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Anne Campbell

Country School Legacy: Humanities on the Frontier

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COGNARD: Commissioner of Ed. This is Anne Congard of the Nebraska Committee for the humanities, interviewing Anne Campbell, Commissioner of Education for the state of Nebraska, for Ernest Grundy of Kearney State College. The date is December 17th, 1981. Ernest is involved with collecting information on country schools. This is part of an 8 state project which aims to discover and then perpetuate the history of the rural schools. The project is sponsored by the Mountain Plains Library Association, and funded by the National Endowment for the Humanities. The project will deposit these tapes and other information collected in a central location for the use by future researchers. It will also set-up meetings and such organizations as public libraries and historical museums using a film and other materials gained in the project. [pause] It’s going. Let’s see, Anne – perhaps we could begin just by - your giving me your educational background, where you were born, some information about yourself, personally, please. [1:00]

A.C.: Well, fine, Anne. I was born in Denver – at my grandparents’ home. I was raised on a cattle ranch in Southern Colorado, near Hooper, at the foot of the sand dunes national monument. I – went to school, rode a bus when I started to school, and - then we moved into town so I could – you know – I could go to school – it was unhandy for me. It was 6 miles to the bus –

COGNARD: Oh, to the bus stop?

A.C.: Yes, to the bus stop. And, so, we moved in under those circumstances and I went 8 grades, then, at Hooper. Then I went to Alamosa because my mother felt that was a better high school. And it also gave me an opportunity to compete in athletics because it was – we were doing it then, they didn’t think it was too hard on girls way back at that time. And I always felt that it didn’t stunt my growth any, and neither did the busing, and – that – I – You know, I – it just helped me keep healthy, like that kind of thing. I graduated from Alamosa high school and went to the University – what is now the University of Northern Colorado. Graduated there in physical education with mathematics as my minor. The – interestingly enough, I really wanted to be a rancher –

COGNARD: Oh, is that so? [2:47]

A.C.: Would liked to have been – gone to Fort Collins. Been - Taken animal husbandry so I could learn - that way. And - They didn’t accept women –

COGNARD: I was gonna say what changed your mind?

A.C.: At that point in time – and, you know, my next best thing, and I’ve not been sorry, really, because education has been great to me, and – and – there’s been probably a greater satisfaction in the fact that in education you will find that you get involved in the lives of others and forget about some of your own problems –

COGNARD: [chuckles]
A.C.: And things – so, that’s a reward, I think, of seeing what happens to young people. So – when I was married, we - we taught at Erie, Colorado, which is East of Boulder. Then, moved to Nebraska where my husband coached at the junior college – and – when my youngest daughter was in 5th grade there was a vacancy in the county super intendancy, and I was asked to – to serve that – ran for election 4 times. It was 2 year – they were 2 year terms, then I was asked to join the state education association, and I did that, and from there to public schools, and to the university, and then to the university here.

COGNARD: To here – I guess for the record, do you want to go ahead and give us your husband’s name, and your children – [4:17]

A.C.: My husband’s name is Leonard, and he was a coach and teacher. He was the one who preferred to stay in teaching and coaching rather than going the administrative route, because he felt that there were no rewards there. We have 3 daughters – Margie, she is a mathematics teacher at the Boulder Public Schools, Bev is – a – a - I’d say she’s the free spirit of the Campbell family, that – she has a Master’s degree in Early Childhood Education, and an undergraduate degree in Accounting. She’s now – she’s done – she’s worked at 4 or 5 jobs. She’s run a daycare center – owns one, and – she waits tables, keeps books for small businesses, and – she’s now working in computerizing those accounting systems. And –

COGNARD: That’s very eclectic.

A.C.: Yes. So – she wanted to ski, so she went where she can ski.

COGNARD: [chuckles] [5:28]

A.C.: Marilyn is the youngest one, graduated at Wesleyan, is a physical education major, also, but she’s not teaching. She has two below-teenage boys, and – works odds and ends. Her husband runs the – food service at Mt. Bachelor’s Ski Resort. So – there - at least two of them, all three of them, really, ski.

COGNARD: I was gonna say. Well, I know –

A.C.: You know, and all – uh-huh- and we’ve all been with –

COGNARD: Been in education. In one way or another.


COGNARD: So, you went to a rural school, and you also –

A.C.: Yes, we had 2 grades – in one room –

COGNARD: Did you?

A.C.: You know, all the way through 8th grade.

COGNARD: And then, about when you were a county superintendent, you obviously would be mainly in a rural area.

A.C.: Yes, it was in Madison County, and there were 68 school districts in Madison County, which is 24 miles square. They would vary in size from maybe 1 or 2 pupils to – maybe 20, 25 pupils. [6:24]
COGNARD: What kind of – as a count superintendent, what kind of sense did you have, then, of the relationship of the school as a building, as a physical plant with the community, was there – I would imagine, for example, and I don’t know because I’ve never been a part of a rural school in any form, but, what is the difference, for example, or what might be the difference, between a school in a rural community in terms of the school-community relationship, and say something - such as the Lincoln public schools relationship?

A.C.: Well, there’s no question that in the rural areas, it is - it may not be so true now, but historically it has been that – that school houses were the center of the community. They would have meetings there, they would have programs there –

COGNARD: What kinds of meetings and programs? [7:33]

A.C.: Well – for instance, many of the extension clubs.

COGNARD: Oh, I see.

A.C.: The –

COGNARD: So not just school related activities?

A.C.: Oh, yes. Just community – community activities, not just school related activities – but, you know, it sorta – it sort of gathered around the school activities because – there is a delight seeing children perform. So – it was – it is a close knit – it is a close knit. Parents are – are closely involved in school activities, and those were hilarious. They vary – from – district by district. Depending again, upon the community and its attitude toward – toward education. And, you can’t say that everyone was all peace and harmony – they’re communities like any other. I think in – in larger cities, it’s declined, too, although I still say that it attracts in Lincoln – it attracts people to watch youngsters, there still is that pull within any community, regardless of whether it’s tipped toward the older citizens or toward the younger. And most of the school districts have made it possible for senior citizens to attend school activities, and encourage to attend school activities. So – but there – there are so many – many other options, let’s say, in a larger city. There aren’t those options in rural areas, and consequently it becomes a very close-knit arrangement.

COGNARD: Do you see a difference in now - from your experiences – in the Norfolk area when – when you actually were there, and looking back now, historically that is, what kinds of changes have you seen in terms of – the school systems in greater Nebraska? [9:23]

A.C.: Well, when I, of course – when I first became the county superintendent, you could teach with normal training. That means just out of high school.

COGNARD: Oh.

A.C.: Then, the first – the first year that a change was made, you could – you graduated from high school and took 12 hours and taught. And then we went to 30 hours, and you could teach. And then we went to 60. And it’s just been within – within this decade, the 70s decade, that we went to requiring a bachelor’s degree.

COGNARD: A B.A. [10:21]
A.C.: For teaching – for teaching in rural areas. Of course, there is the grandmother’s clause, you know, that allows many of those who – who had that other kind of background and who had life certificates with it, to continue to teach. The Normal Training teachers often did a very excellent job, they - they were serious and they were dedicated to it through high school. But you see the same range of - on the continuum. With teachers in rural areas you do at times. It’s – It’s not that different, then – I saw some beautiful things happen – and sometimes I saw some terrible things happen than others – [mumbling]

COGNARD: Depending on the person?

A.C.: Depending upon the person. I will not forget one teacher when I was visiting – a big, overgrown, he had gotten his growth early, at about the 6th grade level. And he was standing reading aloud because he was embarrassed anyway. Particularly with me there. But he was reading a story that - that used Spanish – which had some Spanish names in it, and he would stumble – when he would come to those, he’d stumble, and the teacher would say “now sound it out.”

COGNARD: Oh [chuckles] [11:50]

A.C.: Well, Spanish is something you do not sound out, it has a different pronunciation. But, it affected him, and his - his liking of school, and his - really even his achievement in school. Those are the types of things that happened to youngsters if they – if that happened year after year. That is not in their best interest. In a rural school, if the teacher stays there over a long period of time, you know, there is no – there’s – you don’t have access to a number of people that allows you to get different styles and different ideas and things of that kind in the rural areas. I – you know - I really feel in the rural cases, I like the one grade, but there is disadvantage in a rural school. If you got a good teacher, you’re constantly introduced to new material, cause you listen to the other youngsters.

COGNARD: Oh, I see what you mean. [13:05]

A.C.: And you constantly review, you see, by listening to those below you. So there’s a reinforcement that is – is important and is – is a saving grace of – of a rural school. They’re generally small, and – so, it’s an intimate relationship. Between –between youngsters and between teachers

COGNARD: Between - and the teachers – and I suspect that it might be the advantage, too, of a continuum – that is, if you have a good teacher, I suppose it works the other way around when you have a bad teacher.

A.C.: Oh, Yes. That’s true. That’s right, that’s right.

COGNARD: Was there then tradition of – would you say tradition of – I suppose it’s true in Lincoln, too, but particularly of the rural areas, if someone is going to be a teacher in the rural system that she or he was more apt to stay there – so, more of a sense of - ?

A.C.: Yes, it’s – there are – many of the teachers who would be wives of, let’s say, farmers and ranchers, that kind of arrangement, so they’re – but that can work against you, too, because it can set – there would be some communities, for instance, where they might become inbred that way. That they not - may not be open to a new person –

COGNARD: Yes. [14:32]

A.C.: Who might come in with different values, that sort of thing.
COGNARD: I suppose that’s true.

A.C.: Yes.

COGNARD: So with the provincialism – would they -

A.C.: Yes, uh-huh. A provincialism is inclined to be strong in – in rural areas. You know, they protect one another. And they have to –

COGNARD: Yeah, and they still appears to be true –

A.C.: And they have to.

COGNARD: Just with a new person coming into town, I think –

A.C.: Uh-huh. Typically a small town –

COGNARD: A very small town.

A.C.: Is – is - is that way, too.

COGNARD: You had mentioned – and you were kind of picking up on it again – something in a way about the curriculum that is the reinforcing possibility –

A.C.: Mm-hmm.

COGNARD: Would you say, in general – and I don’t mean at this point to differentiate rural schools necessarily from urban centers – but, in general, what kind of – what kind of educational base did most rural schools work with? That is- was it the very basic sense of education –

A.C.: Oh, yes.

COGNARD: For example, in grammar – what – what would you think - in writing or grammar or –

A.C.: Spelling.

COGNARD: Spelling, those – spelling – [15:37]

A.C.: Computation. Yes, very strong on – on basics, and in many cases, that would be a matter of time. If – well – if you had someone in every grade, K through 8th grade, kindergarten through 8th, according to the curriculum, you would have 9 classes in each level, so that would give you 81 classes that you would have a day.

COGNARD: Oh, I see.

A.C.: and many teachers would be criticized, for instance, a child would maybe be having trouble in 5th grade, so the 6th grade, 7th, and 8th grade might not have gotten all the time that they were entitled to.

COGNARD: Oh.

A.C.: And, so, when Johnny would go home and would say “we didn’t have arithmetic today,” you know, then the teacher would be criticized for that. But, time management is one thing that rural school teachers have to learn to do. And they use – in – in most cases, they use their time very well.
COGNARD: but, what –

A.C.: Because of this. [16:42]

COGNARD: Could you give me some examples, I don’t know what you mean by time management.

A.C.: Well, they – the fact that – that a kindergarten youngster has certain kinds of needs, and incidentally in the kindergarten we have many patterns. We have some half days, we do in cities, we have some full days three days a week, we have full days half of one semester. There are quite a number of different organizational patterns as far as kindergarten schools go. But suppose that - that I had all 8 grades, so – with the kindergarten – then I’d have to – I’d have to plan and give enough time to that kindergarten child that they would be kept busy.

COGNARD: That’s right, especially –

A.C.: That’s right.

COGNARD: a kindergartner [chuckles]

A.C.: That’s exactly right. And, there was inclined to be – there had to be discipline. You could not have – you couldn’t have everybody running around. Which is, you know, with young children – they do need to move. Kids are not made to sit still. So, then you come up with 1st grade in - in reading and spelling and grammar, you come up with - with 2nd grade with theirs, and then 3rd grade and then you start to get into social studies and science and all of those kinds of things. And you’ve got music and art – art generally, interestingly enough, would be on Friday afternoon, and that’s what they do Friday afternoon, the whole school – would be – would take art.

COGNARD: What kind of art? [18:25]

A.C.: Well –

COGNARD: Drawing? Technique?

A.C.: Well, it depended again. It depended again upon the teacher, the teacher’s interests, the teacher’s ability, and – they would be – you know - because they – the business of having to get all of the materials out, and all of the things that go with art. A lot of it would be coloring within lines – but on the other hand I saw lots of creative – you know - encouragement to youngsters. And we would have in-service education for the teachers which – which they dearly loved because they always looked for new ideas – always looked for new ideas –

COGNARD: Was that for – this was the – how would that – how would that work with the sense of provincialism and –

A.C.: Well, most of it would be more in terms rather than content – would be looked in terms of process –

COGNARD: I – I see – technique, or -

A.C.: Yes, technique –

COGNARD: Getting it right.
A.C.: That's right, methodology.

COGNARD: Now, how about – how would this translate in terms of time management to the basic curriculum – that is, for the most part, well two questions really, Anne – for the most part, was it, then – was it mainly fairly structured -

A.C.: Yes, it had to be.

COGNARD: Workbook –

A.C.: Yes, it had to be. It had to be.

COGNARD: Now, is this still true? [19:45]

A.C.: Oh, yes. I visited – I visited a school again and – yes, it has to be. Because that’s the only way, really, that the teacher, then, can see whether or not what - what concept is taught really was put into practice. So, they did use a lot of workbooks.

COGNARD: Do you have – Do you have a sense, then, that – and we talked a little about this way back when with the back to the basics movement – how – how do you think the back to the basics ideas are – functioning in rural school systems?

A.C.: I – They’ve never left them.

COGNARD: I – I would think that would be true. I wondered.

A.C.: They never left.

COGNARD: That it would be –

A.C.: That’s right.

COGNARD: Then what if –

A.C.: A lot of the socialization process, you know, it is a close-knit group, but there is a socialization in a broader community that they have to learn. And they also have to learn what I would say the reasoning, the logic – a lot of which would be intuitive to the degree that they had to be – had to use it on the farms, and on the ranch, you see.

COGNARD: Oh, okay. Just a very practical kind of – [21:08]

A.C.: Right. The - and – for the most part, we found you took the – the youngsters – they did fine in high school, but it took them a little time to catch up – with them. And part of it is that they don’t have – they don’t get that broad base – that – the youngster does in - with one grade, but you cannot extend, let’s say, a concept or an idea or allow the curiosity of the student to be pursued. They don’t have those kinds of resources, but – I certainly have seen some good things happen in those schools.

COGNARD: Well, what if – picking up on that, then – what happens, in general, that you know of, between – the, I guess, the success rate, perhaps, of the – the student – the child who comes out of a rural school system versus someone who comes out – what happens in the long run?
A.C.: I think – I find – you know, I believe that this is true, regardless of where you are, that sometimes youngsters – you see, everyone has a different learning style. And we can’t – it’s tough to generalize. Because – there’s some that succeed in spite of us, you know?

COGNARD: That’s true. Yeah, that’s true. [22:21]

A.C.: You know, and not because of us. And - we may trigger something, let’s put it that way, we may trigger it. But the – but the learning that the child gets may be beyond what we had anticipated. And I think that’s true, I think for the most part rural youngsters do very well when they go on to school, and their rate for going on to school is generally less.

COGNARD: Do you figure that’s - that kind – of –

A.C.: Well, they’re inclined to – they’re inclined to wait out for a while – until they really know what they want to do. I think, though, you know, as farms and ranches had to get bigger in order to – in order to make it economically – it also became impossible to support a family of five or so, you see.

COGNARD: Yeah.

A.C.: They – they – if they married, and so forth, it was difficult for the whole family to remain. So a lot of them had to move out of the rural areas and that’s the thing that I think – two things, in the training of teachers that we really have to know. Part of it is that – that those who teach in the rural area they should understand rural sociology, because it is different. It’s – it’s more interdependent than when you teach in an urban center, that is quite independent. You know, unfortunately, we don’t know our neighbors. We don’t know them well.

COGNARD: That’s true. [24:00]

A.C.: And – the whole discipline area is affected by that. Because, I can remember when I would visit my grandmother in Denver – played with all the kids on the block – but if I did something that was not right, the parent of my friend would discipline me, as well as my own mother. You see?

COGNARD: Oh, I see what you mean.

A.C.: And so there was reinforcement of discipline by a neighborhood or by a community.

COGNARD: That is so – the entire community –

A.C.: That is true. And, we don’t do that. Cities today, you know, take you to court. That’s –

COGNARD: That’s right - Or send you home [chuckles]

A.C.: Yeah, that’s – so we’ve lost that interdependence, it seems to me, that in the rural areas it’s – it’s very strong. But, you know, the one can go too far in saying that everything is great there. Because there – human nature being such as it is – people still do good and bad things, you know.

COGNARD: So, in a way, obviously not to overgeneralize, in a way it does get back, ultimately, to the nature of the kids, the nature of the – the relationship with other kids and their environment, and the nature of the teachers, rather than anything necessarily built in in terms of – obviously curriculum might help, but it’s not going to be necessarily the deciding factor, you know.
A.C.: And, you know, I think transportation, and I think certainly technology has made a difference and has brought about some changes – in rural areas. Expectations for youngsters may have been raised by them – for instance, you very seldom find yourself a child who has been out of his or her community to a larger community, simply because the trade areas, you know, started from that little town, and then they couldn’t get what they wanted in the little town, and that began to die on the vine and you had only the basic support services. You went to the next largest center, and then you went to the next largest center, and then, you know, you- [25:41]

COGNARD: You continued.

A.C.: Yes, uh-huh.

COGNARD: Yes, I would imagine now-a-days – as opposed to even just a couple of decades ago, the average student, the average elementary school student is obviously not going to be located fully and totally in his or her community and never move -

A.C.: That’s right.

COGNARD: And become what his father became.

A.C.: That’s exactly true. It’s – it’s – you know, it’s more true today than of course – it was.

COGNARD: Well, what kinds of – of – for example, History – classes do you remember having – I guess what I’m asking, in particular, I would imagine in most schools it was the traditional American history.

A.C.: Well, I don’t know, I think generally it was the one that – that – you know, the city schools use – in development of a social studies curriculum. The –

COGNARD: Is there – is there more apt to be some use of local resources, though?

A.C.: Well, to some degree, but not anymore. Again, you see again, you’re blocked for that time. And, you know, a creative teacher would do just like a creative teacher in town, get the community involved, bring people in, take fieldtrips –

COGNARD: Museums, and –

A.C.: Yes, uh-huh. Yes, those kinds of things. And, you know, as a county superintendent, we always took the 8th grade youngsters each year – on a trip to either Omaha or Minden or - Lincoln – you know, those kinds of things. To give them an experience – Sioux City.

COGNARD: Yes, I remember even being – in Omaha being bussed to Lincoln to see Morrill Hall, which was the State Historical Society. [28:17]

A.C.: We used to have – play days, in which we would have dancing, sports, track, and whatever you wanted, you know - whole activities so that we could give those youngsters those experiences, in general, to pick them up. You know, from kindergarten to 8th grade, we’d have activities for each of the groups, so they began to see amongst themselves in the rural areas people, you know, who went to the same kind of schools and had a chance to visit with one another. So we tried to give them socialization.

COGNARD: So the play days were, what, once a month? Once a week? How did that...
A.C.: No, we generally would do those probably – we would have maybe two total activities a year. That’s about all you could really do.

COGNARD: Could do?

A.C.: Yeah. [29:07]

COGNARD: Um. Let me see if there’s something else here, Anne, that I’ve overlooked with – with what Ernest asked me to talk to you about. Um. One of the things he did ask me to ask you about was your experiences and memories of them. In a way, I guess we’ve talked about that.

A.C.: Mm-hmm.

COGNARD: But I felt toward the end we might just generalize as to your feelings toward the idea of the rural school system. Um.

A.C.: I think one talks – one – you know, I – one of the things that nobody agrees on is the definition of rural. Um – really -- you know – when – It’s interesting that most of the literature we use 25 hundred – a community is 25 hundred or below. Um. That’s huge in this state.

COGNARD: [chuckles] That’s right, yes. Nationally, that’s true. [Talking over each other]

A.C.: And a high school that, you know – that’s right, and, um, you know – a high school of five hundred in this state is a big school. We’re more – majority of our – of our K-12 systems are – probably around, uh, 300, 250 and below. K-12.

COGNARD: Mm-hmm.

A.C.: On students. So it makes and difference and it seems to me that if there are great things to be said about rural school. If you can have a good teacher in each one. I’m not sure that – that it’s the maintenance of the educational system or the community itself that’s at issue. I rather think it might be the tax situation because it’s cheaper to maintain a K-6 or a K-8 school. [30:54]

COGNARD: Oh, I see. Oh, I hadn’t thought of that.

A.C.: Then you see applied against most accepting class six districts. Applied against those rural districts would be a high school levy that is paid on – one each child that goes into ninth grade in a town school for high school paid by the county superintendent. And it’s a – it’s a uniform levy over all of – of the rural land for high school purposes. I think that, you know – I think that we need to – I think we need to preserve many of the fine values of the rural – what I call rural mores.

COGNARD: Such as?

A.C.: Well, there’s generally, hard work. You know, they’ll give – they’ll give a full day’s commitment to whatever they do. They’re -- they’re well-disciplined, generally. They do get help and encouragement, for the most part, from their parents. There is, you know – there is that strength of the support system in the areas because they are interdependent.

[side one ends at 32:10]
A.C.: ... increasingly technological society, particularly in the math and sciences. That they perhaps are – need a greater breadth of, um, what I call education than they can get right now in the very small school areas. High schools, the small high school – if they can provide the well-rounded kind of an education and the community is willing to support that. With the seven percent levy[?], that is becoming more and more difficult. They perform many good things, but there are others that exist just because of a pride, not necessarily in the interest of a good education.

Cognard: Oh, I see what you mean, as a matter of – uh – historic tenacity. [chuckles]

[1:10]

A.C.: But you see, quality-wise, we’ve never been able to define. If you want to give tests – uh. When I was county superintendent, at the beginning, we had required eighth grade examinations before you could go on into high school. I’ve always opposed that. I’ve found both teachers and parents, uh, tutoring for, you know –

Cognard: For that specifically? Yeah.

A.C.: Uh-huh. For that specific test. And I’ve yet to believe that what you learn on those tests is what is worthwhile knowing.

Cognard: That’s true.

A.C.: You know, as you move on through, because education’s more general. Then we moved out of the required eighth grade examinations but had what we called a testing program. I think most school have that. I – I do not support mandated testing. I think that schools need a great deal of help in how to assess student achievement. But you talk to many people, and they’ll tell you that you get just as much from grade point average and the teacher’s assessment of the pupil as you would from the SAT or the ACT.

Cognard: Is that so?

A.C.: Mm-hmm.

Cognard: [Talking over each other] So that they – individual evaluation is ...

A.C.: [Talking over each other] ... Related[?] [inaudible] Absolutely.

[2:25]

Cognard: Of course, I suppose the teacher having the experience if he or she is – is not, uh, undermined by some kind of personal prejudice. The kind of experience that you have in dealing with – I remember my own, going into a college classroom. You could almost tell by the end of the first week of school, who was going to get an A and who was going to get an F. It – Sometimes, there’s the, there’s the --

A.C.: Youngsters know that, too. Youngsters know that. Um, you know. They’re perceptive as the dickens.

Cognard: [laughs]
A.C.: And they know.

COGNARD: They’re not supposed to. [laughs]

A.C.: Yeah, they know. They know.

[3:01]

COGNARD: Um. What – Just a couple more questions, Anne, because I know you have to, uh – We talked a little about the school as relating to the community and we talked, um – Oh, yes, here’s one that also Ernest asked me to ask you about. Especially in the Norfolk area, did you find any, um, any children who were predominantly of, uh, of an ethnic, um, immigrant, uh, background. For example --

A.C.: Not very many. Not very many in that area. And that’s true over Nebraska. There are pockets where you might find a single family, or maybe two families, of an ethnic group. But you’ll find most of the ethnic groups concentrated in cities and towns.

COGNARD: So that there’s no particular [inaudible]

A.C.: [Talking over COGNARD] For instance, the largest Hispanic community in this state is Omaha, not western Nebraska.

COGNARD: Oh, really. I didn’t know that. I assumed it was Scottsbluff.

A.C.: No. No. They have a very fine, what we would call a settled out, Hispanic population in the western part of the state, uh, who have, um – But you do not find them too often in rural areas.

[4:20]

COGNARD: What about, um, or was this, in fact, a question at all? In terms of the make-up of the, uh, the average, um, one-room schoolhouse type --

A.C.: Well, you generally find, you see, as groups came to Nebraska and settled, they came in family groups. So you found a Czech colony, you found a Swedish colony, a Danish colony, and all those kinds. They were inclined to settle by ethnicity [she pronounces it ethnicitiy]. And the, of course, that changed. But mostly the attitude was to become assimilated.

COGNARD: American. [Chuckles] Yes.

A.C.: American. You see, one of the – Which is one of the problems that we face today.

COGNARD: Yeah, with the reversal of that whole idea of cultural pluralism.

A.C.: That’s right.

[5:13]

COGNARD: Did – Was there, was there any, um, -- Were you aware of any, uh, the difficulty of the rancher-farmer constituency versus say, um, an influx of blue-collar workers’ children, um – was it that kind of diversity?

A.C.: Well you – Not that – No, because it was – I don’t think they saw themselves that way. And many of the – You know, if you call a blue-collar worker as a clerk in the store. Usually the town and country
people, just to a great degree, had similar values. You know, they served the same kind of general culture.

COGNARD: Yes, I see what you mean.

A.C.: You know, so certainly that was --

COGNARD: It goes back to the main value system of socialization.

A.C.: Of course, you always have the envy and jealousy that you find amongst human beings.

COGNARD: Of course. [Chuckles] That’s right. What about things like a music curriculum, a fine arts curriculum. You talked a little about art, per se, but, um --

A.C.: Well, unless – unless the teacher – You know, they had music, but it, um --

COGNARD: Wouldn’t be music appreciation, per se, but --

A.C.: No. Whatever were within the capabilities of the teacher. Now, it’s interesting these days, for instance, that there is a music teacher who comes out from the service union.

COGNARD: Oh, I was wondering about that, if those kinds of resources --

A.C.: Yes. And provides – You know has a traveling, for instance. And sometimes, maybe two schools that are five or so miles apart will get together and the music teacher will spend some time with them, you see. So, there’s -- With travel – With transportation, better roads, and things of that kind, a lot of other things have been able to be accomplished.

[7:09]

COGNARD: A greater flexibility in that. Well, just one more – one more thing, and, um – Do you have, um – Do you want to expose all your feelings? [Laughs]

A.C.: [Laughs]

COGNARD: That is, what kinds of, um, personal experiences would you say, um, both now and in terms of having been a county superintendent would you feel were, um, particularly effective for you, um, relatable?

A.C.: Well, ha. I don’t know. I’m not sure. I think that, um, you know, to survive as a young child, um, I had to learn to do a lot of things myself. And, I think – I think that it gave me an independence, that background gave me a tremendous independence which I see in rural areas today and when I saw in rural areas when I was a county superintendent. There is an individualism, a rugged individualism, that prevails and that stands you in good stead.

COGNARD: How -- how so? [Stuttering, inaudible]

A.C.: Well, in the – you know, in the fact that, that whatever challenge or whatever, you know, whatever thing that you ran up against that you might not have had an experience with before. You didn’t panic. You didn’t panic, because, you know, you figured things out. So if you made a mistake, you went back – You made a mistake, so the next time you knew that that isn’t the way you do it. I think there is that kind of opportunity in rural areas that you learn to work with a good many different people. And I’ve,
you know, interestingly enough, in the period that I’ve was raising my own children, I was active in volunteer organizations. I think that stands anybody in good stead. You learn how to get along with people in organizations. You, um, I don’t know. You know, are you born with perceptiveness or intuition? I don’t know. I don’t know. But, uh, you learn about people because you get to know them pretty well in a rural surrounding. And, uh, you know. I think if you’re sensitive and if you feel you like to get something done or ambitious or, or, uh, whatever, you learn how to, you learn to work in those, in that environment. That, you know, as I say, I think that helped me all the way through. But there were lots of things, it wasn’t just the rural experience.

COGNARD: No, yeah. I was many other things.

A.C.: There were lots of others.

COGNARD: Well, if we’re lucky and all of this will be recorded for us and the equipment will have worked.

A.C.: [Chuckles]

COGNARD: I do appreciate you taking you time. One of the things that Ernest had asked me to have you do, and I, and, and it was not in the packet that he sent me, was to have you just sign a form saying that it was okay for him to transcribe this. When I get that, maybe I could send over to you.

A.C.: Fine. Why don’t you do that. Why don’t you do that.

COGNARD: Okay.

A.C.: Okay.

[Audio ends at 10:48]