

Teacher's life
an Oral History

Inez Johnson, Interviewee
Of Wyanet, Illinois

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Interviewer's Name: MERLE ROUTT
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Q: My name is Merle Routt and I'm visiting today, July 5, 1975, with Inez Johnson. Inez, this is truly a pleasure because you're a close friend of mine, you were my teacher, and we've had such a wonderful experience in the field of music. Inez, I want you to tell me a little bit about yourself, where were you born, the date, and your parents and so forth.

A: My name is Inez Anderson, was Inez Anderson, and I was born in Milo Township which is south of Tiskilwa, it's really between Tiskilwa and Bradford, on a farm that my father owned. And the place is still standing, and in fact, my father built this place. It was later known as the Farm of the Flying Farley Farmer. And then I moved from there when I was two years old because of my mother's health, and went from there to Henry.

Q: What were their names?

A: My mother was Charlotte Moria Hunter and the Hunter's came from Pennsylvania and Ithaca, New York -- as really you might call them homesteaders and they owned all the Hunter land, what's known as the Hunter land down around Tiskilwa and Putnam. And the school down there used to be called the Hunter School. And there were four brothers and that was the territory that they owned. My father's name was Edward William Anderson and he was born in Iowa and his mother's name was Elizabeth. When they were married they lived on a farm that was given to them, an 80 acres, as my grandfather and grandmother died each child

A: was given 80 acres. My grandmother and grandfather had about -- see nine children -- if I'm correct in that, nine living children. And they would always take people in even though they had a large family they would take someone in the winter. And I have a very valuable piece of furniture that was made by one of these so-called tramps who had been a cabinet maker and came there and he told my grandmother if she would keep him through the winter he would take all the different kinds of woods from the farm and make a dresser, which he did. And I happen to have that.

Q: Oh, that's interesting. Tell me about your early schooling.

A: Well, after attending the Henry schools for twelve years I went back to Bradley in Peoria in 1920-1922, and here my major work was done in science, home-ec, and music. I decided very late the next summer to try my luck at teaching. Most young people did this mainly for experience -- because continuing one's education -- was another reason -- some perhaps lacked money. But I had a marvelous experience in the rural school called the Fox Bend School out at the Altha Johnson farm in Bureau County. I'm sorry that this school was somewhat overlooked in our Wyanet history book, as we have several teachers namely, Blanche Thompson, Elizabeth Cleary, and I, who still live in this community. I taught all grades and subjects and I'm sure I learned as much if not more than some students. But never did I work any harder. I think I was hired mainly because I asked for some sweeping compound. And I remember the board members rather smiled as if that was rather unknown of teachers wanting to really sweep the floor so often. I said I wanted to keep the floor clean, and assured them that one of my motives was to clean the building. I was so intent at first

A: to follow my methods training that I received at Bradley to the letter, which I found out did not fit my particular problems. I think it would do lots of college teachers good to really have early experiences in all rural schools. They would find out that what they are trying to tell you will work everywhere, does not. I made my home with an aunt and uncle, Mr. & Mrs. William Kenny in Tiskilwa. June 12, 1975 Kathleen Mills, also a beginning teacher at Fox Bend, brought the Tiskilwa Valley Chief which featured my uncle. He spent many, many months studying of course in Chicago. He played with Sousa, and won the world's championship in cornet playing at the World's Fair in 1893. And in that recent publication that Kathleen brought, I don't know if I mentioned or not, but she was also a teacher at Fox Bend, that was one of her first schools -- there is a picture of my uncle there and if you have a chance to look at that I think you would know more about him. It's much to my glory and perhaps one of my early reasons to liking music so well. Tiskilwa is rewriting the history of their town and community because they were not satisfied with the history that had been given and this will be a very accurate -- they are taking months at it -- not weeks or months -- but well she's been on it, I think it's her second year. Going back to Fox Bend, I have five bridges and four railroad tracks to cross and my aunt would call the various lockhouses, as you may recall some of them have been removed to Wyanet as residences, she would call to see if I had safely crossed or gone by them because some of them were very dangerous -- one I know out home had very -- what I called my home because I later lived on the Altha Johnson place as you know -- and the roads were very bad, very narrow then, they became widened later and you could go over there very easily. My parents died

A: when I was in high school so my brother, my my senior, gave me a new Model T Ford coupe, which the children and I thought was great. Two interesting stories I'd like to tell. I had taken a course in hot lunch program while at Bradley, this course proved to be very beneficial in the rural school. The room was heated with a large stove surrounded by a heavy jacket. Each family took turns in sending something to keep warm, for materials for me, to fix additional to what might be in their lunchpails which were placed under their garmets on a bench in a cloak room, as it was called. The hot food, if prepared, was put on the top of the stove. I had a small room next to the classroom and I asked for a kerosene stove and sufficient utensils to use. The first day that I made goldenrod eggs three boys were very reluctant to taste them. They would not eat eggs at home, but since they had never tasted them prepared in this manner, I insisted that they do so. A third grade girl, sister of one of the boys said, " _____ has things just as good as our things." However, they all liked them so much that one mother said that every Sunday morning her children insisted on having goldenrod eggs. Another interesting incident was when I couldn't get a first grade boy to talk or recite. Weeks went by and I spoke to his parents. The father said, "Well, give him a whipping." Well, I couldn't feel that would be the correct approach. So the father brought him to school the next day and said what the boy had told him, he said, "I'll talk when the weather gets cold." And in the early winter, he did talk. Well, we've come a long way from the water pail and the one dipper from which everyone drank. The two little houses with the cut-out half moon on the sides created a few problems in cold weather. One little

A: girl was standing at the back of the room near a pail, seeing some difficulties I -- or rather suspicioned some -- I walked up to her and asked if she needed to go outside and she said, "No, teacher, the water pail leaked."

Q: (laughter) Good excuse. Okay, Inez what can you tell about -- was there any social life in the rural schools?

A: Oh yes, of course quite different from the social life we have today because the children didn't have their own cars and well they were -- being country children -- they didn't seem to need the entertainment that boys and girls need today and I think it was a wonderful life. The annual box supper was an annual and a great event. Oh, those boxes were beautifully decorated and bountifully filled with goodies. And they were auctioned off to the highest bidder of the male sex, and she was his partner with whom to eat. And we had a wonderful organ in our country school, it was a . . .

Q: Pump?

A: No, we didn't have to pump it. But well, yes, with your feet, I thought you meant someone standing at the sides, you know, that type. And it was a very beautiful instrument, it was a Storey and Clark. So we gave programs and of course liking music we always had started out our school with a few music and of course the old tune that you probably remember in all the -- "Good Morning to You," the song, you know that was practically done in all schools. But they liked all type of music and we did use the old Golden Song Book which many remember. And I know one time one of the boys had lost his dog and I didn't know it and someone chose, "Old Dog Tray" out of that book and he cried and so did

A: everybody else. PHONE RINGS So we gave minstrel shows and all types of programs, seasonal programs, which the children thoroughly enjoyed. In fact, we were asked to take our minstrel show to Tiskilwa and of course we thought that was quite an honor. The teacher's salary was \$90 the first year and the second which was a raise to \$100 was really a compliment.

Q: Inez, do you remember what year that was?

A: Yes, it was the -- let's see I started teaching there in 1922 -- 1922, yes, following my Bradley second semester of 1922. So it would be 1922-23, 1923-24, those were the years. So if you were asked to return that was a compliment and then if you got a raise, well think of it, from \$90 to \$100 -- think of the raises they get today. Although I've heard since that some started with a salary of \$45, of course those usually were the teachers who did no further training after high school. They took the final examination right at the court house after leaving school and were allowed to teach if they passed the test. Bi-monthly examinations were given by the county superintendent and he would visit your school, just as a visitor, about once a year, sometimes twice.

Q: Was that just for the eighth graders or was that for every class?

A: The bi-monthly -- no, that's everyone.

Q: For everyone?

A: For everybody. And of course, those were sent to us and we had to give them and then returned and they graded them. But the teachers as well as the students were always very frightened, we never knew what was coming. But for the eighth grade -- maybe you'd like to know who my first county superintendent was?

Q: I would.

A: It was George O. Smith and his assistant was Edna Carp. And then before I left, Mary L. Uthoff was the county superintendent. And it was during the middle of my second year there that she was visiting and fortunately one of my best students had a long arithmetic problem -- we used to call them story problems -- on the board, she had just completed it, and Miss Uthoff looked at that and thought it was a beautiful piece of work. And the next night I got a call from her at my uncle's home, as I say with whom I was living, and asked if I would be interested in coming to Wyandot at that time to teach -- this was in the middle of the year. And my uncle happened to be county clerk of schools at that time and you know the old adage was, if you teach two years in one school you are successful. And so I turned to Uncle Billy right afterwards -- and the reason she first of all asked me to come was it was the fourth grade and they had 44 children, too many for a man by the name of Mr. Bond to handle -- and so she thought, as she told me, I had good discipline -- I don't know if I did or not, it must be she thought so -- and she thought I could handle half of that grade. So, I turned to my uncle later to see what he had to say and he said, "No, kid," as he always called me, "you stay two years in that school and you will be then considered a successful teacher." Well, of course, the whole Fox Bend school board when they found it out, they were furious and I'm afraid some of them never liked Miss Uthoff after that. They felt she was trying to take a teacher away from their school.

Q: What was the curriculum in that type of school?

A: The curriculum, well, you taught everthing from A to Z. The big

A: problem in that school was preparing an immense amount of seat work for children because, you know, you couldn't let children just sit. But I feel, I still have a strong feeling for the country school and if you know the tendency is coming back to the one room school because children learn from other children. And it was surprising but these little folks, even though you had seat work to keep them busy, but they heard and they enjoyed listening to all the other classes even if it was on a much higher plane. And I think that when they went to the next grade they knew much more than children do -- I shouldn't say today, because we have many things that help children learn -- but I could see when I first came to the town schools how much more children in the rural school received from the grade ahead of them. Well, one could go on and on about the little red brick schools, as they were called. One of the older patrons came to all the programs, and one time when we got ready for refreshments, which my aunt prepared delicious ones, he wouldn't participate because the children had breathed over them, and there were too many germs in the air. Well, anty-over and baseball were our main sports of course. And of course their indoor games were similar to the games that we have today.

Q: Inez, when and how did you happen to come to Waynet?

A: Well the next year then, following my second year, I was called by the school board and I remember that meeting with my long coat and my long braids pulled over my ears as you probably saw at the exhibit, and Mrs. Whitteberg of course was principal at that time, and she sat in and I'm sure was helpful in getting my position although I

A: never saw her before. But my third year I went to Wyanet to teach the first grade and music in grade and high. Schools were not consolidated you know at that time, and I taught first grade from 8:30 to 10:30 in the morning, high school music from 10:30 until noon, first grade from 12:30 until 2:30, and grade school music from 2:30 until 3:45, bands and chorus rehearsals were to be before and after school, and two nights after supper -- all for the amount of \$120 a month. And nowadays teachers will teach only what they are -- well, one field. We know we can think of, we have such huge bands, very lovely bands today of course, but we had to start someplace. And for the very little to start with and with the curriculum that the teachers used to have, you couldn't -- you were not allowed to take students out of any classes and all that you could do would be group work and whatever instruments were had, the parents would afford and so forth.

Q: Then you taught just music then?

A: No, as I said, I was teaching first grade.

Q: Along with the music and all these other classes?

A: Yes.

Q: Oh, no!

A: That's what I was saying, that from 8:30 to 10:30 I would have the little people say, the first graders.

Q: Who took them after than then, when you weren't there?

A: They went home, they were excused. See, they didn't have to stay all day like they do not. See, it wasn't consolidated, we didn't have the busses.

Q: It was compared to kindergarten then, wasn't it?

A: Well no, of course they got more than that because they did read -- you might say they learned to read and write and did lots of reading, not so much as now because we didn't have the books, but in arithmetic you went much further. I remember teaching the times tables and some division in first grade one year, because you had nothing, we just didn't have all the books that we have today. And all the subject that you have today. But you put in the extra things, now for instance nature, I would give them all the things that I had learned in biology and so forth that I thought could be on their level, go on little nature trips and so forth.

Q: Tell me about your first operetta, where they were and so forth.

A: Well of course, the first one I think I gave here was the "Pixies" and I think I had that program down at the _____, the "Pixies" all the people that were in it.

Q: Was that given at the Metro?

A: That was at the Metro, yes. I know when Maxine came one afternoon to talk about, she and Mrs. Ill were both here, when we were rather getting the script ready, and of course I couldn't finish with them, a little later -- anyway we were just discussing the over-all picture of what could be done and the possibilities -- Maxine couldn't believe that they ever had anything at the Metro, she just said they never had anything there.

Q: I was in those programs, I can speak for it too.

A: Well, many people graduated from there I told them about it. I think maybe. . .

Q: I think I was in the "Pixies."

A: . . .she told me she graduated from. . .

Q: Yes, she did, she did.

A: So, you see there definitely was -- there were a lot of programs there. I gave that, I gave "College Days" there, I gave "Cherry Blossoms" there, so you see there were many because as time went on-- I could give the programs and their names which I'd be glad to give the programs to the library if they wanted them at any time.

Q: I think I was in the "Pixies" because I remember the crinoline dresses and the ballet slippers.

A: And I know in "Cinderella" you were the godmother, the fairy godmother. Well, I think. . .

Q: How were you inspired by music?

A: Well, as I told you a little earlier, I think perhaps my uncle did a great deal of that. Then I think that when I went to Pennsylvania to teach in 1931 -- I went to York County and of course that was after having gone to Northwestern summers, various summers, to get my teaching diploma for music.

Q: Tell me about Pennsylvania because I know it's interesting.

A: Pennsylvania I considered one of the most wonderful places in which I taught. I supervised ten schools there in York County and when I say supervised, I visited each school a half a day a week and then the rest of that day I was busy making out the lesson plans for the teachers to follow for the rest of the week. And then at the end of the year, on Saturday they all -- the ten schools came in for one all-day rehearsal. And then on Monday night we gave this and I had -- remember I had a band too in which I -- they would accompany my -- they weren't called operettas, they were mixed programs, you know. And each school had a section of this program to do and then between the schools, why then my band people, my high school band people -- because I was teaching

A: at _____ Township at that time, high school work, besides supervising the ten grade schools -- and so the band participated in this which really made a lovely evening. I'll have to tell you one little thing that was rather interesting -- when I was thanking the people, because really it meant a great deal for these people from the farms and even towns to get their children there, all day rehearsal, and then back again on Monday. And not knowing too much about the country I happened to say, when I was thanking them, now this was in the spring, and I thanked all the parents for being so gracious and for bringing their children when the men were so busy in the harvest fields -- and that amused the county superintendent and his assistant who happened to attend them each year, because of course spring was not considered the harvest, it would be the fall, and they had a big buzz out of that. I never lived it down. I think York County, and that's a Pennsylvania Dutch county, that was the first county I taught in in Pennsylvania -- I just taught in two, York and Tioga. It's 25 miles from Baltimore and this certainly created a tremendous interest in music for me because the Metropolitan Opera appeared there and this, even though they were Pennsylvania Dutch people, many of them had money and took private lessons at Baltimore. And of course, that helped a great deal when they could afford to do that. And their culture was splendid there, as it was in Tioga County. Students were so interested that they would pay, our tickets were ten dollars to go, and of course some of them couldn't pay ten dollars so some of us -- we would pay our ten and then we would take turns standing at the back. I always paid the ten dollar ticket for the front row,

A: which might not sound the best to you, but I wanted my children to watch the prompter and you cannot see a prompter in opera in you're sitting in any other position. There's a little shell he's in, and a lot of people think that opera people never have to be prompted but they do, but it's done very easily and quietly by this man in the shell. And then one night it was rather interesting -- a boy who was very outstanding in music -- had come and he had a big newspaper in his pocket and he brought his field glasses and here we were sitting in the front row, and everybody laughed, you know, about it. However his name is Richard Warfield and was a kin of Wallis Simpson Warfield, and of course you know her husband was abducted [abdicated] from the throne for marrying her. We would take turns however, the children who didn't, couldn't afford to pay the ten dollars -- we would let them sit up front for a while and then we would go stand. You see, we would take turns, so they'd really get to see all. And they'd get such a kick out of the people who were really most interested -- of course people came in their fine furs and everything -- we didn't -- we went as students. But what they were interested in is the Italian people who attended and understood and appreciated and applauded and just loved every minute of that. However, before attending such an opera I would teach the libretto and the score before taking a group. My orchestra -- then I want to tell a little something about the orchestra I had in this school -- they were chosen by the state supervisor of music, which Illinois does not have but Pennsylvania does -- they were asked to perform two years in succession before the governor of Pennsylvania who was Governor Pinchot at that time. And we played for one week at the state farm show which is equivalent to our state fair, only it's all under one

A: building or one cover and it's a beautiful place. And we were given our board and our room and a hundred dollars which meant much to us at that time. I purchased much of my music from a Pennsylvania Dutch man at Reading, Pennsylvania which was not too far -- it was in York County. And when I entered his store it was always, "A nice day, not?" And then his wife would come out who was very friendly and she would say, "It's a nice day, ain't?" -- which were of course Pennsylvania Dutch expressions. I made a small purchase at a store and was asked, "Do you wish to tote this or send a poke?" Well, all in all I became familiar with both Pennsylvania Dutch and Scotch-Irish dialects because I had taught in both vicinities. I later went to Wellsboro, Tioga, Pennsylvania, this is in the mountain area north of Williamsport and close to the New York line, close to Elmira, New York in fact, where I was privileged to hear many fine artists in this civic league programs, Marian Anderson in person, Lawrence Melchoir who just recently died if you recall, Lawrence Tibbett, Rosa Ponselle, Lily Pons, and Richard Crooks. Richard Crooks sang with a very good friend of mine when I lived in Wellsboro, she had a beautiful contralto voice and had planned to do concert work with this tenor. She was a contralto, but she had a thyroid operation and while she did beautiful work from there on but she was not allowed to go on tours because it would be too strenuous. The Grand Canyon of the East is in the mountains at Wellsboro, just outside. Perhaps this place was the highlight of community contacts, belonging to the Wednesday morning musicals gave me a wealth of acquaintances, with whom and for whom to perform. I directed the men's chorus, ladies chorus, the madrigal group, which consists of one member having perfect pitch, did happen to consist of one -- and of course that gave you no problem

A: because a madrigal group you know cannot have an accompaniant. If you have one person who is apt to flat, as I know many of your have experienced, it throws your madrigal, your group off and by having someone with perfect pitch you never could drop. Then of course I was also, as I say, very lucky to have this contralto. I taught vocal music only in Wellsboro, Pennsylvania but I had a thousand students. A man had the orchestra and band and we enjoyed giving our concerts together. We had a very fine write-up one year in which they said it was the most lovely concert that Wellsboro had given and even Mr. Clark and I felt it was most enjoyable, both from the point of the students and the parents. It makes a difference in the attitude of your students whether or not your performance is good and also from the backing of your parents. I'll never forget the beautiful mountain sides in the fall, it cannot be described until you witness the sugar maples.

Q: Inez, I know you made a switch from teaching and went into the government lab, tell me about that.

A: Well, the war brought me back to Illinois. Men were being drafted from the regional research laboratory in Peoria. I'm sure you're acquainted with this laboratory there are just four in the United States, and I was asked to assist in a fermentation lab under the direction of Dr. Raper and Mr. Wickenham. I felt during the war I watched too many events in which the captains two thirds of the time didn't know what they were doing because of liquor. I happened to be in the University of Virginia during these times and several other colleges, and the students the outstanding students of the war at the colleges were asked to put on entertainment, and it would be these men who would be asked

A: to judge and their judging was so outrageous because they were so intoxicated they didn't even know what they were doing. Well I felt there was something more for me than to be going to these things and drinking with them and something at my age I wanted to do something to help in the war. So when I was asked because of my biology work at Bradley to come to this laboratory my first thought was oh, it's been so long, I don't believe that I am capable. But anyway they sent me out for an interview and after they most carefully reviewed by science record, Dr. Raper said, "I'd like to have you return on Monday," it was on the snowiest day I ever saw and I thought well if it's going to go just like today, I won't know anything and he'll know it. However, when he asked me to come I said, "Okay, give me a week to just watch what you're doing," and he said, "No, we don't do it that way, you just come and you'll start right in." Of course, you can imagine how nervous I was because on every door was a picture of Uncle Sam pointing his finger at his mouth, that meant it was very secretive, everything was secretive there. And we had dignataries from all over the country as you know there. Because I was in the fermentation division which means the beginning of penicillin. Of course you know Alexander Fleming, a great scientist, happened to in his -- when he was looking over some of the molds on his media -- saw a little something that seemed strange but he didn't seem to do anything about it. But this thought was picked up at this government laboratory by Dr. Raper and Dr. Oodhill and that's how we happened to develop penicillin in our country. And everything was most interesting and very difficult. I wouldn't take anything for the experience I had. My work in penicillin and really the correct name

A: of the mold is penicillium notatum, and that was the mold for which I -- was one of my duties to look for. The lady before me was called Moldy Mary so when I came they wondered what in the world they could give me a name. Well, of course I had to isolate, that meant I'd have to go down to find molds anyplace I could, so they named me Isolation Inez. And one of my duties was to isolate of course, and every Monday morning early, before the trash people came, the city workmen, I had to go to Bishop's Cafeteria at their old place, perhaps you remember where I mean, to pick any mold that they might have. I had to take a series of petri dishes in a copper container with me and of course my pick and so forth. And any mold that I could find, they might have had over the weekend -- they knew I was coming of course and saved anything that looked like mold -- but it had to be a blue-green mold which is the penicillium noatum, not all blue-greens are but that was the thing I was looking for and of course would pick -- I would go very early to do this. Then I'd do this -- before I met the garbage wagon in front of the Pere Marquette Grocery Store and I was hunting for this mold one day and there was this little boy saw me and he went in to the proprietor and said, "Is that lady hungry?" I prepared various types of media, I planted the molds on the medium, later picking for anything that I could find and replanting on another media. The chopex media was the most important of course and then I had to do the lyophyling. Everything had to be scrubbed of course with mercuric acid to be sure _____ were put into a little booth and you had marble slab and everything was done in there as far as planting.

Q: What did you call that, the what?

A: Chopex?

Q: No, there's another term there that you used after that, lyo. . .

A: Lyophyling. Lyophyling was -- that followed that. Then when I found the molds that I wanted I would pick those molds, replant on another media and then they were put in a suspension, in a liquid made of, well we even used the corn liquor from Pekin -- if you were ever down there you could smell that.

Q: Was that a preservative, or did they keep growing in there?

A: No, they grew, that helped the growth very much. _____ the lyophyling was a big machine and you had to be very exacting with everything, of course your measurements had to be _____ very accurate. It was all done under a glass mode and you moved your machine, moved to your scales for the outside with a little button, it turned very, very slowly. One little mistake and you'd be called over. One time I was called in because of the color. And I remember I was frightened so and I think I shed a few tears. They called me aside and said now this doesn't mean that you've done something wrong, it just means everything has to be so accurate and it could have been a little breeze had come in you know, something could have moved that -- so sensitive. Then the lyophyling is put in little tubes, this media was, with a mold spore and then just when it go so long you had to move another little piece, separated that from the machine, it had a little sticky point to it. And these were all packed and when they were cooled, in packages, and sent to -- see at first they didn't even have enough for the front lines. . .

Q: And that was the beginning of penicillin?

A: . . .in the war. And that was the beginning. And so then I stayed

A: with the fermentation department and near the end of the war until, I stayed until after it was synthesized and that's the kind we have now. And when I was ill a long time, well possibly 27 years ago, of course penicillin is what they were using on me, but it was synthesized then and it just didn't seem to work. They felt well maybe these crystals from the old, which were mold, might work and the only ones who had them were St. Margaret's Hospital. They had some of the crystals there. And they went over and got those and brought them and they seemed to work on me. And I often wondered because I had worked so much with that. . .

Q: If you maybe, you might have made them in the beginning?

A: I'll never know. So -- well after it was synthesized of course that made it a difference in salaries and all because then after the end of the war you were put on social -- no, not social security -- was put on Civil Service, and of course that meant decrease in salary because before I had been paid by the Bradley faculty, since they sent me out there. See, I had originally felt that maybe I would, oh, I'd get a position as a dietitian in a hospital and they said, oh, that pay is so small and with your background we need you out there because so many men have gone. So. . .

Q: Is that how you happened to return to Waynet then?

A: Yes. After the war I was asked to return to Waynet, I remember Leonard Anthony came down and Mr. Pickett and told me that Mr. Greise had gone down with his ship, Mr. Greise was the band man here at that time. So, only they added many more things because teachers were scarce and I had a terrific load. Perhaps that was the beginning of some illness that I've had but then it was -- you couldn't help but have a nervous breakdown unless you were as strong as I seemed to be. I've had nine lives,

A: I'm sure. So since I had specialized in science and especially mycology, that's what I was doing at Bradley at the government laboratory, that special part of biology is called mycology, working with molds. And Dr. Raper was very reluctant at first and then he said, "Well, I know the schools need this too." He knew that very little is given in the biology book, in fact there's practically nothing. I think due mainly to the fact that most teachers had not had that experience, that's the reason why I wouldn't have taken anything for it. He was so lovely to me that he gave me materials and spores, platinum needles, and even the chopex recipe, up until that time of course it had been -- was very secretive -- but after it was synthesized then he didn't mind giving it to me -- not that he published it all over the country, I'm sure. And we were fortunate to have a student who was Paul Reid, a grandson of Dr. Herrick, find a strain of penicillin. I asked the children to bring molds and I carried on just as we did in the government laboratory as I was doing, except that I had no _____ to work with which was very dangerous because -- I even had the children even ask Roger Barrons who was in that class and many others in the biology class -- very interesting class -- I asked them to bring in strains you know of any mold they had. And so I took Paul and _____ John Burton Hamilton wanted to go along, he was interested in seeing the government laboratory down there -- he was a biology student and he just wanted to go with Paul. Paul, of course, was intensely interested and so I took him to the laboratory and it was a strain of penicillin. Dr. Raper entered that as #2001 and then he asked Paul to give it a name and he called to Redium. So at that governemtn laboratory there it is listed and it's put in one of their little pockets like, Redium penicillium notatum mold. And he found his from applesauce. Of course

A: the first was found from cantaloupe, but that was the way he happened to find it.

Q: Why how interesting. You taught a lot of subjects in high school didn't you?

A: Yes, as before I had several other subjects to teach. However, Waynet showed their appreciation later on as I'm sure you all know. But at that time I had to teach algebra and geometry, and general science, algebra II, biology, and of course chorus and band before and after supper.

Q: My, my, my, what a . . .

A: And now you see, they wouldn't do those things.

Q: Then you came to the grade school, right?

A: Yes, I came back to the grade school then. And had more subjects to teach again because of the scarcity of students -- and the reason I came back, I hadn't planned to -- I did have an illness again and I think it's because of the overload in high school -- but after, and that was called angina and the Dr. _____ said you'll not be teaching anymore. But I stayed out two years and then I was being taken into most organizations as my husband said and was doing many, many things for nothing. So when Mr. Patterson, who was principal, came out one time he said he wondered if I would come in and help them out, they have your new school and 40 first graders. As I had previously taught first grade, always something with music you know, besides music, I didn't expect him to -- that I could do it -- but I said my husband was out doing chores. "Well," he said, "Mrs. Patterson and I will wait until he gets in." So when he came in I expected no for an answer but when he explained the situation he said, "Well, she'd doing everything else for nothing, she might as well," so that's how I happened to come back

A: into the grade school.

Q: And I might just add this, that every parent that was able to have their child start under you felt that they got the greatest teacher that there was.

A: Well, I'm sure that isn't true.

Q: Well, I think it is.

A: I think my speciality in first grade work is reading and that is one thing I feel I taught was reading. And because of my phonetic program. And I taught longer than I expected to teach and I'm sure there are many Bureau County teachers that might be a little reluctant now since most schools let them out at 65, although they've all been very nice to me. That I had nothing to do with. They -- I hadn't planned to teach beyond a certain age, but each time the superintendent would say will you help us individualize reading, would you help us individualize spelling, would you help us -- stay another year then and individualize arithmetic which they are doing now. This is giving the children a chance to work on their own level.

END OF SIDE ONE

SIDE TWO

A: . . .child has just as much right to go on _____ give him all he can take, because otherwise he will be losing interest and become a delinquent. And the slower child knows he's not able to keep up, he loses interest, and he too can become a delinquent. So really after you've taught a long time and really find that out, and they're not called, if they're called dummies, it's by their parents or somebody else

A: and doesn't mean that at all. What the individualization is supposed to do is teach everybody on his level, not it isn't done as it should be yet, because it takes a lot of work to prepare several groupings, and some teachers just want to lump it off and give them all the same materials the same time -- we weren't born that way, children all don't learn at the same rate of speed and so why hold back the gifted and why shove what the slower learner is not able to do. Then with the conditions as they are today, we found many parents -- most children were -- well under the supervision of baby-sitters -- home life was not the same, and you could really see a difference in the children now than you saw then. And just this last year I heard many say, well, I'm going to -- this is going to be my last year, I can't take it anymore. They're coming -- I have children coming to me near the end that could not even eat with a fork and knife, if you can imagine that. And the principal will say if you don't do anymore than teach that child to use a spoon you will be doing something. We had emotionally disturbed children, we had children who couldn't manipulate even muscles as they should. I don't know what many baby-sitters are doing, I guess just pushing them and letting them sit or putting them to sleep and they're certainly not reading. One of the best things parents used to do was read a lot to their children.

Q: Inez, that's always been my thought and I think you should write a book, I think it should be brought before the public more. That certainly is my thought. Go ahead.

A: Well, it been discussed of course all over but we are finding that more and more and I'm glad that I retired when I did too, because it would

A: hurt me very much to have to deal with children who are coming as they are, so poorly prepared. Now that doesn't mean all children, we have some families, you know, that prepare their children well and I could almost say more than a third, more than a half, come from rural communities where children have jobs to do and they're not on the streets running around, they're not getting the contact with drugs and other things, alcohol that people -- that children are today. Which -- no need of going into that because we know how _____ the future is going to bring that out more and more. Wyanet showed their appreciation -- many people said, "Why do you work so hard?" Well, if they had had all those projects, all those laboratory things that I had to prepare, they would see why I stayed there to six or six-thirty. It takes times to get set up and do those things, you can't leave. Now, they say teachers can beat the children to the busses if they so please. I don't know when they get this work done, evidently they do it much more efficiently than I did, because I either was a slow worker or tried to put too much in, I don't know. But Wyanet showed their appreciation by the retirement program in the high school called the "Links of Friendship". Principals, former students filled the gym -- many lovely speeches were made, each one presenting a charm for the beautiful bracelet given by the school board, as well as a beautiful plaque designed by the superintendent of schools and made by someone who was connected with the jewelry factory. We were then escorted into the cafeteria where an excellent lunch was served where I had the opportunity to greet many. Many principals, teachers and pupils gave tributes even there. Thus ends 42 years of teaching. Why did I choose teaching? At the age of

A: five I decided on that profession, and my mother said that whenever we played any game it was school, but I had to be the teacher, no one else got to be the teacher. I would wish everyone could read "What You Can Do About TV Violence". I cannot blame children, no one can blame children for any problems.

Q: That comes from Reader's Digest?

A: This is the Reader's Digest, July of 1975, and it's called, "What You Can Do About TV Violence". It starts on page 185 and I can't help but feel that television has been very cruel by the types of things they are putting on. Think what educational programs they could do. But on the Sunday night movie on September 30, 1973 was "Fuzz" and if you, if any of you did look at that it was a thrill-seeking event -- doused water from tramps with gasoline and set them afire, and all that sort of thing. And statistics show that children are sitting up at late as 11:30 or so and watching programs where they used to have to go to bed early, you know. Some of them I think these TV people think that well all kids are in bed now, and show them anyway. I really don't think they care even if children do see them. And they're getting many of their ideas from these terrible violent pictures that they are seeing. The dreadful -- it just doesn't seem to be ignored. I might as not _____ one or two couldn't help but mention. . .

Q: Yes, read them.

A: And on March 8, 1973 a _____ broadcast a CBS movie called, "The Marcus-Nelson Murders". And there was an instance of a young woman was raped and murdered, her head bludgeoned and her throat slashed, "and the crime scene looked exactly like the one on TV," said homicide detective W. F. Perkins. A seventeen year old boy pleaded guilty to the

A: rape murder stating that he had re-enacted the whole movie. You see where he got his idea. In September 10, 1974 at 8PM NBC aired "Born Innocent" and of course that was a terrible thing later. Four days later near San Francisco four children ages nine or fifteen siezed two little girls on the public beach and replayed the scene with beet bottles and they told the policemen they got their idea from "Born Innocent". I think there is much we can do. Now you might want to know something about what I'm doing since I -- or what I have done -- while I've been able, since my. . .

Q: Since you retired. Yes, we certainly would like to.

A: Well, I was asked to be regional director of Region 5 and of -- of five counties. This work takes me to Fulton County, and Marshall, Henry, Putnam, to Mason County, to Peoria County and I visit each unit, each one has say four units in it and I visit twice a year and this past -- you always have projects that you're working on and you're trying to help them develop these projects and I felt the most outstanding work that I was able to help with and did get quite a bit accomplished -- was this last year -- on raising the teachers -- the early retired teachers who had taught a long time but were getting a very low pension. I shouldn't mention names here and I won't -- but in Princeton, well there were 7,000 teachers just in our two -- what we call districts -- in our little area we might call it, that were receiving less than \$300 a month. One teacher had taught 24 years and was getting \$46 a month pension and she does not have a lot to go on. So -- ~~now~~ now they had to set a maximum of course, because you know there are many bills in the hopper that have to do with roads and what have you, but when they're elected to pay some -- school pension, you know, that seems to be --

A: well they set them aside, that's all there is to it. So we just kept at them, kept at them, and then a very find legislative man and he happened to be a classmate of mine at Bradley, his name is Lewis McDonald, and when he saw my name as one of the directors he was very nice and has been lovely and has written beautiful letters to me since Bob's death. But anyway, he said that -- he gave me some outlining that he wanted me to do pacticularly -- and he complimented -- gave me a lovely compliment by asking me back to install their officers. As I say, I don't have to visit but twice a year but Peoria has over 400 members and I thought it was very lovely that he asked me. However, I memorized that ritual and oh, I worked so hard about three days thinking I had to memorize it and after the thing and he saw how good I had, he came up and he said, "Why, you didn't have to memorize that." I could have killed him for saying that. However, it was nice and I think it's more impressive when a ritual is memorized than if you're standing there reading it. Well, so then there's another -- we had a teacher in Wyanet who was getting in the thirties and had taught something like fourteen, twelve or fourteen years, and she has told me many times they just felt as if they were king and queen now, you know, it as meant so much to them. But you can see, they couldn;t go _____ while we teachers who taught longer get much more than that -- but you can see what it means to these people who got such low ones to be raised to \$300. Or they raised -- now they don't all get that, they \$10 a month raise for every year's service that they give, but it helps them all a great deal. And I'm serving my second year on this now and I have. . .

Q: Now what's the society called?

A: Well, this is the National Retired Teachers Association. And of course, I'm working with the Illinois Retired Teachers and the Region 5, there are ten regions in Illinois. Did I mention, yes I mentioned the regions didn't I, I was wondering if I mentioned the one Pekin is in. We are trying to form a new one at Woodford. Woodford is the only county in my region that does not have one. But some of them are so close to the Peoria and Pekin people and the Morton and like that, they have been going and it's rather hard, you know you get acquainted with certain people -- but Mr. White who is the area director, we have area directors and regional directors -- and so that is the big accomplishment we made last year. Now we are trying -- we get -- but there are still many things in the hopper -- and we feel this is going to be a lost cause right now -- it won't be accomplished yet, but you have to work a long time, you have to work ahead -- and now we are trying to get all pensions, not just school, but anyone who gets a pension, to get it freed from income tax, because they have been using our money all these years and we've been paying into it, why should they have that money. Railroad people don't have to pay. Social security people don't have to pay the pension. Why should all these other pension people have to pay income taxes when we had paid, really paid, and they have had the use of our money all these years. And so then this year I have been asked to serve again on another committee and my duties on this are to -- well review another -- a lady who is serving on a committee -- and check with her and see if I think she is doing what we're supposed to be doing, that sort of thing. Because when they call me and want me on another type of committee I give them my circumstances as of now and I said I felt I could not perhaps travel as much and they said it would be a little less traveling, more book-work at home,

Q: Inez, I know that you were made outstanding elementary teacher of America for 1972, what other honors?

A: I served many offices in the Delta Kappa Gamma National Honor Society for teachers. Last year I completed my second year as president. I would like to say, though, that my greatest honor I feel is teaching children.

Q: Well, that's because you're the kind of person you are.

A: And that's it.

Q: I just can't thank you enough for telling us about your life.

A: Did you look at my album?

Q: I will. Thank you so much, Inez.

END OF SIDE TWO

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