

Mrs. Carrie Hemphill (Mrs. Bea Burkhalter also present)

Interview 013a

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Becky Bailey, Interviewer

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Retyped by Elaine Lawrence

Abstract: In an interview with Becky Bailey, Carrie Hemphill recalls life as a teacher in Diboll. She remembers teaching several grades at a time, the rules for teachers, the low pay during the Depression, cleaning and heating the classrooms, and buying books. She also recalls integration and sports. Mrs. Hemphill also reflects on the differences between teaching today and teaching in the past.

Rebecca Bailey (hereafter RB): I am interviewing Mrs. Carrie Coan Hemphill and her current address is 316 South Fourth in Kennedy Texas. Today's date is Sept. 27, 1983. My name is Becky Bailey. Mrs. Kennedy where were you born, ugh... Mrs. Hemphill?

Carrie Hemphill (hereafter CH): I was born in Diboll, Texas Oct. 24, 1909.

RB: 1909, is that younger, 6 years younger?

CH: Yes 6 years.

RB: Mrs. Bea Burkhalter is sitting in on the interview as well. She and Mrs. Hemphill are sisters. We better add that, o.k. Did you go to school here?

CH: Yes I started to school in Diboll in 1917 and finished in 1927.

RB: So you only had ten years of school?

CH: At that time we went to school eleven years, but there were four of us who were able to finish, when we were in the tenth grade with the eleventh grade, because at midterm we found out that we just lacked a credit and one-half and the teachers got together and asked our parents if it would be all right with our parents so we did, we graduated with that class.

RB: So you were only, let's see, let me get my math straight.

CH: Well, I was seventeen....

RB: You were seventeen?

CH: Because I was nearly eight when I started school, and my birthday is in October.

RB: Uh-huh, okay. Can you remember what the school was like that you went to? Did you have, were there two campuses, like there...?

CH: No, there was only one school, far as I remember. And I remember my first grade teacher was Mrs. Allen and she was a widow, but she had a small baby. But she brought it to school everyday and kept it in the baby bed in the room at school.

RB: Oh my! How did that work all year after the baby got older? You don't remember, or...?

CH: Well, we played with it when we didn't have anything else to do. (Laugh)

RB: How many were in your class?

CH: I don't remember that, not very large classes though, at that time I'm sure.

RB: Uh-huh. Just one teacher per grade?

CH: Uh-huh. But then when I was in the fourth grade there were so many and teachers were so few that the fourth grade went to school in the morning and the fifth grade went in the afternoon. We only had a half a day of school each.

RB: What were your books like?

CH: We had to buy our books at that time. I don't remember what year, what year did we start getting books furnished? We bought them and I still have some of my readers from grade school.

Beatrice Burkhalter (hereafter BB): I don't really know what year we started furnishing books but....

RB: Oh really!

CH: But we had to buy our books up, I don't remember, after we got in high school they were furnished, but I don't remember what year.

RB: About how many did you have? One for each subject or...

CH: We had a reader, speller, geography and that's about it. And we got up to where we had history, then we had to have a history book.

RB: But no science or math?

CH: We had an English book, but no science book 'til we got up maybe the seventh or eighth grade.

RB: Were the math books the same?

CH: Oh no, we had math books.

RB: Oh, back in grade school. Okay, then whenever you finished high school, did you go immediately to college or did you....

CH: That fall I went to Stephen F. Austin in Nacogdoches, one year, then I started teaching.

RB: After just one year?

CH: Uh-huh.

RB: What sort of courses did you take?

CH: Just regular courses like English, and I had the same English book that I had in high school, my last year in high school (Laugh). The workbook and all, so that was a breeze.

RB: I'll bet. (Laugh)

CH: And education courses, of course, you had to take and psychology.

RB: What were the education courses like back then? The methods courses?

CH: Ah.

RB: Did you do any practice teaching or did you...?

CH: Not until the senior year. In college.

RB: In college?

CH: Uh-huh.

RB: But you could teach after you did one year of college?

CH: One year in the country schools, but Diboll required two years, so after I taught one year I went back to Nacogdoches another year, and then I was able to teach in Diboll.

RB: Okay. Where was your first school then?

CH: At old Homer, it's right between Lufkin and Huntington.

RB: Isn't it that where...no, you taught at Bald Hill.

CH: No, she taught at Bald Hill.

BB: Just off the Huntington Highway there at Old Homer and go....

RB: And that's where you taught.

CH: And that was a three teacher school and I had the first three grades.

RB: All in the same room?

CH: Uh-huh.

RB: Grades one through three?

CH: Had one first grader and I boarded in her home so she got most of her schooling at home. (Laugh) 'Cause I didn't have time for her during the day.

RB: How large was your class?

CH: I think I had about twenty but, that one in there and about six or eight in the second grade and the rest of them were in third grade.

RB: What sort of teaching supplies did you have? You were only eighteen years old?

CH: Not any, not any if it hadn't been for the other two teachers there to help me along, and we'd get this pan that you'd pour a solution in that was our hectograph work, and you could buy sheets that were already printed that would come off on that.

RB: Kind of like a mimeograph only, did that make a ditto sheet sort of thing?

CH: We did that after, when I first came to Diboll too. That's all we had.

RB: So you didn't have workbooks? Did you have workbooks for the children to work in?

CH: No.

RB: So they strictly had their reading books and their spelling...?

CH: I don't believe we had workbooks 'til we got in high school and then we had a science and English workbook.

RB: I went blank. Did you have teacher's manuals? That went with your books?

CH: Gracious no. We didn't know what a teacher's manual was. They came in with the readers later. (Laugh).

RB: Okay.

BB: They came way later, away later. Because when I first taught there wasn't any manuals.

CH: That's what I'm talking about, maybe not until I started back teaching after I'd been out nine years.

BB: I don't remember when the first manual came out, but when I first started teaching in '34, we had to make our own lesson plans...

CH: We did too. I'd type off things and then run them off that little thing there and staple them together, we'd make little books of our work that we did.

RB: How did you teach reading? Was it like a sight word method or did you teach phonics or what did you teach?

CH: We didn't start phonics until... oh, I think its when I started back teaching again.

RB: So you strictly taught by sight word method?

CH: Yes.

RB: Can you describe what a day would be like to start with? With first, second and third graders all together?

CH: Well, we always had a little opening exercise and...

RB: Okay, what would that include?

CH: Oh, singing a few songs and we'd say a prayer and my desk...the room where I taught this first year was also used for an auditorium, and my desk sat upon a little platform, (Laugh) so the children would come up and do their morning exercises, whoever was going to lead that morning in prayer and lead the singing for the room. After they had learned a few songs.

RB: Did you do the pledge and that sort of thing, too?

CH: Yes. The pledge to the flag.

RB: And then how would your day...?

CH: Well, then I'd start out whoever was ready to work that day, whether it was third grade or second, I'd give the rest of them some seatwork, and I'd teach the arithmetic to the third grade and second grade would be listening, you know. And then maybe next the second grade would have their reading, third grade worked some math that I'd put on the board for them. And as I said this one little pupil that was in the first grade suffered through it all. (Laugh) and some third graders would be helping her read.

RB: Did you like having all, well say the two grades, together was it a lot...?

CH: I just liked teaching, so I really liked it.

RB: Well, I'm sure you have had both kinds of classrooms, where you have taught all second graders or... and then too, how do you think kids do?

CH: Well, I don't know, my daughter said if she'd been in a small school when she started, she said she didn't know how to act the first year that she had the top grade there, because she's always been the lower one and she'd heard everything and she was lost because she didn't know what to do. She hadn't never done that before, so I imagine the children felt that way too. Sometime the teacher did too.

RB: I imagine. Okay, so after you went back to S.F.A. for another year, what sort of courses did you take in the second year?

CH: Some more English and education, and by that time I'd decided what I was majoring in and lots of Spanish.

RB: Oh, you took Spanish?

CH: Yes, I majored in Spanish and that's what I did my practice teaching in, too.

RB: Oh!

CH: At that time they had training school over at Stephen F. Austin so we did all our practice teaching right there on campus. Now you have to go out to some school, for your practice teaching.

RB: Did they have professors as your supervising teacher or...just regular teachers?

CH: Yes. The head of the department was mine. Mrs. May.

RB: And she taught a regular classroom?

CH: Yes, bless her soul, and she was teaching freshman Spanish and all the teaching she ever let me do was erase the board. (Laugh) so I didn't get very much practice teaching.

RB: You just observed a lot. Okay, so you taught high school?

CH: No.

RB: No.

CH: When I came to Diboll I had a mixed grade, too. I was the only one in school had a mixed grade. I had the slow ones from second and fourth grade. How do you like that combination? (Laugh)

RB: From second and fourth not even together.

CH: No.

RB: Well, that would be different.

CH: And at that time the trustees came and sat in your room. The reason I'm thinking about is one Mr. Dave Kenley came when I had that double group like that. Course, I was excited and the children were, too.

RB: I imagine. Okay...

CH: He's the one that put the law in there, that we couldn't have any dates on school nights and no marriages.

RB: Okay, I was getting around to asking you about your contract, what sort of a contract did you sign?

CH: We signed a contract each year.

RB: Each year, and it had these stipulations in the contract?

CH: Printed over on the side, not in the printed contract. See it was a regular state contract from Angelina County. Then printed over on the side was where they had those little special things no dating on school nights and no married teachers.

RB: Did this apply to the men too, or just to the women teachers?

CH: Just to the women. No married women teachers.

RB: How was...?

CH: And it was probably because we had so many mothers who almost had their babies at school and that was a little embarrassing at that time. Wouldn't think anything about that today (Laugh).

RB: Tell me how the school system was set up in Diboll. I understand that it wasn't...we didn't have our independent school district, we were part of the Angelina County, isn't that right?

CH: Yes.

BB: A common school district.

CH: A common school district.

RB: Do you know the schools it included?

CH: Everything in the county, and because we were under a county superintendent. We had a county superintendent.

RB: This included Lufkin, too? As large as Lufkin was, or were they independent?

CH: I believe they were independent.

BB: I think they were independent.

RB: Okay, but every other school...?

BB: That's before we started teaching. Every other school...but I believe Lufkin had gone independent before I started teaching. I don't know how long ago but...

RB: So, how was the school board elected then, as a countywide basis or...?

CH: No, we had...

RB: Or did Diboll send a member to the county board or what?

CH: No, we had our own school board.

BB: Yes. Had our own school...

CH: All the schools did because when I taught out there in the country, I had to go out in the fields and everywhere else to meet the trustees.

RB: Oh! So each school had its own board of trustees or...? But they were accountable to the county superintendent, like Robbins is now, only they had a county wide...?

BB: We only had a principal. We only had a principal at the school and then later though we had people...(Unintelligible.)

CH: Were you still coming to school? Well, Mr. Seago was always superintendent, too. But we were still, as long as I taught here, we were still under the county.

BB: Well, we went in '50 something, in '53 I think it was, when we went independent.

CH: Because I know we had to go up there to get our vouchers signed and then we couldn't cash them.

RB: Oh. Let's skip that for a minute. (Laugh) Who was superintendent here then whenever you came, first started, let's see your first job here in '27?

CH: No, no.

RB: No?

CH: 1930.

RB: Okay, 1930. And this was your second year to teach right?

CH: Yes. Carrol Miller was superintendent when I first came here and then E. H. Bush.

RB: Okay, now was this the county superintendent?

CH: No, that was Diboll superintendent.

RB: That was Diboll's superintendent. Okay, was he appointed by the board like...?

CH: He was elected just like the teachers were hired by, just like the teachers were.

RB: Okay.

CH: We had principal of the high school, because Mr. Bush was principal of high school and Mrs. Weise was principal at the elementary school when I taught here.

RB: Mrs. Weise. Is that what you said?

CH: Yes. W-E-I-S-E. Mrs. O. H. Weise.

RB: Was there...?

BB: (Unintelligible)

RB: Oh really! Was there a junior high as such then?

CH: No.

RB: Just elementary and high school?

CH: Yes.

RB: Okay, were they on the same campus?

CH: Only where I taught there, they were on the same campus.

RB: When was the high school built over...?

BB: I don't know.

CH: I don't know either, but I know they were on the same campus, see our sister was in high school here and that's when the, burned, the high school part of it did. One morning they had the high school boys for the janitors, and they got up to build a fire that morning and he saw the smoke going out, the pipe went over to the wall and up and he saw the fire coming out there and grabbed up what he thought was a bucket of water and it was kerosene and threw it on it and it went up in flames.

RB: Did the whole thing burn down, or just...?

CH: No. That building. I think it maybe burned on down but they damaged all the other buildings because the desks were nailed down or screwed down to the floor and they went in there and yanked them all up to save the desks because they thought the whole building was going.

RB: And messed the floor up?

CH: Yes, messed the floor up so we couldn't have school 'til we got the floors fixed.

RB: Oh no! What year was this?

CH: 1932, Ezelle said. She was the one that was in high school at that time.

RB: Can you remember any other stipulations in your contract besides the dating and the no married persons?

BB: No pants!

CH: No, we sure didn't wear any pants.

RB: No pants. They probably didn't even bother to spell that out did they?

CH: Yes, they did.

RB: It was on the contract?

CH: Yes. Women were not to wear pants.

RB: Anything else?

CH: I can't think of anything.

BB: I can't think of anything.

RB: Was these all still in effect whenever you came? Now that was in 1941 when you came.

BB: In '41. (Unintelligible)

RB: Okay, so by that time they had done away with all those stipulations?

BB: All those stipulations.

RB: Well, when did you marry then?

CH: In '36.

RB: In '36. You taught from...?

CH: From '38, taught here from the fall of 1930 to '38.

RB: '38? Okay. And so you married in 1936 and no one knew? How did ya'll keep it a secret for two whole years?

CH: My family hid it. We were just good at keeping secrets. (Laugh)

RB: Were there any other jobs available where the women could be married and work and teach?

CH: Well, I couldn't afford to live away from home and help my family, too.

RB: Well, this was right in the middle of the Depression, nobody was working much at the sawmill around here. Let's see, you taught second and fourth grade the first year. After that...?

CH: I taught departmental work in the fifth, sixth and seventh.

RB: Okay, what?

CH: I taught spelling and reading.

RB: Spelling and reading. Was there any use for your Spanish in Diboll at that time?

CH: Never. I've never used my Spanish.

RB: Oh. She would now, here, wouldn't she? (Laugh)

CH: Well, I could have too in Kennedy because there are lots of Spanish speaking people there. They have to have a special teacher down there that's Mexican-American that knows both languages.

RB: Right, all that certification. Okay, so you taught fifth, sixth and seventh, then. And it was on the same campus. Can you describe what the campus looked like when you first started to teach in Diboll in the '30's?

CH: Well, have you ever seen that picture of that old, the big building? That's where I went to school and taught the first years there. And then later they had the classrooms over in the high school buildings. I taught second grade over there, when I got out of the department work.

RB: But the elementary went through eighth grade, or what...?

BB: Went through eighth grade because even when I finished high school over there I had eighth until...

CH: It didn't when I went, I graduated from high school, I mean grammar school in seventh grade and eighth, ninth, tenth and eleventh....

RB: Oh, that's right.

CH: Because, after they'd changed to twelve grades is when they put it in.

RB: So elementary only went through seventh when you were teaching in that department?

CH: See high school only went through eleventh then.

RB: Okay, and it was a different building, but yet on the same campus?

CH: Yes.

BB: Over there where the elementary campus is now.

RB: Okay, how many buildings, how many actual buildings were there? Was there a gym? Was the gym there at that time?

CH: No.

RB: No.

CH: But we had an auditorium and the whole school had auditorium too, once a week.

RB: Okay, what was it like? Was it where they had announcements and things or...?

CH: Mr. Steagall would yell out, "Is everybody happy?" and we'd say, "Yes!" And we'd sing and have a little program once a week.

RB: Were the teachers in charge of coming up with things?

CH: Yes, we took turns.

RB: Took turns, huh?

BB: That was our community building for the longest. Upstairs was the lodge building, the lodge met upstairs and downstairs was the auditorium for the school.

RB: And it was on the same location. Right there in the...

BB: Right there where the bicycle rack is. It was right there.

RB: Oh. It was right in there? Was there a cafeteria?

CH: No.

RB: What did the kids do for lunch?

BB: Our cafeteria was the downstairs part of that auditorium.

CH: Auditorium.

RB: Oh, did you have...

BB: After they started having soup...

CH: They started having a soup kitchen there before I left, but they only had soup. And then I don't know when they started regular lunchrooms.

RB: Well, did the kids just walk home or did they eat outside or what? Did they bring their lunch?

CH: They eat outside. Or if we brought a lunch and it was bad weather we stayed in our own rooms.

BB: It was after I came there to teach in '41 that we had lunchroom duty.

CH: Yard duty, too. If it was fit weather to stay outside, well, we had to stay outside.

BB: We'd have them eat their lunch in a room. We had one room and all the kids brought their lunch. We'd have a week of that and then you could go home.

RB: Oh, how nice.

CH: They had a big study hall and the superintendent thought this was home to that. Was it that way when you started teaching here? They'd already built Mr. Pate a building.

RB: On the same area, but a separate building.

BB: They put the principal and superintendent in the book room.

RB: Do you remember what kind of salary you got when you first went to work there in 1930?

CH: I got eighty dollars, is what I was supposed to get, and when we had to discount it...well, I got fifty-four dollars a month, during the Depression. But we had to have it.

RB: Okay, what was the discount? What do you mean by that?

CH: Well, the bank would cash it for us for that much money. They'd give us fifty-four dollars.

RB: Who would give you the check? Who was the check from? The County?

CH: Oh. It came from the County.

RB: But it...They wrote a check for eighty dollars, but yet you couldn't get eighty dollars for it?

CH: No. The bank would cash it for us for fifty-four dollars.

RB: Did you have to go to Lufkin to cash it then because there wasn't a bank here?

CH: Yes. We had to go to Lufkin to get our vouchers even.

RB: They didn't deliver your paycheck? You had to go to Lufkin to get your paycheck?

CH: And the first one I got when I was teaching at Diboll, I burned it up in the garbage.

RB: Why? Surely not on purpose? (Laugh)

CH: I was taking some correspondence work from Huntsville. And I guess I gathered it up with that. And I was so embarrassed I wouldn't go...had to go to the trustees to get them to sign the voucher again. And my Daddy went to Mr. Lawrence and got him to re-write my check....I'm telling about the first check I got when I started teaching in Diboll.

BB: Well, the first you ever got out at Homer, you had to wait 'til your eighteenth birthday before they'd give it over to you.

CH: Yes.

RB: Are you kidding? You couldn't even do it...?

CH: Yes! I had to wait 'til October 24th before I could get my check.

RB: Did it seem it was worth the money? When you looked at the eighty dollars?

CH: Well. Eighty dollars....

RB: Well, I looked at what I got from my first paycheck and I wondered, "Is this really worth it!" (Laugh)

CH: Everything was so cheap then that you could buy dress goods for nine and ten cents a yard. I always did all my sewing.

RB: So it seemed like it was worth it to you?

CH: And during the Depression, yes...I did work up to ninety dollars a month before I left Diboll. Because I remember after staying out nine years and I went back to teaching, well, I was drawing three times as much as I thought I would. That sounded like a whole lot then.

RB: It sure did.

CH: Of course, times have changed.

RB: When did they start giving you the full value of the check? Do you remember when?

CH: No, I don't remember. But it didn't last all the time I taught here at Diboll. I don't remember.

RB: Well, business picked up here about '36 or so....'37. Did that...?

CH: I imagine that might have been about it.

RB: About the time? Okay. What kind of heating did all your schoolrooms have?

CH: Those big old wood heaters with a jacket around them.

RB: The wood heaters? Just in the corner of the room or out in the middle?

CH: Over to one side.

RB: Who was responsible for building your fires and all?

CH: Well, these boys that janitored...(Laugh)

RB: The ones that set the thing on fire? (Laugh)

CH: The first year I taught school, the teacher was responsible for the fire.

RB: In Homer?

CH: Always some of the boys that were in the upper grades would be there by the time I was, and I'd have them build the fire.

RB: Well, who delivered the wood and that sort of thing? That was...the school just had it delivered?

CH: I guess the school bought it.

BB: The school bought and had it delivered and the kids brought it in. We had a big pile. Had to break it up there and the kids would bring it in every evening. That was their job.

RB: Oh. You brought it in at night before you left?

BB: As long as I taught in the country, we had to make our own fires.

CH: Yes, and do our own janitor work, sweep the floor before we left, about every two weeks out at Homer we had to oil those floors.

RB: And the teachers all had to do that? Well, at least we don't have to do that anymore.

BB: You all have it good!

CH: This ought to make you teachers feel a little bit better. (Laugh)

RB: A little bit better, yes. It is already. What type of restrooms did they have?

CH: They still had outdoor toilets.

BB: It was way out there. About as far as from here to them trees down there.

RB: Oh, my gosh! That far!

CH: Not quite that far. Seemed that far. Couldn't have been that far because that gully that I was telling you about there at Diboll, when I started school. And I started school here in World War I and we fought the war. The boys fought and we were the nurses. We'd fight down in that trench and we'd have our beds up there and we'd bring in...

RB: Was that a pretty deep gully at that time?

CH: Pretty deep.

RB: But now it's not...it's been all filled in.

CH: Yes. They covered it a long time.

RB: But it was a...?

CH: Deep gully then.

RB: Let's see. I am trying to think how it runs to the school.

CH: I don't know if there's even any there now. Is there?

BB: No.

RB: Well, on the new playground you can see where it went. Where it did go? Because there was a lot of glass and all that they covered up. But how did it run in the school property? Just behind the school or?

CH: Behind the school.

BB: It was behind the school.

CH: It wasn't any fence around the school or

RB: Did the school face like it does now?

CH: After the highway came through there, I think they built a fence.

BB: I think they built a fence through there I think before the highway came because they built a board fence and instead of having gates they built steps to go over it.

RB: Oh, a stile?

CH: Steps over it.

RB: Oh, steps to go over it and back down? Did it face on School Street like it does now? Or did it face on the other road?

CH: No, it faced School Street.

RB: And then the gully just ran through the back?

CH: Yes.

BB: And our restrooms were right there.

CH: That's what I said that was a real good place to play, guess.

RB: It's a wonder you all didn't die! (Laugh)

BB: Then they put in those pit-type toilets like the government put in during World War II.

CH: World War II

RB: Oh, yes.

BB: World War II. That was when they put in those pit-type toilets. Before then every house in Diboll had an outdoor toilet.

RB: What did your classroom look like? Was it large, small, have blackboards, that sort of thing, windows?

CH: Yes. We had blackboards and long windows and much of our work was done on the blackboards. We'd write up there for the children because they didn't have all this mimeograph stuff to run off now and they'd have to copy it.

RB: What about paper? Did the kids have a lot of paper?

CH: No. Not a lot.

RB: Or did you have to be kind of sparing about what you gave them to do?

BB: The kids did most of their math and all that on the blackboard. We had them all the way across two or three sides of the building, two sides, I guess. And we'd put the kids up there and they did their math on the board.

RB: Yes, that would save a lot of paper, wouldn't it?

BB: (Unintelligible)

RB: Yes. I bet it did.

CH: I remember when I was in school here, and we were talking about the books. I'm sure we didn't have enough to go around because the teacher was always putting poems on the board because we did a lot of memorizing and if we didn't have the book that it was in, she'd have to copy it.

RB: How did the school say, "Here are the books, you buy them" to the students or did...?

CH: No, we bought them down at the drug store or somewhere.

BB: Down at the drug store, Mr. Agee always had them, you know. The old Company store, that's where we bought them. I don't know where...He always had them on a shelf up there, and had all the books on it.

RB: I was wondering about that.

BB: And then if I being the oldest one, I bought the books and after I used them, I handed them down because they used the same book.

RB: Oh, they stayed with the same book. Well, that's a good idea.

CH: If you left them out in the rain, they got ruined. They'd have a time.

RB: And then you got in trouble, huh! (Laugh) You're all in the same building, first through seventh grade? Right? Were all the classes...Did they all change or did fourth through the seventh....?

CH: The pupils didn't change. The teachers went to the pupils when they went to departmental work over there.

RB: When did they start departmentalizing? At what grade?

CH: The fifth grade, I guess. Fifth, sixth and seventh, I believe.

RB: Okay. How long was the school day?

CH: The teachers had to go at eight and stay to four. I think...the children, we started letting the first graders go at 2:15, the second grade at 2:30, the third at 2:45 and I think everybody went home at 3:00 or 3:15. But the teachers had to stay 'til 4:00. And that's when we did our work for the next day and had our snack. Mrs. Taylor made hot tamales. We always bought hot tamales for about ten cents a dozen.

RB: Oh, I see. Was there a teacher's lounge back then?

CH: Oh, goodness no!

RB: Did you get any time off?

CH: No.

RB: During the day, you had your kids from eight until they went home.

CH: Yes.

RB: So there was no time off.

CH: No time off. And when they had their play period you had to go out with them to play. It wasn't called P.E. then, just play period.

BB: They went out to play and you went to play with them.

RB: What...?

BB: When you started to school, did they still have to carry the water in the water buckets? We all had to have those little folding cups when I first started. Everyday they'd send these boys off to the well down...way off down there to get a bucket of water.

CH: Didn't think about the piano.

BB: This four-room building I started school in had a big hallway right down the middle of it, with a piano in the middle of it. So these boys would go everyday to get the water and they'd come back and pour water on that piano bench. And that teacher never did catch on. He'd go out there to play that thing for us to march out and sit down in the water every time. (Laugh)

RB: You mean you had a closing assembly, too?

BB: Well, that was to march out.

CH: That was to march out.

BB: You had to march in and march out.

CH: You lined up. You lined up and marched in to that music.

RB: Oh, there wasn't any bell sort of thing you just went...?

BB: I remember one of my teachers had a little one she got out and rung like that, but most of the time that music started and you run up there and got up to the place where you was supposed to line up. (Unintelligible) You come on in when they got ready.

CH: I remember we were all lined up there in the sixth grade and Miss Ossie, she was Ossie Green then. Mrs. Ossie Thompson was my teacher and we were all lined up out there when she came to school that morning. And she'd been out of town and she was the first woman in Diboll to have her hair cut. And we were all singing:

Good Morning, Mr. Zipp, Zipp, Zipp,
With your hair cut just as short as mine.

Oh, that may not should be on there. I hadn't thought about that.

RB: Oh, that's cute.

CH: That and the day the superintendent came in our classroom when I was in the sixth or seventh grade one, looking for a boy. And he knew the superintendent was after him and he made a run for the window and the superintendent told the teacher to catch him and the teacher jumped out and broke his leg.

RB: Oh, no! That happened here, huh?

CH: That was Mr. R. O. Davis and I won't name the young man! (Laugh)

RB: No, let's don't.

CH: And he went out there and the railroad was there. And there was a freight train there and that boy caught that freight train.

RB: And just left town?

CH: And that was the past time for young men at that time was riding the freight train. I'm sure you heard about the young boy that fell off of it and was cut all to pieces.

RB: No, I hadn't heard that one. That happened about that time too, huh?

CH: Yes, along about that same time.

RB: Were there any social restrictions put on the teachers? I know that they couldn't date during this time, but did you have to go to church? Did they check and see that they went to church?

CH: I guess you did. I taught a Sunday School class all the time I was there.

RB: Were there any of your co-workers who weren't affiliated with the church or was everybody...?

CH: Ah, I don't know. Everybody lived in Lufkin.

BB: They didn't go to the Diboll church.

CH: In the '30's while I was teaching here, Mrs. Purdy lived at Diboll and she taught piano lessons and she also helped with the music programs in the school.

BB: We had some of the best programs then because Mrs. Purdy was always there to help.

RB: Was there a P.T.A. or a scout group or anything?

CH: A mother's club. It started out as the mother's club and Mrs. Rutland was the one that started that. And later it became the P.T.A.

RB: What were the parents like to deal with? Is it a lot different than it was back then?

CH: Yes! When I first taught here. They had a lot more respect for teachers than they do now.

RB: Why do you think this is so?

CH: Because, I think maybe, the first thing was the parents began to think the children shouldn't be punished at school and I think because the children ought to have respect for the teachers in the school. (Unintelligible)

RB: When you left here in '30...?

CH: '38.

RB: '38. Then how long was it before you came back and taught again?

CH: I came back here in...when was it? '64, 1964.

RB: Okay, what did you teach at this time?

CH: Sixth grade.

RB: Okay, did they have junior high then? As a different building, you know?

CH: (Unintelligible)...when we first moved over there.

RB: Let's see, when did we integrate? Wasn't that when we integrated, is that whenever we changed?

CH: No. They had already integrated when I came here.

RB: In '62?

BB: Carrie, I don't believe they had because that's when we moved...

CH: Oh, that's right. Yes, when we moved over there.

BB: And ya'll moved over....

RB: So that was the first year of integration?

CH: Of integration, yes.

RB: Were there...?

BB: Well, they partially integrated; you know we had freedom of choice, and some, several of the little, several high school kids came over and two or three of the little, of the elementary.

RB: Of the elementary. Uh-huh.

BB: But most of them stayed over there, until we completely integrated, now I don't what year that was, it was after we came here...

CH: It was '62, I guess, or '63.

BB: Because we, you know, we went them...

CH: I don't know how many years I taught once I taught them.

RB: Were there any big problems with integration here? Was there a lot of hard feelings? Did the students get along with each other?

CH: Well, I think it went exceptionally well.

BB: We integrated before we were forced to.

RB: Right, because in '68, I graduated in '68 from high school and we were not integrated at that time.

BB: We did before we were forced to, and it was a regular thing. You know and as I said part of them could come, freedom of choice, if they wanted to come over there, they did, and then they thought....

CH: Well another thing. They moved the colored teachers, they mixed them all up in the school. See they didn't just leave all the colored teachers over there. Put them around in all the other buildings and I imagine that helped.

BB: We didn't have any trouble, not near as much as they are having now...

RB: Okay, well that's good.

BB: And Mr. Ramsey, I think had quite a bit of trouble. Later on. I don't think the first years they did because Bessie was over there and they got along real well.

RB: Well, I don't see any big problem. I mean there may be isolated incidents of kids, but I think kids are kids, black or white, it doesn't matter.

BB: But we didn't have any trouble in the elementary school as she said the problems could...with the colored teachers over there, they helped us. They made the black pull their own, especially Miss Wallace. She made them behave.

RB: Yes, I teach with her right now.

CH: She's a good teacher.

BB: A good teacher.

CH: The children like her, she works well with them.

RB: Did you see any real big change? What big changes did you see from '38 to '64? That's a what...? A twenty year...?

CH: Yes, we'll see, I had been out of the teaching profession for nine years, and I saw so many changes when I first came back in, I just kinda adjusted by the time I got back up here, I taught in Orange ten years before I came up here.

RB: Well, how did Diboll change? In '64, there was quite a bit of change by that time, wasn't there? What struck you most about the town and the school?

CH: Well, they had the new school building see, then, and they didn't have that when I left here. And there were so much bigger plants than it was when I left here. They were just scattered over close to the highway by that time. Of course, we had so much more material to work with than we did when I left here. Schoolbooks furnished. The school furnished part of the materials for the teachers to work with. Which they didn't have any of that when I left here.

RB: Did you have a work period and all by this time? I'm sure...by '64 or did you teach?

CH: We didn't have a work period. She was my principal; you'll have to talk to her now. (Laugh)

BB: And we didn't have any aides. I never had a secretary. I never had an aide the whole time I was over it all.

RB: When did the Spanish start coming or the Mexican-Americans from...?

CH: It was after I had been there.

RB: After you had quit teaching, too? So you never had...

BB: Yes, I had some, the Mirandas, and the Melanders and the Verolas? They lived here all that time you know but they had...

RB: But not like it is now, you didn't have to worry about the Spanish language?

BB: No, they all could speak English. Mrs. Miranda told me one time, it worried her about her children, they didn't want to learn her language.

RB: Oh, they didn't want to learn Spanish, huh?

END OF SIDE ONE

RB: Okay. What sort of high school sports were played whenever you were going to school?

CH: Basketball, girls and boys.

RB: Oh, they had a girl's basketball team back then?

CH: Oh sure. Haven't you heard her say she was one of the "Bloomer Girls"?

BB: That's what they called us. We wore those great big old black bloomers that came way down here, and they called us the "Bloomer girls."

CH: They didn't have a period as such to practice during school. So we stayed after school everyday and practiced.

RB: Was the game a lot different than it is now, I mean they have full court, now. Just like the boys do.

BB: Well, we played just like the boys did, but it was out in the yard, you know, we played outside.

RB: Oh, you didn't have a gym?

CH: Oh no!

BB: Oh no! You didn't have a gym!

RB: Oh you just had two goals out there and...

BB: They built that gym the year before; they built that gym in 1940...

RB: And so ya'll played outside. Did you play other schools?

CH: Yes.

RB: How did ya'll get there? In cars?

BB: No, we had...(Laugh)

RB: No?

BB: We played at Burke.

RB: Oh, you played at Burke? Where else?

BB: Yes.

CH: That's about as far as you could get.

BB: Now this little Prairie Grove out here. They had a team and we went out there and played them one time in a horse and wagon.

RB: How did you do it? You'd go in a horse and wagon? And your folks...

BB: All day long we'd be gone.

RB: I bet you would. Would you play on Saturday or during the school day?

BB: Yes, we had to play on Saturday, because you know, we couldn't take off from school.

RB: Oh, well they do now.

CH: I didn't play basketball, but by the time I got in high school we had cars. We had our first car. We lived out in the country about a mile and I drove into school everyday. So the boys had a way to go then. And we used to take our class plays, senior plays to the neighboring schools. I remember we took ours to Corrigan, but we went in individual cars. But we had a school bus as such, when I was teaching here, because we used to take them to the county meet, or whatever interscholastic meet.

RB: Oh, you had a U.I.L. sort of thing for the kids?

CH: And this first bus we had was opened and it had curtains that let down if it was raining. I remember one time we went to Lufkin for some kind of meet, it rained on us.

RB: (Laugh) Oh no! How many people could fit on the...?

CH: Oh, about 15 or 20. There was seats up and down the sides of it.

BB: With a breeze coming in.

RB: Oh, that sounds neat. Well, by the time you were teaching, no, that's when...?

CH: That's when I was teaching here the first time.

RB: Okay, they had that. But no football was played or anything like that?

CH: No, they didn't play football even when I taught here.

RB: Oh, even when you taught here, they didn't?

CH: The first time.

RB: What about in '64?

CH: Yes.

RB: Okay, by '64 they were playing football.

CH: Yes, because see I drove from Moscow everyday, twenty-five miles up here and twenty-five miles back.

RB: Where were you?

CH: Moscow. I lived at Moscow when I taught up here that last time. I came up here on Sunday for church twice a day too, besides that. (Laugh) Because this was home and I wanted to get back in the Methodist Church here. And there wasn't one in Moscow. I would have had to gone to one of the others, my husband liked to come up here.

RB: So you just came.

CH: In fact, we was talking about that the other day and then after church we'd all go up to Youngblood's for chicken.

RB: Oh, that sounds good. Oh, I know there's one other thing I want to ask you about your classroom. How many students did you have in a classroom? Did it...?

CH: One year that I taught second grade here I had fifty-two children.

RB: Ahhhh. Fifty-two!

CH: Fifty-two children in the second grade.

RB: How did you teach them anything?

CH: I just wonder that too sometime. I just wonder, but we got by. We taught them. (Laugh)

RB: With fifty-two children? But that was the biggest....

CH: That was the biggest grade, class I ever had, most of them were around thirty-five, I guess.

RB: So the average was probably about thirty-five?

CH: Yes.

END OF INTERVIEW