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Theodore L. Goff, Jr.

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Interviewee: Theodore Goff and Mattie Goff

Interviewer: Sandra Scofield

Place: Chadron, Nebraska

Date: October 30, 1980

[0:03]

Scofield: Okay. This is Theodore Goff of Chadron, Nebraska. Okay. We'll just start with these questions and just kind of run through them.

Goff: Okay.

Scofield: If that's okay with you. What about that one? What was the first day of school like? Did anything come to you about that?

Goff: No, I don't remember too much about the first day. There was a lot of exciting days after the first day.

Scofield: (laugh)

Goff: I remember one time, that was when the schoolhouse was over there that some of us kids went to canyon, we got smoking grapevine. And we came up, the teacher smelled it on our breath, and she sent us back down the canyon to get a switch, and she gives us all a licking. (laugh)

Scofield: (laugh)

Goff: That was one of the times after...

Scofield: What are grapevines like?

Goff: Grapevines (unclear). Well, they're, a grapevine is, uh, they're kind of perforated like, they've got holes all through. When you light them, why they'll burn kind of like, uh, just kind of like a cigarette. You can draw through there, make smoke.

Mattie: In other words, they're hollow.

Goff: Yeah. Did you ever hear tell smoking grapevine?

[1:16]

Scofield: Well, you know, I think my (unclear) now I think about it, the boys used to make cracks about that.

Goff: You want to get a dry one, see, so it burns. It's kind of like punk, you know, (unclear). Just keep them burning.

Mattie: I remember smoking some kind of weed, but I didn't, sure wasn't grapevine, it was something else, kind of hollow in the middle.

Goff: Well, uh. It isn't exactly hollow, just kind of perforated enough that you could draw.

Scofield: So that was...

Goff: That was one of the exciting. That was one of the exciting.

[1:50]

Scofield: Um. It adds to hear about that. You only went to Flag Butte.

Goff: Only went to Flag Butte school.

Scofield: How many--. Did you know of other schools around the area?

Goff: Well, there was Evergreen. There was Trout(?) Butte. And, uh, that school north of us.

Mattie: Rose Hill.

Goff: Rose Hill. Rose Hill is right.

Scofield: How about that Evergreen School (unclear)?

Goff: Jack Lannigan says he's got pretty good records on that school. If you want to see him.

Scofield: Now that'll--.

Goff: He thinks that school is older than Flag Butte, and it may be. I don't know.

Scofield: I don't know. We were in that a few years ago for a community picnic or something. It seemed to have more furniture, I think. Maybe I'm--. Seems like it was more furniture in that building.

Goff: Well.

Mattie: Oh, they left all those old desks up there until they had that sale.

Goff: You see, Flag Butte took that one over. We had a sale. Sold practically all that stuff. But there might've been a little.

Scofield: I remember the sale. Um, we were talking a little bit about your teachers. May I ask what were they like?

[2:57]

Goff: Well, I had a lot of good teachers and I had some who weren't so good. So. But, I'll say that most of them were good teachers.

Scofield: And when we're looking at those records again, we noticed that they weren't there a lot of times very long. One or two years.

Goff: One year was the most that a teacher would stay.

Scofield: Was that because of money or...

Goff: Uh, no. I think, uh, the people just wanted different teachers.

Scofield: That was better experience for the teachers.

Goff: I think so. Better experience.

Scofield: Yeah.

Goff: No, they. One year at a time is about all the teachers stayed.

Scofield: What, uh--.

Goff: You can tell that from the records.

Scofield: Yeah. What kind of subjects and so forth did you study?

Goff: Well, we had arithmetic, spelling, reading, and geography, and, uh, language, physiology. Now that's different from what they are nowadays.

Scofield: Uh-huh, little bit.

Goff: History. Did I say?

Mattie: Spelling.

Scofield: What was your favorite? Remember anything special that you liked particularly?

Goff: Arithmetic was my, uh. I was usually. That was the only thing I was ever at the head of the class was arithmetic. I was usually pretty good at arithmetic.

(laughing)

Goff: Reading. I never could read very good.

Mattie: You still can't.

Goff: I can't spell very good.

[4:25]

Scofield: How many kids were in these classes usually?

Goff: Oh, there was about usually five. Five to six was in my classroom.

Scofield: Now is that, that was the whole school?

Goff: Oh, no. No, that's just in the class.

Scofield: Just in your class.

Goff: See, because the teachers taught from the first to the eighth grade. She had, uh, all those grades.

Scofield: Mm-hmm.

Goff: And, uh, whenever you was in a certain class, then there was just so many pupils in that class. Understand what I mean?

Scofield: Uh-huh. Yeah.

Goff: Okay.

Scofield: So there might have been, would you say, there might have been, in a spelling class, there might have been people in different grades.

Goff: Not too. No, no, no.

Scofield: Not too often?

Goff: They usually was all in the same grade.

Scofield: How many? Okay. How many then altogether would you have in school at one time probably?

Goff: That school out there one time had 23. That's the largest. I would say when I was going to school that, uh, fifteen and sixteen was about the average.

[5:27]

Scofield: Uh-huh. Um. How did you. How did you think of school? Did you think it was fun? Or was it boring? Or was it sort of an in between?

Goff: I was never one who cared for school much. I--.

(laughing)

Goff: I'd rather get out and do other things.

Scofield: Yeah. Smoke your grapevines?

(laughing)

Goff: Yeah, smoke grapevines. No, I never was too good a student, I guess.

Scofield: Well, was that, was that partly thought because nothing went on that really excited you very much?

Goff: I think so, yeah.

Mattie: Well, they didn't have activities in those days. See, they even had their fifteen-minute recesses and they had to make their own games. Get out and play. They just didn't have those.

Goff: Did you ever play "It"?

Scofield: Yeah, I think I have. I think I have.

Goff: That was our main game to play. Up, up (unclear) away.

[6:14]

Scofield: Remind me, how. I think I've played "It," but I'm trying to remember what the rules were.

Goff: Well, we just always used that cement base there, you know. That was the base. Last one on the "It" base was it.

Scofield: Yeah, and then the guy has to chase the kids around and catch them.

Goff: When dismissed from school why everybody'd race for the door, last one on the "It" base is it. Last one out the door, he was it. Then we get out and run around the yard and the one who was it had to catch somebody else. Whenever they caught him, why, then that person was it.

Scofield: Um, you talked about that they'd held the church services once in a while in this building. Were there other things that went on? The community use the building for other things?

Goff: Oh, yes. There've been dances there. They used to have dances. They used to have Thanksgiving dinner. We all have a big community Thanksgiving dinner. And, uh. Lot of times, they'd have dances at night. Some people on the school board was in favor of dances and some weren't. And, so, with the. There was usually more on the school board that favor dancing than there was wasn't.

Scofield: Majority rule.

Goff: Yeah. Majority rule.

Scofield: (laugh)

Goff: So, that was.

[7:21]

Scofield: How about recently? Let's see in the last, oh, ten, fifteen years. Now, I know that 4-H clubs met there once in a while. Flag Butte has its farmers' market. Has there been anything else that's...

Goff: Well, we held Sunday school and church there.

Mattie: When did you go on the school board, do you remember? There was never a dance there, he was on the school board.

Goff: When, uh. No, not. No, not after, uh. There was before, though.

Mattie: There never was any, no dance there that (unclear)

Goff: The first teacher was Selma Delan(?).

Mattie: From. Selma Delan, now she was, uh, she was, lived here in Chadron and she, uh, she taught five years out there. Now she was there in (unclear, speaking over each other)

Goff: She was one (Unclear, speaking over each other)

Mattie: She come there in '32. She come there in the year before (unclear).

Goff: You can get records of Mrs. Hawthorne (unclear).

Mattie: You'll get all of those teachers and, uh, from then on, uh, you, Harold Smith. Who was the other student? Norman Sanders. And they. Didn't any of them want dances in the school and they had Sunday school and church, they had revival meetings there. And there never was a dance there after you was on the school board.

[8:48]

Goff: No, not after that. See, uh, Selma Delan, she was a Christian woman, professed to be, you know. And she didn't believe in that. And then, uh, then we had Thelma Miller. You know Thelma Miller, do you?

Scofield: I don't think so.

Goff: Don't you? She was (unclear).

Mattie: I thought you knew her. Now, how many years did she teach there?

Goff: She taught several.

Mattie: The board tried to pick out Christian women and (unclear) we always had good teachers.

Goff: And, uh, Thelma's sister.

Mattie: Alma

Goff: Alma. She taught one year.

Mattie: She taught one year. And, uh, Wentworth. What was her name?

Goff: Vada.

Mattie: Yeah, Vada Wentworth taught. She married Ernest Hawthorn's brother. And Bernice Schumacher, she taught there two different times. Two, three years (unclear).

[9:48]

Goff: Next question.

Scofield: What are you-- (laughing). Do you remember ever having bad, did bad weather ever interfere with you going to school? Or--.

Goff: Oh, yes. Lots of times.

Scofield: Did you try to make it? Or was it just kind of understood--.

Goff: Oh, no, we always got there.

Scofield: You always went.

Goff: (Unclear)

Mattie: (Unclear) pleasure if you didn't have school for two weeks.

Goff: Well, no. I thought she was talking about when I went to school. But, uh. There was times when we couldn't get there.

Mattie: They went horseback, didn't they?

Goff: I always rode a horse, see. When they couldn't get there with a horse, why, they'd take a bobsled. That was when I was small.

Scofield: Mm-hmm. Was that true, for instance, when your grandkids went to school there, too? Was it still. Did they still ride horses to school?

Goff: (Unclear)

[10:41]

Scofield: That little coal shed that sits. Is that a coal shed back in the back or was that a stable?

Goff: That's a barn that they built for the horses. No, there used to be a coal shed there but it was tore down. That's a barn that they build for the horses. There were several rode horses there.

Mattie: Bobby always took their kids. And they were the only grand--. Uh. They were the only grandkids--.

Goff: Yeah, I think Jane Smith probably and some of them the last that rode horses.

Scofield: What about, uh, you mentioned that you were, that she sent you down, the teacher sent you down to get a switch when you smoked the grapevines, you got in trouble. Was that generally how she punished you? Or were there other ways of, if you got out of line, were there other things that she did?

Goff: When I, you know, there was really not much switching at all. That was about the only time that I got a switch that I remember.

Scofield: You remember. Was that pretty much the case, there weren't too many problems with discipline?

Goff: There wasn't too many, no.

[11:35]

Scofield: How about, did you, did you have to recite in front of the class? Do you remember having to do recitation.

Goff: Oh, yes. Oh, yes. That's a yes.

Scofield: What kinds of things did you, uh?

Goff: Well. You remember them long benches that's in there now?

Scofield: Uh-huh.

Goff: Why, they'd call the class all up, we'd sit on them benches. Then they teacher'd ask each one questions. And, uh, you'd have to get up and, uh, if she called on you, you'd have to get up and answer the questions on your lesson.

Scofield: Were you required to memorize things like poems or things or anything like that?

Goff: No, you're supposed to study your lesson and you more or less have it memorized. You were supposed to know what your lesson was about.

Scofield: Yes. Do you remember? Could you recite anything yet, from, uh.

(laughing)

Goff: No.

Scofield: That's a dirty question, isn't it?

(laughing)

Scofield: That's not on the list.

Goff: No. I really, uh. I remember some of the songs we used to sing. "Battle Hymn of the Republic" and, uh, whole lot of them songs like that too.

Scofield: Did you?

Goff: Patriotic songs.

Scofield: Mostly patriotic?

Goff: We'd always have singing every morning. But that was opening...

Mattie: Exercise.

Goff: ... exercise.

Scofield: Is there anything else you remember singing? Did you ever sing anything besides patriotic songs?

Goff: Not too much.

Scofield: Not too much?

Goff: No. That was the main ones.

[12:52]

Mattie: Didn't they used to have ciphering matches and spelling matches out there too? On a Friday evening usually.

Goff: Oh, yeah. Every Friday afternoon, we'd have spelling matches and ciphering matches. That was after recess, the last recess.

Scofield: Uh-huh.

Goff: That was always kind of interesting.

Scofield: Did you--? Did you--?

Goff: Did you ever been in one?

Scofield: I was in a spelling bee once. Yeah. Even remember the word I lost on.

Goff: Ciphering, you get up there (unclear)

Mattie: (Unclear, laughing) I mean everybody does remember words they went down on.

(laughing)

Goff: Yeah. That's right.

Mattie: You know that used to be the entertainment for country people. Even on Friday nights where they go and, they'd have, uh, some kind of a social, they'd have a lunch of some sort and they'd have a spelling match and, uh, and a ciphering match and (unclear).

Scofield: Did you get a prize? Did you get prizes if you won or was it just kind of the honor of being the best.

Goff: The honor. Just the honor. (Unclear) prizes.

Mattie: (laughing) yeah.

Goff: They used to have a lot of box suppers there, too. They'd have dances or something, then a box supper.

Scofield: Uh-huh.

Goff: Pie suppers. If the district needed something, why, that's the way that they used to kind of raise money to buy things for the district.

[14:06]

Scofield: Uh-huh. Um. How would you. How would you rate the education that you got in one of the country schools?

Goff: Well, I'd rate, uh, I'd rate it high. I tell you, there's been a pupil that just graduated from that school out there that's been to the head of the east (unclear) in town.

Mattie: (unclear, speaking over each another)

Goff: (Unclear, speaking over each other) I could name some up.

Mattie: (Unclear) ... it was from out there. We never had any kids that didn't come to Chadron that they wasn't up with the kids from there.

Goff: They was right up with the kids.

Scofield: And so, you always felt that was a pretty good school and the kids came out of there well prepared?

Goff: I do.

Scofield: How about--.

Goff: My kids and my neighbor's kids. All of them. They had a good education.

Mattie: Well, they didn't have the sports. You see, when they went to school, they put their whole time into learning. And that many (Unclear) I figure a kid that went to that school out there has got a better education than the majority of them outside of high school.

Goff: Gene Smith. He was the head of the class and so was Gale Sanders. And, uh. We had a boy that was pretty good. I can't keep any of our kids got their education there. One of them's turned out to be a preacher. The other one's a...

(murmuring)

Mattie: Bob's the only that liked to stay with the farm.

Goff: Real estate. Gale sells real estate. He did.

[15:35]

Scofield: What about, um, when we were talking about the course of the classes you took and some, what about? Do you remember any of the ways they taught history or English or language arts or any of the...? How'd the teacher present that? Were you asked to read a book? Or did she lecture to you? Or...

Goff: Oh, yes, we all had our history books. We all, uh.

Mattie: We had a book on every subject.

Goff: Yes, the district furnished the books. And, uh, there was a book for every subject. And everybody had his own book. Sometimes they had to double up if there happen to be too many students or something one year.

Mattie: They even had penmanship books when you took your penmanship.

Goff: And everybody had his own book and you studied your lesson and then when you was called to class, why, she'd ask you questions on ...

Scofield: Was that your test pretty much, then? If you--.

Goff: Oh, no. We always had a test end of the month, too, on what we went over that month.

Scofield: Mm-hmm.

Goff: See. Then we had examinations every month. If you didn't remember, why, because you was asked questions that you didn't know you was going to be asked on your subject during that month. So, if you didn't remember, you just (unclear) test.

(laughing)

Mattie: (Unclear) grade on your report.

[16:54]

Scofield: You already said you like mathematics best in school. What was, uh. What were your worst subjects?

Goff: My worst. Oh, spelling, I think. I don't know whether it was the teacher I had didn't start me out right or what. But I never was a speller.

Scofield: How about. Did you have homework? Or could you get everything done during the day?

Goff: No. Very little. Very little homework. Sometimes if you got behind or was sick, was out a day or two, well, you brought homework home. I hardly ever (unclear).

Scofield: Can you. Now this is a tough one, I think. Can you remember like maybe one day at school and kind of describe what the day was like? From beginning to end. You talked about, they always started the day with kind of a patriotic ceremony, opening ceremonies. What happened after that usually?

Goff: Well, we, uh. You mean our classes right through the day?

Scofield: Mm-hmm. Yeah.

Goff: It was usually reading and arithmetic and language, physiology. Now that was before noon. And then afternoon, why, was history and spelling and, uh, I should. I didn't get them divided up just right. But that's kind of the line. The way that went.

[18:10]

Scofield: How about breaks? Did you have recess the morning? The afternoon?

Goff: Yes. 10:30 every. 10:30, why, we'd have a fifteen-minute break.

Scofield: Any other breaks during the day? (Unclear) break and do stuff.

Goff: Yes. 2:30 in the afternoon. If you had an hour noon. Now if you had a thirty-minute noon, why, then the recess came at two o'clock. And your other recess would be 10:15. But you had fifteen minutes. Two breaks besides noon.

Mattie: (Unclear) in the winter, though. (Unclear) day for sure?

Goff: Yeah, we had an hour noon all the time when the day (unclear).

Scofield: Did you feel it made a difference in your upbringing having gone to a country school?

Goff: No. Must've, yeah, but I think, I think in town there's more mischief to get into. Oh, yes, I think so.

Mattie: You don't have a social part. It's altogether different in the country. (Unclear)

Scofield: (Unclear) even though I grew up in the country, I didn't ever go to a country school.

Mattie: You didn't.

Scofield: So this is all news to me. I'm real interested in just what the differences were. Because I went to school with some of those kids you're talking about. But I know that they could come in and they could, they could compete with those of us who went to town school.

Mattie: (Unclear) you take our kids, why, they always brought them in. The teachers would bring them in, take them around, you know. Just like they do still. Yes. You know, these places and have their day off. They did a lot of things our kids did that they never used to do. They'd come into their music festival and take part in that.

[19:55]

Scofield: Um. Remember back when you went to school, do you remember any bullies in your school? Or any troublemakers?

Goff: Oh, yeah. Yeah, we had them. It was. It wasn't the, uh, our neighbor's kids, it was always somebody that happen to move in for a while. I've known two or three that they were just there for the winter. And that was one trouble with this one certain teacher. See--.

Mattie: Well, I think that's because little people moved around then, living on rented places, and the kids were so much older in school than some of the others. And they was always the ones who would get you into mischief.

Goff: I don't want to run down the cities, or anything, but this boy was from Detroit. And he came out there to stay with his relatives, went to school there. And he was a little kidder (Unclear). What he didn't know, knew, or (laugh) no need to try it, I guess. But, uh, as far as the neighbor's kids around there, we all got along good. I wouldn't say there was any bullies.

[21:02]

Scofield: How about, how'd they heat that building when you went to school there?

Goff: Uh. They had, uh, wood for a long time. They heat it with wood. Then they went to coal. Then they went to gas. But when I went to school when I was a kid, why, they had a wood heater that was about three foot long and maybe two foot high. And they cut the wood in two-foot lengths. That's the way they heat the building.

Scofield: Um. If you look back now on going to school, what kinds of things stand out in you mind the most? What do you remember the most?

Goff: When I look back. Oh. Sleigh-riding at recess, I guess.

(laughing)

Mattie: You know, all the kids that's ever gone to the school up there would go up there on that Flag Butte Hill and they'd take their sleds and then (unclear) that's around there, you know, and go underneath that. It's a wonder that some kid didn't get their head cut off.

(laughing)

Goff: We used to go up there and climb up that north side, too. I never was no climber, but I had went up. But there was other kids at the school, they'd go up there.

Scofield: Do you think that--.

Goff: I didn't know just what kind of an answer you wanted me to give on that.

Scofield: (Unclear) there aren't right or wrong answers to these.

Goff: Okay. Okay.

[22:36]

Scofield: Do you think that country schools should be preserved? Like what you've done out there at Flag Butte? Think that's a good idea that they should do more of that?

Goff: Well, now. I do. (laughing). And she don't, so there we are.

Mattie: You say. Now you're looking at it different (unclear) building. You mean the building. As far as that building out there, if you're not going to have a school in it, I don't care a thing in the world about it. But he does. But now, as far as the schools, I'll take the country schools that got it over the town school outside of their, uh, sports and things like that. Because as long as there's youngsters to go school. Now, if you look right out there at Grantham's now, look how far they're bringing those kids to school. And--.

Goff: Now I hold up for the small school.

Mattie: I think, I still think the country schools are all right.

Goff: But the way the community is out there, there wouldn't be many kids around there to go to school.

Mattie: When they get them down to one and two and three kids, then that isn't fair to the kids who go. They need competition. But as long as they've got enough kids to go to school, I'll take a country school, is all. Now, you take district 49 out there, where we were in. They've got two teachers out there for nine kids. Out here where, um, Cottonwood Crick, it's out on 385, you know, on down there. They've got the same thing there. There's two teachers for nine kids.

[23:57]

Scofield: Let's take, for example, that little country school, Evergreen School. Nothing is being done with that. Now, I know what Mattie's going to say here. Do you think that somebody should that someone should take that little building under their wing and protect it like the Flag Butte people have done with theirs?

Goff: Well, Jack Lenington(?) did.

Scofield: He's the private owner, isn't he?

Goff: He's the private owner. He bought it. Because he didn't want to see it torn down. And I had the idea (unclear) probably (unclear).

Scofield: Well, now, if I--.

Goff: Oh, I think it's nice as far as (unclear, Mattie talking over him).

Mattie: If they're going to have something going on there, it's all right.

Goff: As far as keeping them all, why, I don't know if that would be necessary. But I do think Flag Butte's one of the oldest school buildings around that country. One of them. I would say it's the oldest. (Unclear)

Mattie: I'm just not. I'm just not that sentimental.

Goff: Well, I think one difference. I think one difference is because, uh.

(Laughter)

Goff: She didn't come. She wasn't here, didn't go to school to that building. Like a lot of the rest of us. Now all my kids went to school there. And all the neighbor's kids. (Unclear).

Matties: Well, if they're using it for something. But really since they kept that schoolhouse out there, the Fourth of July and they share farmers (unclear) is practically all that's been there. I thought maybe that the clubs or something (unclear).

Goff: Yeah, but it's sitting there. We can see it.

Mattie: Yes.

Goff: I drive by it every day about.

Mattie: It's sitting there. You know, I'm that way about old buildings on the place. Now, I think when an old building is dilapidated and it isn't any good anymore, it looks better to get it down. And I just don't care anything about them old buildings.

[25:49]

Scofield: Um. Here's a question that might be tough to answer. I'm not sure how I'd answer it even. The question is, What is the role of country schools in rural education today?

Goff: What is the role?

Scofield: What's the role of country schools in rural education today? Would you say, I think that's a tough question. I'm not sure how I'd answer that.

Mattie: (Unclear) have to go to these bigger schools because they're educating their kids there like they are anyplace else.

Goff: I wouldn't know how to answer that, either.

Scofield: Anything else, um. There's a man down in Kansas who's doing some research just on the music and what kinds of training that students got either in music or singing. We talked about singing and I'd like to back up and go back to that if we could for a minute. Did you have any, anything that would be considered music lessons or music training?

Goff: Not too much, no.

Mattie: Yeah, but our kids did. Every one of them.

Goff: I know, but that, uh.

Mattie: I run across that picture just this morning where they had that little band out there. Did you take those pictures downstairs that I picked out this morning?

Goff: No.

Mattie: There's a picture in there on them kids (unclear).

Goff: In the earlier days, though, there wasn't. The teachers didn't have too much music. We didn't have a piano there until we started holding Sunday school.

Scofield: Uh-huh. Was that after you'd gone to school there then?

Goff: Yes, that was after I went to school.

Scofield: Uh-huh. How about Christmas programs?

Goff: Oh, we always had Christmas programs.

Scofield: Was that something just the kids did or was that the whole community?

Goff: No. Just the kids. (Unclear) school program.

Scofield: Can you give us? Do you remember anyone in particular that you could give us a description of?

Goff: Oh. We just had dialogues and all the kids would have a piece to speak. And just Christmas dialogues. That's about the only way I can explain it.

(Someone whispering): costumes. Yes.

Goff: Uh. And then they always have Santa Claus. Warren Sanders used to always be Santa Claus. He had a big, fur overcoat, you know.

Mattie: There's a picture of our kids when.

Goff: It's always like that.

[28:15, tape turned]

Mattie: And every one of our kids they taught them how to play the horn. All the boys could play.

Goff: Well, you know, Mattie.

Mattie: I still got their caps and their capes and two of the kids' horns.

Goff: Well, we didn't have a piano start holding Sunday school.

Mattie: No, (unclear) got that one.

Goff: So, you see, uh. I just, we start courting. No, that wouldn't have done any good though. What I wanted, that picture of the schoolhouse before it was moved.

Mattie: Now this was the year that Bobby started school.

Scofield: (very quietly) What year was that?

Mattie: Now, he was, uh, he started when he was five. That'd be in '38.

(Quiet murmuring)

(Laughing)

Goff: Now this is, uh, Thelma Miller. You said you didn't. She used to work down here at this here auto supply.

Mattie: She still does.

Goff: She still does, I guess. But she's taught. I guess maybe you don't recall.

Mattie: You knew a Lois Hawthorne, didn't you?

Scofield: I don't think so.

Mattie: (Unclear).

Scofield: (unclear) two twins

Mattie: Well, this one is just older than the twins.

Goff: This is Vada Wentworth. Do you remember when I said Wentworth we talked about? That's the two different (unclear) there. Now, who was this one?

[29:26]

Scofield?: They were neighbors of them as far as (unclear).

Mattie: Oh, they did years and years ago, but our kids married.

Scofield?: Yeah, I was just wondering.

Mattie: But he's got on boots. Now this is our oldest boy here.

Scofield: Uh-huh.

Mattie: And this is the second boy. And this is Bobby. Now. And the girl was the youngest. She's not on any of these pictures.

Scofield: Who's this? Who is this teacher here in the picture here. There's a teacher in this.

Goff: That's that Vada Wentworth.

Mattie: She married the Hawthorne.

Scofield: Was that pretty common for a teacher out there to marry somebody in the community and then stay? Or was that kind of unusual?

Goff: No, that'd be very unusual. I don't know of anybody (unclear).

Mattie: Anybody around here.

Goff: Not (Unclear) teachers. And that was another thing. The teachers were usually from, often from another state or something like that. But Nora McCullough there, I think she was from Wyoming, if I remember. They didn't have local teachers too much.

Scofield: How'd you find your teachers?

(someone murmuring): (Unclear)

Goff: Oh. Now, after I got on the school board. Why, of course, we'd always go to college and get references there.

Mattie: You got them from your county superintendent.

Goff: Yes. Get them from the superintendent because that's where they'd send in their application. You know.

Mattie: And some of the girls would recommend other girls when they were going to leave, too, that they thought would be good. Then you. Now that's where you got Vada Wentworth. Thelma Delan recommended her. She come up here. Don't you remember? Because she (unclear).

[31:10]

Scofield: What were, um. What were? Were there rules and regulations when you were a board member about what you expected of your teachers and ...

Goff: Oh, yeah. Oh, yeah. We usually sat down, talk with them. (laughing) I don't know how--. Are you recording this?

Scofield: I don't know.

(laughing)

Goff: Well, when I was on the board, we tried to hire teachers who didn't smoke or drink and (unclear, speaking too quietly).

Scofield: Was that--.

Goff: We kind of set rules for the teachers.

Scofield: When. I know when my mom, she was showing me her first teaching contract and it was, one of the things in there was she couldn't get married.

Goff: Is that right?

Scofield: Yeah. Was that the case in your district?

Goff: No. I don't. I don't--.

[32:05, break in recording]

Goff: Now, that isn't the one I wanted.

Scofield: Okay, now we're going to. We're looking at teacher's salaries and how they've changed over the years.

Goff: Okay. Well, Mrs. Donna Wood. Well, Miss Diffendafer(?). She got 90 dollars. Bernice Mar(unclear) got 90 dollars. Then they dropped to 80.

Scofield: What year are we at here?

Goff: Well. We're in '29. That's what I was going to say. '29, '30, and '31. Then in '32, they dropped clear back to 60 dollars. '32 and '33 and '34, they was hard years.

Scofield: Hard times, I suppose. Yeah.

Goff: And then, uh, Vada Wentworth, she only got \$65. \$65 in '37. And then in '38, they started going up again. In '39, \$75. '40, \$75. Then they dropped back five dollars. And I didn't get no record in there. Then Marie Shulster(?) got 90 dollars.

Scofield: That was in 1947?

Goff: Six.

Scofield: Six. That's interesting.

Goff: Then, Anita Nation got \$100. And then Mary Daniels, she got \$178. And they just kept going on up.

Scofield: Okay, let's--.

Goff: Then the last was 500 dollars.

Scofield: And that was 195-what? What was that year?

Goff: '75. Oh, you mean, uh... (pages flipping) I'm sorry.

Scofield: That 500 dollar figure. 19--.

Goff: Which one?

Scofield: Okay, it says there 1959 is 300 dollars. Is that where were at down there?

Goff: Oh, '59, yeah, 300 dollars.

Scofield: Okay. And that's per month.

Goff: That's per month.

Scofield: Yeah. Okay.

Goff: Of course, now there's probably, uh, social security and stuff taken out of that.

Scofield: Sure, yeah.

[33:39]

Goff: Now, that's what kind of got me. Now, some of these, I know the social security was taken off and I couldn't find no record.

Scofield: Well, did they--.

Goff: When they're even numbers like this, why, the social security hasn't been taken off.

Scofield: Uh-huh. Okay, now, I see here, as you move up here to the 1960s, they make a little advance, but not much. Here, 19-, was that 1968, it goes to \$450?

Goff: 1968, 450 dollars. But there's a space in the (unclear), I suppose they just kept it climbing.

Scofield: Uh-huh.

Goff: And then they went to \$500, and they paid \$500 from there on out.

Scofield: Mm-hmm. Let's. Could we back up here and look at those early years? Now you had clear back from 1896? Is that what you said?

Goff: Mm-hmm.

Scofield: What was--.

Goff: That was the first teacher.

Scofield: And she made how much?

Goff: That was a man. \$33 and a third.

Scofield: That's a month?

Goff: That's a month.

Scofield: And then it drops down to?

Goff: \$25.

Scofield: I wonder if that difference there was because you had a man teacher and then you had a woman teacher.

Goff: I just don't know about that. (Unclear) 28. Well, it depends on the times. You know, they were having pretty hard times in there in some of them times.

Scofield: Yeah.

Goff: So, then \$28 and \$28 and then it jumps back to \$25.

Scofield: Now we're in 1900, and it jumped back to \$25. Yeah.

Goff: And then they jumped back to \$25 here in 1902 and '03, too. (Unclear)

Scofield: Where we here, now? Okay, then the next change is 1904, 35 dollars a month. This is interesting here, too. Look how many months they taught.

Goff: Yeah. Yeah.

[35:08]

Scofield: First teacher taught six months.

Goff: And then they had four months. Then three. Then two. Three. Four. Down here in 1912, now they see six months. Now that's all I went to school, six months.

Scofield: Mm-hmm.

Goff: First year.

Scofield: Was that because, um, they needed you at home or the district?

Goff: No. Oh, no. No. The district just didn't have the money.

Scofield: So, you just hired the teacher for as long as you thought you had it.

Goff: (Unclear) kind of hard teachers (unclear).

Scofield: I've often wondered, do you really need to go to school nine months?

Goff: You say you wonder if they do?

Scofield: I've wondered. Because we had to go nine months. I always felt that was maybe unnecessary.
(laughing)

Goff: It always seems like a good idea.

Mattie: (unclear) took you that long to get through the books though.

Goff: Yeah. I'm sure every kid feels that way.

Mattie: Mm-hmm.

Goff: I really think nine months is a good deal.

Scofield: Yeah. Let's--.

Goff: If you remember, it was kind of hard to make the grade sometimes. Yeah. Hey, you know where they're teaching all the grades, why, the teacher don't have the time to teach a grade, do you think?

Scofield: I suppose that will be more important, definitely. Yeah. Let's get some more figures here. What are we, where'd we quit at? We looked at a change. We got. In 1904, the teacher taught for four months for 25 dollars. And then that changes to 35 dollars for four months the following year.

Goff: Yeah.

[36:34]

Scofield: Uh, and then we--.

Goff: I got them two turned around.

Scofield: Okay. That's 1902 and 1903. But the salary was the same.

Goff: Yeah, it was. (Unclear)

Scofield: Yeah. And we don't see a change here, what, until.

Goff: About 1907, is that it? Or 1908. 1908. Ethel Forney. She got \$45.

Scofield: For five months. Uh-huh. Then it goes up to \$50 for five months in 1910. You don't really see any big jumps here though for quite a while, do you?

Goff: Oh, no. No, they just gradually go up. Go up and down, see.

Scofield: Yeah. What year is that? Right there.

Goff: 70? Or 52? '18. 1918

Scofield: Went up to 52 dollars for six months and then what the next year?

Goff: Then it jumped the next year. Bernice March(?) got \$70.

Scofield: Uh-huh. Then we get to 1925, they get clear up to 90 bucks a month for seven months.

Goff: Yes.

Scofield: (laughing) That's interesting.

[37:37]

Goff: And then, from there on, they probably, I didn't, I don't. Well, now, here's one, I found had eight months. We know that was Thelma Delan(?). We know that.

Scofield: What was the first year that they had nine months school in your district?

Goff: Oh. Did Thelma?

Mattie: (unclear)

Goff: Yep, Thelma just got eight months. You know, uh. You're recording this?

Scofield: Yeah. Mm-hmm. Is that okay?

Goff: No, that's all right. I just won't say something.

Scofield: (laughing).

Goff: You know, some of them wanted eight months and some of them nine. (Unclear)

Scofield: So it was kind of up to the teacher?

Mattie: Well, they voted that at the school board.

Goff: No, no, no. They voted that at school.

Scofield: Oh, I see. What was the difference? What was--.

Mattie: (Unclear) kids ought to be home that extra month in the spring.

Goff: Yeah, I guess. Some wanted (unclear). Well, another thing, money, too. See, they didn't want to pay off that extra money because when you pay out more money, well, that's more taxes. (laughing)

Scofield: You bet. You bet. Yeah.

Goff: So, it was up and down there for, oh, several years and years. Eight and nine. But then they finally passed a law, see, they had to have eight months.

Mattie: They had to have nine months.

Goff: Nine months.

Scofield: You remember what year that was?

Goff: Well.

Scofield: About when that was?

Goff: Well, let's see. Thelma, Vada Wentworth. I guess, I guess it was about '36 (unclear) '37.

Scofield: Mm-hmm.

Goff: Wouldn't you?

Mattie: Well, I don't know. I just remember going over there, go to school meeting and there were some that didn't want it, only eight months. And I thought they ought to have nine because it took them that long to get through those books they had.

Goff: That'd be awful close along in there. '36 or '37.

[39:23]

Scofield: What was the? What were some of the most, um, hot issues that the school board ever had to deal with? I'm sure money was probably one of them. But what? Do you remember any of the other things that happened at the school board that were particularly difficult decisions or that people were really divided on?

Goff: Well, uh, the months of school was one of them. And the (unclear). The money they'd vote. Some thought it'd be so much and others other. And, uh, really that's about all I can really think of.

Scofield: Generally, pretty--.

Goff: Of course, when they moved the schoolhouse, well (laughing) that was a hot subject, too. It took them two years to (unclear). I don't remember too much about that.

Scofield: What was the? What was the controversy over moving the schoolhouse?

Goff: They thought they'd get a percent of the district more. And, at that time, there was more children over that direction than there was over that way. See? And a mile was just a mile. That mile made a lot of difference them days.

Scofield: (laugh).

Goff: See there was three or four children coming from up there where Harry lives now.

Scofield: How did they move that schoolhouse?

Goff: Just horses.

Scofield: Just put it on a sled kind of?

Goff: Put it on wagons. On wagons. Yep.

Scofield: That must have been a pretty good feat. That's pretty rough country.

Goff: That's, uh, that was quite a job (unclear).

Mattie: Yeah, you know, them roads on around through Hawthorne's then across the crick, there was no road straight across that then. At all.

Scofield: Uh-huh.

Goff: Where they moved it to is down below the Smiths, where (unclear) is. There's a shallow place there. And it's been there years. And that's where they moved it across.

Mattie: They moved it down across that?

Goff: Yep.

[41:16]

Scofield: Was your dad the one, was he in on that?

Goff: No, no. My dad was dead then.

Scofield: You were in on the move then?

Goff: Oh, I just can't remember.

Scofield: Uh-huh.

Goff: See, I went to school one year when it was over there.

Scofield: Uh-huh.

Goff: Then, uh, the next year they moved.

Scofield: Yeah.

Goff: So, I can't. I remember seeing them horses up there in (unclear). Did you ever see horses try to pull together? They just go on and on and on, you know. So, I remember a lot of it, but, uh.

Mattie: What was you, about seven?

Goff: Uh. (Unclear) No, I was about six. Six, seven.

Scofield: Did that make any difference? Well, what time of year was that? I suppose they moved that summer?

Goff: Oh, they moved that during the summer, yeah. It was a, you know.

Scofield: Did they set it right on that foundation then that's there now?

Goff: Yep. Yep.

Scofield: They poured the foundation?

Goff: They poured the foundation and then just set it right down on the foundation.

Scofield: Uh-huh. So, you weren't really uprooted too much. Things were pretty normal when you went back to school?

Goff: Oh, yeah. Of course, they had it all fixed up by the time school started.

Scofield: Uh-huh.

Goff: But, uh. Oh, I say fixed up, you know. They had to put a new floor in afterwards. One thing and another.

[42:33]

Mattie: Did they put a new floor in at that time?

Goff: Oh, yeah.

Mattie: Well, when I went out there, I never seen a splintery floor all of my life as that floor was and that (unclear)

Goff: That was a different floor that was in there. That's a different floor.

Mattie: That'd be the second floor then that was put in there. Because, uh, then you put that, uh, linoleum in on top of that and that sure did help. They did (unclear, Goff begins speaking)

Goff: (Unclear) a lot of work done on it, you know. There used to be a wainscoting, they called it, around the edge. Of course, that isn't there now.

Mattie: (Unclear) now.

Scofield: Have you thought of any other things, as you thought about the conversation we had about the school, have you thought about any other things that happened at the school when you were a student or anything that (unclear) include.

Goff: No, I really haven't that would be interesting too much, I guess, you know. I can't think of anything. A lot of things happened, of course, but, uh. Some things I wouldn't want to put out. (laughing)

Scofield: (laughing)

Mattie: A lot of good times in that schoolhouse because they used to have, uh. Well, they didn't, they didn't have literary over there much, did they?

Goff: No.

Mattie: The whole bunch went up to Evergreen...

Goff: Evergreen is where they had.

Mattie: ... for literary and I'm telling you, they'd have crowds up there. And they really had good times.

Scofield: Do you remember anything they did at literary?

Mattie: Oh, yeah. They'd make up newspaper, make up silly things, you know, about different people in the community. A lot of the times they'd get it out of the newspaper and just change the name.

(Laughing)

Goff: Well, they had a debate. Debate on certain things.

Mattie: Yeah. And they always had a lunch of some sort.

Scofield: Remember any of the debate topics?

Goff: Oh, no. No, I just, I wouldn't. I mean, you know, I mean, I don't remember. Because I wasn't old enough to, I wasn't in on the debate. That was the older ones.

Scofield: Pretty much an adult activity?

Goff: Yeah. Yeah.

Scofield: Okay. Well. Thanks for all of that information. And we'll go outside (unclear)

[44:45, end recording]