much. It was so healthful--good cottage cheese.

Q: With lots of cream on it.

A: Oh, yes! (laughter)

Q: Did you sell eggs?

A: Oh yes! I remember, it was in war time when we sold eggs at Long's Store in Beardstown and they paid us seventy-five cents a dozen!

Q: World War I.

A: Yes, and I wonder what the people who bought those had to pay. But seventy-five cents a dozen! Wasn't that awful for people who had to buy them?

Q: Did you get eggs all winter, or just in the summer?

A: Oh yes, we got eggs all winter.

Q: You kept them in a heated building?

A: No, our hen house was never heated.

Q: But you still got the eggs.

A: We got the eggs.

Q: Did you ever know of anybody putting eggs down in brine for winter?

A: I'd heard of it, but I never did. We always had fresh eggs to use.

Q: When you canned, what vegetables were considered most suitable?

A: Oh, green beans . . . and peas . . . and . . .

Q: Tomatoes?

A: Oh, yes, tomatoes, of course. And, even since we've lived here, I used to have an immense garden here, and a beautiful garden, too. Of course, when I was going to school in the summer, my children had to come and take care of the garden. We had an immense garden here and always did much canning of tomatoes and beans and peas. Those were the main vegetables that we canned.

Q: What system did you use, pressure cooker or hot water bath? How did you do that?

A: I had used the hot water bath, but a lot of them I just plain canned.

Q: Open kettle.

A: Yes.

Q: Open kettle peas, maybe?

A: I think I always used cold pack for that.

Q: That takes forever to get them cooked, three or four hours, doesn't it?

A: I don't even remember. It's been a long time since I've done it; I don't even remember how we timed it.

Q: Did you make cucumber pickles and beet pickles?

A: Oh, yes.

Q: Did you ever have thresher dinners? I want to hear about those.

A: Oh, yes! We had thresher dinners, and I had the loveliest mother-in-law! She'd always come and help me when we had threshers, and I remember first she said, "Now, you must have two kinds of pies."

Q: Two?

A: Yes. Two kinds of pies. A raisin pie and a lemon pie, and Grandma Brasell could make the best pies, and so could her daughters. I think they had me beaten, although I finally learned to make pies, but they were experts at it. Too, I baked my own bread. About a whole year after we were married, we didn't have very good bread, but my husband never once complained and said, "This isn't just like Mom made," because she made excellent bread. I changed yeast. I used the kind that my mother used--it was called The World's Fair Yeast. You'd keep some back, you know.

Q: A starter.

A: Yes, a starter. And when I began using that, then I had wonderful bread, and the light rolls, and the doughnuts. Oh, and how my husband loved doughnuts!

Q: You made your doughnuts out of bread dough, then.

A: Yes.

Q: That's the best kind.

A: Yes. Oh, they were so good!

Q: What kind of meat would you have for the threshers?

A: Beef, always.

Q: Would that be roast beef?

A: Yes.

Q: What else would you have on your menu?

A: Well, I don't remember. Vegetables and pickles and fruit and, of course, pie for dessert, and iced tea, of course, and coffee for those who wished it, and in particular, I don't remember.

Q: Mashed potatoes?

A: Oh, I imagine so.

Q: With lots of cream.

A: Oh yes, always!

Q: Was it necessary to buy the beef?

A: Oh, yes.

Q: How much would you pay for enough beef for a thresher dinner?

A: I haven't the faintest idea. It's been too long ago.

Q: How many people would you feed at noon?

A: The table was full and it was stretched out--I would say--I imagine around fifteen.

Q: And how many days would you do that.

A: Well, I don't know if it ever took more than one day or not. I just don't remember. I don't remember getting two thresher meals two days in succession--might have--I just don't remember.

Q: Was there competition among the women as to who could put out the best meal?

A: Not to my knowledge . . . No, I don't think so. Not to my knowledge.

Q: It was just a job to be done.

A: Yes.

Q: Well, what about corn shucking and corn shelling time? Did you have lots of men then to feed?

A: No. No, my husband kept a hired man and they shucked the corn. Luther would get out bright and early, as soon as he could see in the morning. You could hear those ears hitting the knockboard, you know. Maybe we had corn shellers, but I don't remember it.

Q: Maybe they just hauled the corn into town.

A: I think so. Then, of course, had to keep some to feed, you know, to feed the stock, the hogs and the cows and the horses.

Q: Did he keep his own seed corn or did he buy seed corn?

A: I couldn't say, I just don't remember. Just guessing it off, now, maybe I'm a mile from right--my son I expect would remember, but I don't--but I'd say he used his own, but I don't say that I'm right.

Q: Well, this is before the time they had the hybrid seed.

A: Yes. I know now they're very particular about the kind of seed. I know my son-in-law is very particular. Well, all the farmers are for that matter. And, of course, the fertilizer for the fields, that was hauled from the barnyard, and they had a manure spreader, you know.

Going back just a moment to the strawberry bed--our wonderful strawberry bed--our garden was down at the edge of one corner of the field, closest to the house, and my husband was out with the harrow and with the teeth straight down, he went over that strawberry bed in the spring. And I said, "Why Luther, you're running our strawberry bed!" And he just laughed. Later on, then, he explained. I knew what he was doing; it prevented

going over and cleaning out and resetting and all and that way he took out all the old plants, don't you see. And too, he had well rotted, fine manure that he spread very early in the spring on the strawberry bed, and such strawberries! When we sent some to our neighbors, they thought that we had just picked out the biggest ones. We took them just as they came.

Q: Picking strawberries was no easy job either, was it?

A: No, but we did fine. I remember one morning when my son was just a little fellow, he could walk all right. We had left he and June--we didn't have Lois then--asleep in bed and Luther and I went down to pick the strawberries, because there was a very big picking. We were so busy we didn't even take time to talk. First thing we heard, "I like to come down here." Looked up, and there saw Robert in his little nightie, barefoot [in] the hot sun . . . (narrator makes a panting sound) He knew where to find us. (laughter) Well, we went to the house. Luther picked him up and put his hat on his head. He was afraid his head would get too hot in that hot sun. (laughter) But, oh, he was such a good little boy.

Q: He knew about strawberries early in life. You spoke about the hired man. Did he have a separate house or did he live in the house with you?

A: Oh, no. He had a room upstairs at our house.

Q: I guess that's the reason they had such big farmhouses, for the hired man to live in.

A: I guess. Well, he had a room upstairs, and otherwise we didn't use that room, just for spare beds, you know, but we had plenty of room downstairs. So, he was right there. We fed him and did his washing and everything. He was a very good hired man. He was from Missouri. He worked for my husband a number of years.

Q: Did he stay the year round, or did he go home in the winter?

A: I think that he must have stayed the year round, because my husband would be off with the threshing machine--he ran the threshing machine too, you know--and I believe that he ran the separator or whatever, or did something about that, as I remember.

Q: Your husband was a professional thresher, then.

A: Yes, he did. He farmed and then he ran the threshing machine, too.

Q: And how long would he do that--the rest of the summer after he finished his own?

A: Well, whenever there was wheat harvest, and then there was oats, and then there was cowpea hulling--it was cowpeas then, not soybeans. There were them to hull and, of course, they would be stacked, you know. I don't know--I guess they could be threshed any time of the year because they were in stacks--and also clover hulling.

Q: Wasn't there wheat stacked, too?

A: Some people stacked their wheat, but my husband didn't; he had it in shocks. So they would go around, and many of them--I don't know of any in our neighborhood that stacked their wheat but they had it in shocks, you know. Then there would be men on wagons that went around and picked up the stacks and hauled them to the separator.

Q: They called those shocks, didn't they?

A: Yes, shocks.

Q: And a stack was big . . .

A: Yes, they were a great number of shocks put together. (laughs)

Q: Now, when wheat was in a stack, it couldn't be threshed right away. Didn't it have to--what was the word--cure?

A: I don't know. I know what cure means, but I don't know about that. Reason tells me that it could have been threshed later, and maybe that's what they were waiting on, for it to cure. I don't know. I presume, that in all the rounds that my husband made with the threshing machine, I imagine that he did thresh some out of the stack, but I just don't remember.

Q: Did he have a steam engine?

A: Oh, yes.

Q: What ever happened to that steam engine?

A: I don't know.

Q: Some of them, I think, ended up in sawmills.

A: Yes. True. This one was used in a sawmill. Before we were married, he worked in a sawmill. Now, the machinery was not his, it belonged to August Hansmeier, Sr. and he ran it for him. He worked for him, too, running the machinery before he was married.

Q: That was a very important contribution to the community, the thresher, because everybody had to wait for him to come. Whole life revolved around that.

A: Yes, that's right. At that time, cowpeas were quite a crop. You never heard of soybeans then!

Q: What were cowpeas like? I don't remember them.

A: Well, they looked, as I remember, they looked a good deal like soybeans, only they didn't grow tall like that. And I do remember this, that they made very good hay, and especially when they weren't threshed. They were especially good for the cows. When the cows were fed the cowpeas with the beans in you should have seen the cream. It was really something.

Q: Rich and yellow.

A: Oh, yes!

Q: Did you ever sell cream?

A: I can't remember that I ever sold cream. I sold butter, but I can't remember that I ever sold cream. When I churned butter, it was always churned from sweet cream, and it was delicious! I haven't even tasted butter for ages. We use margerine now and, of course, I wouldn't want butter now for the cholesterol content, so I use Fleishman's Margerine. It's made of corn oil.

Q: Well, you're helping the corn farmers and this is corn country.

A: Yes! (laughter) Well, I'm a farmer at heart.

Q: What did you feed the chickens?

A: Well, corn, and I don't know if we . . . any other grain we had on the farm if we used or not and, of course, for the smaller chickens, we bought the regular feed for little chickens, you know. Although, sometimes the little ones--I know Mr. Niestradt told me this; he said, "Well, Carrie uses cheese." The cottage cheese without the cream on it, of course, for the baby, tiny chickens. I tried that out, but I think that we had some commercial feed for the little ones sometime or other.

Q: Did you ever buy chickens at a hatchery?

A: No . . . I think I might have a time or two. I'd be afraid to say for sure, but it's been a long, long time ago.

Q: I haven't seen a Rhode Island Red since I can't tell you when!

A: I don't know when I've seen a Rhode Island Red.

Q: I wonder if they still have them.

A: I imagine. I imagine they do.

Q: Now, they were good-size chickens to eat and yet they were good layers too, weren't they?

A: Oh yes. Yes, indeed. They were a good all around chicken I thought.

Q: Where did you sell your eggs? At the grocery store?

A: Yes.

Q: No one came through the country buying eggs, then?

A: No. No.

Q: And you just applied the eggs to your grocery bill.

A: Yes. Later on there was a man came around that bought the eggs. A truck came. I think he bought eggs; he bought chickens, I know, if we had any we wanted to dispose of. I think he bought eggs. I wouldn't say for sure on that.

Q: There've been lots of changes in occupations on the farm.

A: Oh yes, I should say so.

Q: It's no longer the self-supporting unit.

A: No, that's right.

Q: What's your thinking about using deep freezes on a farm? Did you do that?

A: No, I never had a deep freeze.

Q: You wouldn't have had to can your strawberries then.

A: No! (laughter) Of course, my daughter wouldn't know how to get along without their deep freeze, but I never had one.

Q: What were some of the things that you think made you happier or more satisfactory on a farm as compared with now--some of the things that you did?

A: Electricity.

Q: That's the biggest improvement?

A: That would have been the most important thing.

Q: Are you on REA [Rural Electrification Administration] here?

A: Yes.

Q: When did you get that?

A: Oh, that must have been . . . I imagine . . . twelve years ago, maybe longer than that. I wouldn't say for sure.

Q: And that's the biggest improvement.

A: I think so.

Q: Now what from the past do you wish you'd been able to keep?

A: Well . . . it would be hard to say. (pause)

Q: Are people as neighborly as they were?

A: No. No, good neighbors, but yet, not like they used to be because they used to be--there weren't so many cars, you know, and people visited more.

Q: They had to depend on each other more.

A: Yes, not too dependent, but just to visit, you know. But there's no complaint at all. I've always had good neighbors.

Q: St. Peters' has kept active all through the years though.

A: Oh yes.

Q: And it's still a community center.

A: Yes.

Q: I've been told that St. Peter's was here before the church in town was.

A: Well, I don't know when the church in town was established, but St. Peter's has been well over a hundred years. I should know.

Q: Now, your children went to Sunday School at St. Peter's, I believe.

A: Yes.

Q: Can you tell me something about the influence the church had in the community? What kind of leadership did they extend?

A: Very good leadership. There's . . . well, there's . . . the different activities for children, and then for different ages you know, and now with our new pastor and his accomplished wife-and he's accomplished, too--they have the children's choir, the youth choir, that we didn't have before. One nice thing we have now, every third Sunday we have a get-together in the fellowship room with lunch after service. We have dinners every so often. It's very lovely.

Q: Was it like that when your children were small?

A: No.

Q: It was just strictly church then.

A: Well, there was always Sunday School. There was always a good Sunday School class for every child, and for adults as well. So, that is fine. I don't know that all churches have that, but I should think that most of them do. Most Lutheran churches do, anyway, I know, and I think most of the others do too as far as that's concerned.

Q: It's unusual that this strong community center would be so close to town.

A: Well, I know after our church burned, there were some, I believe, who didn't want to rebuild on the old site. Well, the majority was stronger on saying we will have a church right where the old one stood, and they were very determined, and my son was among them, believe it or not.

Q: Now he lives in town, doesn't he?

A: Yes.

Q: And comes out here to service.

A: Oh, yes.

Q: Now, when you first went to that church did they have any of the service in German?

A: No. No. Not then. It was with Rev. Garten when he came, and I had his two daughters Elizabeth and Marie--I had them in school. When Rev. Garten came, then it was changed to English. He was a wonderful man. He passed away not too long ago--time flies, maybe it's been three years--but he was a wonderful man. I always had a Christmas card from Reverend Garten. Marie and Elizabeth were back just this summer and it was a joy to see them. When we went off to Washington to the Mail Carriers Convention out in Spokane--that's where Marie lives--so we were entertained at Marie's and then we went on to Seattle, or Linwood, which is, I guess you'd call it a suburb of Seattle--to my brother's. So, that was very lovely that we got to spend that time at Marie's. And her father, got to see him, right next door there.

Q: Oh, he lived there, too?

A: Yes, he lived right next to Marie. I know how hard it was, or I imagine awfully hard on Marie and her husband, when he passed on. He'd be missed so. She has a wonderful husband, and Marie is a teacher, too. I'm not sure . . . yes, Elizabeth was a teacher, too, but I don't know if she teaches now or not. But Marie is retired now. I remember so well when they were here. We've had several different pastors, however, Reverend Bischoff was there seventeen years and I had their two boys in school, for second grade. They're both married now. Todd, the younger one, they're expecting an addition to their family early this summer, so I'm anxious to see that little, new grandchild of the Bischoffs.

Q: (laughter) Well, you've just been a part of this community and the lives of these people for all these generations. It's really a privilege, isn't it?

A: Yes, it is. It surely is; I love them. And before Elsie Winkleman's George died, he was in World War I and then he contracted leukemia and he died, oh, ever so many years ago, but I had their four daughters in school. One of their daughters teaches in Jacksonville; the other one works in the bank, but she's also married, something like a year ago, I believe. She lives not far away. Elsie lives, across, back of the church over there. Now, that was the limit of the West Point District.

Q: A district would be about three miles square, perhaps?

A: I would say something like that. I've been trying to think of the number of the district. As many times as I had to write that, every time I made out my schedule at the end of the month. I've tried to think of the number of the district.

End of Side Two, Tape One