

Genevieve Carter

8/27/03, T1, S1

- ES: This is an interview with Genevieve Carter on August 27<sup>th</sup>, 2003 at the Grande Ronde Retirement Residence. Just say, "It's a bright sunny day in Union County."
- GC: Yes, that's right.
- ES: Say it.
- GC: It's a bright sunny day in Union County.
- ES: You said in the earlier interview...
- GC: ...she loved to sing and she was always going around the house humming and singing. A very happy person. I stayed with my grandparents when I was going to school. We lived in the country out on a farm so I came to town and stayed with them during the week and went to school 'cause there was no school out there at the Balaria School, it was closed at that time.
- ES: The Balaria?
- GC: Balaria School. It's still there, but it's a home now. It's been made into a house.
- ES: Do you remember how that's spelled?
- GC: B-a-l-e-r-i-a, I believe.
- ES: And what was that near?
- GC: I was only... I was just in the second grade, I think, second or third grade.
- ES: Where was the school?
- GC: Right on the corner up above our place. You go down the Conley Lane and the Walsinger Lane...it's called the Walsinger Lane now...but it was right on the corner and then we were on right down the road about three-fourths of a mile.
- ES: Would that be close to Elgin or Summerville?
- GC: Oh no. No. Alicel.
- ES: Alicel.
- GC: Uh-huh.
- ES: And where did the Walsingers live?
- GC: They lived near Alicel also.
- ES: I see. But did you say that you had to come to your grandparents because it was too far from your house to go to school?
- GC: No, they closed the school. There was only about two pupils out there and so they closed the school. I had to come to town to go to school.
- ES: To La Grande?
- GC: Uh-huh.
- ES: I see. So the Walsingers lived in La Grande?
- GC: I stayed with the Moss'. My grandparents were named Moss.
- ES: I see.
- GC: M-o-s-s. They were my mother's parents.
- ES: Your mother's parents.
- GC: Uh-huh.
- ES: I'm not clear about the Walsinger's relation to you.
- GC: My grandmother was a Walsinger.

ES: On your father's side?  
GC: On my mother's... On my... [laugh] On my mother's side. Yeah, my grandmother she was a Walsinger.  
ES: And how does the Moss come into it?  
GC: She married a Moss.  
ES: She married a Moss, I see.  
GC: She married James Moss.  
ES: What was her whole name then?  
GC: Martha Jane Walsinger, then Moss.  
ES: Moss. Okay. And they lived on a farm?  
GC: Out by Alicel.  
ES: What were they farming, do you remember?  
GC: Wheat mostly, I think.  
ES: Do you remember being there when they were...when they were working?  
GC: I was just a young girl.  
ES: Yes. But you remember watching some of the farming procedures?  
GC: I don't know that I did or not. I guess so.  
ES: Because you were too young maybe?  
GC: Yes.  
ES: And then can you remem... Can you tell me anything more about how Alicel looked at that time? I understand that it was quite a town at one time compared to what it is now.  
GC: We had the store. They had quite a nice little store and a school, a church and quite a few homes there, some nice homes there. I remember especially the Murphy home which was really quite elegant.  
ES: Were you inside it?  
GC: Yes. I had been inside it.  
ES: What made it seem elegant?  
GC: The size of it, I guess. There was a, you know, quite a large downstairs then an upstairs. It was kept up nice, nicely painted and everything.  
ES: You mentioned a store. Was this a small general store?  
GC: Just a small general store. I remember I was just a little...little girl and the men liked to go and sit around the stove, you know, and talk. I came in the store and one of the men said, "Jim, here comes Genevieve. She wants a nickel or something." [laugh] So I went up to my granddad and I said, "Have you got a nickel or a dime or something?" [laughs]  
ES: What did you want to buy?  
GC: I bought a candy bar or something I guess.  
ES: Did you hear the men talk about anything?  
GC: No, not especially. They'd talk farming, you know, and I was too young to pay any attention.  
ES: Was the school that you went to then in Alicel?  
GC: Yes.  
ES: Yes.  
GC: I was just... I just went there two years, first grade and second grade.  
ES: I see. So do you remember anything at all about what happened at that school?

GC: We lived about a quarter-of-a-mile from the school, maybe farther, and we had to go across the railroad track to get to the school. The Ruckmans lived across the road from my folks...

ES: Ruckman? R-u-c-k-m-a-n?

GC: Uh-huh.

ES: Yes.

GC: Clark Ruckman was his boy, he was adopted. But anyway, he was...lived across the road so he walked to school with me so that I'd be alright crossing the railroad track. I think Clark is still around. I don't know whether he's in La Grande or not anymore. He did used to live in La Grande.

ES: So once you got to the school can you remember what happened there?

GC: The first day of school we walked in the door and Clark went to his seat, he had a certain place where he sat. I just walked in with him and sat down in the seat beside him. All the kids began to giggle, they thought that was funny. [laugh]

ES: Why was it funny?

GC: It wasn't funny to me. I was just with Clark and I just thought it was the thing to do.

ES: Why do you think they thought it was funny?

GC: I don't know.

ES: Were the younger...

GC: They thought I should have a seat of my own, I guess.

ES: Were the younger children supposed to be separate from the older children?

GC: No, we were all in one room, as I recall. Now, I...

ES: Yes, but different seating...different seating areas I mean?

GC: What?

ES: Different seating areas?

GC: Just the one room. There was another room in the school, but I guess upper grades were over there in that other room. I don't remember.

ES: Do you think there were two teachers?

GC: Mm-hmm.

ES: Do you remember your teacher?

GC: Her name was Ms. Watkins is all I know.

ES: How did she dress?

GC: Oh, I don't remember. I don't think I paid any attention to that.

ES: This would've been... You were born in 1912, right?

GC: Uh-huh.

ES: So you were about five years old perhaps?

GC: Yeah, five or six.

ES: That would've made you... That would've made it about 1917 right at the time of the Second...First World War.

GC: I guess so.

ES: Do you remember being...

GC: I don't remember anything about that.

ES: Okay. About the railroad tracks, were there quite a few trains each day going through?

GC: I don't think so. I think there was just the one train and maybe a freight train once in a while. Kind of like it is now.

ES: Do you remember seeing the train?

GC: Yeah.

ES: It had a steam locomotive?

GC: Uh-huh.

ES: How many cars?

GC: I think only one.

ES: A passenger car you mean?

GC: What?

ES: A passenger car?

GC: Mm-hmm.

ES: Did you ever ride on it?

GC: No, never did.

ES: Did you want to?

GC: No, not especially.

ES: I see. I should think a train with a steam engine might have been quite exciting to a young child.

GC: I don't know. I don't remember that I was excited of those.

ES: I see.

GC: I imagine.

ES: You told me a little about the Walsingers, what about the Whittles? How were they related to you?

GC: My grandmother was a Whittle.

ES: On your father's side?

GC: On my mother's side.

ES: Oh. Walsinger and Moss both on your grandmother...on your mother's side.

GC: Right.

ES: How would...

GC: My dad...his folks...well, they came from Missouri or somewhere too, but they were not...they came on the train later. So that's all I know.

ES: Did you ever talk with your grandparents about why they decided to come to Union County?

GC: No. No, I never did.

ES: How 'bout your parents? Were they both born here?

GC: Yes.

ES: Did they ever say anything about...

GC: No.

ES: ...why they came to Union County? Why their parents did?

GC: No.

ES: What's your guess?

GC: I think the farming maybe. My grandfather Moss was quite the farmer. He had two farms. He had one over by Alicel and another one over across by the Conley warehouses.

ES: Toward Cove?

GC: No. The Conley warehouses are on the highway between Alicel and Island City.

ES: Oh, I see.

GC: Those Conley warehouse... They call 'em the Conley warehouses.

ES: Did you talk with your parents ever about farming?

GC: No. My dad farmed for a few years, but he preferred railroading. So he left the farm when I was just about, I don't know, eight years old I think. We moved to town when he went to railroading.

ES: What sort of job did he have on the railroad?

GC: He worked on the...he was an engineer. He loved the railroad, but he didn't like farming. He hated the horses. [laugh] They always made him mad.

ES: What do you think they did that made him mad?

GC: They just... I don't know. He tried... I don't know, he just got mad at the horses. I just don't remember.

ES: Did he talk to you about what his job on the railroad?

GC: He was an inspector, engine inspector in the shops here in La Grande. For a while he was an engineer and then he went into...when we came back from the farm then he was...he worked in the shops. But he liked it, I think.

ES: Were there any times that he took you down there to look at the shops?

GC: Mm-hmm. Yeah, I went in several times. I was quite thrilled, you know, to go in there and see those big engines.

ES: Can you tell me more about that?

GC: I just remember going over there and my mother sat in the car and I went in with my dad. Here were these great big engines, you know. I just remember that.

ES: Were they being repaired?

GC: Uh-huh. That's what he did.

ES: Did you talk with any other people there?

GC: No. I don't think...

ES: You were still a little girl.

GC: Uh-huh.

ES: Yes. When you were in La Grande High School you played the piano for musical programs?

GC: Yes.

ES: How had you learned to play the piano?

GC: I took lessons from Hilda Anthony.

ES: Oh, you did!

GC: I took lessons from the time I was about... My mother taught me to play the piano first when I was about five and then I started taking from Hilda Anthony when I was probably nine, something like that. She was a wonderful teacher. She was the best teacher in La Grande.

ES: Can you remember what made her seem such a good teacher?

GC: She was... She was a very fine musician herself and had gone back East to study piano and was just an excellent teacher and a wonderful person.

ES: Someone told me that her method of teaching was you learned for a piece the left-hand part, played that by itself, and then you learned the right-hand part, play that by itself, and then maybe later you put them together. Is that what she did with you?

GC: I don't remember that especially.

ES: Maybe that was just for the beginners?

GC: I don't know. It might've been the way she did it, I just don't remember. But I studied with her from the time I was about eight, I think, until I was through college. So I studied with her for a long time.

ES: What were some of the pieces that you played when you became more advanced?

GC: Oh golly, I don't know. I had all of 'em, Mendelssohn, Chopin, all of 'em. And then when I was a junior in high school I gave a recital by myself. It was at the La Grande Hotel. I think I was a junior in high school when I did that. Usually it was seniors, but I did it when I was a junior.

ES: Do you remember more details about that recital?

GC: It was in the ballroom of the La Grande Hotel and I remember I got my first real long dress. My aunt, Lema Fuller, sang.

ES: Lema?

GC: Lima Fuller.

ES: L-e...

GC: L-e-m-a.

ES: L-e-m-a.

GC: Uh-huh. And she was my mother's sister. She sang. She took lessons from Mrs. Dr. Richardson. And uh... I don't remember much about it except it was in that ballroom there at the La Grande Hotel.

ES: Did you play without any mistakes?

GC: I think so. [laughs]

ES: Can you describe the ballroom anymore? Since that building is not there we can't know except through your memory.

GC: They had a stage and the piano, the grand piano, was up on the stage. Then the seats were down below. But that's about all I remember.

ES: Was there food served at the recital?

GC: No. No. You just... I played a few pieces and then my aunt, Lema Fuller, sang in the middle of the program and then I played at the end.

ES: Were there other recitals after that?

GC: There were a lot...quite a few recitals. Hilda Anthony had a lot of students. I remember Helen Speckhart was one of them and...oh...McFarland, I can't think of his first name. His last name of McFarland, I know we played a duet at our graduation. He played one part and I played the other on the piano.

ES: Tell me about playing for the operettas at the high school.

GC: Mr. Newsbaum was the music teacher and he always had these operettas. I was gonna graduate... I could've graduated in three-and-a-half years. Then Mr. Newsbaum heard that I was thinking about graduating at Christmastime. He came to me and he said, "I don't want you to graduate at Christmastime." He said, "I want you to play for one more operetta." [laugh] So I did, I stayed in the four...the extra half year.

ES: When you played for the operettas did you have to be there for every rehearsal?

GC: Yeah, after school every night. But I enjoyed it.

ES: Do you remember any that...the names of any of the operettas?

GC: No, I don't. Pickles. Pickles is one.

ES: Were they usually comedies?

GC: What?  
ES: Usually comedies?  
GC: Yes, I think so. Now that's the only one I remember.  
ES: What did people say about your playing?  
GC: They seemed to think that they seemed to enjoy it.  
ES: Was the music difficult?  
GC: Yes. I went quite a long ways with my music.  
ES: I mean was the music for the operettas difficult to play?  
GC: Not especially. You had to work at it, but it wasn't all that hard.  
ES: What else were you doing musically during that time?  
GC: I played for the orchestra and the chorus.  
ES: That took a lot of time.  
GC: Yes, it did.  
ES: Academically what were you doing at that time?  
GC: Just taking regular high school courses.  
ES: Was there any course that was particularly satisfying?  
GC: Oh, I...I liked school. I think English and I wasn't especially crazy about history, but I liked the English and typing and shorthand and all...  
ES: What impressions do you retain about teachers there?  
GC: What'd you say? Oh...  
ES: What impressions do your retain about teachers?  
GC: I remember Mr. Toller was our principal. Bertha Hayes was the typing teacher. I was trying to think of the English teacher. I remember my dad... I had... I got small pox, I guess, or chicken pox, I don't remember. I had to stay out of school for a couple weeks and my dad went to school to get my books and get the assignments so I could work at home on them. He came home and he thought my English teacher was really good-looking. [laugh] Albright. I think her name was Albright.  
ES: How would you describe the...the kind of...of atmosphere that these teachers created in the classroom? Would you call the discipline strict?  
GC: It didn't seem to me we had much...she had to do much discipline. I don't think she did. I don't remember.  
ES: I suppose you never gave the teachers any trouble.  
GC: I don't think I did.  
ES: Do you remember any details about the graduation ceremony?  
GC: It was at the Mormon tabernacle. The tabernacle isn't there anymore. Do you remember where that was?  
ES: Yes.  
GC: Patsy McClellan and I played a duet on the piano. I think that's about all I remember.  
ES: After that you decided to go Eastern Oregon Normal School.  
GC: Uh-huh.  
ES: Why did you choose that place?  
GC: I always wanted to be a teacher. From the time I was six years old I'd go out in the woodshed and I'd line up my chairs – I had some little chairs – I'd line 'em up

and I had a blackboard and I was the teacher. I'd get up there and teach. [laugh]  
I played school an awful lot. I always wanted to be a teacher.

ES: Did you consider going to any other college?

GC: No. My folks couldn't afford it and it was nice that we had it here. It made it easy to go.

ES: Can you recall any details about the classes you took?

GC: Just took the courses that were prescribed that we had to take, you know, to be a teacher.

ES: Did that include student teaching?

GC: Yes. I had... I was trying to think of her name. My teacher was... Isn't that awful, I've forgotten her name!

ES: No, it's not awful. It's normal.

GC: She lived... I can remember where she lived, but I can't remember her name.

ES: Were you aiming at primary level teaching?

GC: Primary.

ES: Yes.

GC: Yeah. The second grade.

ES: Was the principal of the laboratory school Kate Howks?

GC: Uh-huh.

ES: Do you remember her?

GC: Yes, I do.

ES: What do you... What do you remember about her?

GC: I just remember she was straight and tall and dark hair, I think. Very nice person, but you had to...you had to mind your p's and q's. [laugh]

ES: And if you didn't what would she do?

GC: I guess I always did 'cause she never did anything to me. [laugh]

ES: She a little bit intimidating?

GC: She was... Yes, I think so.

ES: Serious.

GC: But I liked her very much. She was a good...a good one to, you know, supervisor.

ES: When you finished the course there for teaching was that after two years or four years?

GC: Two years.

ES: Two years. How did you... Did you feel as though you were ready to start teaching?

GC: I felt like I was.

ES: Perhaps because you'd planned on that all...most of your life.

GC: My first year I was at Pumpkin Ridge.

ES: Now did you pronounce it Pumpkin or Punkin?

GC: Pumpkin.

ES: You do? Most other people around here say Punkin.

GC: I know they do. [laughs]

ES: Why do you say it Pumpkin?

GC: That's just the way it's supposed to be. [laughs]

ES: I see. That's the way it's spelled, yes. Do you remember that first year of teaching at Pumpkin Ridge?

GC: Yes, I do.

ES: Tell me.

GC: I lived with the Hugs, Ray Hug and his wife and then they had two boys in school.

ES: Was he Verl's brother?

GC: No. Who?

ES: Vernal Hug's brother?

GC: Vernal? I really don't know. I can't tell you. I think so.

ES: Must have been.

GC: I stayed with them during the week and then my mother would come and get me on Friday evening and take me to La Grande to home and then on Sunday evening she'd take me back out there. Then they had a daughter by the name of June and she was going to Eastern Oregon College. So my mother would take me out to Hug's and bring June back to La Grande. Then on Friday night she'd bring June home and take me back to my home. So it worked out really...really nice. And in the bad weather when she couldn't get up that road with the car they would take me in the cart...horse and cart down to Summerville and I'd come home with my mother and June'd get in the cart and go home with them. So it worked out really great.

ES: I know about where the Pumpkin Ridge School was. I don't think...

GC: It's a home now. It's up on the top of that hill and that's where the schoolhouse was.

ES: But the Hug's house was not right next to it, was it?

GC: No, it was about two miles from the school. I had a bad knee, I've still got a bad knee, and my mother said, "Genevieve just can't walk that distance, you know, in the snow or the mud and everything." She said, "Don't worry about that." She said, "We've got a little cart, two-wheel cart." And so every morning the boys'd go out – and it was the two boys, Earnest and Warren – and they'd go out and hook up the horse to the cart and take me to school. There was a barn up there by the schoolhouse that the horse could stay in during the day and then they'd bring me home at night in the cart.

ES: Why couldn't you make the horse go yourself?

GC: I could've, but they wanted to do it. They loved to...

ES: I see.

GC: And they would get the horse... They'd harness up the horse and get it ready. I couldn't 've done that I don't think.

ES: About what time did you need to get to school?

GC: I don't remember especially. I think probably eight o'clock we'd have to leave to get up to the schoolhouse in time.

ES: What did you have to do first when you got into the building?

GC: In the wintertime I had to build a fire.

ES: Was there a potbellied stove?

GC: Uh-huh.

ES: Yes. So would somebody else cut the wood for you?

GC: The boys'd get the wood for me. I think the men, the school directors, cut the wood and had it ready and all the boys had to do to is bring it in. And of course they had to carry the water in too, a bucket. They had a well with a pump.

ES: Water that everybody in the...including you would drink?

GC: Oh yeah. We had a dipper we'd dip it out of the bucket. [laughs]

ES: You shared your...

GC: Each one had a glass.

ES: I see. At least partially you shared your germs.

GC: That's right.

ES: Did you have to keep the fire going all day yourself?

GC: The boys'd help.

ES: They would? They would?

GC: Mm-hmm.

ES: Did you have several older boys?

GC: Yes, uh-huh. There was one Hug boy that was older and then there was another boy, I can't remember his name. He lived down the road a ways, but I can't remember his name. He would help, too.

ES: Can you tell me during...how you planned your lessons during that first year?

GC: I just... I don't know.

ES: Did you have a textbook for each child?

GC: Oh yes, you had a textbook.

ES: So suppose it was arithmetic, for example, how would you...how did you decide what you were going to do in arithmetic each day?

GC: Just took it page by page.

ES: You followed the textbook closely?

GC: Mm-hmm.

ES: Same for the other subjects?

GC: Yes.

ES: Civics? Geography?

GC: I didn't have... I didn't teach civics.

ES: No?

GC: No. I didn't have any...

ES: You had to teach reading, arithmetic, spelling, geography?

GC: Yes. History.

ES: History. What else?

GC: And then I gave...

ES: Penmanship?

GC: Penmanship and music.

ES: Music.

GC: Of course I love music so... And there was an old pump organ.

ES: Oh, wonderful!

GC: Yeah. So it worked out fine. We had to have programs. You... The teacher was... The school was expected to have a Halloween program and a Christmas program. At the Halloween... And then Thanksgiving. And at the Thanksgiving program the men would pass the hat around and collect money to buy treats for

the kids for Christmas. Then we'd have a Christmas program and then we always had the treats. They'd have a sack with candy and oranges, that sort of thing.

ES: Were you responsible for deciding everything that was going to be on the program?

GC: Mm-hmm.

ES: What things did you...?

GC: We always had a little play. I'd find a play that would suit the number of students that I had. And then I liked music, of course, so I taught 'em a lot of songs. Some of 'em would do poems, recitation.

ES: When you say find a play did you have a book of plays?

GC: I would go to the library and get some.

ES: Oh, I see. And how did you make parts for each student to learn their lines?

GC: I don't know.

ES: You didn't have a copying machine I'll bet.

GC: No. I... I had a... I don't know, it was a tray about this big and then it had kind of a jelly in it.

ES: I think it was called a hectograph.

GC: Hectograph. That's what I had.

ES: Purple?

GC: Uh-huh.

ES: Yes...[end tape]

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GC: ...but it was a lot of fun, I enjoyed it. I loved to do the programs. They expected it. They expected a program.

ES: And you didn't have any trouble getting students to participate?

GC: Oh no.

ES: They liked to do it?

GC: Uh-huh.

ES: Yes. I suppose the parents were very appreciative.

GC: Yes. I had to find something suitable with the number of students that I had.

ES: Yes.

GC: So it was... I had to do quite a bit of looking to find a play that would suit the number of students.

ES: Was there enough space in the school building to have the programs there or did you have to go to some other...

GC: Yeah, we had... And there was a little stage. We had a little stage up in front. Yeah, there was plenty of room. I don't know whether they brought in extra chairs or what they did.

ES: They must have. Did the county superintendent ever visit you?

GC: Yes, a few times.

ES: What happened?

GC: Mr. Sayer.

ES: Sayer?

GC: Uh-huh.  
ES: S-a-y-e-r?  
GC: Uh-huh.  
ES: What did he do?  
GC: He just came and visited a little while, stayed a little while and then he left.  
ES: Did you feel as though he was checking up on you?  
GC: I didn't... No, I didn't. I wasn't concerned about it. It didn't worry me any.  
ES: You must've asked yourself, "Why is he here?"  
GC: What?  
ES: You must've asked yourself, "Why is he here?"  
GC: I knew he was coming so I was expecting it.  
ES: Oh. Did he tell you why he was coming?  
GC: No. He just came in and talked a little while and looked around and sat down and stayed about a half an hour and left.  
ES: You didn't realize he was evaluating you?  
GC: I think that he was. [laughs]  
ES: I suppose from what you're saying you felt confident about what you were doing.  
GC: I did.  
ES: Yes. Was there any opportunity ever to talk with other teachers?  
GC: No. I was the only one.  
ES: But I mean did...were there any meetings from...of teachers from other schools?  
GC: I don't recall if there was or wasn't. I belonged to the Primary Childhood Education it was called. Meva Neil was the president of it. I belonged to that and we met I guess once a month. I don't remember about that for sure. We'd talk about school and problems and that sort of thing.  
ES: What would be an example of a problem?  
GC: I don't think I ever had any, really. [laugh]  
ES: But other teachers might have?  
GC: They'd ask questions about how to do this or that or the other, I think. I just don't recall.  
ES: How... Something related to teach...teaching?  
GC: It was related to teaching, uh-huh.  
ES: My understanding of the method of teaching at that time was that it was mostly memorization.  
GC: I don't know that it was.  
ES: Things like memorizing the names of state...capitals of states and things and rivers, mountains.  
GC: I think so.  
ES: Dates in history.  
GC: Locating it on the map.  
ES: When you teach that way it's fairly simple.  
GC: Uh-huh.  
ES: After Pumpkin Ridge where did you decide to teach?  
GC: Then I went to the Iowa School that isn't there anymore.  
ES: On Hunter Road?

GC: It's out there in the middle of the valley close to the Stanleys. Do you know where the Stanleys live?

ES: Approximately.

GC: It was right on the corner down below their place. The Knausses lived up the road past...past the Stanleys to the corner. I had Lillian Knauss and then I had Helen and Jean Speckhart and you had to go down another half a mile to the Speckhart place and I had those two girls. And then I had a boy and I can't remember his name.

ES: Why did you decide to go...to leave the Pumpkin Ridge School and go to the Iowa School?

GC: I thought it'd be closer to home. I was getting married. I was married while I was teaching at the Iowa School. I married Harvey and they didn't object to me being married. [laugh] To a married teacher.

ES: That was a little unusual.

GC: Mm-hmm. Because at that time, you know, a married teacher had a hard time getting a job.

ES: Yes. Why... Why...

GC: They wanted me to come back so I did one year.

ES: Where had you met Harvey or under what circumstances had you met Harvey?

GC: He sang in the Methodist choir and I was playing the organ. He was singing bass. Then my daughter, now, plays the organ and she met her husband, he was singing bass in the choir. [laugh]

ES: Yes. A repeat there. Tell me about playing the organ at the Methodist church. How did you get that job?

GC: I loved the piano, you know, and I wanted to learn to play the organ. Helen Hansen, Elmer Hansen's wife – I don't know whether you knew her or not.

ES: No.

GC: She'd dead now. She was playing the organ and one time she called – I was staying at my grandmother's and my folks lived out in the country and I was staying during the week to go to school with my grandparents. She called me and she said, "Genevieve, how would you like to learn to play the organ?" I said, "I would love to play the organ." She said, "I'm going to marry...get married. Elmer and I are getting married and," she said, "if you'd like to play the organ," she said, "I'll give you some lessons." And so it was alright with the church, I guess, I don't know. I don't remember getting permission from the church, but we just switched. She took... She gave me some lessons and I practiced down there on the...for not very long. I don't know whether it was three weeks or what and I had to start playing for church. I played for the Methodist church for I don't know how many years and then...then I started playing at the Presbyterian church for quite a few years. So I did a lot of church playing.

ES: Back to Harvey, he was singing in the choir, you said. By that time he was already teaching, wasn't he? At Central School?

GC: Mm-hmm.

ES: Had you known him at college?

GC: Uh-huh. Yes. I had met him...met him...well, yes. I saw him up there. We didn't go together then, but I remember he was there. He was ahead of me, one year ahead of me, I think.

ES: Could you describe to me how he looked and what sort of a man he was at that age?

GC: He was very slender. He always wore tennis shoes, I remember that. [laugh] I don't know what...what you mean.

ES: Would you describe him as a handsome man?

GC: I thought he was.

ES: Athletic?

GC: He wasn't in athletics, but he walked all the time.

ES: He was a very good swimmer I understand.

GC: Yes. Taught swimming.

ES: But he also did a lot of swimming himself, didn't he?

GC: Oh yes. Yes, he did.

ES: Like swimming across Wallowa Lake?

GC: Yes.

ES: More than once.

GC: I think only once. I don't...

ES: Oh. Maybe the story I heard was a little bit exaggerated.

GC: I had... We knew he was going to swim across the lake, we were camped up there at Wallowa Lake at the Methodist camp. They said he was going to swim the lake so my mother and I went down to the other end of the lake, the head of the lake. I don't remember who rowed the boat, but someone was with us that rowed the boat and he went along behind him in the boat.

ES: Was it... That wasn't something that he needed to do except for his own satisfaction, was it?

GC: That's right.

ES: Is that the way he was? Often doing things that would kind of test his strength or his endurance?

GC: I don't know. It could be.

ES: You knew him pretty well.

GC: [laugh] He walked from the base...up there at Wallowa Lake, you know, when you go into the lakes. He had been camped in there for a week and he walked out in one day. Walked to Cove and on home in one day.

ES: I'd say he was a man of a lot of physical strength and endurance.

GC: Yes, he was.

ES: How did he propose to you?

GC: I...I don't know. [laugh]

ES: Was it on bended knee?

GC: No. [laughs] I think we were in the car.

ES: Oh. Very simple?

GC: Yes.

ES: You were ready to say yes?

GC: Uh-huh. I think so.

ES: Then from Iowa School did you decide you weren't going to teach for a while?

GC: I was married while I was still teaching at Iowa.  
ES: Yes.  
GC: And married teachers couldn't get jobs at that time during the Depression so I didn't even try.  
ES: But you married part of the time you were teaching at Iowa School, but they didn't want you to come back? Is that what you're saying?  
GC: No. I didn't want to teach anymore after I... A married teacher couldn't...couldn't get a job.  
ES: I know. But you were an exception to that because you had a job for part of the time anyway.  
GC: So I finished off the year.  
ES: Then came family.  
GC: Yes.  
ES: Yes. And then after that you did return to teaching at Central School.  
GC: Yes. We were in Portland in the Vanport flood.  
ES: I have that story.  
GC: So when we got back to La Grande, why, the superintendent of schools was...what was his name...shoot. Anyway, he came out to my mother's where we were staying to see us. We were real good friends of them. Longfellow. No. Was it Longfellow?  
ES: I don't know.  
GC: I don't know. And he said... Harvey said, "Genevieve would like to teach if there's a place for her." And he said, "If there's a vacancy Genevieve will have the first chance." So when they had their meeting of the teachers, you know, the day before school started and when Harvey started to home, why, he said, "Harvey, tell Genevieve to come at eight o'clock tomorrow...or Monday." So he knew I had a job, but we didn't know what. But it was second grade and I was in the basement down there at the old Central School. I was there for two years in the basement. And then the school...they built the new one, new Central School and then I moved up there. I taught the rest of the time up there.  
ES: What do you mean by the new Central School?  
GC: The old Central was down there on Fourth Street.  
ES: Yes.  
GC: Then they built the new one over there under the hospital hill.  
ES: Oh, that one, yes. I live close by that.  
GC: What?  
ES: I live close to that. I thought you had started back to school later than... I mean I thought you'd returned to teaching before that school was built.  
GC: Oh.  
ES: I guess just two years before.  
GC: Yeah.  
ES: And then you continued teaching there for several years.  
GC: Uh-huh.  
ES: Was it mostly music?  
GC: No. I had second grade.  
ES: I see.

GC: And then I had my own music and then I taught music for Molly Gower and Melma Haffy. They all had third grade and Molly had the other second grade. I taught their music, too. One of 'em taught handwriting while I was teaching music for them and the other one taught spelling in my room.

ES: You just switched places. Can you tell me more about the music program that you were using?

GC: It was just what I wanted to do. There wasn't any supervisor at that time.

ES: What did you want to do?

GC: We just did a lot of singing and we put on an operetta. I just did what I could.

ES: Were you... Were you teaching the children to read...to read music?

GC: No. Not especially.

ES: It was strictly ear training?

GC: Mm-hmm.

ES: Do you remember some of the songs you used?

GC: No.

ES: One of the songs I remember from sixth grade that we sang a lot was Santa Lucia.

GC: Oh.

ES: Do you remember that?

GC: I didn't teach them that.

ES: Were they folk songs?

GC: I guess they were. I don't... Of course I taught them America and The Star-Spangled Banner and America The Beautiful and songs like that. Then we had a music book that they sang out of.

ES: Was this sometimes two-part singing?

GC: No. I didn't do any of that. This was second grade so they're not ready for two-part singing.

ES: Maybe on some simple songs. How did the boys generally take to singing?

GC: Oh, they seemed to enjoy it. They didn't cause me any problem.

ES: Did you play the piano while they sang?

GC: Mm-hmm. I think they liked that. I had a piano in my room so it made it real nice. And then when I taught Molly Gower's, why, she'd bring her kids into my room where the piano was and she'd take my kids into her room for spelling. So it worked out pretty nice.

ES: Could you do that every day?

GC: Two or three times a week. I don't remember what the schedule was. And then I had Melma Haffy's, too. So I had Molly Gower's and Melma Haffy's music.

ES: When you were... When both you and Harvey were teaching in the La Grande system of course that was very different from teaching at Iowa School or Pumpkin Ridge. For one thing, there were many more children and several more teachers than you had. Do you remember anything that was going on in the schools at that time that had to do with negotiations about salaries or working conditions?

GC: No. I didn't... I don't... I don't think they... I just accepted what they gave me. I don't remember that we had meetings. Harvey may have gone to meetings, but I didn't.

ES: You didn't have teachers' meetings?

GC: Second grade. I think second grade teachers got together, but...

ES: But you didn't talk about salaries or working conditions?

GC: No. No.

ES: Was there a nurse in the school?

GC: I don't remember.

ES: Was there ever a dental hygienist?

GC: No.

ES: Any psychological services or guidance?

GC: I don't recall any.

ES: I know that most of those services weren't offered a number of years ago although when I was in elementary school a dental hygienist came to the school every year and cleaned every child's teeth.

GC: Really?

ES: Yes. That was in the 1930s.

GC: For heaven sakes.

ES: So apparently schools here...

GC: La Grande didn't do that, I guess.

ES: No. The county didn't offer any special services either?

GC: I don't remember that they did.

ES: That was one major difference from then and now, I think.

GC: Yes, I think so.

ES: Did Central School have a library?

GC: What?

ES: Did Central School have a library?

GC: I don't think so. I don't think they did.

ES: Did the children have to use the La Grande Public Library for their...

GC: Yeah. We would go down there once a week.

ES: And they could check books out?

GC: And then I would go to the library and get books and take 'em to school and have 'em on the library table so they had books to look at.

ES: What was satisfying to you about teaching during that period?

GC: I just liked it. I always had liked teaching.

ES: You didn't have anything that would be called a problem?

GC: No. I don't recall of any problem.

ES: It sounds like paradise.

GC: [laugh]

ES: You loved to get up every morning and go to school?

GC: Uh-huh.

ES: You hated to come home you were so much...so much...so satisfying at school?

GC: I always liked school. I always liked teaching.

ES: Can we talk a bit about teaching swimming at Hot Lake? Did you go out there to watch any of the lessons?

GC: No.

ES: Did they talk about the pool?

GC: I don't... I don't know. Lanetta taught out there.

ES: It doesn't look as though the pool... I know the pool is not usable now.

GC: No.

ES: But at that time was it, do you think, a good pool?

GC: It wasn't very big, I recall that. She enjoyed teaching out there. Mr...what was his name...Rolf...

ES: Dr. Rauth?

GC: Rauth, yeah. Rauth. He was very nice to Lanetta and they got along real well. She liked him. The pool wasn't very big...wasn't very big.

ES: But you never actually saw it?

GC: No. I didn't watch... I didn't go out there when they were teaching, no.

ES: Okay. Could we talk about Harvey's work with Scouts? He must've told you quite a bit about that.

GC: He had... He had his troop and he had his camp at Wallowa Lake. It was over there on the other...where the...where the Boy Scout camp is now.

ES: I think that's on the west side, perhaps, of the lake?

GC: Yeah. And he...he had his camp over there. I don't know...

ES: Why did... Why did he find Scouting so satisfying?

GC: Find what?

ES: Scouting so satisfying?

GC: I don't understand what you...

ES: Why do you think he enjoyed or wanted to continue working with Scouts?

GC: Oh, he liked kids I think. He liked kids, boys. He hired a cook and they had a little cookhouse where, you know, where the cook cooked the meals for the boys. Then he taught 'em swimming. They swam right out there below the camp there on the lake. Taught 'em boating. He just liked that sort of thing.

ES: It was a continuation of what he was doing as a teacher and a principal.

GC: Yes.

ES: Apparently he didn't get enough of it in school. [laugh] Did he talk about what he was trying to do with the boys?

GC: No. I don't recall that he did.

ES: Some people would say that in addition to all the skills of knot-tying and fire-building and reading the compass and those kinds of things that Scouts learn, building character is important. Did Harvey talk about that?

GC: No, he didn't talk about it, but I know he did.

ES: That that was important to him, you mean?

GC: Mm-hmm. I know he did. He just liked boys. [laugh] He thought he was gonna have some boys, but he had three girls.

ES: Oh, I see! [laughs] That must be a big part of it, yes. His surrogate sons. He must've spent a great deal of time away from home then?

GC: He did, but he was home a lot too. It took a lot of his time. Reverend Coff was his helper. He had this Boy Scout troop at the Episcopal church and that was the group of boys that he worked with. But then the boys that were in his troop were not all Episcopalian. They just joined the troop because it was a good troop to belong to.

ES: Were you tempted to work with Girl Scouts?

GC: No. I... Me?

ES: Yes.

GC: No, I never did.  
ES: Was that because you didn't have time?  
GC: I guess so. [laugh] I was never a Girl Scout in my...when I was growing up.  
ES: Were you aware about how many stud...kids were involved in Scouting in those days?  
GC: Oh, I think so.  
ES: Were there many, many Scout troops?  
GC: No, I don't think so. I just don't remember how many troops there were. Harvey had the big one.  
ES: The big one.  
GC: Yeah.  
ES: How many do you think?  
GC: I think he had about thirty.  
ES: Did he talk about having boys become Eagle Scouts?  
GC: Yes. Yes, he was always urging them on to be Eagles.  
ES: Had he been an Eagle Scout?  
GC: Yeah.  
ES: He'd grown up in Union County, hadn't he?  
GC: Yeah.  
ES: Yes. I remember hearing about his father living here.  
GC: Uh-huh. Yeah, he did.  
ES: With any time that might've been left over from Scouting and school, you were both teaching in school, what else did you do for recreation?  
GC: Go to the movie once in a while. Of course we did a lot of camping in the summertime, go to Wallowa Lake.  
ES: There was a cabin on Mt. Emily, wasn't there?  
GC: There is, uh-huh.  
ES: Did you go up there and use that?  
GC: Oh yes. We... The first summer after we were married we lived up there all summer long. In fact, we went every summer.  
ES: What would a typical day up there be like? What would you do during the day?  
GC: Get up and get breakfast and then wash the dishes and then Harvey usually go off and cut wood and I'd be at the cabin. But it was a double-back cabin and Harvey's sister and her husband were on one side and we had the other side. So if Sally and Grant were up there, why, then Sally and I'd talk and visit. And my grandmother liked to go up there quite a bit and she'd go up there and stay with us. I'd clean up the cabin and sit out in the shade. [laugh] Read.  
ES: Brought books up with you. Did you look out over the valley from there? Did you have a view?  
GC: Can't see the valley from the cabin.  
ES: Oh, you couldn't. By the time you got up there had the snow melted?  
GC: Oh yes. No, we didn't go up there during the snow. I never did go up there when it was snow. Harvey did, but I didn't.  
ES: How did you get there?  
GC: We had a car.  
ES: Was the road pretty bumpy?

GC: Yeah. Very bumpy. Going down Fox Hill was bumpier than ever.

ES: Did that mean then that you didn't get out to get supplies very often?

GC: No. We would take enough to last for the time that we were going to be up there so we didn't have to go out and get supplies. Except the one summer that we stayed up there all summer, why, we had to go out. I don't remember about that.

ES: Were there... Were there visitors? Either welcome or unwelcome visitors?

GC: Oh yeah. My folks came up sometimes and then my grandmother came up and stayed with us quite a bit. She liked to stay up there. We had a few visitors, but I don't recall.

ES: Any animal visitors?

GC: I don't think we had any. I think a deer might come by once in a while and we would see one down below the cabin once in a while, but I don't remember especially.

ES: No bears?

GC: We had a wood rat. No, no bears. But we had wood rats up in the attic up above. At night they would scamper across. [laugh]

ES: Squirrels too, I should think.

GC: I don't know about the squirrels, but we sure had wood rats. He was always after wood rats.

ES: Trying to trap them?

GC: Mm-hmm.

ES: Did they do damage?

GC: No, not...I don't know whether they did any chewing or not. I don't recall that they did any damage. They just lived... They liked to live up there in that attic so we tried to get rid of 'em.

ES: Were they bothering you?

GC: No, only the noise at night. You never did see 'em in the daytime.

ES: Of course at night it was otherwise very, very quiet, I suppose, wasn't it?

GC: Yes. That's right.

ES: One thing that John Turner didn't ask you about is the kinds of clothing you chose to wear. Can you recall how you dressed when you first started teaching?

GC: I wore dresses, I know that.

ES: Describe the dresses.

GC: Oh, I couldn't do that.

ES: Were they down below the knee?

GC: Yeah, a little below the knee. They weren't long.

ES: A dress... Only a dress would be a little chilly I should think during the wintertime. Did you also have sweaters?

GC: Yes.

ES: Did you wear hats?

GC: No.

ES: No hat?

GC: If I did it was a scarf.

ES: What kind of shoes?

GC: They'd be oxfords I think.

ES: With ties?

GC: Uh-huh.

ES: Yes. Where were you buying your clothes?

GC: In La Grande. Anne Johnson's, I went there to get my dresses, and N. K. West, that's an old, old store.

ES: Yes. Do you remember about shopping at N. K. West?

GC: Mm-hmm.

ES: Can you describe how that store looked?

GC: Oh, I don't know. You had...you went through those double doors and you had to go over to the side for the clothing. The men's side was on the right and that's about all.

ES: If you can remember of actually buying something, can you describe the salespeople and what they did? Because I don't think it was the same then as it might be now.

GC: I don't know. I don't even remember who they were. They had an alteration room and if you had to have something done, you know, to make it fit better, why, they would alter it there at the store...[end tape]