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Summary of Oral History Interview with Elizabeth Geroux

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Interviewed by Irene Francis

Elizabeth Geroux was born in 1894 and grew up in Glover Park, near Silver Park, Colorado. Her father, a former miner from Rockvale, moved the family to homestead land while continuing to work in the mines, leaving Elizabeth, her mother, and siblings to manage the ranch. Since there was no school nearby, she attended a small rural school several miles from home, often walking the long distance. She recalled strict teachers, harsh discipline, and an early education disrupted by weather and seasonal schooling.

Elizabeth was determined to complete her education and worked her way through high school in Florence and Canyon City, taking jobs as a live-in babysitter and housekeeper. She later became a teacher, starting in rural schools such as Silver Park, Ilse, and the Willows before moving to larger schools in Silver Cliff and Westcliffe. During World War II, she was asked to return to teaching due to a teacher shortage.

She spoke about life in the Wet Mountain Valley, describing harsh winters, the impact of the Great Depression, and community traditions. She married Dona Geroux, raised four children, and supported her husband's work as a foreman at the Kettle Ranch. Elizabeth reflected on the changing landscape, from a once swampy valley to a drier climate, and the decline of small farms.

Her interview highlights the challenges of early rural education, the resilience of homesteading families, and the strong community ties in Custer County.

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