

An Interview with

Mildred Kendrick

at Greene County Extension Center in
Springfield, Missouri

23 March 2012

interviewed by Jeff Corrigan



Oral History Program

The State Historical Society of Missouri

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Collection C4051

One-room Schoolhouse

CD 23

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PREFACE

Mildred Kendrick was born near Niangua, Missouri, on June 28, 1922. She attended and taught in one-room schoolhouses. As a child, she would walk one mile along a dirt road to Copening School. She went on to the State Teachers College (now Missouri State University) in Springfield after completing school at Niangua. She then accepted a teaching position at Amity School in Webster County. As a teacher, she would help host some social activities for her students such as pie suppers, Christmas programs and bonfires. Mildred stopped teaching after her marriage and the arrival of her five sons, but would continue in education by substituting at local schools and teaching Bible and Sunday school at her church. Mildred Kendrick passed away in August 2012.

The interview was taped on a CompactFlash card, using a Marantz PMD-660 digital recorder and an audio-technica AT825 microphone placed on a tripod. There are periodic background sounds but the recording is of generally high quality.

The following transcript represents a rendering of the oral history interview. Stylistic alterations have been made as part of a general transcription policy. The interviewee offered clarifications and suggestions, which the following transcript reflects. Any use of brackets [] indicates editorial insertions not found on the original audio recordings. Physical gestures, certain vocal inflections such as imitation, and/or pauses are designated by a combination of italics and brackets [*/*]. Any use of parentheses () indicates a spoken aside evident from the speaker's intonation, or laughter. Quotation marks [“”] identify speech depicting dialogue, speech patterns, or the initial use of nicknames. Em dashes [—] are used as a stylistic method to show a meaningful pause or an attempt to capture nuances of dialogue or speech patterns. Words are *italicized* when emphasized in speech or when indicating a court case title. Particularly animated speech is identified with **bold** lettering. Underlining [] indicates a proper title of a publication. The use of underlining and double question marks in parentheses [(??)] denotes unintelligible phrases. Although substantial care has been taken to render this transcript as accurately as possible, any remaining errors are the responsibility of the editor, Sean Rost.

Narrator: Mildred Kendrick (son Donnie Kendrick also present)
Interviewer: Jeff Corrigan
Date: March 23, 2012
Transcribed by: Teresa Bergen

5

[Begin Interview. Begin Track One.]

10 Corrigan: —turn this on. This is Jeff Corrigan, oral historian for the State Historical Society of Missouri. I'm here today, March 23, 2012, in Springfield, Missouri, at the Greene County Extension Center, at the Springfield botanical gardens, to interview Mildred Kendrick about her experience both attending and teaching at a one-room schoolhouse. Also in the room today is her son Donnie Kendrick. Mildred, could you start by telling me when and where you were born?

15

Kendrick: I was born in Niangua, Missouri.¹

Corrigan: What was the name of it again?

20

Kendrick. Niangua. N-i-a-n-g-u-a.

Corrigan: I've not heard of that one before, so—

25

Kendrick: (laughs) It's down on the other side of Marshfield.

Corrigan: Oh, okay. And when were you born?

Kendrick: 6/28/22

30

Corrigan: Could you tell me a little bit about your family?

Kendrick: Well, my mother and father and I had one sister and three brothers. Two brothers.

35

Corrigan: So there was two brothers and one sister?

Kendrick: Uh huh.

Corrigan: And where did you fall at in the lineup? Were you the oldest? Youngest?

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Kendrick: The boys were older than I was.

Corrigan: Okay.

45

Kendrick: So I was next.

¹ Mildred Kendrick was born about five miles east of Niangua.

Corrigan: So you were third.

Donnie Kendrick: You were third out of four.

5 Kendrick: Third.

Donnie Kendrick: There were really five. There was a baby that died.

Corrigan: What was your parents' names?

10

Kendrick: First names?

Corrigan: Yeah, first names.

15 Kendrick: Bamma and Burley Yeubanks.

Donnie Kendrick: With a "y."

Corrigan: Okay. So Y-u

20

Donnie Kendrick: Y-e-u

Corrigan: Okay. Y-e-u-b-n-k-s

25 Donnie Kendrick: b-a-n-k-s

Corrigan: b-a-n-k-s, yeah. And how did you spell your mom's first name?

Kendrick: B-a-m-m-a

30

Corrigan: Bamma. Okay. Okay. And so you had four siblings. Now where did you go to school?

Kendrick: I started at Copening

35

Corrigan: Copening.

Donnie Kendrick: Copening. C-o-p-e-n-i-n-g.

40 Corrigan: And where was that located at?

Kendrick: East of Niangua.

Corrigan: Okay.

45

Donnie Kendrick: It's about four miles. About four miles east.

Corrigan: About four miles? And did you, how far from your home did you have to go?

Kendrick: Oh, was it a mile?

5

Donnie Kendrick: Probably.

Kendrick: A mile. About a mile, anyway. We walked. I don't know how we got there when it rained. (laughter)

10

Corrigan: In bad weather?

Kendrick: Yeah.

15

Corrigan: Did you, so there was no car, no buses at that time?

Kendrick: No.

Corrigan: Okay. Did you walk on the road? Or did you walk through a field or something?

20

Kendrick: Road.

Corrigan: On the road. Was it a dirt road?

25

Kendrick: Yes.

Corrigan: So the school's name was Copening.

Kendrick: And we had a church a short distance from it named Copening. And it's still there.

30

Corrigan: Oh, the church is still there?

Kendrick: But the school is gone.

35

Corrigan: Okay. Okay. Could you describe the building of the school? The inside, the outside? Could you tell me what you remember about the school?

Kendrick: (laughs) No.

40

Corrigan: Was it a white building or was it a red school?

Kendrick: Let's see.

45

Corrigan: It's probably a whitewashed building, it looks like?

Kendrick: Yes. Uh huh. Yeah.

Corrigan: Now this picture you're looking at, is this your class?

5 Kendrick: Yes.

Donnie Kendrick: It's 1932.

Kendrick: 1932.

10

Donnie Kendrick: And all four of her—

Kendrick: All my siblings are there.

15

Donnie Kendrick: —siblings are in there.

Corrigan: All your siblings are there? And what grade are you at in this? Do you remember?

Donnie Kendrick: You were ten. So you're probably, what? Fourth or fifth grade?

20

Kendrick: Yeah. Fourth or fifth grade.

Corrigan: Oh, that's you right there in the middle?

25

Kendrick: Yeah. Yeah.

Corrigan: So it looks like, let's see. How many kids are here?

Kendrick: I think maybe I counted 20-something, I'm not sure.

30

Corrigan: I got 28. So you're right, 28 kids and then the teacher there off to the right. And she looked fairly young, too. Do you remember her name? Or?

Kendrick: Lucille Dugan.

35

Corrigan: Lucille Dugan?

Kendrick: One of my favorite teachers.

40

Corrigan: Okay.

Kendrick: And we had another teacher that I remember, Retha Sell.

Corrigan: Aretha?

45

Kendrick: Retha.

Corrigan: Oh, Retha.

Kendrick: Just Retha.

5

Donnie Kendrick: R-e-t-h-a, S-e-l-l.

Kendrick: Then they moved our school to Niangua. They—

10 **[End Track 1. Begin Track 2.]**

Kendrick: —consolidated.

Corrigan: Okay. So how long did you go to the one-room school?

15

Kendrick: I was about in the fifth grade.

Corrigan: Okay. So, first through fifth grade.

20

Kendrick: Yeah.

Corrigan: Okay. And then they consolidated, and then you went to Niangua?

Kendrick: And went on the, we caught a bus.

25

Corrigan: Okay. So you did catch a bus to go into, after consolidation. Okay. Now do you remember the school, did it have any electricity?

Kendrick: No.

30

Corrigan: Okay. Did it have, was it the typical school where you walked in, there was two doors that you walked in? Either on either side? Or did it just have the one?

Kendrick: I remember just one.

35

Corrigan: Okay.

Kendrick: Maybe steps and little porch.

40

Corrigan: Okay. Did it have a little cloakroom or anything?

Kendrick: Well, just hangers to hang our coats.

Corrigan: And put your lunches there and that?

45

Kendrick: Yeah. And a shelf for the lunches.

Corrigan: Okay. Did it, was the teacher's desk in the front?

Kendrick: Yes.

5

Corrigan: Was there a big chalkboard behind her?

Kendrick: Yes.

10

Corrigan: Okay. So you didn't have the individual slate chalkboards. Just the big one on the—

Kendrick: Big one.

15

Corrigan: Was it one where the windows were on the east and west sides? Was there windows on both sides of you?

Kendrick: I just remember the windows being on the, what's that other direction? Well, it wasn't east. And it wasn't—north.

20

Donnie Kendrick: Was it north?

Kendrick: North. That way. (laughs) North.

25

Corrigan: Okay.

Kendrick: I don't remember any windows being on the east side.

Corrigan: Okay. So still enough light, though, throughout the day.

30

Kendrick: Yeah. Lots of windows.

Corrigan: Did you have, did you also have the little kerosene lanterns and lights? Or did you not need those?

35

Kendrick: No.

Corrigan: Okay. Do you remember, how was it heated?

40

Kendrick: With big old woodstove. (laughs)

Corrigan: Woodstove, okay. Did it have the individual desks? Or did it have those shared desks?

45

Kendrick: Shared. Shared desks, mostly.

Corrigan: Did it have the youngest in the front all the way to the older kids in the back?

Kendrick: Right.

5 Corrigan: Do you remember, was there any pictures hanging on the wall or a flag or anything?

Kendrick: Well, you know, I don't remember. Our flag, I think we'd put it outside every day. So it probably was inside.

10

Corrigan: So there was a flagpole outside and some of the kids would raise it and take it down each day?

Kendrick: Yeah.

15

Corrigan: Was that mostly older kids?

Kendrick: Older kids.

20

Corrigan: Was that a treat to do that?

Kendrick: They thought it was.

25

Corrigan: And then did you go inside, did you do, did you say the pledge of allegiance?

Kendrick: Pledge of Allegiance, and maybe a prayer.

Corrigan: A prayer? Okay. Did you do any singing?

30

Kendrick: Yes.

Corrigan: Was there a piano?

Kendrick: Yes.

35

Corrigan: Oh, there was. Okay. Was there a well outside? Like a pump well?

Kendrick: Uh huh. Uh huh.

40

Corrigan: Did somebody have to carry in the water, then?

Kendrick: Uh huh. And water bucket on the inside with a dipper. And each one had a little drinking cup.

45

Corrigan: So you each had a cup.

Kendrick: Yeah.

Corrigan: So you didn't have to share the one dipper.

5 Kendrick: Didn't try to share the dipper.

Corrigan: Was it those little collapsible cups?

Kendrick: Yeah.

10

Corrigan: Okay. The little tin ones?

Kendrick: Right.

15

Corrigan: Okay. Do you remember, so you had the individual cups there, okay. Was there any playground equipment outside? Was there a swing or a—

Kendrick: There were some swings. But not much of anything. Maybe a, no, no teeter totters.

20

Corrigan: Okay.

Kendrick: Just a few swings. And we had a cellar.

25

Corrigan: Oh, you did have a cellar.

Kendrick: Cellar.

Donnie Kendrick: Well, that's at the school you taught, you had the cellar.

30

Corrigan: Okay.

Kendrick: Yeah, yeah, at the school I taught.

35

Donnie Kendrick: At Copening, did you have a cellar at Copening?

Kendrick: No. No, we didn't have a cellar at Copening.

Corrigan: Okay. So, okay. Now which school is this one? Is this the one you taught at?

40

Donnie Kendrick: Mm hmm.

Corrigan: Okay. So that's these two pictures. Okay. So we'll get to this one later.

45

Kendrick: Okay. All right.

Corrigan: We'll talk about this one. No, no, no. That's fine.

Kendrick: I'm getting confused. (laughs)

5 Corrigan: No, yeah, that's okay. Was there, did you have outhouses?

Kendrick: Yes.

Corrigan: Was there two?

10

Kendrick: Two.

Corrigan: Were they separate?

15

Kendrick: Yes, yes.

Corrigan: Was there an old coal shed or anything out there?

Kendrick: Not that I can remember.

20

Corrigan: Did anybody have to ride a horse to school?

Kendrick: No.

25

Corrigan: Okay. So there's no hitching post—

[End Track 2. Begin Track 3.]

Corrigan: —or anything for that?

30

Kendrick: Kind of a close neighborhood. Everybody, you know, walked.

Corrigan: Did they pick up people along the way as they walked to school?

35

Kendrick: No, no. Well, they may have. Friends.

Donnie Kendrick: Now most of these are all related.

Kendrick: Yeah. (laughs)

40

Corrigan: Oh, okay. So out of all those students, a lot of those are relatives.

Donnie Kendrick: Probably 90 percent of them.

45

Kendrick: But some were further away than others, you know.

Corrigan: Yeah.

Kendrick: But when I looked at this picture, I thought, well, I know all of these kids. But they're my, mostly my cousins. And now I can't name all the kids I had at my other school.

5

Corrigan: That you taught, yeah.

Kendrick: They look familiar, but I can't, just can't name all of them.

10 Corrigan: Yeah. No, that makes sense, especially if those are mostly relatives. Because then it means you interacted with them outside of school, too. Okay. Now you said the school doesn't exist today.

Kendrick: No.

15

Corrigan: How long, how long ago did it get destroyed?

Donnie Kendrick: Shortly after this picture's taken, probably.

20 Corrigan: Was it by fire or did it—

Kendrick: No.

Corrigan: Okay.

25

Kendrick: I think it was just moved. I don't know why it was moved.

Donnie Kendrick: Did somebody buy the property?

30 Kendrick: Might have bought the property. And there was a, a canning factory close.

Donnie Kendrick: Tomato.

35 Kendrick: Tomato canning factory. And they might have used that, used it for that. I don't know.

Corrigan: Okay. So there was a factory nearby. Does that mean that there was a lot of kids coming in and out of the school?

40 Kendrick: No.

Corrigan: Okay. So it was mostly—

Kendrick: That was usually in the fall, you know, with the tomatoes.

45

Corrigan: Okay. Now you said the church that was nearby still exists, though.

Kendrick: Uh huh.

Corrigan: Okay. Okay. And that was the, was it also called the—

5

Kendrick: Copening.

Corrigan: Copening. Okay.

10 Kendrick: Methodist.

Donnie Kendrick: That was one of the families that settled in the area. Probably donated the land.

15 Corrigan: Okay.

Kendrick: Copening Methodists. The Copenings did the settling.

Corrigan: Okay. So it's a Methodist church.

20

Kendrick: That's why it was named after them.

Corrigan: Okay. Okay. So I—

25 Donnie Kendrick: Little German family, I think.

Kendrick: And it was there for years and years. And my dad and mom are buried there.

Corrigan: Oh, and there's a cemetery right there?

30

Kendrick: Cemetery.

Corrigan: Okay. And is it called the Copening Cemetery, too?

35 Donnie Kendrick: Mm hmm.

Corrigan: Okay. Okay. So a tight-knit little community there.

Kendrick: Yeah. Yeah. Yeah.

40

Donnie Kendrick: But actually the community that it's resided in was called, referred to as Dudley Town. And her mother was a Dudley.

Kendrick: A lot of these mother and father's—

45

Donnie Kendrick: Basically that was the family that there were a lot of cousins related to. They called it Dudley Town, but they went to Copening School and the Copening Church. And they're buried at the Copening Cemetery.

5 Corrigan: Okay. So your mother, so she was a Dudley, then.

Kendrick: Yeah.

Corrigan: Okay. Okay.

10

Kendrick: And my grandfather Dudley had a molasses mill.

Corrigan: Okay.

15 Kendrick: Supposed to be some of the best molasses ever made. (laughs)

Corrigan: Okay. And was that nearby where you lived?

Kendrick: Yeah. Just across the field a little ways.

20

Corrigan: Oh, okay.

25 Kendrick: But I used to go over there. And they didn't want us to be close to the pit where the fire was, or the horses were going around. But we'd get a piece of cane. And I don't know whether it was excess that they were getting off of the boiling. And we'd stick that cane in there and lick the molasses off of it. (laughs) I can remember that.

Donnie Kendrick: Did you have molasses every morning, then?

30 Kendrick: Well, probably.

Donnie Kendrick: For breakfast?

Kendrick: We never knew what it was to do without molasses. And cookies.

35

Corrigan: Yeah, molasses cookies. Yeah. Did you, going back a little bit to the farm, did you, your farm that you lived on, your grandpa's, so obviously he had molasses. But did you have livestock, too?

40 Kendrick: Well, we did.

Corrigan: You did.

Kendrick: We lived across the field a little ways.

45

Corrigan: So what kind of livestock did you have?

Kendrick: Oh, just a pig or two, and cows to milk, and ducks and geese.

5 Donnie Kendrick: Her father ran a threshing machine through that part of town.

Kendrick: Yeah. And a sawmill.

Donnie Kendrick: And a sawmill.

10 Kendrick: So he didn't do any of the work.

Donnie Kendrick: They didn't do much farming, but they have livestock.

Corrigan: Okay. So you did have dairy cows, though.

15 Kendrick: Yeah. Enough to provide what we needed for ourselves.

Corrigan: Does that mean, then, you were able to take milk to school, then, with you? For lunch?

20 Kendrick: No, we didn't.

Corrigan: Oh, you didn't. Okay.

25 Kendrick: I don't remember taking milk.

Corrigan: Okay.

Kendrick: But we had butter and cheese, stuff like that, you know.

30 Corrigan: So you—

[End Track 3. Begin Track 4.]

35 Corrigan: —were pretty self-sufficient.

Kendrick: Yeah. Yeah.

Corrigan: Did you have a big garden, then?

40 Kendrick: Yeah, Momma had a garden.

Corrigan: Did it have any apple trees or fruit trees?

45 Kendrick: We had fruit trees.

Corrigan: Did your mom have to can a lot and preserve?

Kendrick: Yeah. Yeah.

5 Corrigan: And you said a pig. Did you salt and smokehouse it, to put up the hams?

Kendrick: Yeah. Kill it and hang it. And our well was way down in the sticks and the holler.

Donnie Kendrick: Was it a spring?

10

Kendrick: Spring.

Donnie Kendrick: It was a spring.

15

Kendrick: And we had to carry water from there to wash and everything. And it wasn't an easy life.

Donnie Kendrick: And you kept your, did you keep your dairy in the spring? To keep it cold?

20

Kendrick: No.

Donnie Kendrick: I thought somebody kept their milk and cream and whatever under the water in the spring.

25

Kendrick: That was our other place.

Donnie Kendrick: Oh, your other place.

30

Kendrick: Yeah.

Corrigan: Okay.

35

Kendrick: That was too far to go down. Well, probably we did keep things down there, but it was awfully far to have to walk down there and then come back up the hill with even water.

Corrigan: Because there was no ice box or anything yet.

40

Kendrick: No, not then. But later on we had one.

Corrigan: Okay.

Kendrick: Lived hard.

Corrigan: Was there, so we covered how many kids were in your school. Since it was a pretty close-knit community and family, there probably wasn't much in and out of kids. It was mostly the same kids.

5 Kendrick: Yeah. Yeah. There were a few neighbors on the other side that weren't related that came. They're in here, too. But we all felt like we's related. (laughs)

Corrigan: Yeah.

10 Kendrick: Went to high school together.

Corrigan: Do you remember at all, did you learn a lot from listening to the older kids as you went up?

15 Kendrick: I did. I did. I remember my teacher. We'd have a little recitation bench up front. And she'd call for the class. And I remember, I don't know what we were doing up there, but she made the comment that when they'd practice their multiplication tables, she'd point me out that I knew them better than they did, because I was listening to them. But I was always, I don't know, I won't say smart, but I just kept things in my mind.

20

Corrigan: So that really helped you out, then, paying attention—

Kendrick: Yeah. Yeah.

25 Corrigan: Because then you knew what was coming.

Kendrick: Yeah. Yeah.

Corrigan: Okay. Did the older kids help out the little kids?

30

Kendrick: Not so much that I remember at that school. But at the other, where I taught, I had some of the older girl, Betty Lou Johnston. And she played the piano. And sometimes when I was busy with a class, I'd have her to help with things. And the kids went home and told their parents that I was letting her teach. So I had to quit that. (laughs) But you know, she was very helpful with maybe telling them a word or something like that.

35

Corrigan: So she wasn't teaching—

Kendrick: No.

40

Corrigan: She was just helping. But they misinterpreted that.

Kendrick: They were kind of jealous of her because she played the piano. (laughs)

45 Corrigan: Now going back to the school you went to, was there a piano in there?

Kendrick: I don't remember.

Corrigan: Okay. Okay. And do you remember, did you guys at that school, did you have, was the school also like a community center at all? Was it used for other things?

5

Kendrick: Not that I remember.

Corrigan: Okay.

10 Donnie Kendrick: Probably the church was more.

Kendrick: Church was more.

Corrigan: Okay.

15

Kendrick: Because it was just a little ways—

Corrigan: Did you have a Christmas program?

20

Kendrick: Usually.

Corrigan: Did all the kids practice songs and prepare?

Kendrick: Songs. Mm hmm.

25

Corrigan: What was the, did the teacher usually write the program? Or was it that—

Kendrick: It was usually, I think she'd send off and get material, maybe. Maybe write some of it.

30

Corrigan: Was it like the nativity scene, or was it—

Kendrick: Yeah. Nativity scene.

35

Corrigan: Okay. And was that a whole thing where the whole community would come and watch?

Kendrick: Part of the time.

40

Corrigan: Okay. Did you decorate everything?

Kendrick: Mm hmm.

Corrigan: Okay. Did you, did you guys dress up or decorate for like Halloween?

45

Kendrick: No.

[End Track 4. Begin Track 5.]

5 Corrigan: Okay. Did you have an end of the year picnic or anything?

Kendrick: Usually. Picnic. Mm hmm. We were close to a little stream.

Corrigan: Okay.

10 Kendrick: And lots of times we'd go down there and have our picnic. We could walk there.

Corrigan: Was that usually the last day of school?

Kendrick: Yeah.

15 Corrigan: Okay. Did school start in August or September?

Kendrick: September.

20 Corrigan: September. Did it run through May or—

Kendrick: May.

Corrigan: Okay. So it was a full almost nine months.

25 Kendrick: Mm hmm. Mm hmm. Mm hmm.

Corrigan: Okay. Did you guys have any social things, like pie suppers?

30 Kendrick: I don't remember anything like that at Copening School.

Corrigan: Okay. Okay. Did you have, do you remember doing any like art projects or anything? You said singing. But was there any other like art?

35 Kendrick: I don't remember about the art.

Corrigan: Okay. Okay. Do you remember recess?

Kendrick: Yes.

40 Corrigan: Did you have it morning, afternoon, or just at lunch, or—

Kendrick: We had a morning recess. And then lunch. I think we even had a little bit in the afternoon.

45 Corrigan: Was it a short—

Kendrick: Short. Mm hmm.

Corrigan: Fifteen minutes or something.

5

Kendrick: Mm hmm.

Corrigan: Okay. Do you remember, was the teacher outside supervising? Or—

10

Kendrick: Yes.

Corrigan: Do you remember any of the games you played?

15

Kendrick: No, not really. I know we burned wood there at the school. And what I remember, I guess I was a tomboy. And I was climbing on that woodpile. And she tied a blue ribbon around my finger to make me remember that that was a no-no. And that kind of hurt me. (laughs) Because I was kind of a tomboy.

20

Corrigan: So she didn't want you climbing on the woodpile.

Kendrick: No, no. We could get hurt.

Corrigan: Mm hmm.

25

Donnie Kendrick: What recreation, to climb on a woodpile. (laughter)

Kendrick: Just something to do. Didn't have nothing else much. I don't think we even had any swings.

30

Donnie Kendrick: Did you have any balls?

Kendrick: Well, yeah, I don't remember this school playing ball.

35

Donnie Kendrick: Having any balls?

Corrigan: So did you probably play games like, you know—

Kendrick: Yeah.

40

Corrigan: —hopscotch or—

Kendrick: Races and things.

45

Corrigan: Tag.

Kendrick: Yeah, tag.

Corrigan: Did you play like Red Rover?

Kendrick: Yeah. All those.

5

Corrigan: Ok, did you play that, a lot of people played that game Annie Over?

Kendrick: Yeah. Yeah.

10

Corrigan: You played that, then?

Kendrick: I remember that.

Corrigan: Throwing it over the top of the schoolhouse.

15

Kendrick: Yeah.

Corrigan: Okay. Do you remember what you had to do when there was bad weather? Did you have to stay inside?

20

Kendrick: Yes.

Corrigan: What did she have you do? Did you guys—

25

Kendrick: Well, usually sometimes, we'd divide up into teams and have, well, what do I want to call it?

Donnie Kendrick: A relay race?

30

Kendrick: No. On the blackboard.

Corrigan: Almost like—

Kendrick: Problems, you know. Just simple little problems.

35

Donnie Kendrick: Contests.

Corrigan: Contests, or, like a math contest?

40

Kendrick: And then maybe we'd sing.

Corrigan: Did you do any spelling bees, or—

Kendrick: I don't remember that. Because these were all younger kids.

45

Corrigan: Okay. Do you remember, did you have any chores you had to do at the school? Did, you know, there was probably somebody carried in the wood, carried in the water. But did you have to clean the erasers?

5 Kendrick: You mean—Oh, yeah. Somebody was appointed to dust the erasers. And I guess the teacher took care of the heat and brought the wood in. As far as I know. Because I don't remember, I don't remember any board members at this school.

Corrigan: Okay.

10

Kendrick: But I know we had some, but—

Donnie Kendrick: Probably somebody in the community furnished the wood.

15 Kendrick: Yeah. Oh, yeah. Yeah.

Donnie Kendrick: And paid for by the school system.

Corrigan: Did you have to like wash the blackboards?

20

Kendrick: Yeah.

Corrigan: Was that a once a week kind of thing where everybody got together and cleaned?

25 Kendrick: And sometimes swept the floors.

Corrigan: Did you have the little inkwells at your desk?

Kendrick: I don't remember that.

30

Corrigan: Okay.

Donnie Kendrick: Pencils? Would you have used a pencil?

35 Kendrick: You know, where you have ink.

Donnie Kendrick: What did you write with?

Kendrick: Pencils.

40

Donnie Kendrick: More pencil than ink.

Kendrick: Yeah. Yeah.

45 Corrigan: Did you take your lunch each day?

Kendrick: Yes.

Corrigan: What was a typical lunch for you?

5 Kendrick: Some kind of a sandwich and maybe some kind of fruit.

Corrigan: Was it like a biscuit—

[End Track 5. Begin Track 6.]

10

Kendrick: Some kids brought biscuits. My mom made light bread.

Corrigan: Okay, so your mom made the bread. Okay.

15

Kendrick: So we had, that's about all I can remember ever eating.

Corrigan: Did you have molasses cookies or something?

Kendrick: Probably. (laughs)

20

Corrigan: Because you mentioned the molasses.

Kendrick: Yeah. All of these kids probably had molasses cookies.

25

Corrigan: So your grandpa would have been supplying it to all the nieces and nephews and everybody.

Kendrick: Yeah.

30

Corrigan: Okay. So did you have a little tin? Or like a little lunchbox or cigar box?

Kendrick: Something like that to carry it in. Didn't have boughten boxes.

Corrigan: Was it one of those where you wrap the sandwich in like wax paper?

35

Kendrick: Yeah. Maybe in a paper bag.

Corrigan: But was it mostly what was in season, if there was fruit—

40

Kendrick: That's right. Mm hmm.

Corrigan: So if there was fruit or if there was maybe, did you have like the egg sandwiches?

Kendrick: Yeah. Egg sandwiches. And people had meat, you know, animals. And cured, it was, sometimes. But chicken.

45

Corrigan: Or like a ham on a, a little ham sandwich?

Kendrick: Yeah.

5 Corrigan: Okay. Now you stayed up until, you said, fifth grade?

Kendrick: Fifth grade. And back then, when you got to a certain grade, I don't know whether it was because she had so many children, the superintendent, like you skipped maybe the fifth grade one year, went on to the sixth, then came back the next year to the fifth. Well, that
10 threw me behind the other kids in my class when we went into town. So I didn't get to graduate with them.

Donnie Kendrick: Held her back.

15 Corrigan: Okay.

Kendrick: Because I didn't know what to tell them at the school, that I had already had that class.

20 Corrigan: So you had, so did you repeat a class, then? Did you repeat the fifth grade or—

Kendrick: No.

Corrigan: No.

25

Kendrick: Like maybe it would be seventh and eighth or something. And they would go ahead and have the other, the higher class. And then come back next year and take the lower class. So I don't know why.

30 Corrigan: There was a woman yesterday we interviewed and she had the same thing. Except she was supposed to go to, let's see, yeah, sixth grade first, then fifth grade.

Kendrick: Yeah.

35 Corrigan: And when the school consolidated, the new school said no. So she never had fifth grade. She had two sixth grades. Same book, same everything. And she didn't have much of an explanation, either, except they said fifth grade was harder.

Donnie Kendrick: That seems strange.

40

Corrigan: But, so anyway, you're not the only one that had an experience like that. So then you went all the way through Niangua and you graduated from high school there, then? And when was that? Do you remember when you graduated high school?

45 Donnie Kendrick: 1941. This is her.

Kendrick: I was valedictorian.

Corrigan: Oh, you were valedictorian of the school? Is this your picture here?

5 Donnie Kendrick: That's her. And then, she graduated in high school in '41 and then she went to State Teachers College here in Springfield. And that was her college picture.

Kendrick: That was my first college picture.

10 Corrigan: Oh, this is your first college picture. Okay. Okay. So then, okay, so you graduated high school. So you did go to teachers' college then. And what did you study there? What was the subject you were going for?

Kendrick: Well just for elementary education.

15

Corrigan: Okay. Elementary ed. Okay. And how long did you go there?

Kendrick: Well, I think that, I don't think that I ever used up my scholarship. You know, it's been so long ago. But I think I had to have two years to really get other schools that I would like to have.

20

Corrigan: Yeah, you had to have those two years in so you could go back and teach somewhere else.

25 Kendrick: Yeah. Yeah. And—

Corrigan: Okay. So then you, so you went there for two years. Elementary education. And then did you go right into teaching then?

30 Kendrick: Yes.

Corrigan: Okay.

Kendrick: And I had to take, we had to take a test from the county superintendent, even after we went to school, college.

35

Corrigan: Mm hmm. Did you do the college, was it, because I think at that time they had four semesters back then. They had the fall, the winter, the spring and summer. So did you go straight through it?

40

Kendrick: No. No. I think I went two—

[End Track 6. Begin Track 7.]

45 Kendrick: —two semesters the first time. And then during the summer, I'd go back.

Corrigan: Mm hmm.

Kendrick: And got my required amount.

5 Corrigan: Okay. Now going back to, the school you attended, do you think you got a good education?

Kendrick: That was my best teacher, I think. Well, one of them.

10 Donnie Kendrick: Elementary? You talking about the early years?

Corrigan: Yeah, she's right, yeah. She's right, yeah. So that was one of the best teachers you ever had?

15 Kendrick: Lucille Dugan. She's from, was from Elkland. And was, I just can't remember anything bad about her. And of course, a lot of these children were poor people. And she treated everybody, you know, just alike. Tried to. But I had a teacher in Niangua that I really liked, too.

20 Corrigan: In high school?

Kendrick: In high school. No, grade school. Don Calame.

Corrigan: So sixth or seventh or eighth grade. One of those?

25

Kendrick: Yeah.

Corrigan: What was his name?

30 Kendrick: Don Calame.

Donnie Kendrick: Calame. C-a-l-a-m-e.

Corrigan: Okay.

35

Kendrick: And he was a good Christian man.

Donnie Kendrick: He later was a dean at—

40 Kendrick: SMS.

Donnie Kendrick: Missouri State.

Kendrick: Yeah.

45

Corrigan: And what subject did he teach in junior high that you liked?

5 Kendrick: Well, just English, math and spelling and all that. And what I liked about him— I made good grades. Course, as I said, I was valedictorian. And he sang at funerals and different things. And he'd always call the superintendent and said, "Send Mildred down to take my class while I'm gone."

Corrigan: So you were a substitute, then, too.

10 Kendrick: So I think that's where I got the idea that I wanted to be a teacher.

Corrigan: Okay. Good. Good. So you do think you got a good education at that school?

Kendrick: Oh, yeah. Yeah.

15 Corrigan: Good.

Kendrick: Well see, I was either in the fifth or the sixth grade when I went there. So she did a lot. (laughs)

20 Corrigan: Dugan did. Okay.

Kendrick: Yeah.

25 Corrigan: So now what was the, so you went to teach at a one-room schoolhouse, then?

Kendrick: Uh huh.

Corrigan: So what was the name of that school?

30 Kendrick: Amity.

Corrigan: Amity.

35 Kendrick: Uh huh.

Corrigan: And where was that at?

Kendrick: Webster County? No?

40 Donnie Kendrick: It was about eight miles east of Niangua.

Kendrick: Was it Wright County?

45 Donnie Kendrick: It was almost to the Wright County line, but it was still in Webster County.

Corrigan: Okay. So eight miles east. So, okay, but still in Webster County. Okay. And how long did you teach there?

Kendrick: Two years.

5

Corrigan: Two years. Okay. And how were those years?

Kendrick: (laughs) Fair. You know, of course it was my first school. And I wanted to do good. And I knew a lot of the—I had graduated with a lot of the kids that lived in that area. So they knew all about me and everything. And I had pretty good, well, with all the kids there, this is, we had a cellar. And that was—

10

Corrigan: And so this is all the kids there, then? Or?

15

Kendrick: Well, what was there that day.

Corrigan: That day. Okay.

Kendrick: They were kind of hit and miss.

20

Corrigan: Dependent on field work or—

Kendrick: Right. Yeah.

25

Corrigan: Okay. It looks like there's, let's see, one, two, three, four, five, six, seven, eight. Seventeen kids there. In this picture you have—

Donnie Kendrick: That's just the girls.

30

Corrigan: Just the girls. So you've got 11 of those. So here's a picture of the school.

Kendrick: Yeah.

Corrigan: Okay, so you're right. It had kind of the porch in the front with the two entrances.

35

Kendrick: Yeah.

Corrigan: Now that doesn't look white. Was it a white school? It almost looks like it's stucco or something.

40

Kendrick: No, I don't, yeah, it was stucco.

Donnie Kendrick: Concrete stucco.

45

Corrigan: Was it red? Or do you think it was still a white school?

Kendrick: Just kind of dark, I think.

Corrigan: Okay.

5 Donnie Kendrick: It's still standing, too.

Corrigan: Oh, this school's still standing. Amity School.

Kendrick: It's a residence now.

10

Donnie Kendrick: It's a house. They converted it to a house.

Corrigan: So it was turned into a house. Okay.

15

Kendrick: And I had to build the fires. Sometimes one of the board members would beat me there and get the fire started. And I had to clean. I would wash windows. I had to, well, boys helped me bring in wood. But, and I didn't like the way the building looked on—

[End Track 7. Begin Track 8.]

20

Kendrick: —the inside. So I bought the material and my mom made curtains for the windows so it would look more homey. But now we did have different things for the people. We had a Christmas program every year, and bonfires. I don't know whether the board liked that or not, but bonfires with young people around. And pie suppers. And things like that.

25

Donnie Kendrick: I was going to say a wiener roast, but you probably didn't have, you didn't have wieners back then, did you? (laughter)

30

Corrigan: So was that first year pretty rough teaching? Was it a big adjustment?

Kendrick: Yeah. It was. Mm hmm.

Corrigan: Did you try to mimic your old teacher?

35

Kendrick: No. I just tried to do the best that I knew how to do from my previous school years at Niangua, you know. Because I got a lot of work to do there when teachers had to be out of town or anything.

40

Corrigan: Did your classes at the teachers' college, did they help you a lot?

Kendrick: Uh huh. Yeah. I know I got married during one of my semesters. And had tests to take while I was gone. And they were very willing to let me go ahead and take the test. Because he was in the service.

45

Corrigan: What was your husband's name?

Kendrick: Lloyd Kendrick.

Corrigan: And he was in the service. Did he serve in—

5 Kendrick: Horse cavalry. (laughs)

Donnie Kendrick: Home guards. Well, he didn't have to go overseas.

Kendrick: No.

10

Corrigan: Okay.

Donnie Kendrick: I don't know if you call it Home Guards. He was at Fort Riley, Kansas.

15 Kendrick: Well, his knees were bad. But he loved that. He loved horse, he was raised on the farm and he loved horses.

Corrigan: Was he from the area, too?

20 Donnie Kendrick: He was actually from this Amity School area. I don't know, is that where you met?

Kendrick: Yeah. That's where we met.

25 Corrigan: Did he attend this school?

Kendrick: No. He had, his sisters and brothers had attended that school.

Corrigan: So he was from that area, the Webster County area there.

30

Kendrick: Yeah. Yeah.

Donnie Kendrick: Yeah, once again, all these kids are related, mostly. In one way or another.

35

Kendrick: (laughs) And most of them had large families. So sometimes I would have two or three out of one family.

40 Corrigan: Now it sounds like you had a lot of work to do at that school, yourself. Was the school board helpful at all?

Kendrick: Yeah. That one board member, he was very helpful. I don't remember much about the others. But I know lots of times he'd have the fire going when I got there. And that helped a lot, because I had to walk from my place of staying to the school.

45

Corrigan: Were you still staying with your parents?

Kendrick: No. No. I was way out in the country.

5 Corrigan: Did you room with, or did you board with somebody? A family?

Kendrick: A family.

Corrigan: Okay.

10 Kendrick: They were real nice. And I know they had stock and killed beef and I got so tired of sandwiches, beef and pig sandwiches (laughs) that I couldn't hardly eat them at noon. But at least, she was a good cook. And she fed me good.

Corrigan: Do you remember at all what you got paid?

15 Kendrick: You know, less than a hundred dollars.

Corrigan: A month, right?

20 Kendrick: Yeah.

Corrigan: Less than a hundred dollars a month. Okay.

Kendrick: Then when I went to Niangua, course, it was more.

25 Corrigan: Okay. So you stayed at this Amity School for two years. Then did you go on to teach more?

Donnie Kendrick: They had an opening at her—the school she graduated from, Niangua.

30 Corrigan: So you went back to Niangua?

Kendrick: I got there—

35 Donnie Kendrick: She got a teaching position there.

Corrigan: What did you teach there?

Kendrick: Fourth and fifth grade.

40 Corrigan: Fourth and fifth grade.

Kendrick: That's my favorite grades.

45 Corrigan: Oh, are they? Okay. Any reason why, or—

5 Kendrick: Well, you know, like you'd be reading a story and you knew that it wasn't true. But oh, they just believed everything I read to them, you know. And didn't quarrel or fuss about it. But I had five kids one year that couldn't do anything. And I was bound and determined I was going to teach them to read and to add. I went down to the primary teacher and got some books. But I found out, you know, they were too old. They were in fifth grade and—

[End Track 8. Begin Track 9.]

10 Kendrick: It was impossible to try to teach them and my other class, too.

Corrigan: So how long did you teach there?

Kendrick: What was it?

15 Donnie Kendrick: Three years there.

Kendrick: Three years. And I got married. And he was out of the service. So we had to move to Springfield.

20 Corrigan: So you moved to Springfield here. Okay.

Kendrick: Then I substituted here for about ten or twelve years.

25 Corrigan: Okay. In the Springfield school district here? Ten or twelve years of substituting?

Donnie Kendrick: And then the state re-passed that—

Kendrick: That I had to go back to college to—

30 Donnie Kendrick: —special needs class.

Kendrick: Yeah. For special need.

35 Donnie Kendrick: About '71 or so, somewhere around there.

Kendrick: You know, like where you couldn't punish anyone and all this. So I had to go.

Corrigan: So you did that, then. You went back and took those—

40 Kendrick: No, I didn't.

Corrigan: Oh, you didn't. Okay. Okay.

45 Donnie Kendrick: She hung it up then.

Kendrick: I had the kids.

Corrigan: So in the '70s, this is in the '70s?

5 Donnie Kendrick: About '71, I think, when that was required.

Kendrick: And I didn't drive.

Corrigan: Okay.

10

Kendrick: But my home school teacher was, what was Miss Eagleburger's first name? Anyway.

Donnie Kendrick: Eva.

15

Kendrick: Eva Eagleburger.

Donnie Kendrick: But that's at my school.

20

Corrigan: Okay.

Kendrick: That's where he went. But she was, when she needed a substitute, of course, I didn't live very far, she'd always call me.

25

Donnie Kendrick: She'd call.

Corrigan: And her name was Eva-

Donnie Kendrick: Eagleburger.

30

Kendrick: Eagleburger.

Corrigan: Eagleburger, okay.

35

Donnie Kendrick: And that was at Bissett Elementary here in Springfield.

Corrigan: Bissett Elementary?

Donnie Kendrick: B-i-s-s-e-t-t.

40

Kendrick: And then I got acquainted with the lady that did the calling from the school, you know. And I always heard that if you refused, you wouldn't get very many calls. Of course I didn't drive. But anyway, my oldest son would take me and come and get me. They learned to place me close, close to home.

45

Donnie Kendrick: There were three schools close by. And she taught at—

Corrigan: So you substituted for a long time, then. Now you said, you mentioned your children. Go ahead and tell me their names.

5 Kendrick: Jim. Of course, we call him, James. And Steve. Tom. And Danny and Donnie.

Corrigan: And you said they were twins, right?

Kendrick: We had three and then twins. (laughs)

10

Corrigan: And all boys.

Kendrick: All boys. I wanted a girl. (laughter) Oh. But we lived close to the school. So they hardly ever were absent. Because they could walk and get home right quick.

15

Corrigan: Okay. Well, what kind of influence do you think that, it sounds like a lot, that that one-room school had on you. Is that where, did you really just learn to love school and education?

20

Kendrick: I did. And mostly, after went to town school and they asked me to come and take the room while they were gone. I think that's really what set it off.

Donnie Kendrick: To be a teacher?

25

Kendrick: Yeah. To be a teacher.

Donnie Kendrick: Because you had, her dad's brothers and sisters were all teachers. So I didn't know, maybe that affected you, too.

30

Kendrick: Well, they all wanted me to come to Kansas and Oklahoma.

Donnie Kendrick: They had all moved to Coffeyville—[near Wann] Oklahoma.

Kendrick: They thought I would make more money out there.

35

Donnie Kendrick: And they all became teachers out there.

Kendrick: I didn't want to go out there.

40

Corrigan: So you've stayed in this area for a long time.

Donnie Kendrick: She's been at her house for sixty-seven years.

45

Corrigan: Okay. That's great. Are there any, well, there's a question I was going to ask and I just forgot about that. I was going to ask you, you said this school, the one you taught at, had the piano and that. And that, so you incorporated music and—

Kendrick: We had music.

5 Corrigan: And the pie suppers and all that. And is that where, would everybody decorate the boxes to cover the pies in?

Kendrick: Yeah.

10 Corrigan: And then they would auction them off.

Kendrick: Auction them off.

Corrigan: And was the money used to buy supplies then?

15 Kendrick: Yeah. The board would keep that, you know, to—

Corrigan: And buy stuff for the school?

20 Kendrick: Mm hmm. Mm hmm.

Corrigan: Okay. Did you, let me ask you this. Did you enjoy attending the one-room schoolhouse? Or teaching it better?

25 Kendrick: Well, I can't, I was quite young with the one-room school, but that was all I ever knew, you know, back then.

[End Track 9. Begin Track 10.]

30 Kendrick: But teaching was what I really enjoyed doing. And of course then, later, after I quit teaching, the churches would call on me to teach Bible school. One time they even called, wanted me to be superintendent of the Sunday school.

Donnie Kendrick: She always taught Sunday school and she always taught Bible school.

35 Kendrick: I've been busy. And I've worked. Everything in Springfield, like voting. I worked the voting for years and years and years.

Donnie Kendrick: She's a poll judge.

40 Kendrick: Until I just got tired of getting up at four o'clock and getting over there. And then if there was a mistake, we had to correct it. And Heart Association. I liked to work.

Corrigan: Liked to be active and be involved.

45 Donnie Kendrick: Head Start. PTA.

Kendrick: Yeah. Head Start. Yeah. PTA. I kept involved in all that.

5 Corrigan: No, that's good. Is there any story, or is there anything we didn't cover that you had on your sheet there that you wanted to? Is there anything about the either teaching at a school or going to one that we didn't cover? I guess I did want to ask about the cellar. What was in there? Or what did you store down there? I'm looking at your picture there and—

Kendrick: See, the cellar was there. I don't know how long that school had been there.

10 Donnie Kendrick: Well, my dad's folks went to school here. And we've got pictures back into the late 1800s. So the school's been there a while. But they had a tornado in 1936 that went through that part of the country. And that may be why the cellar was built.

Kendrick: Well, and then, right—

15

Donnie Kendrick: Because there was probably eight or ten people killed.

Kendrick: Here was the school. And then here was the cellar.

20 Corrigan: Okay.

Kendrick: And then right up here was a residence. So I don't know. But we claimed the cellar as ours. (laughs) I don't remember—

25 Corrigan: So you used it as like a storm shelter.

Kendrick: Yeah. I don't remember ever going, we probably did. But—

30 Corrigan: Well it looks like the kids at least took their picture on there. But they may have been playing around there, too.

Kendrick: Yeah. (laughs) Yeah.

35 Corrigan: It kind of looks like it was something you could probably jump off of.

Kendrick: Yeah. Yeah. They hardly ever had an accident. I know one day, you know, I had, I had sympathy for a lot of these little kids. And one day it was so hot. And I told this boy, and I thought I had another older boy. Of course, they weren't always at school. And they walked to a little grocery store about a mile away, wasn't it? Dick Beard's?

40

Donnie Kendrick: Mm hmm.

Kendrick: And I told them to get a case of pop. And I'd treat them to pop. And those two kids walked all the way over there to the store and back. Because I didn't drive.

45

Corrigan: Because it was so hot.

Kendrick: Yeah.

5 Corrigan: And you said you never drove, right?

Kendrick: Yeah, later on.

Corrigan: Later on. But not during any of this time period.

10 Kendrick: When I found out how easy it was to drive. (laughter)

Donnie Kendrick: I don't know how many families did you stay with.

Kendrick: I just stayed—

15 Donnie Kendrick: You mentioned the Buttrams.

Kendrick: Oh, they all asked me to go home with them and stay all night.

20 Corrigan: You mean the school you taught at?

Kendrick: Yeah.

Corrigan: The different families wanted to board you.

25 Kendrick: Yeah.

Donnie Kendrick: The McKeels were the ones that had the—

30 Kendrick: I stayed with Jody and—

Donnie Kendrick: —had the smoked meat that she got tired of. (laughs)

Kendrick: And they were real nice people and they treated me well. I had a room to myself

35 and everything.

Corrigan: And what was their name again?

Kendrick: Jody and Almy McKeel

40 Donnie Kendrick: M, little c, K-e-e-l.

Corrigan: M, little c, K-e-l?

45 Donnie Kendrick: K-e-e-l.

Kendrick: And they were very well thought of in the community. Churchgoing people and all.

Corrigan: And that was Jody and—

5

Kendrick: Almy.

Corrigan: Almy?

10 Donnie Kendrick: Alma. They never said a “a.”

Corrigan: Yeah.

Donnie Kendrick: They always had the e-ending on it.

15

Corrigan: Pronounced different. Yeah, I know what you mean.

Kendrick: I was going to say something, but I don't know what it was now.

20 Donnie Kendrick: Well, and you stayed with Angus and Maggie one time.

Kendrick: Oh, yeah. Stayed, everybody would want me to come and stay all night one night. Well, I didn't know what to do. But anyway, if you went to one, you had to go to all of them. So these people, I went to their home—

25

[End Track 10. Begin Track 11.]

Corrigan: You said Agnes and Maggie what?

30 Donnie Kendrick: Angus and Maggie Buttram.²

Kendrick: Buttram.

Corrigan: Buttram. Okay.

35

Kendrick: And they had several children in school. So they would cook a good meal you know, at night. And then we had to go upstairs to go to bed. And there were holes in the ceiling.

40 Donnie Kendrick: In the roof.

Kendrick: In the roof. And it snowed or rained, one, that night. (laughs) We had to sleep there.

45 Donnie Kendrick: And the snow came through the cracks in the roof.

² Maggie Buttram was a first cousin to Mildred Kendrick's mother Bamma.

Kendrick: But I never said a word about it, you know.

Corrigan: You were just polite that they put you up for the night.

5

Kendrick: Yeah. All of them would try to put me up. Well, nearly every family that I can remember had me over at least once.

Corrigan: Okay.

10

Donnie Kendrick: Was lice a problem?

Kendrick: Hmm?

15

Donnie Kendrick: Was head lice a problem?

Kendrick: Never had any.

Donnie Kendrick: Never had a problem with head lice.

20

Kendrick: Nope.

Donnie Kendrick: Bedbugs?

25

Kendrick: (laughs) Not that I know of.

Corrigan: It sounds like you had a nice, enjoyable experience.

Kendrick: It was. It was.

30

Corrigan: Well is there anything else that we didn't cover that you want to talk about on your list there? Or did we cover it all? I know we covered recess and lunch and social activities and—

35

Kendrick: You know, we just didn't really have a lot of social activities. People back then, you know, just wouldn't come out much. Unless it was church, church dinner, something like that.

40

Corrigan: Well, and a lot more people back then, they had a lot of chores to do and a lot of field work, canning, prepping, food.

Kendrick: Yeah.

Corrigan: There wasn't a whole lot of time, probably, for socializing.

45

Kendrick: Yeah.

Corrigan: It was a hard time.

5 Kendrick: I remember my husband, when he went to school there, he was always telling about the teacher, one or the other teachers, they caught a skunk and took it to school and put it under the foundation.

10 Donnie Kendrick: Well. They killed it and took the stink bag (laughs) and would throw it under the school.

Kendrick: That's how some of them were—

Corrigan: Were they trying to get out of school that day?

15 Kendrick: I don't know. (laughs) Just for the fun of it.

Corrigan: So kids still got into mischief back then.

20 Kendrick: But I know, they've talked about the teachers that was before me. And they felt like they had good teachers.

Corrigan: Good.

25 Kendrick: Because they probably got punished all right.

Donnie Kendrick: Well these years were during the Depression. But now she's always said that they really didn't know that there was a depression, because they were, well, they ate what they grew.

30 Kendrick: Yeah.

Donnie Kendrick: And it was that same, all year round.

35 Kendrick: Passed clothes down, you know, from one to another.

Corrigan: Well, you were self sustainable. Each farm was self sustainable.

Donnie Kendrick: And her grandpa made molasses. So they had molasses and biscuits.

40 Corrigan: Yeah. That's an awful lot of kids to provide molasses for, but—

Kendrick: (laughs) Well, he sold a lot.

45 Corrigan: Yeah. Yeah.

Kendrick: And people would grow the cane and haul it in for him to make the molasses.

Corrigan: Now did he grow it himself, too, or no? He just—

Kendrick: I don't remember. He probably did.

5

Corrigan: Some. So he was refining it for other people, too.

Kendrick: Yeah. Yeah. Yeah.

10

Corrigan: So he would get it—

Kendrick: That made him some money.

Corrigan: Yup. And then you said your dad ran the threshing machine and the sawmill, too?

15

Kendrick: Yeah, yeah, yeah.

Corrigan: Right in that same area?

20

Kendrick: Well, all over.

Corrigan: Well, yeah, you went everywhere with the threshing. But the sawmill, did that—

25

Donnie Kendrick: When they lived at Copening, it was out in the country. But when the school, you eventually moved to Niangua, in town. And he had a sawmill in town with the threshing machine. And then he'd go from the town out to the—

Kendrick: Conway. Wherever. You know.

30

Donnie Kendrick: —county.

Kendrick: And I can say that we never went hungry. And my mom took care of the garden and canning and milk. Chickens.

35

Corrigan: And did you have a lot of chores to do, too? Did all the kids work?

Kendrick: Yeah. Yeah. I know we used to have to carry that water. A distance that I didn't like. And then lots of times we'd go to a school that had singing. And you'd compete against other schools, you know.

40

Corrigan: So you did have those kind of competitions—

Kendrick: Yeah. We'd go to other towns.

45

Corrigan: Math and spelling—

Kendrick: No, not that. Just—

Donnie Kendrick: More music?

5 Kendrick: No. What did I say? Had a lot of sports.³ But—

[End Track 11. Begin Track 12.]

Donnie Kendrick: That was in high school.

10

Kendrick: Yeah. Yeah. Well what was I going to say?

Corrigan: You were talking about—

15

Kendrick: Oh. And of course you had to have your own money to buy your meal when you were on these sporting things, or singing. And lots of times Dad wouldn't leave it, wouldn't have it, or wouldn't leave it. And the boys had rabbit guns. And they had rabbit in there.

Donnie Kendrick: A trap. They called it a gun. (laughs)

20

Kendrick: Take it to town and sell it in order to have money to go buy our lunch or whatever it was.

Corrigan: So everybody helped everybody out then?

25

Kendrick: Yeah. Yeah.

Corrigan: No, that's great.

30

Donnie Kendrick: Well and her oldest brother here in the picture helped with the sawmill. And I was trying to think, he had an eye injury while working at the sawmill. I think he's got a bad eye in that picture.

35

Kendrick: He was pounding on an iron rod and a piece went in the center of his eye. And they had to bring him up here and amputate the eye.

Donnie Kendrick: So I imagine the boys had more chores than you guys did, probably.

40

Kendrick: My brother, the other, (coughs) excuse me. The other brother played basketball. And this teacher that always asked me to come down to his room, he'd get my brother and me together and he'd say, "Now, Bill, you need to make as good as grades as your sister's making, or you're not going to stay on the—" (laughs)

Corrigan: On the team? Yeah.

45

³ Mildred Kendrick participated in many women's sports activities in high school, particularly volleyball.

Kendrick: I don't know. A lot of things I don't remember, but some I do.

Corrigan: Well, it sounds like you remember a lot, though.

5 Donnie Kendrick: You're welcome to keep these pictures. I've got copies.

Corrigan: Oh, okay. That's great. I'll add them—

10 Donnie Kendrick: And the name "Amity" means friendship. I don't know if you want to know that or not.

Corrigan: No, that's good. I'll add those to your file. And when I put it all together and I'll put it all in there. So people are looking up Amity School or Niangua or any of those, it will all be there.

15 Donnie Kendrick: And there are—

Kendrick: Macedonia was close to our school.

20 Donnie Kendrick: Close to Amity. Amity School records are still at the courthouse in Webster County.

Kendrick: We'd play ball against the different schools. We didn't have too many schools close. But the boys really liked that.

25 Corrigan: No. Sounds good. Well, if you don't have anything else to add, we can wrap up here. But I really appreciate you sharing your story today and coming in. It's a, hopefully it can stay a nice day today. It looks like the rain's still hold off a little bit.

30 Donnie Kendrick: I had just jotted down a few questions to kind of pick her brain. I was kind of curious as to why you picked Amity. But, did you have more than one school to pick from?

Kendrick: Yeah, I went to several different school—

35 Donnie Kendrick: Interviews?

Kendrick: Interviews. And of course, as my, they all knew my dad.

40 Donnie Kendrick: Because he was the threshing machine, sawmill.

Kendrick: He was a good person. And then the kids that went to school knew me and how hard I worked to make my grades.

45 Donnie Kendrick: So did you pick Amity because that's where Dad was? (laughs)

Kendrick: I don't really know. Maybe because it was closer. Because I went to some other schools that were a little farther away. And no one ever called—

5 Corrigan: Well, Mildred, I want to thank you for coming in today and sharing your story. It will be a great addition to our collection. And like I said, you're going to be hearing from me and you'll get some stuff in the mail. But I'm going to go ahead and shut off the recorder right now, so just give me one second.

10 Donnie Kendrick: Thank you.

Corrigan: Thank you.

[End Track 12. End Interview.]