

An Interview with

Jacob Nave

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 29

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PREFACE

Jacob Nave was born in Protem, Missouri on October 23, 1923. He attended a two-room schoolhouse in Protem and graduated from School of the Ozarks. He then joined the navy for World War II, serving from 1943 to 1946. After the war, Nave returned to Missouri and began teaching at Pelham one-room schoolhouse. He owned a small farm, which his wife managed while he taught. In 1949, Nave moved on to teach at Protem's two-room schoolhouse for two years. In order to maintain his teacher's qualification, he attended Southwest Missouri's State Teachers' College every summer. His last teaching job was in Forsythe, Missouri, where he was the elementary principle until 1954. In this interview, Nave reflects on the everyday aspects of his experience as a teacher in a one-room schoolhouse and the quality of education he provided.

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: Jacob Nave
Interviewer: Jeff Corrigan
Date: March 23, 2012
Transcribed by: Teresa Bergen

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[Begin Interview. Begin Track 1.]

10 Corrigan: So 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 Jacob Nave. Is that how you pronounce it? Nave?

15 Nave: Nave. That's right.

Corrigan: Okay. About his experience attending a one-room schoolhouse. Jacob, could you start by telling me when and where you were born?

20 Nave: I was born in Protem, Missouri, October the 23rd, 1923.

Corrigan: And what was the town again?

25 Nave: Protem. P-r-o-t-e-m. That's Latin for "the time being." And that's why they named it that. They couldn't agree on what they wanted to name the town. Owensville or something else. So the postal department said we'll go temporary until you get your mind made up. It ended up being Protem. Until Bull Shoals Lake covered it up. And we still have a post office down there.

30 Corrigan: Okay. That's interesting.

Nave: Yeah. So much for that. Yeah.

Corrigan: Could you tell me, did you have any siblings?

35

Nave: Well, yes. I had five half-brothers. My father's first wife passed away. And then he married my mother. And me and I had two sisters. So I had immediate siblings. I had two sisters, yes.

40 Corrigan: Okay. And what were their names?

Nave: Mary Nell Nave and Betty Jane Nave.

Corrigan: So Mary and Betty.

45

Nave: Mm hmm.

Corrigan: What was your parents' names?

5 Nave: My parents, my dad's name was Jacob Wilson Nave. Jacob Wilson. He went by J.W. or Wills. My mother's name was Dora. Her maiden name was Evans. E-v-a-n-s.

Corrigan: And were they farmers?

10 Nave: Yes.

Corrigan: Where was the farm at?

15 Nave: Our farm was about a mile and a half northwest of the little town of Protem. On Shoal Creek.

Corrigan: That was the name of the road?

20 Nave: No, that was on the creek. Shoal Creek ran up through Protem. And it ran on up, our farm was on Shoal Creek. At that time we didn't, I can't recall having any names of roads specifically. But there was one road that everybody called it the Protem to Cedar Creek Road, because it went to the next town about 10 miles west of there. But we did live off that road, yeah.

25 Corrigan: And how do you spell Shoal Creek?

Nave: S-h-o-a-l. Shoal Creek. That's just a bunch of shoals. (laughs)

Corrigan: Okay.

30 Nave: If you're not familiar what a shoal is, that's where the water runs over real fast. And then it goes down to hold the water. And it catches. And then goes over another shoal. So the decline down through there was very steep. So we had a lot of shoals. Not too many holes.

35 Corrigan: Okay.

Nave: Yeah.

40 Corrigan: What kind of farm was it? Was kind of livestock did you have? What kind of crops did you grow?

45 Nave: We were fortunate enough to have a farm that was homesteaded by a German. And we had all kinds of fruit trees on it. And we, we raised cattle. And my dad was a fox-trotting horse enthusiast. We had a stallion that we bred mares for surrounding farmers and so on. But we raised cotton, corn and hay were the main crops. The cotton was the only one that we sold. And that, we quit selling cotton about 1934 or '35. There was a cotton gin down at the little town of Protem. In fact at one time, there were two different ones. They'd bale them up

in big 500-pound bales and sell it. But we would go down with a wagon pack full of it. And they'd weigh it and they'd weigh the wagon afterward and tell us how much cotton they had in the wagon. But then we sold livestock, our cattle, we kept cattle on the farm. And we all sold, raised hogs. Had a lot of those we raised. We had a lot of open range at that time. There
5 was a farm, a lot of it was farms that were abandoned back from the late '20s and '30s, during the Depression. But anyway, we ran sows out in the open range. If I'm saying too much, why, that's all right.

Corrigan: No, you're fine.

10

Nave: So we mainly grew hogs and cattle. And we had a few, well, we had this stallion. And he had four or five fox-trotting mares there on the farm. And we'd sell some of those. But he got paid for the mares that the stud horse bred.

15 Corrigan: And how big was the farm?

Nave: It was—

[End Track 1. Begin Track 2.]

20

Nave: —220 acres, not a real big, 220 acres, yeah.

Corrigan: Okay. Was it a specific breed of cattle you had? Or just a mixed breed?

25 Nave: No. We had Hereford cattle, white-face, we called it back then, yeah, yeah. And of course we did have, we had milk cows. We had two or three milk cows. They were Jerseys.

Corrigan: Jerseys. Okay.

30 Nave: We always had milk.

Corrigan: Okay.

35 Nave: During the hard part of, back in the '30s, I was only 10 years old in 1933. But I can remember the talk about the hard times. But we had plenty to eat because we had it there on the farm. But we had very little money.

Corrigan: Did you have a big garden, too?

40 Nave: Oh, yeah. We had a large garden. Yeah.

Corrigan: Did your mom can and preserve?

45 Nave: Oh, yeah. Can. Yes, yes, yes. And I can remember, we had what they called a crabapple tree with real little small apples. And she'd can those crabapples, she'd can those

apples in syrup. (laughs) That she'd make out of sugar. That might not have been too healthy, but we sure enjoyed them when winter came around.

5 Corrigan: So was that the only things you probably bought was like sugar, flour—

Nave: Sugar, flour.

Corrigan: Coffee?

10 Nave: Coffee. Some few things like that.

Corrigan: But everything else was self-sufficient.

15 Nave: I think there was a few, you know, baking powder and soda, things like that.

Corrigan: Yeah.

Nave: Yeah.

20 Corrigan: But most things, everything else was on the farm.

25 Nave: Yeah. Most of the time, we grew enough corn most of the time to winter our livestock, the livestock. And needed some grain during the winter. Then cottonseed was good feed for cattle. And we took them down to the cotton gin, we could get our cottonseed back if we wanted to. But that was, that was basically what we did on that farm. We grew about everything that we eat.

Corrigan: Did you have like a smokehouse or put up hams?

30 Nave: Oh, yes, we had a smokehouse. And we smoked the meat in there. And then if we ran out of meat during the summertime, we'd get a fat (laughs) shelter(??) hog up and kill it and then we'd do what they call pickling the meat. We'd cut it and put it in salt brine and it would stay in there so long. And then take it out. And then we had a large cellar. Some call them a food cellar. But my dad had dug that down to solid rock and then built up concrete walls around it and a concrete top on top of it to keep things cool. Because we had no refrigerator, no electricity. In fact, we didn't have electricity in that community until after World War Two. Finally they did, the government, I can't think of the name, but anyway, we didn't have electricity.

40 Corrigan: Yeah. When they started doing like the Tennessee Valley Authority and the—

Nave: Yeah, yeah. That's right. I remember Valley Electric Corporation. Yeah. And—

45 Corrigan: You didn't have an icebox then, either, at that time, did you?

5 Nave: No, no. No. Well, a few people did. We didn't, because it would melt so quick, you know. We did have, we had plenty to eat because we grew a lot of it. And a little side note there, when it came cotton picking time, there was a very poor family lived about a half a mile from our house. Seven or eight children. And they were just tickled pink to come over and pick cotton for food. We didn't pay them money, because we didn't have much money. We'd sell the cotton, get a little money, but not much. But they were just tickled to death to pick cotton for food. And occasionally they'd come over and do other work for food. For what we had there that we'd grown.

10 Corrigan: Okay.

Nave: Just an example of how hard times were.

15 Corrigan: Yeah. What was the name of the one-room schoolhouse you attended?

Nave: Well, that is a misunderstanding. I did not attend a one-room schoolhouse. I taught in a one-room schoolhouse.

20 Corrigan: Oh, you taught at one.

Nave: I taught in one.

Corrigan: Okay.

25 Nave: I attended a two-room schoolhouse.

Corrigan: Okay.

30 Nave: Yeah. And at one time they had a two-year high school on the top floor. The schoolhouse was built way back in the late 1800s. And at that time, it was a large school and they used both floors. But when I was going, it was what we called a two-room school. One teacher taught one through the fourth grade. Then the next teacher taught the five, six, seven and eight. Then for a short time we had a two-room high school up—

35 **[End Track 2. Begin Track 3.]**

Nave: —stairs. But the last of that was 1944, was the last time they had any high school there at that building at Protem.

40 Corrigan: Okay.

Nave: And it was very nice. A big, tall, two-story building with a large bell up on top of the roof. Excuse me. (cough)

45 Corrigan: So that's where you attended school. Okay.

Nave: Yes, that's where I attended school. And I was fortunate to have some very good teachers. My first grade, all the teachers I ever had down there were exceptional teachers. Their goal was to teach children the basics. Reading, writing, arithmetic and so on. Whatever else. But mostly that was, that was what they concentrated on back in those days. Yeah.

5

Corrigan: So then you ended up teaching at a one-room schoolhouse, though.

Nave: I ended up teaching there later on.

10

Corrigan: Oh, at that school.

Nave: That school, yes.

Corrigan: Okay.

15

Nave: Then when it came out, when I graduated eighth grade, we had to take a county teachers' exam back in those days. Went to Forsythe, took the eighth grade examinations. And I scored second for the county. I'm not bragging, but I just, that was due to my good teachers was what it was, really. And then I applied to attend high school at what is now College of the Ozarks. It was then School of the Ozarks, a four-year school that had started in 1906 in Forsythe. Their building burned and then they moved over to their present location. But I attended high school at School of the Ozarks.

20

Corrigan: Okay.

25

Nave: Yeah. And then—

Corrigan: Well, go ahead. So then, so after the School of the Ozarks, then you went into teaching?

30

Nave: After School of the Ozarks, then I went into service. By the time I got out of that school, it was 1942.

Corrigan: Okay. So you served in World War Two, then?

35

Nave: And I was automatically deferred because my father had passed away in '36. And it was my mother and two younger sisters there on that good-sized farm. And I could have stayed out of the service legally. But a few—or, well, anyway, I didn't feel comfortable doing it. So I volunteered, which a lot of other guys did. I volunteered for the navy and was in the navy from '43 and discharged in January of '46.

40

Corrigan: Okay.

Nave: And when I came back, I had a farm of my own at that time.

45

Corrigan: Where was that at?

Nave: It was about two mile north of Protem—

Corrigan: Okay.

5

Nave: —on Highway 125. And the school was three miles north of Protem, and it was called Pelham. P-e-l-h-a-m.

Corrigan: P-e-l-h-a-m. Pelham.

10

Nave: It had been there for many years and it was named for a person by the name of Pelham.

Corrigan: Was that a, what size school was that?

15

Nave: That was a one-room schoolhouse. Strictly a one-room school. Nice building.

Corrigan: And you taught there, then?

20

Nave: I taught there three years.

Corrigan: Oh, at Pelham three years. Okay.

Nave: Yeah. I taught at Pelham three years.

25

Corrigan: What year was this, roughly?

Nave: Well, I kind of go into a little history of it if you want me to or not.

30

Corrigan: Sure, No, no, go ahead.

Nave: If you tell me to do it.

Corrigan: Yeah, go ahead.

35

Nave: Well, they always had school board meeting or election in April. And after this school board election and meeting, they came to me and asked me if I would be interested in teaching. They said the lady that was teaching there had decided she didn't want to teach there any longer. I hadn't been back long enough to find out the history of everything. But they offered me \$125 a month, which wasn't too bad, considering the fact that on this farm I had right there close, we were, I had some livestock on it, was making a little money. And my wife could kind of see about that while I was teaching. So I accepted it. And I then started worrying about how I would— and this is just true facts of the thing, if you're interested in it – how I was going to teach those, I think there was going to be four or five first graders. And I was wondering how I was going to teach them to read and write and so on. So I go down to Protem to my first grade teacher, who has retired. And I asked Miss

45

Lucy to tell me how to do it. And she said, “Well, J.D., don’t worry too much about it.” She said, “The state course of studies and the book guides will be a big help to you. And besides,” she said, “young children like that, whether they realize it or not, they’re very interested in learning something new. That’s just the way they are.” And she said, “I don’t think—

[End Track 3. Begin Track 4.]

10 Nave: —you’ll have much trouble.” So I thanked her and started to leave. And she said, “Just a minute, J.D.” She said, “Everybody knows why they hired you.” I said, “Well, what about it?” She said, “Well, the other teacher had trouble with this eighth grader. And she failed him because she couldn’t make him mind. And he kept disturbing the whole school. And so they hired you because you were a man.” (laughs)

15 Corrigan: And you had military background.

20 Nave: “And you’re right out of the military. And they figured you could keep him in order.” And she said, and I kind of indicated that’s the way I felt. Well, I don’t think I’ll have much trouble. I’m bigger than he is. And she said, “Now, J.D., you may paddle him and so on. But you need to do something to get that child on your side. Some way or another in your confidence.” She said, “If you don’t, he’ll give you the same trouble that he gave the young lady that just now quit.” Well, I worried a little about it all summer. But I didn’t know for sure what I was going to do. But somehow or another, the day school started the good Lord must have been with me. And I say that in all seriousness. I was going to call him in, order 25 him to keep water in the water fountain, wood in for the wood and this thing. First one thing and another, because he was the oldest and largest. But something said J.D., don’t approach him that way. So anyway, when I called him in, I told, I changed my—

30 Corrigan: Demeanor or—

Nave: Yeah. Well, I told him, I said, “Rome(??), I really need some help.” I said, “We need to keep water in the water fountain and wood in the stove, up for the stove. And I need someone to help me watch those little kids.” Down below was a creek and a playground down there. I said, “I don’t want the kids getting into that hole of water. And I need some 35 help. And if you could do that, you could appoint a couple of younger boys to help you.” And this is a true story. That young man or kid just swelled up. And he said, “Yes, sir, Mr. Nave. I’d be tickled to help you.” I had never had a bit of trouble with that kid. I did go to some extra, when he did something, I’d brag on him a little bit if it warranted that. And I tried to help him get caught up in his grades. A little extra coaching and so on. But no 40 bossing. At all. I just never did boss him. And I think what capped it off, he said, that was fall of the year when we started, early fall. And when hunting season come, he said, “Dad wants you to go coon hunting with us.” I said, “Okay, I’ll go.” So we did. And we had quite a little hunting thing. But we ended up ready to come in about one o’clock. And his dad was missing one dog. Well, he tooted his old horn and tooted his horn and finally he heard him barking. 45 Must have been a mile or two east of there. So we got to go over there and see about him. And we went over and he had a coon treed and he got the coon and we came home. But I

never did complain. I was at the point of complaining, all right. But anyway, that's the story of that. But I enjoyed teaching there. The parents were very supportive. And I followed Miss Lucy's instructions, course of study and everything. And we just, we just had three good years there. That's all it amounted to.

5

Corrigan: So Miss Lucy was her name. Was Lucy her last name, or—

Nave: Miss Lucy Strain. She was a first grade teacher for several years.

10 Corrigan: And what was her last name?

Nave: Strain. S-t-r-a-i-n. Yeah.

15 Corrigan: Okay. I wondered, I thought it was her first name, so I wanted to make sure I got her last name in there. Okay. Now this school you taught at, because I want to focus on the one-room school, could you describe the building for me? Could you describe its size, how it was set up? How it was heated? How it was—

20 Nave: Oh, yeah. Sure. Yeah. It was a nice one-story building. A tall building, though. It was painted white. It sat up on a little knoll. Flat ground. And then we had a slab. And down below it was a pretty good-sized stream. And some flat ground down there where the kids played. We didn't have any playground equipment, really. But we had a good heating stove that stood sort of in the middle of the classroom. And we heated with that. And then we had a well that had been drilled. It was an old dug well, really, that we got, drew water out of
25 with a rope and a bucket. And we did have a nice water fountain inside the building that we poured the water in. And then the kids could—

[End Track 4. Begin Track 5.]

30 Nave: —up there and push on a button and drink.

Corrigan: So they didn't have to drink with like a dipper—

35 Nave: No. They had a nice water fountain to drink out of. It was, the parents surrounding that school were very supportive. And the majority of them were fairly well off financially. In that day and time. And they let me know if there's anything we need at that school, let them know. Different things we might need. And they were very, very supportive. So that's pretty much, but the school is still standing. But it's in very bad disrepair. And here some time ago, why I interviewed the owner of it who owns a lot of land all around it for the White
40 River Valley Historical Society. We were thinking about trying to help rebuild a few of them. We knew we could get some grant money to do it. But I went down and looked at it. And it was so far off of the main road. Roads had changed. They built a new road since I taught there. And it was in such a state of repair that we discussed it and decided just to forget about trying to rebuild it. Because, mainly because of the location and the extremely bad condition
45 it was in. Yeah.

Corrigan: Was it used after, once it was no longer a school, was it used for like storage or hay?

5 Nave: No, sir. Yeah, well, it was, yeah, it was one farmer there close to it, he used to store hay in it. The last time they had school in it was about 1951 the one-room schools in Taney County were all consolidated. But I had left there and gone on back to Protem to teach in the two-room school. I taught there '46, '47 and '48. That was the beginning of the terms.

Corrigan: That was at Pelham.

10

Nave: At Pelham, yeah.

Corrigan: Okay.

15 Nave: '49 and '50, I taught at Protem in the fifth, sixth, seventh and eighth grade. It was called the principal, because somebody had to kind of halfway be the boss. And at that time, we had, we had hot lunches served. And we bused a few kids in. I bought a suburban carry all to, and they were bused in from a one-room school that had been closed before the main closing. And the lady that did the cooking drove the bus for us and brought the kids in. And
20 we had a good lunch there.

Corrigan: Okay.

Nave: It cost 20 cents a day to eat. Yeah.

25

Corrigan: At the other school, at Protem.

Nave: At Protem. Yeah.

30 Corrigan: Now the, where specifically, you know, you said the school still exists today. Where specifically, the old school, the—

Nave: Pelham?

35 Corrigan: The Pelham school. Where was it located? Had it ever been moved since the original spot? Or was it—

40 Nave: Far as I know, it was in the original place where it first started. And it was about three miles north of Protem and about a quarter of a mile west off of 125 Highway. And it is now owned by, well, I can't think of the man's name. But he has bought a lot of land down there, including a large cave in which he does research work down in the cave. My memory is bad. I can't think what you call a person like that, but—

Corrigan: Almost like a cave biologist, or—

45

Nave: Yeah, yeah. That's what it is. That's not exactly the term. But he owns the school now and does not use it for anything at all.

Corrigan: Okay.

5

Nave: He owns, oh, I expect with the cave land and the land around the school and so on he bought, that goes into another long story. One man accumulated it and then he went, he got to play in the stock market and lost it. And this cave man bought it. So there's nothing going on in the school anymore. No use whatsoever.

10

Corrigan: Okay. Now when you were teaching at Pelham, how many kids were in the school? How many kids did you have to teach? Roughly.

15

Nave: When I first started, I think there was 24. Twenty-four, twenty-five. Yes. It gradually went down a little bit. I had a picture I was going to bring along, but I didn't do it, of the second year I taught. But I think in that there were 22 students in it, yeah.

20

Corrigan: Okay. Okay. And how would you describe your, you said you were a little hesitant before you went right into it. Well, first off, you said your wife could manage the, what crops or whatever cattle were at home. What was your wife's—

[End Track 5. Begin Track 6.]

25

Corrigan: —name?

Nave: My wife's name was Nova. N-o-v-a. Yeah.

Corrigan: Nova. And what was her maiden name?

30

Nave: Her maiden name was Rozell. R-o-z-e-l-l. That was a major big family in that area down there, yeah, the Rozell family was.

Corrigan: So she was from the area, too.

35

Nave: She was from the area. Yes.

Corrigan: Okay. Okay. She didn't attend Protem or, did she attend Protem where you were at?

40

Nave: She attended the grade school up at Pelham.

Corrigan: Oh, did she? Okay. So she had—

45

Nave: While I was going to, she was two years younger than me.

Corrigan: Okay.

Nave: But she did attend grade school up at Pelham School.

Corrigan: Okay. So her family and her were all from the area.

5

Nave: And then she did go to high school down at Protem, two years of high school down there.

Corrigan: Okay. Okay.

10

Nave: Later went on to Forsythe.

Corrigan: Okay, so, okay. So you got married. And how did, how was that, teaching in the one-room schoolhouse. You had all those kids, all those subjects. You know.

15

Nave: Well, I really enjoyed it. Just making a long story short, I really enjoyed it. The kids were, I liked them. They seemed to like me. And we just got along fine. And we did have, I don't think they'd had that for a while, but we used to have sort of a get together there. They had pie suppers around some of the schools, but not there. We just had a family get together there, twice a year. And the parents came, brought food. And this was during the day. And afternoon. And everybody visited and just enjoyed life is what it amounted to. Yeah.

20

Corrigan: Do you think a lot of, now, I've interviewed a lot of students, a couple teachers, one-room schoolhouse teachers. And I usually ask the students, did you learn a lot from listening to the other kids, the older kids. And they almost always say, absolutely. Now you as a teacher, was that a, did it just happen? Or was it encouraged? Or how do you think that—

25

Nave: Well, yes. I encouraged it some. Yes. Yes. But they were, you know, they were sitting right there. (laughs) You'd have the little first grade kids, the second grade kids. Then you'd go on up the line. And I had sort of a schedule worked out that, I, I can't tell you the exact schedule. But anyway, certain days I worked more with the upper grades than I did the lower grades, and vice versa, in order to try to make it even. Because you couldn't teach all of them all the same thing every day. It was hard to do a good job of having first grade through the eighth grade classes, of course.

35

Corrigan: So it was a lot of time management and being organized.

Nave: Yes. And of course, first and second grade usually were considered one group. Third and fourth, another one. Fifth and sixth. And you kind of, well, we didn't alternate back and forth, but we did to some extent on certain subjects.

40

Corrigan: Now how did you, how far away from the school did you live?

45

Nave: I only lived a mile and a half. Yeah.

Corrigan: Okay. Did you have a vehicle then? Did you drive there? Or did you—

Nave: Yeah. I drove. I had a, I had a, right after I came out of the service, I bought a military jeep.

5

Corrigan: Okay.

Nave: They were surplus then. (laughs)

10

Corrigan: Yeah.

Nave: In fact, I bought two of them.

Corrigan: Okay.

15

Nave: Me and my wife both had a jeep.

Corrigan: Okay.

20

Nave: Yeah. Yeah. Later, that's what I had while I was teaching the one-room school. Yeah.

Corrigan: Okay. Yeah, that's what I was curious. So you didn't have to, you didn't walk the one and a half miles or anything. You—

25

Nave: I drove all the time. And usually some of the children rode with me.

Corrigan: You'd pick them up along the way?

Nave: Yeah, along the way. Yeah.

30

Corrigan: Now you had mentioned earlier, and this probably was from the Protem school, but I still wanted to mention it. You said something about you used to walk across the street, the creek, a log.

35

Nave: Yes.

Corrigan: And then the log was gone or something washed away.

Nave: Well, I'll just go into that a little bit.

40

Corrigan: But where was, was that at Protem?

Nave: No, that was at home.

45

Corrigan: Oh, home! Okay. Go ahead.

5 Nave: Yeah. The creek came down through our farm. The house was here and then the schoolhouse was a mile and a half on the east of there. But it was on the opposite side of the creek from where we lived. But I did cross the creek right there at home. And Dad would put two big logs together and put some boards across them, nail them down. And then put a cable to it and tied it to a tree over here, because the creek get up and wash it around. Well, he'd go down there on the old saddle horse with the rope and he'd tie it on to the end and drag it back across, straighten it out. But that was the way I crossed the creek. It was rough, except in the dry part of the summer, that creek ran a pretty good stream all the time. You didn't want to have to, you could wade it, but—

10

[End Track 6. Begin Track 7.]

Nave: —certainly didn't want to wade it with your school clothes on, get wet. Yeah.

15 Corrigan: Yeah. No, I can imagine.

Nave: Yeah. (laughs)

20 Corrigan: That wouldn't have been good. So you said there wasn't very much play equipment outside at Pelham.

Nave: No. There wasn't. We had—

25 Corrigan: So what did the kids do at recess? What kinds of games did they play?

Nave: I was just trying to think the other day.

Corrigan: Well did they, I mean, were you out there with them watching them?

30 Nave: Most of the time, yes. Most of the time I was. I tried to be. But down in the flat there, we had some balls and bats and so on. And we'd play ball down there. And then some of the other kids just, they'd play hide and seek and so on, because we were right close to the woods. And just different things, little things like that. That's smaller children.

35 Corrigan: Was there a morning recess, recess at lunch, and recess in the afternoon?

Nave: Yes, uh huh. We had morning recess.

40 Corrigan: Was it 15 minutes or—

Nave: Something like that, yes. And then we were off almost an hour at noon, most of the time. And then mid-afternoon we had a little recess. And they could take a break and go outside to the one-room toilets outside. One for the girls, one for the boys.

45 Corrigan: And were they separated on two different ends?

Nave: Yes, yes. Yeah. The school faced the south. And the creek was on down in here. And then out behind the school, on this corner was the boys' and on this corner was the girls'. But the families living around there, they saw to it that we had a nice, clean, two-hole outdoor toilet. And I did have some money to pay to get somebody to do an occasional cleanup on it.
5 But we concentrated on trying to keep it clean. That was the thing that we did, yeah.

Corrigan: Yeah. Okay. You mentioned these family get togethers instead of the pie suppers. Did you have a Christmas program the kids would put on?

10 Nave: Yes, we usually had a Christmas program, yes.

Corrigan: Was this, well, first off, was there a piano in the school at all?

Nave: No. No. There was no musical instruments in it at all. Yeah. And we did practice
15 singing a little bit every once in a while, I think. I don't remember whether every day or not. But lots of time when we started school, we'd sing a song or two together.

Corrigan: At the beginning of school.

20 Nave: Yes. Yes.

Corrigan: Now was the beginning of the day, did that involve, was there a flag pole outside?

Nave: No. There wasn't any flag pole at all.

25 Corrigan: Okay. Was there a flag inside the classroom?

Nave: No, there wasn't. Uh uh.

30 Corrigan: So you didn't say the pledge of allegiance or anything.

Nave: No. No.

Corrigan: Okay.

35 Nave: We should have, but we didn't. It just wasn't, it wasn't a, you kind of followed the rules that the county had. And I can't recall any rules where we were required to do that.

Corrigan: So maybe a, so there'd be occasional singing, though.

40 Nave: Oh, yeah. Mm hmm.

Corrigan: Okay. And is that what they would do for the Christmas program? Sing some songs and—

45 Nave: Songs, yes. And we'd exchange some gifts and so on. Small things.

Corrigan: Yeah. Would you do like a little play or skit or something? Did you have the nativity scene or did you have, or did the kids decorate at all, the classroom or anything?

5 Nave: I believe we did a little bit of decorating. Not a whole lot. But we didn't have any, we didn't have the money or the place to get too much stuff like that. We were 25 miles from any town of any size. Forsythe was the closest town of any size. Or Gainesville, Missouri.

10 Corrigan: Was the school ever used for anything else besides school? Did it ever serve as like a meeting place for the community? You know, sometimes there would be a church close by, but I wondered if the—

Nave: No, I don't believe so. I'm trying to think if it—I don't think it was even used as a voting place. Yeah. I can't think of anything.

15 Corrigan: Just as a school. And some of them were, and some of them functioned differently as a—

20 Nave: Yes. Oh, yes. Yeah. There was one out southwest of Protem that I'm pretty sure they used to have church in it as well as school.

Corrigan: Now what about chores at school? You probably had things to do. But did the kids, did they help you clap erasers and wash the board and bring in wood or water?

25 Nave: Oh, yes. That's what this young man Rome(??) Blankenship, he was in charge of seeing that there was wood in. And we had wood stacked outside, but we kept it under cover and so on. But Rome(??) and the other boys that he appointed, they would be sure that there was wood inside. They'd bring in maybe enough—

30 **[End Track 7. Begin Track 8.]**

Nave: —to last all week and stack at the back of the schoolroom. And of course the water every day for the water fountain. Just general maintenance like that. And then it was my job to sweep the, kind of clean up at the end of the day.

35 Corrigan: Okay. So you swept it out then, too.

Nave: Yeah. Yeah. That's right.

40 Corrigan: I didn't know, you know, some places did something every day. Some people, maybe at the end of Friday, they would have everybody help clean up the school for the week or—

45 Nave: Oh, once in a while I guess I recall the kids would help me or we'd get together on Friday and do a little extra cleaning up. But it just depended on what, how I was feeling, how

they were feeling about it. It wasn't a set thing that was set that we had to do every time. Yeah.

5 Corrigan: Okay. I'm assuming you took your lunch every day.

Nave: Oh, yes. Yeah.

Corrigan: What was a typical lunch for you those days?

10 Nave: Oh, usually sandwiches of some kind, and some of it and meat too. My wife was a good cook. I'd take along a little cake or maybe some pie or something or other. I had a lunch bucket.

15 Corrigan: So you had a bucket you took with you?

Nave: Yeah, I had a lunch bucket, yeah.

Corrigan: Did you have a thermos or anything with something to drink in it, or—

20 Nave: Can't recall that we had anything extra to drink except the water fountain, yeah.

Corrigan: Okay. And did you probably bring what was seasonal on your farm, too, whether it be fruit from trees or from the garden? Did you butcher animals, too?

25 Nave: Yeah, I took occasionally, I wasn't living on the same farm I grew up on. We let one of my sisters have it. But usually, usually—

30 Corrigan: But you had some livestock, livestock and that, too. So you might have like a ham sandwich sometime.

Nave: Yeah. I just don't recall the details. I know I usually took sandwiches of some sort.

Corrigan: And your wife packed that for you?

35 Nave: Yeah, she packed that for me. Yeah.

Corrigan: Okay. What did the school do for, you were there for three years. What did the school do for graduation for the eighth graders? What was graduation like?

40 Nave: I don't recall any ceremony as such for the eighth grade graduates.

Corrigan: They just got promoted and—

45 Nave: They were promoted. And sometimes we'd have a gathering of, especially the parents might come to school. But there wasn't anything outstanding about graduating from the eighth grade in this one-room rural school.

Corrigan: And you graduated from high school, you graduated from Protem High School, right?

5 Nave: No. From School of the Ozarks.

Corrigan: Oh, that's right. School of the Ozarks. That's right. Sorry. I want to make sure I got that down.

10 Nave: The little one-room schools kind of depended on the teacher. But for the most part, they were dedicated to teaching the kids. And it depended on the teacher and the parents as to what outside extracurricular activities they had.

Corrigan: Did you have a good school board that—

15

Nave: Oh, yes. I sure did. Yes. Yes. And there were three school board members. And all of the, well, one of them lived right there close had four children the first year I taught. And the Hunter family, it was another member, they had three children in school. And the other member had one child in school when I started teaching there. Yeah. But they came, some as far away as a mile and a half, I think. One or two of them did. But the Bonner children, that lived the closest, four of them, they just lived a short distance from the school. And the mother of those children was very supportive of any need that we had. Yes.

20

Corrigan: Good. Good. Now as the one-room schoolhouses consolidated and they did all this consolidation everywhere and that, and then they kept kind of upping the requirements for teachers, did you have to go back to school at any point to take more hours?

25

Nave: That was the agreement back when I started teaching. I was out of high school and hadn't been to—

30

[End Track 8. Begin Track 9.]

Nave: —college. But if you got a job teaching, you had to agree to go to school in the summer. So I came up here to Southwest Missouri State Teachers' College every summer and went to school the summer term. And a few terms I attended the August term, which was you only took two courses. One in the morning, one in the afternoon. I think we had school on Saturday, but I'm not sure. Anyway, I made the mistake of taking two history courses one time in August. (laughs) I was mighty, mighty busy.

35

40 Corrigan: Yeah?

Nave: Yeah. Mighty busy. Sure was. But it was a very small campus over here where the big school is now.

45 Corrigan: From what is today here in Springfield, it was a much smaller campus back then.

Nave: Oh, yeah. Very, very small campus compared to now. And there were other teachers down in Taney County that came up here summers. One good friend just recently passed away. He and I rented a room every summer. After the first summer, we wanted that room back. Because you see, it was in the basement. We thought well, we got it because nobody
5 else wanted that basement room. But we took it the first summer we went to school up there. And when we came back, Mrs. Wise, we told her we wanted that basement room because it was cool down there. There was no air conditioning in it, you know. So, anyway, that's, most of the teachers starting had to agree to go to school summers. Then after I taught at Protem, I left—I quit teaching for a year. I moved up here and I went to school for, well, I came up
10 here in the summer and I went to the next, all that year and the next summer and August. And then I went back down to Forsythe to teach again. And I taught two more years down there. And then I quit and I left in 1954.

Corrigan: So you stopped teaching in 1954?

15 Nave: Yeah. Yeah, I was elementary principal at Forsythe when I quit teaching. Just wasn't making enough money to live on. That's what it amounted to.

Corrigan: So you taught until 1954, but you were also acting principal.

20 Nave: Yeah, yeah. It was elementary principal. Yeah.

Corrigan: And that was at Forsythe.

25 Nave: At Forsythe, yes. And that was a real pleasure, too. All those schools I taught at. Pelham, Protem and Forsythe, the parents were so very supportive of the teachers. In so many different ways. Especially in Forsythe, where people had a little more money. And if something we needed that cost a little money, those room mothers would get together and see that we got it, you know.

30 Corrigan: But there was no money in teaching back then, so you had to get out of it.

Nave: Well, in 1954, we had no benefits. I had four children by that time.¹ And I had, when I agreed to teach at Forsythe, I had to come up and live in the Forsythe district. So I eventually
35 rented my farm and eventually sold it. And I just aspired to getting by is what it amounted to.

Corrigan: What were your four children? What's their names?

40 Nave: We started out with Ada. Carol. Dianna. And James. Yeah.

Corrigan: How do you spell Ada?

45 Nave: A-d-a. Ada. Ada Belle after, her mother. My mother's middle name, her full name was Dora Belle Nave. So we named Ada after someone in my wife's family and Belle after her grandmother. So.

¹ Jacob and Nova Nave had a total of eleven children.

Corrigan: So Ada, Carol, Dianna. And then what was the fourth one?

Nave: Fourth one was James.

5

Corrigan: James. Okay.

Nave: Yeah. They call him Jim now. But anyway, I went to work for GMAC that summer. The county, or the Forsythe superintendent helped me get the job.

10

Corrigan: Now what's that place? I don't know. GMAC?

Nave: It was a General Motors finance company.

15

Corrigan: Oh, gotcha. Oh, that one. Okay.

Nave: At that time, we had a lot of business here. And I went for their insurance department in the technical part of it. It was my job to go out and check on the wrecked cars and whatever they insured to be sure that we didn't spend too much money to get them repaired. But anyway, I was in training the summer of '54. I was, family was still living at Forsythe at that time, hadn't moved out. But anyway, long story short. The superintendent, Mr. Ralph McPherson and I were good friends. And he asked me how much I was making. I told him I was just—

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[End Track 9. Begin Track 10.]

Nave: This is a true story. I said, "I'm still in training, Mr. Mack." "Well, how much are you making?" And I told him. And he said, "Well, J.D., you're making within \$2,000 a year of what I'm making as superintendent of schools here at Forsythe." It's not how much I was making; it's how poor they were paying teachers. And Forsythe School at that time per pupil had more tax income than any other district in Taney County. Branson hadn't blossomed by that time. But the Powersite Dam was privately owned and it was in the Forsythe District. So it brought in a lot of taxes. And so, but still (laughs) teachers weren't paid very good. And I don't think they are, they are not paid what they're worth yet today, I don't think.

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35

Corrigan: Now do you think kids that attended a one, I mean, it probably depended on the teacher, but was there any, do you think they got a quality education? Or was there any disadvantage for kids to go to a one-room schoolhouse versus if they were in town and went to a public school and just were with kids their own age?

40

Nave: Oh, there were some disadvantages, yes. Because the bigger schools had more outside activities that they could participate in and so on. But when you get down to basics—at that time, we had a state course of studies that we had to pretty well follow. And a county superintendent would come around and visit with you periodically. I don't remember how many times during the term. It would depend on, if he heard you were having trouble, he'd

45

be down more often. But then when they got to the eighth grade, they had to pass the eighth grade examination in the county. But then that was later phased out and so on. Yeah.

Corrigan: Okay. So differences only because of size and what was offered.

5

Nave: Yes.

Corrigan: Okay.

10 Nave: Yeah. But I thought for the most part, I can only speak of my own experience, but I do know some of those kids that were in school with me. And another good teacher that was down there. We had one young man that was in the first grade at Protem when I taught down there. And he's multi-millionaire in Las Vegas as a banker and a veterinarian and so on. And three or four of those kids in that particular class. And my daughter Ada was in that class.
15 But they have done exceptionally well. And I think a lot of it goes back to, partly, to their education. I just feel sure that well, I visited with this young, or he's an older person now. I visited with him recently. He was in from Las Vegas visiting his mother. He said, "The training I got in Protem grade school was a big help in my success in life." But he, his IQ was high. That's another thing, we didn't have no way of testing stuff like that. If we had it, we
20 never did know about it.

Corrigan: Yeah.

Nave: It was pretty bare essentials. I'll have to say that.

25

Corrigan: Yeah. Was it, I mean, was there really big differences even between like Pelham and Protem? A two-school versus a one school? Were there, basically were there a lot of things, the same kind of thing? Or were there really huge differences from those schools?

30 Nave: Well, even down to Protem, there was more activities that they could participate in with volleyball, basketball. It was on an outside court. But back then, we, best I remember, of course I wasn't, when I was going to school down there, I still wasn't in the, well I graduated eighth grade. But we did have some competition with the surrounding schools. Which we didn't at this Pelham, and I don't think there was too much with other one-room schools in
35 that area. Where you'd get out, play basketball against someone else.

Corrigan: So they kind of lacked all those extracurricular activities. The sports and things.

Nave: Yes. Yeah.

40

Corrigan: Okay. And probably also had, you know, competed against schools in spelling bees.

Nave: Yeah. Once in a while they did that, yes.

45

Corrigan: Mm hmm. But when you're teaching in a one-room schoolhouse, did you have the kids compete with math problems or have individual, you know, have spelling bees in their own classroom?

5 Nave: Yes, we did. That's right. We had spelling bees and also we'd have, they'd go up to the blackboard and give them out problems. See who could get the answer the quickest or if somebody, maybe, keep trying, if you found somebody that could work out the answer. But we used to have a little competition like that, yeah. Hadn't thought about that—

10 **[End Track 10. Begin Track 11.]**

Nave: —year. But spelling, though, we used to have spelling bees, yes. And you kind of had to divide it up in the different grades. And also, you had to kind of keep within their range of spelling ability, too.

15

Corrigan: Mm hmm.

Nave: Yeah.

20 Corrigan: Yeah, you wouldn't give a first grader the same as an eighth grader, hopefully.

Nave: That's right. Of course not. Yeah.

25 Corrigan: So when you heard about this project, when you think about a one-room schoolhouse, what kind of memories does that bring back for you? You saw it in the paper, or—

30 Nave: I've always had an interest in it. Here's a Taney County paper. Our historical society put on a little program. And then I called on this. She started teaching at Pelham when I left there. But this, this is a—

Corrigan: Now I see it says J.D. here. Do you go by that primarily, J.D.?

Nave: Yeah. Yeah, yeah, yeah, yeah.

35

Corrigan: Okay. And when was this? When's this paper from?

Nave: Let's see. That's been three or four years ago.

40 Corrigan: Okay.

Nave: 2010, yeah, 2010, yeah.

45 Corrigan: Okay. But, so you've actually, not that long ago, actually, done some more stuff with the idea of—

Nave: Yeah. I was in connection with the White River Valley. We concentrated on different programs. We have quarterly meetings. And they asked me to conduct the meeting on the one-room schools. And I did a lot of research. And this book, *Land of Taney*, it's got a lot of information about schools in it.

5

Corrigan: So this book is called, let's see—

Nave: That's one of the county superintendents.

10 Corrigan: So the book is called "The Land of Taney"

Nave: "Land of Taney." But it's not—

Corrigan: A History of the Ozark Commonwealth. Elmo Ingenthron's

15

Nave: Ingenthron, yeah.

Corrigan: So I-n-g-e-n-t-h-r-o-n, apostrophe s.

20 Nave: Yeah. It's got a section on schools. And it goes way back.

Corrigan: Okay.

Nave: A long time. I did a lot of research on that.

25

Corrigan: Before your program—

Nave: Right after the war, Civil War, during the Civil War, there weren't hardly any schools along the Missouri-Arkansas line that had caused ever so much conflict back and forth. And then later after it settled down they called them subscription schools. The parents would get together and hire someone to teach two or three months. Maybe there might be a church building where they could use, or they might meet in someone's home. That was some of the first. And then later on the state started little one-room schools. And there's a chart in there about what they paid and everything like that. So Elmo has really preserved a lot of the history. He was a former teacher and also superintendent of the schools of Taney County. But anyway, so much for that. Schools have a long history. Some of it not too good. And the old saying was, "Spare the rod and spoil the child." And they tried to hire men teachers because they thought maybe they could keep order better.

30

35

40 Corrigan: More discipline, they thought.

Nave: Discipline, yes. And they over-disciplined, to some extent. Yes. There was no doubt, no doubt in my mind about that.

45 Corrigan: Just in different time periods they—

Nave: Yes. Yes. It just, you could just read in Elmo's book or, and it goes way back. And I did some other research and so on that if the teacher didn't paddle the kids once in a while, they'd get somebody else in.

5 Corrigan: When was this book written? It was written in, okay, 1974. And then it was reissued in 1983. Okay.

Nave: Yeah, yeah. But it just has a lot of, and there's, there's pictures of five county superintendents over the years.

10

Corrigan: Okay.

Nave: Yeah. But anyway.

15 Corrigan: Half a century of Taney County.

Nave: Yeah.

20 Corrigan: So you definitely, are you happy with the profession that you were in, teaching, for a while? That you taught?

Nave: Yes. I wish I had stayed with it. I made pretty good money when I changed. But it was, the work was very hard. I was responsible for spending the insurance company's money. And they didn't want me to cheat anybody, but they sure didn't want me to let somebody cheat us, either. And when I started, when I first started working, they moved me down to Cabool, Missouri. And I had Ozark, Taney County, and Howell County. I had so many arson claims down there that I had to work. Somebody's old car would get, quit running or something, they'd get it out, burn it up. Run it off of a bluff or something or other. Going to let the insurance company pay for it. Well, that's all right to try to defeat—

30

[End Track 11. Begin Track 12.]

Nave: —crime. But I had lots of other customers that had good, honest claims I needed to be seeing about. And I'd spend all my time. And I was fairly successful in breaking those crimes, too. But in the end, we had to pay the lien holder. Because most all of them had a lien on them. And the lien holder didn't have any part in the arson. So we had to pay the lien owner. And lots of times, it was GMAC. They had formed an insurance company way back there because they financed something and then something happened to it, no insurance on it, and they were the loser.

40

Corrigan: So they actually just ended up paying themselves back.

Nave: Yeah.

45 Corrigan: Okay. (laughs) That's interesting.

5 Nave: But at that time, Shelter Insurance was called MFA. And they had a couple of specialists. One north of the Missouri River, one south. That's all they did was work fraudulent claims. And it seemed like there were a lot of them back in those days, '50s and '60s. Just unbelievable. My work, what I'm saying, my work, that was a whole lot more stressful—

Corrigan: Than it was teaching.

10 Nave: Teaching was rewarding. You felt good about that.

Corrigan: You enjoyed it.

Nave: Yeah.

15 Corrigan: Good.

Nave: You had to provide for your family and so on and try to save a little money to live on later on. So that part's turned out pretty good for me.

20 Corrigan: Well, that's good. Well is there anything else about your teaching at a one-room schoolhouse that we didn't cover? We covered a lot. But I didn't know if there was any story that stuck out in your mind, or you thought on the way up here, on the drive, if you thought we'd cover today or anything. Or did we cover most things?

25 Nave: I can't think of anything right now. There were lots of little things that happened. Never did have any serious problems that I know of. And like I said, the parents, especially in that district, were supportive. We just didn't have hardly any problems at all. And I tried to—Mr. Redfern, he's in that picture out, he oversaw us one-room teachers. Did a good job overlooking, checking us out and seeing if we were doing a good job. And he'd come down
30 and maybe spend an all afternoon watching you teach, see how you taught, and so on.

Corrigan: Ernest Redfern?

35 Nave: Ernest Redfern. Uh huh.

Corrigan: Okay.

Nave: Yeah.

40 Corrigan: Well, good. Well, it was nice. I'm glad you came up today. And I'm glad you shared your story. It's definitely good to get the teachers' perspective, too, as opposed to just the student.

45 Nave: Oh, yeah.

Corrigan: I'm glad you came up and shared your story.

Nave: Well, I've enjoyed it. I just was wondering exactly how it would go. But I've enjoyed it. And I hope I haven't blabbed too much. (laughs)

5 Corrigan: No, no, no. You're fine. No, you're fine. Let me go ahead and shut off the recorder here a second.

Nave: Yeah.

10 **[End Interview.]**