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Oral History Collection

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Cress, Dorothea

March 23, 1993

Interviewed by Irene Francis

IF: This is Irene Francis and I will be talking to Dot Cress today and the date is March 23, 1993 and we are in her home in Canon City. What's the address, Dot?

DC: 1820 North 5th Street.

IF: And would you please spell your name for me?

DC: Dorothea-

IF: Cress, spell Cress.

DC: CRESS.

IF: And Dot has been a teacher in the Custer County school system for many years and she lives in Canon now but we are going to ask her about things of her life when she was in Custer County. But first of all, we're going to talk to her about some preliminaries in her life, such as her birthdate.

DC: My birthday is August 7, 1910, I was born.

IF: And where were you born?

DC: I was born in Jennings, KS which is in Norton County, on a farm.

IF: And where were you married and what date were you married?

DC: We were married April 29, 1933 in Santa Fe, NM.

IF: And your husband's name please.

DC: My husband's name is Earl Elton Cress who-

IF: Where was he born?

DC: Was born in Wet Mountain Valley near Westcliffe in December 21, 1906.

IF: And you have children. How many children do you have?

DC: We have four children, William Elton Cress, born in 1939 and Donald Chauncey Cress, born in 1941 and Milo David Cress, who was born in 1945 and our daughter was born in 1948. She is Katherine Dortha Cress.

IF: Wow, you did really good with that. I'm not sure I could remember all of the dates of my children, that's great. When you were educated, first of all, your grade school time. Did you go to a one room school house?

DC: I went to a one room school house here in Canon and then to Canon City High School and I graduated from Canon City High School in 1929, and from there, the next fall, I went up to Greeley to the Greeley Teachers College.

IF: So, you went to the Teachers College. How many years did you have there?

DC: I went to Greeley Teachers College one winter and I had planned to go for two years to get a live certificate but conditions changed and I had to go to start teaching beginning in 1930, the fall of 1930. At that time, we could take a county examination and get a temporary teachers' certificate with, I think we had to have one summer, but I had had one year, so I took the examination in Greeley in the spring of 1930 and got a teaching certificate.

IF: Now you said, conditions changed. What does that mean? Did you move?

DC: That means that I couldn't continue school. I had to stop and work.

IF: Uh huh, and where was your first teaching position?

DC: It was at the Greenleaf school in the Wet Mountain Valley, near Westcliffe, Greenleaf.

IF: Uh huh, then that was, was that near where you lived?

DC: No, that was up, I lived in Canon at that time and well, a friend who was teaching up at the Brush Creek school had told me about the vacancy so I went up and applied for the school and at that time, we made a written application and applied in person.

IF: And who did you have to apply to? Was it the superintendent or the school board?

DC: No, we applied to the rural school boards and there were three of them. There was the president, secretary and treasurer, and we applied to all three of the school board members and then they had their meeting and decided on the teacher and sent a contract.

IF: Was there more than, when you applied, was there more than just you that was applying at that time?

DC: I really don't know about that. There might have been, you know, you don't ask about that.

IF: Right, you just go appear before them. Do you remember who the names of those board people were at that time?

DC: Yeah, I know the president was Mrs. Brandon, and I'm not sure who else was on the school board.

IF: And that was for the Greenleaf school. The board was for the Greenleaf school.

DC: Yes.

IF: How many students were enrolled about that time, do you know?

DC: Well, I think there were at that time Greenleaf was, it was during the Depression and people were getting a job wherever they could and there was a sawmill there and they hired people who lived in the district and there was a, the sheep, there were two outfits that ran sheep and they hired sheep herders and then there were the regular ranchers.

IF: In that area?

DC: That was the type of families that were there and the children, well, there were about eight or nine of them at that time.

IF: And what grades were there?

DC: Well, I don't remember. They were some in all grades. The little Spanish-American children were, there were, let's see, there was four of them, and they were from, there was one little girl that was only five and her brothers and sisters brought her to school, maybe as sort of a babysitting or to get acquainted with the language cause none of them spoke very good English.

IF: Oh, I see, so you had a language barrier there.

DC: Well, yes, that was, and then there was the little folks that came from the sawmill. There were, one of the mothers cooked for the sawmillers and there was another one that worked, and there were two of those little boys. And then there were the people that lived up next to the mountains there and they had two grandchildren that came that lived with them. Their mother had died and the father lived at home with the grandchildren, and that was a little boy and girl. Then there was another family that came, moved in there the year before and they had two boys. They were 14 and 16 years old.

IF: Oh, you had them. How old were you at this time?

DC: I was 19.

IF: Students were almost as old as you.

DC: I guess I might have been 20. Anyway, these two boys had lived over where they were not able to go to school so neither of them could read. So, that was another problem that we had to deal with.

IF: How do you- this is a one room school house and how do you go about teaching all of those grades?

DC: Well, it was fairly easy for me because I had attended a rural school and I knew how to go about setting up the curriculum and so it wasn't too hard. The county superintendent was over each district in the county.

IF: Who was the county supervisor?

DC: The superintendent was Lou Beeman.

IF: It was a woman?

DC: Yes, it was a woman. She had her office in the county courthouse and before school, she gave out instructions and the register and the different materials that we needed and then-oh, and then there was state course of study that gave the requirements for each grade so when you made out your daily program, you, or I did, I consulted that, so I knew that the children were getting what they needed in the grades they were in and you could, from that, you could tell what they needed, whether you could pass them at the end of the year or not.

IF: Yean, now they gave you all of the books. Did they give you all the books?

DC: No, the Greenleaf school, some places they didn't furnish the books. But Greenleaf school had the textbooks and they were, they had a set of encyclopedias and maths and a globe, and a pretty good supply of equipment.

IF: Were the children charged anything for school?

DC: No, no.

IF: they all came through the school district.

DC: Yes, it did. They were workbooks and the district even furnished those workbooks.

IF: I see. Was there time during the year when you'd say well, I would like a certain kind of book. Did you go back to them or they just gave you the books at the beginning of the year and that was it?

DC: Oh, they were stored in the school building, the textbooks were.

IF: So, you used everything that was there. Nothing was brought in from the outside.

DC: No, not in the districts.

IF: When you got your job, when you applied for your job, what type of duties did they tell you that you would have other than teaching? I mean, was there time?

DC: They had, you were to do the janitor work and that included keeping the school clean, sweeping the floor and at Greenleaf, they had the wood already chopped and ready to use and there was also coal that had to be carried in. But the wood, you had to see to it. But the children were real anxious to do those little chores and they would carry in an armload of wood or a bucket of coal.

IF: Did they have water?

DC: No, the school didn't have a well. There was a ditch ran by the school and in those days, people drank out of the ditch when it was running. It didn't run the whole year but when it did. Otherwise, I would take a bucket of water just what I could carry and we would use that for drinking and there wasn't much hand washing in those days. There were two toilets and-

IF: There were two separate outhouses?

DC: Yes.

IF: One for the boys and one for girls?

DC: One for boys, one for girls. They had a corral that they put their horses in. There were none of the, well, the two boys, the two older boys were close enough so they could walk to school but the other children, all the little Spanish-Americans lived about three miles, I think it was across the prairie and they had a buggy and the older boy was, what should I say, he was crippled some way or I didn't know just exactly what had happened to him. But he had a homemade crutch that he used and they had a horse and a buggy and the horse was so skinny, I wondered at times how-

IF: How he made it?

DC: But anyway, they would come and he would be, he'd have a hold of the reins and he'd be with his crutch, he'd raise it up and whack the horse and the horse would take off on a trot and finally settle down. But that's the way they came to school.

IF: He wasn't too kind to the animal, huh?

DC: Well, it wasn't too-

IF: You got to get it going.

DC: He called something to it, I didn't know what the words were because they were in Spanish.

IF: What were some of the surnames of these kids?

DC: Well, I don't know if I should, some of them are still living anyway.

IF: Well, that's ok.

DC: Uh, Sanchez and that was the Sanchez family.

IF: Oh, ok. Now I have a teachers contract in front of me here and it says, Miss Dorothea Ketcham, Canon City, CO and it's school district 7.

DC: That's the Greenleaf school.

IF: Ok, that's the Greenleaf school. On the 6th day of June 1931 and the period beginning September 8, 1931, ending May 14, 1932. So you went all through the winter, right? September to May.

DC: Is that signed by, no that must be the one over at Ilse.

IF: Oh, this is the Ilse one. It's signed by Gertrude L. Richer.

DC: Rocher.

IF: Rocher>

DC: Yes. No, that's the Greenleaf one.

IF: The president was Frank Cress.

DC: Yes, uh huh.

IF: Ok. Now who was Frank Cress?

DC: He was Earl's father.

IF: I see, ok. You were paid \$90.

DC: That's right.

IF: For that.

DC: And that was a good salary because at that time, the railroad ran through some of the districts. That was Brush Creek, Greenleaf and Ula and they paid taxes. So, they paid, these districts paid more than the other districts in the Valley because-

IF: Railroad paid taxes to the-

DC: To the county.

IF: County. I see.

DC: And that gave them taxes that they wouldn't have had otherwise from the ranchers.

IF: Alright. So, when the railroad was no longer running, it really affected the school system.

DC: Yes, it did. It did.

IF: And here it says, other requirements, any time lost should be made up with regular school sessions. So, when you had snow days, then you had to-

DC: No.

IF: No?

DC: If we didn't, but those were very few because they rode their horses-

IF: Kept going.

DC: There weren't many of them.

IF: There weren't many days you didn't have school?

DC: No, no, they were mostly, I don't remember any that we turned. Well, I remember one Thanksgiving that we turned the children to go home at noon.

IF: Oh, did they go all week?

DC: Yes, they went five days and school began at nine o'clock and was out at four unless you could shorten the noon hour to a half hour and that would let them go at 3:30. But that was the regular day.

IF: Their lunches, did they bring their lunches?

DC: Oh yes. Yes, they brought their lunches.

IF: Uh huh. They have a, did they have drinks with their lunches too?

DC: Yes, whatever, some of them, you just didn't, well, they didn't have a whole lot. They just-

IF: Brought what they had.

DC: Brought what they had, yes, uh huh, yeah.

IF: In this school where as a teacher, you were a single teacher in the Greenleaf school, who did you live with?

DC: I boarded with the Cress's and they were the closest to the school. However, it didn't matter. But they were the closest to the school and willing to board the teacher and it was about a quarter of a mile up to the school. So, I could walk to school and some family in the district would board the teacher.

IF: That's usually what happened, and that was the Cress's and that's probably how you met your husband.

DC: Well, yes. He was not at home then. He was working out in Seattle; WA and he came home for a week or two and I was living there and that's how we met.

IF: Uh huh, there was this pretty schoolmarm that was there when he came home, huh? So, how long did you two go together before you got married?

DC: Well, that was in 1930. He was gone though-

IF: Most of the time.

DC: And then he came home and bought a ranch there that had belonged to his mother's family and that was in 1932 and then we weren't married until 1933.

IF: And that ranch was the Hugg ranch, HUGG.

DC: Uh huh.

IF: That he bought. I want to go back to this teachers-Ara Weimer is here with us, too and she's asking, where was that school located exactly?

DC: It was located at the end of Verdumont Road which was about a mile from the highway, highway 96 is it?

IF: 69 I think, runs through there. Yeah.

DC: 69, 96 comes up from Gardner.

IF: uh huh.

DC: Highway 69.

IF: And then Verdumont goes off of Highway 69 and this was at the end, well, that was pretty high up, wasn't it?

DC: The school was, yes.

IF: In connection with where Montgomery's lived, where was the school?

DC: Well, they lived on up across the prairie at the foot of the mountains. I think that must have been about two miles.

IF: Past the school? Was that past the school?

DC: Past the school, uh huh.

IF: Alright, so the school was more towards the, I mean, if you didn't, start rising up too much to the mountains.

DC: Well, yes, it was, the school was probably located in the center or as near they could, the center of the district.

IF: Now, that school was moved, wasn't it, into town at one point?

DC: At one time, it was moved from the prairie down to that location and then when the district, or the county was consolidated, it was moved into Westcliffe by the old Westcliffe schoolhouse and used for a lunchroom, to begin with, and then they used it for other things, and finally burned it.

IF: Yeah, uh huh.

DC: Got rid of it.

IF: Ok, I'm going to go back to this teacher's contract. This is still for the Greenleaf with the president as Tuttle, or is that, you changed school-

DC: Yes, that's for the Ilse-

IF: For the Ilse school.

DC: Mm hmm.

IF: Alright, the Ilse school contract is on the 4th of August 1932 and the school period is from September 6, 1932 to April 30, 1933 and she received \$85 for that, so you took a little \$5 pay cut.

DC: Well, that was only eight months too.

IF: I see, it was a little shorter time. In this, it says, it talks about, as a condition of your employment are that you will faithfully observe the rules and regulations adopted by the board of the government of said school, that you will prove your professional spirit by belonging to your county and state education associations, that you will exercise responsible diligence in looking after the preservation of all school property under your jurisdiction, that you will make promptly and correctly all reports of the school required by the county superintendent, that you will keep a correct register of the school and file the same with the president or state of the board or the principal of the school at the close of the school year as required by law and that you will hold a legal certificate under the laws of the state of Colorado. No teacher will be dismissed without good cause shown which indicates a hearing. And then it says, other requirements, and this is handwritten in, janitor work, the teacher to remain unmarried during school term and it was signed by W. Tuttle, President and George Griffin as Secretary, Arthur Peck as Treasurer. Was that a common thing, that they didn't want the teacher to marry?

DC: Oh no, no. They wouldn't hire you if you were married. They didn't, and in those times, you didn't find any married teachers.

IF: Man or woman.

DC: Well, I don't know about men. Women.

IF: Women.

DC: Men, I think, could be married.

IF: When did that change?

DC: Well, just about this time, because when I came down to Canon, they didn't, I was married then and they didn't require you not to be married. They had up until that time. They wouldn't hire a teacher that was married.

IF: I see. Ok, so now you are at the, do you want to tell us any more about the Greenleaf school? Is there anything you can remember, was that school also used for the community as far as, what kind of things did they have?

DC: Social gatherings, the school programs and any community get together it was used.

IF: Like, did they have dances there?

DC: No, they didn't at the Greenleaf school.

IF: Box socials or-

DC: No, no, they didn't at that time and they, I don't think they had many of those. Most of that was social was at the dances in Westcliffe.

IF: Ok.

DC: I think.

IF: At the school, what kind of social, mostly school functions.

DC: Yes, yes, we had the children would have programs and invite the parents and then the different schools would get together, like the teacher that taught at Ula, we would get together, I know we had a taffy pull one time. That was really, the teacher cooked the taffy and having no sanitary-

IF: What would you cook it on? Would you bring a stove in?

DC: The old, no, there were just wood and coal stoves at school.

IF: Where would you cook this taffy?

DC: On the top of the heating stove.

IF: I see.

DC: But the children had such a good time, they didn't bother to wash their hands and the taffy, the more they pulled it, the darker it got (laughing) and then they would offer us bites of taffy which was hard to swallow. But those were the sort of things that we did and-

IF: And this is with the two schools, Ula and your school?

DC: Yes, we would have different programs.

AW: Would they have contests between each school or-

DC: Well, those mostly took part in Westcliffe they would meet and they had a music day and each school put on a number for the program and-

AW: Did they have spelling bees or anything?

DC: Oh yes. They had spelling contests and that was carried on. You chose the one that went to the spelling contest in the different districts and then those children went to the spelling contest and in there, the county superintendent usually pronounced the words and the one who won there, would go to the state contest in Denver. They also had track meets and a lot of it was carried on in the town.

IF: And you would take the children to it?

DC: You'd take the children in there.

IF: But the parents would see that the children got in there, is that the way that worked?

DC: Well, pretty much so. The teacher wasn't, or the district wasn't responsible for them.

IF: For that.

DC: There were no busses or any-

IF: Yeah, right.

DC: So, the parents would have to take the children and we had the Blossom Day program in Westcliffe and it was music and I had the little Mexican children, Spanish-American children, and they were real good at singing. So, we had a program or a number for the program and they sang in Spanish, Celito Linda, and the pianist played for them. But then the people didn't know what that meant so we had to translate it into English and they sang it in English then. So, they made a real hit at the program.

IF: Did you have a piano at the school or did you, you weren't responsible for the music.

DC: Oh yes, yes.

IF: So, you would just teach them small songs with-

DC: Well, yes and we had a Victrola.

IF: Oh, I see.

DC: And we had records that we'd play.

IF: The kind that you wound up with your hand?

DC: Yes.

IF: The Victrola. Did you have plays and things like that too?

DC: Well, not a lot. We didn't, although we did write plays. We would write plays from our reading stories and they would-

IF: The children would write plays and then put them on.

DC: Uh huh, just for the ones at school.

IF: Right.

DC: And then they, like Billy Goat Gruff and The Three Bears, they enjoyed that one.

IF: And they would act those out?

DC: They'd act them out.

IF: How about, did they do the one, Chicken Little?

DC: I don't remember them doing that.

IF: I remember that as one of my-

DC: We had the story but I don't think they-

IF: They didn't act that one out.

DC: No.

IF: But I can remember acting out Billy Goat Gruff myself. That was a favorite.

DC: Yes.

IF: Now you stayed there at that school for, let's see-

DC: Two years.

IF: Two years.

DC: To begin with.

IF: And what was the reason you moved? Was there a reason?

DC: Well, you just had the same children year after year and it was, you needed to let somebody else-

IF: I see. Then they did that kind of-who made that decision? Did the superintendent?

DC: I made it.

IF: I see. You yourself could make that decision.

DC: Yes, I just thought they needed a different teacher, different, something different.

IF: Ok. So, then the next school that you went to was Ilse?

DC: Yes, uh huh. That was down, well it's out east-

IF: Ilse route.

DC: Yes, although they got their mail from Canon, but it was in Custer County.

IF: And who did you stay with when you were there?

DC: I stayed with-

IF: I was asking Dot before she got a tickle in her throat that where she was staying. What family did you stay with?

DC: At George Griffin ranch and that was, by that time, I had a car and I boarded there with the family and they had a little boy. I think he was about 4th grade, 3rd or 4th grade, and I took him to school each day.

IF: And how many children were at that school?

DC: Oh, there were, there must have been around 18 or 20.

IF: So that area around then was pretty populated, wasn't it?

DC: Yes, although the-

IF: The Terrible mine going?

DC: The mine was closed down at that time.

IF: I see.

DC: And quite a few of the people had moved out. It was a big attendance there.

IF: What were the people doing when they didn't mine?

DC: Well, they were mostly ranchers there and some of them worked away from there.

IF: I see. Did you find any different problems or any different types of things that you had to do at that school or was it just kind of-

DC: No, it was all about the same. They were just the regular school children.

IF: Right. Did they use the school for any different things at that area?

DC: yes, there they had dances there because it was quite a ways from Westcliffe.

IF: Was it a bigger school?

DC: No, the schoolhouse was quite a bit larger than the Greenleaf school and the children were about the same.

IF: Did you have the same duties? How about the fire and the water and all that?

DC: Oh, yes, that you had to, but there was a house closer, just across the road from the schoolhouse there and they, the boy that came to school, brought the water to school. But the-

IF: A bucket or how would you bring it in?

DC: Yes, just a bucket.

IF: Bring it in a bucket. So that bucket would, alright, so we have this bucket of water. How did these children drink? Did they each have their cup or-

DC: Yes, they each furnished their cup.

IF: Out of a dipper, used a dipper with the pail?

DC: Well, I think so. I think that was, but they didn't drink out of the dipper.

IF: No, they drank out of their own cup.

DC: And there, they had a water container that had a little-

IF: Spigot on the bottom?

DC: Yes, it was. So, they just pressed a button and the water ran.

IF: That was a little more sanitary than the other!

DC: Yes, it was.

IF: Do you remember any special incidents that happened with kids or, was there, did you ever have any emergencies? Did anybody ever get hurt?

DC: Oh yes, those things happened and at the Greenleaf school, go back to the Greenleaf school, the children had a gun they brought to school and they would leave it up at the front of the room and then take it when they went home. There were no incidents with that but-

IF: They just bring that for protection?

DC: No.

IF: Just to have it, huh? Cause that's what they want.

DC: Cause that's what they were used to doing. They were used to handling a gun but=

IF: Uh huh. Was this a shotgun or, what was it?

DC: No, it was a little .22 and the year after I was at Greenleaf, there was an incident that they started home and there were three children that came from closer, but the road went up and the boy decided to take a shot at one of these little kids, hit him in the hip and he went home, and they took him to the doctor. I don't know what the results were but it was a long shot or the little kid might have been hurt worse.

IF: Hurt worse. Yeah.

DC: Another, while I was still there, there was a little boy that came up from, came down from up in the timber. There was an axe in the, out in the room and out in the anteroom and were they kept their coats and things and he came, there were two steps up to the door and he was standing in the door with the axe up over his head and his little sister was down on the ground arguing with him, and he was just, I heard them arguing and I went there and he had the axe up there just ready to bring it down on her. That was one of the times when I really spanked one of the pupils, and I gave him a really good spanking and his grandparents were on the school board. I got to wondering about it and in a day or two, the grandfather came from town and he parked his, I think it was an old pickup that he had at the time. Anyway, he parked out back of the schoolhouse. The road ran right past there, and he came in. I couldn't hardly wonder what he was coming for but he came in and he said, I hear you gave my grandson a spanking the other day, and I said, yes, I did, and I told him what he was doing and he said, well, that's just right, he said. He needed it and I'm glad you did it. So-

IF: That's good, that's good.

DC: They stood back of me.

IF: I could imagine, knowing you, Dot, that if, that you thought about it a while. It wasn't an impulsive kind of thing. I'm sure.

DC: He was-

IF: He needed it for sure. Was, did the children pretty much mind what you-

DC: Oh, yes, yes, they were very good. They were interested and they didn't cause much trouble.

IF: And the parents probably at that time upheld the teacher and the teacher was a figure that you mind when you came to school.

DC: Oh yes, it wasn't, that was no problem.

IF: Ok, so you went to the Ilse school. How long did you teach at the Ilse school?

DC: Just one year.

IF: Then what?

DC: Then, we were married in the spring and I went back to Greeley to school and taught the school where I had gone to school, there in Canon.

IF: Oh, in Canon? You came back to Canon and taught? How long did you teach in Fremont County?

DC: Well, I just taught the one year.

IF: And then, you start having children?

DC: Then, no. Going back up to Westcliffe, our first son wasn't born until 1929 and that was in 19-, I thought here, 1933 and 1934, '34 and then I went back and taught the Greenleaf school for a couple of years or so after we were married.

IF: And were some of the children still there or they all changed and so you-

DC: It had all changed by that time.

IF: And then were there any other places you taught? You taught in Greenleaf.

DC: No, the three schools and then not until 1956, I started in Westcliffe.

IF: And by that time, the school was consolidated and-

DC: Reorganized, yes.

IF: And what grades did you teach in?

DC: Well, I taught in 5th grade for three years and then our daughter was going into the 5th grade, so I asked to go back to the 4th grade and there I stayed the rest of the time.

IF: What year did you quit teaching then?

DC: I taught 24 years all together.

IF: Compare a little bit between the one room schoolhouse and the structural one grade classroom. Which would you rather teach?

DC: Well, it was a challenge to teach in the rural school but you had only one grade to prepare for.

IF: So, it was a little easier?

DC: Well, I don't know.

IF: Or just different?

DC: You put everything into it. You did the planning and all. It was less lesson plans for the one grade because you had all the subjects in the rural school to plan for and all the grades, all the grades that attended and-

Tape stops and restarts.

IF: We've turned the tape over now and we're going to correct a statement that Dot made and that was about your son's birth. What year was your son born?

DC: He was born in 1939.

IF: Yeah, we said '29, so we'll just go ahead and correct that. Before we end this tape, we're going to ask Dot a little bit about the games that some of the kids played and what kind of recreation they had in the early school.

DC: The games were, they didn't have much equipment, so they played with a ball and a bat and they played hide and seek. They could play. There were places they could hide around and they played, they had races and they would play 'Annie over' and they would play, 'Run, sheep, run'.

AW: Was this at recess?

DC: It was at recess at noon, after they'd eaten their lunches. They also at Greenleaf, they took their horses to water at noon. They'd get on their horses and ride down to the ditch when it wasn't running right by the schoolhouse, and back, and that was always exciting for them. They'd run, either race to see who got there first and then back and-

IF: How about marbles or jacks? Did they play-

DC: Well, yes, they did. They had those things, but, and they would play those at recess.

AW: Was that the only recess you had, at noon?

DC: We had, no, we had one at 10:30 and one at 2:30 in the afternoon, one in the morning and one in the afternoon.

IF: Did, what about days when they couldn't go out and play? What kind of things did they do inside?

DC: They played games. They'd play a game; they'd sit in their seats. They called it 'initials' and one person would write an initial on the board and then the one who wrote the initial would try to get to the seat that was the one that had, they'd try to catch them if they, if the one that, whose initial had been written caught the one, they could go back to their seat. But if they didn't catch him, they would have a chance to write another initial and they played that game a lot. They also played 'Cat'.

IF: How do you play 'Cat'?

DC: That, you have x and o that you fill into a frame and-

IF: Ok.

DC: There was initial game they played that they would, they would draw, they played that one on the board. Well, they played Cat on the board too, but they played this other one, they would make a, rows of dots and then they would take turns and the one who could draw the line between the dots and they'd have to have, fill in that square, outline that square by turns and the one that got the last to make the square wrote his initial in that square and the one who had the most initials in there won the game. So, that was a game-

IF: We used to play that too, but I never knew what that was called. I don't know that we ever called it anything. But the other one was called Cat? The one with the x's and o's?

DC: Cat, yes, in the, I don't know what you call that figure?

IF: Oh, tic tac toe. You called it Cat.

DC: Cat, uh huh.

IF: Right. How about jump ropes. Did they ever play jump ropes? Things like that?

DC: Not in the rural schools. Some of them did in the rural schools.

IF: Flat enough.

DC: No, no, the yard was, they didn't jump rope very much.

IF: Poetry, did they recite poetry?

DC: Oh, yes, we memorized poetry a lot.

IF: What were some of the authors of the poetry? Was it like Longfellow?

DC: Oh, yes, Wadsworth and Burns and I, just the regular ones that there were so many poems in their readers. For different grades, they had different poems and they'd memorize those.

IF: Now you taught during the Depression.

DC: Yes.

IF: Did it affect the families a lot during the Depression?

DC: Well, they had to do their own work and they had very little money. They made their own entertainment and very little money to spend. They-

AW: But mostly they lived on ranches and farms and had their own gardens and-

DC: Yes, they had their own gardens and their cows and their chickens and they didn't, they made use of all they had. Some of them didn't have, their clothes were not fancy. It was just-

IF: But they were warm enough and they had-

DC: Well, most of them had warm enough clothes. They road their horses. I don't know. It was just a different way of life from what we have today.

IF: Right, did the children complain very much or were they just kind of-

DC: They didn't complain. They were just-

IF: Happy in their childhood?

DC: Well, yes, they weren't like they are today. Families told the children what to do. They listened to them but they told them what to do and the children did it. They, the parents had the run of the place.

IF: And the teacher too.

DC: Well, when they went to school, the teacher was given that authority to, and they wanted them to. They wanted them to be responsible. They would take their books home, if you assigned homework and

bring the lessons back, done. And that was another thing, the paperwork that had to be corrected. We'd go to school, maybe be there by 8 o'clock and they didn't come until 9 and then after school, we would grade the papers and get ready for the next day.

IF: So, you would be there. What time would you usually get home? School was out at 4.

DC: Yes.

IF: And then you-

DC: And it would be, we'd stay, I'd stay an hour or whatever. I tried not to have to grade papers after supper.

IF: So, it would almost be dark before you got home.

DC: In the wintertime, it would be a lot of times, pretty close to dark.

IF: Were the schoolhouses warm enough? Did they ever, or did you just wear warmer clothes?

DC: No, you sat closer to the fire.

IF: If somebody said they were cold, they just sat closer to the fire.

DC: Yeah, they could move over closer to the fire. But those stoves kept the buildings warm.

IF: Once you got them going.

DC: Oh yes, uh huh.

IF: Ok, well, I just really appreciate the things you've told us and I think you'll give the people that come after us a little more to look at in the rural school.

DC: Well, I hope so. It's hard to tell just all the things. I hope it's enough to give them some idea of how they worked, what the people did.

IF: Well, we thank you so much, Dot. We forgot one thing. We were just talking to Dot and she was talking about the setup inside the school. Did they, first of all, how were the seats? Each individual or was it a couple of kids sitting next to another, or how was that set up?

DC: No, each child had his own seat and it had a desk where they kept their books and pencils and tablets and so forth. Up in a part of the building that was away from the rest of the students, there was, we had a recitation bench and each class, as you presented the lesson and gave the assignment, each class would come to this recitation bench and we would ask the questions and discuss the material and then they would have their lessons assigned and they would go back to their seat and work on the assignment and then the next class would be, they would come up and they'd go through the same procedures. And they would go back. So, you went through that with each class each day.

IF: How long would that take, a recitation period?

DC: Oh, it would depend on your schedule, how your lesson plans worked out. It wasn't any set time. You just had to divide it among the different classes.

IF: You'd say, now we're having recitation.

DC: No, we'd say, First grade reading.

IF: I see.

DC: Or Second grade, whatever it was, geography and that would give each student the chance to have individual help, whatever they were doing.

IF: When they had penmanship, what kind of pens did we write with?

DC: Up through the, I think about the 3rd or 4th grade, we used a regular lead pencil and then we used pen and ink. Some of them had an inkwell that had to be filled and they had pen holder and a pen point and they used ink at that time.

IF: I can remember when I went to school, we started writing with the pen and the point and the inkwell and I can remember the teacher just giving us enough ink that we were going to use that day or-but the first thing we made before we start using our pen was a pen wiper. Did you ever make, have your students make a pen wiper out of felt or some kind of-

IF: I've seen them, but I didn't, we didn't-

IF: Did they have blotters? Did they use blotters?

DC: Yes, yes, they had blotters.

IF: Cause I can remember, one of my children not long ago asked me, what is that thing? You know, they didn't even recognize what a blotter was for.

DC: No.

IF: So, you did have blotters.

DC: Yes, when I was going to school, the girls had long hair and if the inkwell wasn't empty, the braids would get back-

IF: I think that's why my teacher only gave us as much as we were going to use.

DC: Oh yes, they had to go along and fill-

IF: I don't remember the inkwells having tops on them.

DC: Well, these did. They were a little glass ink, but that wasn't in the Greenleaf school. They just had bottles of ink up there that they used. Later, they did the bottles of ink down here too. Can't even buy ink bottles anymore.

IF: Anymore.

DC: I don't know where.

IF: And I don't know what they'd done with all the inkwells because I, in the old Westcliffe school, we want some inkwells right now and I can't find any to go in the little round holes.

DC: I don't know either.

IF: Thanks, Dot.

End of recording.