

An Interview with

## **Bonita Pipkin**

at Greene County Extension Center in  
Springfield, Missouri

**22 March 2012**

interviewed by Jeff Corrigan



### **Oral History Program**

The State Historical Society of Missouri

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One-room Schoolhouse

CD 21



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## PREFACE

Bonita Pipkin was born in 1932 in Springfield, Missouri. She grew up on a beef and dairy farm just outside of Republic, Missouri, and attended a one-room schoolhouse, the Blades School. Pipkin describes the school building, its role as a schoolhouse and a community center and the close-knit group of students that went to the Blades School. She also discusses the many games the students would create, the chores everyone would help out with and the comfort she felt knowing everyone was looking out for each other.

In 1944, Pipkin left the Blades School and went to Republic High School. She then graduated Southwest Missouri State College (now Missouri State University) with degrees in health and physical education and counseling. Pipkin went on to teach health and physical education at a Junior College in Independence, Kansas, and at Southwest Teachers College. Pipkin attributes her success to the one-room schoolhouse because that was where she learned to accept people and developed a need to help others.

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: Bonita Pipkin  
Interviewer: Jeff Corrigan  
Date: March 22, 2012  
Transcribed by: Teresa Bergen

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**[Begin Interview. Begin Track 1.]**

10 Corrigan: I'm going to go ahead and turn it on now. So this is Jeff Corrigan, oral historian for the State Historical Society of Missouri. I'm here today, March 22, 2012, in Springfield, Missouri, at the Greene County Extension Center at the Springfield Botanical Gardens. I'm here to interview Bonita Pipkin about her experience attending a one-room schoolhouse. Bonita, could you start by telling me when and where you were born?

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Pipkin: I was born in Springfield, Missouri, but my family lived two-and-a-half miles west of Republic. And on my grandfather's place. They were the first in Pond Creek. They established the Blades School as a part of our ancestry. And they donated land. And I was born in 1932, February the 18<sup>th</sup>.

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Corrigan: So you were born in Springfield and you lived in Republic.

Pipkin: In the country. Yes. (laughs)

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Corrigan: Now could you tell me a little bit about your family, how many—

Pipkin: I was an only child. Um-hm.

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Corrigan: Okay. What did your parents do?

Pipkin: They were farmers.

Corrigan: And what kind of farm was it?

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Pipkin: Well it was a livestock farm.

Corrigan: And what kind of livestock?

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Pipkin: They had beef. And then they also had registered Guernseys.

Corrigan: Oh.

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Pipkin: And then they had sheep, they had hogs. It was diversified. In those times you had all kinds of animals. We had turkeys, chickens. A variety.

Corrigan: So it was, besides a beef farm, it was also a dairy farm, too.

Pipkin: Oh, sure. Um-hm.

Corrigan: Okay. And Guernseys. Okay.

5

Pipkin: Yes. I sat many a time on a three-legged stool, milking cows. (laughs)

Corrigan: And I would assume if you were an only child, you definitely did work on the farm.

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Pipkin: Oh, yes. Most definitely. I mean, I know what work is. That's exactly, I learned that early.

Corrigan: Oh, okay. So I didn't have to ask you if you were the oldest or youngest or anything.

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Pipkin: No. I'm the only one.

Corrigan: What were your parents' names?

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Pipkin: Otto and Adeline Blades.

Corrigan: Adeline. A-d-e-l-i-n-e?

25

Pipkin: Uh-hm.

Corrigan: Okay.

Pipkin: Blades.

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Corrigan: Adeline Blades and Otto Pipkin.

Pipkin: No. Blades.

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Corrigan: Blades. Okay. Oh, that's right. I'm sorry.

Pipkin: Uh-hm. That's fine.

Corrigan: Otto and Adeline Blades.

40

Pipkin: That's right.

Corrigan: Okay. Now when and where did you start school?

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Pipkin: My dad and mother, they really started me, I started school when I was five. And I went to Blades School.



Corrigan: And it was called Blades School.

Pipkin: It was Blades School.

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Corrigan: After the family.

Pipkin: After the family. It was donated by my grandfather. The land. So basically I went seven years to grade school. They put me up in another class first year. See, I was five when I started. And they promoted me one, I skipped one class. So.

10

Corrigan: Okay. So you went there seven years.

Pipkin: Yes. Uh-hm. That's the entire time. I started school, high school, when I was twelve.

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Corrigan: Okay. Okay. Now could you describe the school for me? The inside, the outside.

Pipkin: Oh, yes. It was, in the back of the school, it was where we would hang our jackets. Where we would take our lunch buckets or our cigar boxes or our paper sack or whatever that we could put in the back. And the teacher would bring everything like, she would bring her excess stuff from her own home if she lived at home. However, sometimes they would be so far away, like even Billings or Aurora they came from, that they would come and stay with people in the neighborhood. So they would come, we had all kinds of, our equipment was usually a round ball. Some tin cans for games. And of course our winter coats, straw hats and all that kind of in the spring and fall.

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25

Corrigan: Okay. Was the school white or red?

Pipkin: It was white. It was white. And it faced the south. It was all one rectangular shape. And it had, in the back, was the place where, I called it the closet, or the clothing area. And the lunch area was divided, just a small area. But the other direction was an extension where the potbellied stove was, where the chalk board was. Where all of the benches were. And the teacher's desk.

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Corrigan: Now did you have one big chalkboard in the back behind the teacher?

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Pipkin: Yes. On the side.

Corrigan: On the side, okay.

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Pipkin: On the side.

Corrigan: Where were the windows in the building?

Pipkin: Oh, they were on the west.

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Corrigan: The west.

Pipkin: And it was a complete section of windows. So there was a lot of light coming in from the west.

5

Corrigan: Okay. Was there electricity?

Pipkin: No. No.

10 Corrigan: Okay. How big do you think the school was?

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

Pipkin: Probably thirty feet long and, say, twenty wide.

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Corrigan: Okay. Did you have the individual desks, or the shared desks where you had like two kids next to each other?

Pipkin: We had shared desks.

20

Corrigan: Okay. And were the little kids up front?

Pipkin: Yes.

25 Corrigan: And the larger kids in the back?

Pipkin: Yes. Yes.

Corrigan: Did the teacher sit in front, then?

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Pipkin: In front.

Corrigan: So when you came into the school, on the far end would have been where the teacher was and the blackboard?

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Pipkin: That's right. As you came in, the double doors and the steps into the school on the south side. You'd walk straight to the front, what you would call the front, to the teacher's desk. And I remember being on the very front. And I was the only one at that time. I was the only first grader. So, anyway, I had the whole thing to myself. So that was a good thing.

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Corrigan: Do you remember anything in the classroom about, was there any pictures of any—

45 Pipkin: Oh, yes. George Washington, Abe Lincoln, the flag. And all of these, for instance, the superintendent of schools, his picture was there. He would come out once every year to the school, the Green County superintendent of schools, and visit with us. And he was the

one that came and basically he would rate us as far as the school system. Whether you're completing your subjects, what subjects you're taking. But the wonderful thing I remember most about it is being five years old and being in a group of people, young people, older than I, and that section's older, up to the eighth grade. But they always respected me. We were a  
5 community. They always watched after me at recess. And then I returned that same favor when I grew out of it, through, after the seven years.

Corrigan: Okay. Did you have, so you said a potbellied stove.

10 Pipkin: Oh, yes.

Corrigan: So coal or—

Pipkin: Coal.

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Corrigan: Coal. Okay. And did you have, was there a water pump outside?

Pipkin: There was a water pump. There was the flag pole. And that was our first thing every morning. That each one, they turned around, we'd have, this person would go this time, and  
20 then tomorrow would be your time to raise the flag. And we'd say our pledge of allegiance to the flag. That was in warm weather. However, in the winter, we'd have it inside.

Corrigan: Okay.

25 Pipkin: But we also, yeah, we had the pump. And I know my husband, he said he had a little tin can that he, they all drank out of. We just had a big water bucket and we all drank out of the same dipper.

Corrigan: Okay. That was my other question, if you had individual dippers or—

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Pipkin: No, no, no. We had one big dipper. Germs. (laughs) Oh, my.

Corrigan: Did the school have like a library area at all?

35 Pipkin: No.

Corrigan: No. Okay. Okay. So you didn't have any books to—

Pipkin: No.

40

Corrigan: —check out or anything?

Pipkin: No. No, no. That was way before that, library. (laughs)

45 Corrigan: Okay. Was there outhouses, then?

Pipkin: Oh, yes! Oh, yes. One for the boys, one for the girls.

Corrigan: And were they on opposite—

5 Pipkin: Oh, yes. Opposite ends of the playground, on the field. Yeah. Uh-hm.

Corrigan: Okay. Was there any place, was there like a coal shed or—

10 Pipkin: Oh, yes. Yes, there was. Next to the boys. There was a small shed where they stored coal. But it was on the side of the boys' restrooms.

Corrigan: Was there a place for like, did anybody have to ride a horse to school?

15 Pipkin: Oh, sure.

Corrigan: Was there hitching posts?

20 Pipkin: Oh, sure. There were two hitching posts. In fact, I didn't ever have that opportunity because I just lived probably in, see, probably three blocks away. Because my home where my grandfather lived and we had bought was just right, just across the field from that schoolhouse.

Corrigan: Okay. So you didn't have very far to walk each day.

25 Pipkin: No. No.

Corrigan: So you said roughly about three city blocks?

30 Pipkin: Yes.

Corrigan: Okay. Because it was on your grandparents' property.

Pipkin: Sure. Sure.

35 Corrigan: So it wasn't, you were pretty close. And so you didn't have a long walk—

Pipkin: No.

40 Corrigan: —like a lot of people had to walk miles.

Pipkin: Oh, I know. A mile and a half, and then a mile and a half the other direction.

45 Corrigan: So you didn't have to walk far. That's good. Was there any type outside? Was there any type of playground equipment?

Pipkin: Just the tin can, and that was the whole game that we played was kick the tin can. It was a game we played. We'd make a large circle. And you put the tin can on the inside. And one person stood, everyone else went away and hid. And he was supposed to find us. And if we, anyone he caught, if he found you, you would have to go back and then get in the circle.  
5 But if there was one major person that could be the one, he'd be the last one and kick the can out of there, everyone was free. We just played that over and over and over. And then we played Annie Over. We played Red Rover, Red Rover. And I had—

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

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Pipkin: One teacher that loved to play Fox and Geese. That was in the dead of winter. And she would get out with her shovel and make the trail. And we couldn't get out in the snow. We had to stay within the trail. And she was always the wolf. The kids were excited, no less.

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Corrigan: Okay. Well, we'll go on with the recess thing. Did you have recess in the morning and afternoon?

Pipkin: No. Just in the afternoon. Right after dinner.

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Corrigan: So just in the afternoon.

Pipkin: Yes. Right after dinner. Uh-hm. Thirty minutes.

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Corrigan: Okay. Did you have it at lunch, too? Or no?

Pipkin: No. We just had always a combination of eating your lunch and the recess.

Corrigan: Okay. So no other recess during the day.

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Pipkin: No. No.

Corrigan: Okay, so it was about 30 minutes, okay. So you said you played Annie Over, Red Rover, Fox and Geese.

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Pipkin: Oh, yes.

Corrigan: Kick the Tin Can.

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Pipkin: Oh, yes.

Corrigan: Were there any like group games, like baseball or anything? Or no?

Pipkin: No. We didn't have that. We had Ring around the Rosy, for the girls.

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Corrigan: Okay.

Pipkin: And the boys, they just, I guess they just stood around, whatever they did. I don't remember what they did. (laughs) But anyway.

Corrigan: What did you do when there was bad weather?

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Pipkin: Oh, we had to stay within the schoolhouse. And we would go to the blackboard, we'd draw pictures. We'd play Tic-Tac-Toe. We would try to improve our ciphering, because we're in competition. And I have information here, either from my uncle, I just had all of this historical, this is the kind of brochure that he had in 19, I think it's 1916?

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Corrigan: Nineteen fourteen, it says here.

Pipkin: Fourteen—Whatever, but that is his literature. Uh-hm.

15

Corrigan: So this was his instruction on how to—

Pipkin: Yes. That's how to write.

Corrigan: How to write, okay, writing lessons. So each one was—

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Pipkin: And you can have that, if you'd like.

Corrigan: Are you sure?

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Pipkin: Yes, I'll give that to you.

Corrigan: Okay. I'll put it in your folder then.

Pipkin: Yes.

30

Corrigan: No, that will be great. No, that's interesting. I've never seen one, actually. I'll keep it with your stuff. So then, okay, that's interesting. So some competitions, then, during—

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Pipkin: Yes, we had competition.

Corrigan: So during, if you had to stay inside, you were definitely keeping busy.

Pipkin: Oh, yes, we didn't, yes, we did.

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Corrigan: Okay. So let me go back a little bit now.

Pipkin: Okay.

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Corrigan: Where specifically, you said it was on your grandparents' farm—where is that specifically located?

Pipkin: Okay. It's two and a half, two and a half miles west of Republic on 174. And it was half a mile south.

5 Corrigan: Half a mile south.

Pipkin: Mm-hm.

Corrigan: Okay. Does this school building still exist today?

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Pipkin: No.

Corrigan: Did it burn down? Or—

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Pipkin: No, it was sold. Which was a tragedy. And the gentleman who bought it was going to keep it in, he let it just fall, he was a doctor. He was going to reconstruct and keep it. And you couldn't find a piece of it now, I don't imagine.

Corrigan: It fell in disarray—

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Pipkin: Oh, my, yes.

Corrigan: About what year was that that you, do you know what year the school closed?

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Pipkin: Let me see. Probably in 1944.

Corrigan: Okay. Now how many, you said there was one in your class.

Pipkin: Mm hmm.

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Corrigan: How many kids were in the whole school though, roughly?

Pipkin: Sixteen.

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Corrigan: Oh, okay. Did you have a lot of different teachers? Or just one? Okay. What was their name?

Pipkin: Oh, well the first one was Mrs. Massey. She was from Billings. Lottie French, and she was from Billings. Miss Sharp was from Monett. And June Wampler was from Billings.

40

Corrigan: June Wampler?

Pipkin: Wampler. W-a-m-p-l-e-r.

45

Corrigan: And she was from where?

Pipkin: Billings.

Corrigan: Okay, Billings. So you had four over your time there.

5 Pipkin: Yes. Right. Mm hmm.

Corrigan: So was any of them your favorite?

Pipkin: June.

10

Corrigan: June?

Pipkin: I think it was because I was older.

15 Corrigan: Okay.

Pipkin: She was a very, very good teacher. I liked Miss Sharp really well because she liked to play, you know—

20 **[End Track 3. Begin Track 4.]**

Pipkin: —one of these games as I said prior to this, you know. She was a fox, you know, in the geese and all of that. The first two were very, older women, older women, and very motherly and matronly. And they started me out in the right way. I mean, they taught me, my dad had already taught me how to write and how to do my ABCs and how all of that particular before. That's the reason they moved me up a class.

25

Corrigan: Okay. Did you learn a lot from listening to the older kids?

Pipkin: Oh, yes. That was the connection. And they, they were always available. I mean, I remember they were always wanting to help me, you know. They would, well, a lot of them came by down the road past our house. I was always welcome to walk with them. I felt comforted. I felt like someone was watching after me. We all knew each other. A lot of that in our area were kin, see. Republic basically, when it was first established, there was the Mooneyhams, the Gaurottes, the Blades. And then they remarried and my goodness, you know, but we all felt really, really close.

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Corrigan: So you knew what was coming in the other grades—

40 Pipkin: Sure.

Corrigan: But you also—

Pipkin: Had an attachment? Oh, yes, I knew what was coming. And I could listen whenever she was doing her lessons. You know, the teacher was trying to have all of these different sections. I could always listen to what they were doing. And to read, and whenever they got

45



in front of the class, I could always listen. And whenever they gave a presentation or when they had to read or over here on the chalkboard, you could always see how to add. It was a connection. That was the great thing. You weren't separated.

5 Corrigan: Because, was it difficult, being the only kid in your class, though?

Pipkin: No.

Corrigan: Okay.

10

Pipkin: It has a personality. I mean, you have to have the personality of, if you're an only child, some will say, "Oh, you're spoiled rotten." No, I always had to, I wasn't. I didn't have anything to be spoiled rotten with. I had a dog and a Radio Flyer wagon. That was my toys. We lived in a two-room shanty with a lean-to.

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Corrigan: Okay.

Pipkin: So that was the way it was. It was hard times.

20 Corrigan: And how big was the farm?

Pipkin: The farm? 160 acres.

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Corrigan: Okay. Do you remember, was the school, I'd like to talk about some of the activities that happened in the school.

Pipkin: Sure.

30

Corrigan: But also, I'm curious about two things. Activities, both that you as students did, maybe Christmas programs—

Pipkin: Oh, yes.

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Corrigan: —pie suppers and things. But I'm also curious to know if the school, was it ever used as almost like a community center?

Pipkin: It was a community center.

40

Corrigan: Okay. So we'll talk about, can you talk about the programs or the activities first?

Pipkin: Sure. Sure. On that community, is that what you want to talk about?

Corrigan: No, no. Talk about the school programs first.

45

Pipkin: Okay. Oh, yes.

Corrigan: Christmas program or—

Pipkin: Oh, yes. We had Christmas programs. And we also then, we had, we would celebrate  
Easter with a Maypole. We would have, oh, like Halloween, we'd all have that little activity.  
5 All of the, all of the holidays. We would make special decorations and special games. And  
then we'd have poetry and recitals. And the teacher always would ask, first of all, she would  
ask if anyone would like to, she never designated you're going to do this, which was always  
a good thing. And there were always people wanting to participate.

10 Corrigan: Now was the Christmas program, is that something that she would write? Or was  
it something you guys worked on?

Pipkin: We worked on it. We worked on it. Not only that, well, all of the parents helped.  
They would sew costumes. They would bring, you know, in fact one of them brought a lamb,  
15 you know, for Christmas. And then we, the men would have made the little Jesus little cradle.

Corrigan: So you did like the nativity story?

Pipkin: Yes. Yes. The nativity story.  
20

Corrigan: Okay. And that would be held in the evening—

Pipkin: In the evening and the community would come.

25 Corrigan: So the whole community would come.

Pipkin: That's right.

Corrigan: Okay. So it wasn't just the parents and students.  
30

Pipkin: No. It wasn't. They invited everyone.

Corrigan: So was that the only, so you celebrated the other holidays—

35 Pipkin: Right.

Corrigan: Easter, Halloween. Did you—

Pipkin: We decorated.  
40

Corrigan: Did you dress up for Halloween?

Pipkin: Oh, yes. Oh, yes, yes. Not only the youngsters, but then the parents did. And so, as I  
was telling you, you know, the parents would try to come and see if they could guess one  
45 another. And at the time, sometimes we would have like they would bring a dinner and  
everyone would share in that. They'd have a box dinner. But—

**[End Track 4. Begin Track 5.]**

Pipkin: But they all had so much fun with all of the funny garbs that they wore.

5

Corrigan: So Halloween was not just during school.

Pipkin: Oh, no. It was night.

10 Corrigan: It was at night, a whole family affair.

Pipkin: It was the community, the family, everyone.

Corrigan: And everybody made their costumes.

15

Pipkin: And everyone came. Yes.

Corrigan: And you said people would try to figure out who—

20 Pipkin: Yes. No one, everyone had to guess.

Corrigan: Who was who.

25 Pipkin: Who was who. And someone basically got a sucker if they won. I don't even know, my dad got a sucker for being the wolf, no one ever knew who he was. (laughs)

Corrigan: Okay. So if you could stay hidden, you got a—

30 Pipkin: Sure. A sucker.

Corrigan: A sucker.

Pipkin: That's right.

35 Corrigan: Okay. So you mentioned pie suppers.

Pipkin: Oh, yes.

40 Corrigan: Now can you tell me, describe to me how the pie suppers were run. And what you guys did.

45 Pipkin: Okay. Well first of all, you could either, you could take a pie or a cake. But most all of the farm ladies would bring pie. And they would have it in a decorative box or a container. A real, and of course would take their best. And then you had the gentlemen or anyone else in the crowd – it was a neighborhood thing – and they would bid on them. Fifty cents, dollar

and a half. And whoever got the highest bid. Whoever got the highest bid got to eat with the person who brought the pie.

5 Corrigan: And nobody knew who brought what.

Pipkin: No! No.

Corrigan: It was all a surprise.

10 Pipkin: It was a surprise.

Corrigan: Okay.

15 Pipkin: So they would hold up the box and they would say, "Now this box," and the auctioneer would just, someone in the audience, and they would just say, "Oh, give me two and a quarter. Give me fifty cents." You know, at that time you didn't have much money to give anything. But anyway, whoever got a dollar fifty was really a pie. And so then, then they would say, "Well, this is the pie number so and so." Well no one knew who number so and so was. Well anyway then, they would get the connection. And that was number 15. And  
20 then the lady would say, "Well, that's my pie." And then they'd all sit around. Devour it.

Corrigan: Now would the men and boys try to figure out whose pie was who?

25 Pipkin: Oh, sure. Oh, sure. They especially the older boys. The older boys wanted to make sure who brought, girl brought it, from what family. Yes, most definitely.

Corrigan: Okay. But primarily pies but occasionally cakes.

30 Pipkin: Yes, yes. Uh-hm.

Corrigan: Okay. Now was there any other activities at the school? Did you have an end of the year party or picnic?

35 Pipkin: We had a picnic, yes. And something else. It was also at that time which it was where they came to vote. It was also a voting community.

Corrigan: So the other side, it was a community center.

40 Pipkin: That's right.

Corrigan: So they, you said voting.

Pipkin: Yes.

45 Corrigan: And was that where a town meeting would be?

Pipkin: Right. The town meeting. It was just a center, it was the center of our community.

Corrigan: Okay.

5 Pipkin: See, it's just like now, a community building in a larger city. But that was ours at that time.

Corrigan: So people would use it for voting?

10 Pipkin: Sure. Yeah.

Corrigan: And did you have chores to perform at the school? And what I mean by that is did kids have to carry in wood, water, clean erasers, heating—

15 Pipkin: Yes. Yes, yes. Yes.

Corrigan: Did you have to—

Pipkin: Yes. Clean erasers. Boys would bring in the coal. They would, they had to sweep.  
20 They would, she would designate whoever offered to do it. If they had to go early. Because a lot of these young people had to be at home early. Because they had chores to do. But I remember Miss Wampler always saying, "Anyone who cares to, would you please stay and we'll clean the blackboard. And so and so will get the erasers cleaned and get the water bucket cleaned and the dipper." And make sure that all the lunch buckets are gone, you  
25 know, that you got designated. And make sure that no one has left their coats. There was one designated to make sure that everyone had taken their boots. Especially for the little kids.

Corrigan: Was this daily? Or weekly?

30 Pipkin: Daily.

Corrigan: Daily. Okay.

Pipkin: Oh, yes.

35 Corrigan: Okay. Did you take your lunch every day?

Pipkin: Yes. Oh, yes.

40 Corrigan: Could you tell me what a typical lunch was for you? Did your mother prepare it?

Pipkin: Oh, yes.

45 Corrigan: And what, you know, what other kids brought.

Pipkin: Very sad, basically. But it was very meager like bacon, biscuits. Sometimes, very rarely, we'd have cheese. You would have maybe, if you were on a dairy farm, you'd have milk. If your mother would make, oh, like cookies, you'd have a cookie. But you didn't have a variety of anything. It was just, I know, bacon sandwiches.

5

Corrigan: So basically bacon that you'd have from the farm.

Pipkin: Yes. Oh, yes.

10

Corrigan: And then biscuits your mom would make.

Pipkin: Yes. Everything was home, it was not bought. There was nothing bought.

**[End Track 5. Begin Track 6.]**

15

Pipkin: We didn't even have ice. We didn't have anything like that. Of course, no refrigeration. No way to cool anything. So you see, that was that time.

Corrigan: So you didn't have an ice box yet, even at your house.

20

Pipkin: No, no. No.

Corrigan: Did you, was this all like salted pork?

25

Pipkin: Oh, yes. Yes. Salted pork. Oh, yes. And I helped measure.

Corrigan: Did you have like a smokehouse? Or did you—

30

Pipkin: Yes, we had a smokehouse. Yes. And we hung the hams and all of the salted pork. And we always, as I said, we had turkeys and we had chicken. When Mom would fix fried chicken, she'd have a piece or two, I might have fried chicken. That was a specialty, you know.

Corrigan: Did you have a lot of eggs then?

35

Pipkin: Yes, eggs. All of the basics.

Corrigan: Did you have egg sandwiches, too?

40

Pipkin: Egg sandwiches. Scrambled egg sandwiches. Everything came off of the farm.

Corrigan: Uh-hm.

45

Pipkin: You didn't purchase anything. Sugar, flour, coffee. That was your limit.

Corrigan: Okay. Okay. And you said you brought it in, what did you bring it in to school with?

5 Pipkin: Well, okay. Some of the kids would bring them in cigar boxes. But my grandmother Blades bought me a dinner bucket when I was five. And I still have it. And it's just a tin container approximately eight inches long and four inches wide. And it's an aqua blue color and it's tin. That's what I took that in, every year in school. That was my dinner bucket.

10 Corrigan: It was your lunch, okay.

Pipkin: Uh-hm.

Corrigan: So you had milk, where a lot of kids didn't.

15 Pipkin: Oh, yes. Oh, yes.

Corrigan: You had milk.

Pipkin: Really. Because I had a dairy.

20 Corrigan: Was it in a thermos you put it in?

Pipkin: It was in a jar.

25 Corrigan: Oh, okay.

Pipkin: Mm-hm. A little pint jar.

30 Corrigan: Okay. Okay. And this was, so you'd eat your lunch, then you would get your 30 minutes of play.

Pipkin: That's right. That's right. Uh-hm. And most of the time, it didn't take long. (laughs)

35 Corrigan: No, I can imagine. If you only had one recess, you didn't dilly dally.

Pipkin: We didn't tarry. (laughs)

Corrigan: Yeah. Did you guys ever have, did you have orchards or anything, or apple trees?

40 Pipkin: Apple trees. My grandfather had apple trees. They were old at that time. And not, it wasn't an orchard. It was two or three trees out in the pasture.

Corrigan: So would you occasionally bring—

45 Pipkin: Occasionally. Uh-hm. Occasionally.

Corrigan: Okay.

5 Pipkin: And tomatoes, see, like tomatoes. I could get those in the fall. You know, when we first start school there would be tomatoes on the garden. We always had a big garden. See, we had planted 100 pounds of potatoes. I mean, we got out and tilled—and green beans and all of the vegetables. Like everyone's coming back to now.

Corrigan: Mm-hm. Would your mom put them up in preserves?

10 Pipkin: Oh, sure. Oh my goodness. She'd can. Lonnie and I would help can 44 pints of corn out of the corn field many a time. So you see, we had it and we preserved it. We never threw anything away. We took care of what we had.

Corrigan: So you were self—

15 Pipkin: Self sufficient. From one end to the other. That's exactly right. (laughs) As my dad called the car the jitney.

Corrigan: Okay. So you attended the same school all the way till you graduated.

20 Pipkin: That's right.

Corrigan: Okay. And what year did you graduate?

25 Pipkin: I graduated in 1944.

Corrigan: Okay. And that was from eighth grade.

30 Pipkin: Yeah. Well it was really, it was eighth grade, yeah. It was eighth grade. (laughs)

Corrigan: Yeah. Without the skipping part, yeah. And then did you go on to high school?

Pipkin: Oh, yes.

35 Corrigan: And where was that?

Pipkin: At Republic.

Corrigan: Oh, Republic High School. Okay.

40 Pipkin: Uh-hm. Uh-hm. From 1944 to 1948. Graduated when I was sixteen.

Corrigan: Nineteen forty-eight, graduated at sixteen.

45 Pipkin: Uh-hm. And so did my husband. He graduated in 1947.



Corrigan: Okay. And what's your husband's name?

Pipkin: William D.

5 Corrigan: William D. And was he from the same area?

Pipkin: He was from where we live now. Seven miles north of Republic.

10 Corrigan: Okay. So on, in today, not a very far area. But back then, he was on the other side—

Pipkin: Oh, that was a long way.

Corrigan: That was a long way. Okay.

15

Pipkin: And we only had four school buses.

Corrigan: So, but you didn't get bused to school because you lived so close.

20 Pipkin: No, no, no. Oh, I got bused. Oh, yeah. To Republic? Yes.

Corrigan: Oh, to the Republic High School. Yeah.

Pipkin: Yes to Republic High School.

25

Corrigan: Okay. You were bused, then, okay. I was going to ask you if you kept in contact with anybody from your class. So I don't have to ask you that because you were the only one. So I apologize for that.

30 Pipkin: (laughs) That's okay.

Corrigan: Did a lot of people that you went to school with, though, did they end up staying in the area, in the Republic area? Do you still see a lot of those people today?

35 Pipkin: Oh, yes. Yes. But Republic has, you know, it's, the population of Republic has just sprung forth. There's over 15,000 now. When I was going there, there were probably, I mean, around Republic, there was 800 to 900. So you see, it's really expanded with a lot of people moving in as a bedroom town for Springfield.

40 **[End Track 6. Begin Track 7.]**

Pipkin: But I do see. Yes. And the other day I got a picture that was the Republic basketball boys at this special time. And they were the champions in their class conference in the state. And out of the twelve boys, there are only two left, and I know them well.

45

Corrigan: Okay. Do you feel you got a quality education there?

Pipkin: Yes. One on one.

5 Corrigan: Okay. I was going to ask why, and probably because a lot of one on one.

Pipkin: (laughs) That's right. They made you feel like you were important. Not in a haughty way or an egotistical way. But you were well worth their time. And they were not paid. Just a pittance. The teachers didn't receive a very large sum.

10 Corrigan: Did you think that people in your community, did they really value education?

Pipkin: Oh, yes.

15 Corrigan: Did your parents value education?

Pipkin: Yes, yes. Even though my father, he had to quit and never went beyond the sixth grade. But because he had to take field work. He had to work. See, that's it. But my mother, I have a certificate of her award here. And graduate, she received, this is in the Saint Joe school in Greene County. But down in the bottom it tells the year that she had perfect attendance.

20

Corrigan: So Miss Ada?

Pipkin: Addie, uh-hm. That was her nickname. Addie. Hendricks. Addie Hendricks.

25

Corrigan: Okay. Is it A-d-d-a?

Pipkin: A-d-d-i-e.

30 Corrigan: Oh, okay. I want to make sure I, A-d-d

Pipkin: That was her nickname.

35 Corrigan: Addie. A-d-d-

35

Pipkin: i-e.

Corrigan: That was a nickname. Okay.

40 Pipkin: And her name was Hendricks. Graduated, and she went through the eighth grade.

Corrigan: Hendricks was her maiden name.

Pipkin: Uh-hm.

45

Corrigan: Okay. So Greene County School, Missouri, having been for five months, neither absent nor tardy. That's good. (Pipkin laughs) January 29, 1916. So neither absent nor tardy is a—

5 Pipkin: That's what I mean. That's—

Corrigan: That's very bold on there.

Pipkin: That's very bold. You got a diploma or certificate of award for that purpose.

10

Corrigan: So your parents, education was important. And so you graduated, so you went on to Republic High School and graduated from there.

Pipkin: Uh-hm. As valedictorian.

15

Corrigan: Oh, you were.

Pipkin: Yes.

20

Corrigan: Congratulations.

Pipkin: Thank you. I went on to SMS (Southwest Missouri State) with a scholarship. Graduated with magna cum laude from MSU (Missouri State University). It's now MSU. And taught school.

25

Corrigan: So then it was Southwest Missouri State—

Pipkin: Teachers College

30

Corrigan: Teachers. Okay. So Southwest Missouri—

Pipkin: Teachers College.

Corrigan: Teachers College.

35

Pipkin: That's right.

Corrigan: So it is what is today—

40

Pipkin: MSU.

Corrigan: Southwest—

Pipkin: No.

45

Corrigan: Missouri State University. (Pipkin laughs) All the universities, you know, change their name around here.

Pipkin: They changed several times recently.

5

Corrigan: And I'm not a Missourian. I'm not from Missouri—

Pipkin: But they do.

10 Corrigan: —and I've learned the names have changed a lot. So you graduated from SMS in what year?

Pipkin: Oh, '52.

15 Corrigan: '52. In what was your—

Pipkin: Health and physical education and counseling.

Corrigan: So health and physical education and counseling.

20

Pipkin: And a minor in biology. And art. Don't get me started where they all went to. (laughs) But anyway.

Corrigan: So health and physical education. Art and biology.

25

Pipkin: Right. And then I taught school.

Corrigan: Okay. That was my next question. So you became a teacher yourself. Now where did you teach at?

30

Pipkin: I taught at Nevada, Missouri. Junior college in Independence, Kansas.

Corrigan: So Nevada, Missouri was which one?

35

Pipkin: It was high school.

Corrigan: Was high school. Okay. And what subject?

Pipkin: Health and physical education.

40

Corrigan: Okay. And then you said, what was the other one?

Pipkin: Okay. Independence, Kansas, Junior College.

45

Corrigan: Independence, Kansas.

Pipkin: Uh-hm.

Corrigan: Junior college. And what did you teach there?

5 Pipkin: Counseling and health and physical education. And then I taught at Southwest Teachers College after that for two years.

Corrigan: Okay. Hold on. Let me—

10 Pipkin: That's okay.

Corrigan: I want to get them all. And then it was Southwest Teachers College.

Pipkin: Mm hmm.

15 Corrigan: What did you teach there?

Pipkin: Same thing. Health and physical education. Then my husband decided that maybe we would just stay home and embrace our family. (laughs) So that's what I did.

20 Corrigan: So you did those right after college.

Pipkin: Sure. Right.

25 Corrigan: You taught high school, Independence, Kansas, then Southwest Teachers College.

Pipkin: That's right. That's right.

Corrigan: So when did you end that? When did you stop working?

30 Pipkin: I'd say two, three, four, five, '56.

Corrigan: So you stopped in 1956.

35 Pipkin: Uh-hm.

Corrigan: And you said, so your husband's name was William?

Pipkin: Yeah. That's right.

40 Corrigan: What were your children's name?

Pipkin: Nancy.

45 Corrigan: Okay.

Pipkin: Mary Anne. A-n-n-e. Two names.

Corrigan: Okay.

5 Pipkin: And Jim.

Corrigan: Jim. So three children. Okay. Now what, so the question I have for you is, so what influence do you think—

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

Corrigan: —attending that one-room school had on your life? Now obviously you became a teacher, so it had some. But what kind of things do you think really influenced you?

15 Pipkin: Oh, what influenced me was the perception of understanding other people. To accept them for who they are. Also, having a close feeling for, to wanting to help or assist other people. Young people, especially. Because I served 12 years as community leader of the 4-H, I've helped in every PTA. I've been an Extension council vice president when we had women's Extension. All of those activities that I would have never thought about had I not  
20 had some basics. Someone teaching me that you're here for a purpose and to share what you know. At one time I was Green County PTA president, Extension president—(laughs) Really too much. So I decided I'd just come home and take care of my children. Now they were teenagers at the time. But you know, they need you. An older child, an older person at that age, needs you more than a young child does. You think a young child needs you  
25 desperately. But others can fulfill those obligations. But when you get a 14, 17, age child, they need that connection. You need that connection. You need to sit at a dinner table every night and eat a lunch and a meal together and find out what's going on.

30 Corrigan: Now we covered a lot. But I'm curious to know, is there anything that we didn't cover or any funny story you have from the school that you'd like to share? Or if there's any, you know, other topic we didn't cover about the school that you attended, I mean, let me know, yeah.

35 Pipkin: Okay. As far as I know, nothing, oh, nothing, well, yes, there was one time Sonny Blades, and he was so sorry. We were playing Annie Over. First black eye I ever had in my life. And we'd throw the ball over the schoolhouse. Well, he came around the corner and he'd thrown it and I threw it back. And the next time he came around the outside and threw it right directly and hit me in the eye. I was about eight at that time. Went home with a black eye. Mom said, "What have you done?" I said, "Oh, well, just this Sonny's problem."  
40 (laughs) I have the black eye. He was so sad! He was just, really, (laughs) it was a terrible thing to hit me.

Corrigan: So it just came over the roof at you.

Pipkin: Oh, sure! Hit me in the eye. And it really puffed up. I couldn't see anything. But anyway, went home with a, you know, here I was with a black eye. I don't think Mom expected that. (laughs)

5 Corrigan: No. No. She probably wanted to make sure you weren't—

Pipkin: She thought maybe I was out roughing the others up. (laughs)

10 Corrigan: Yeah. That's probably what she was more worried about, that you were fighting.

Pipkin: That's right.

15 Corrigan: Did you, I forgot to ask this a little bit ago, did you have, was there a piano in the building?

Pipkin: No.

Corrigan: No piano. Did you sing?

20 Pipkin: Yes, we did. We had music. Yes, I enjoyed that.

Corrigan: Okay. I wondered that. And did you have art projects at all?

25 Pipkin: Yes. Oh, yes. I loved that.

Corrigan: So art and music were incorporated.

30 Pipkin: Yes. Oh, they were incorporated. But we didn't have a piano. We didn't have money enough for a piano.

Corrigan: Okay. Yeah, I wanted to make sure I asked that. I kind of forgot about the—

Pipkin: Right.

35 Corrigan: So some of the other extra things besides like math and reading and—

Pipkin: Sure.

40 Corrigan: So there, because I knew you said you decorated for things, but—

Pipkin: Sure. But we would have people like would come in that could play the fiddle or entertain. And those usually came along with the box supper. We'd usually have an entertainer, you know, like maybe Grandpa Hendricks or someone loves to play the fiddle. Bluegrass, that kind of stuff. It was, as I said, a community thing.

45 Corrigan: Okay. Good. Good. Did your husband attend a one-room schoolhouse, too?

Pipkin: Yes, he did.

Corrigan: Just on a different side of town.

5

Pipkin: North side. Bennett.

Corrigan: Bennett.

10

Pipkin: Bennett. Uh-hm. I have his information here

Corrigan: Okay. So does he have a similar story like you do?

Pipkin: Oh, yes. And there's his work. I just wanted to show you some of the things.

15

Corrigan: Yeah. So you've kept a lot of this stuff. So you have an arithmetic workbook—

Pipkin: But you all can have this. I brought it so you can keep it.

20

Corrigan: And practice activities in English. And individual corrective exercises for elementary school English.

Pipkin: Mm hmm. That's right.

25

Corrigan: So these were his books.

Pipkin: That's right. You may have them. I'm giving those to you.

30

Corrigan: Well, thank you. We can add them to the collection for sure. And while we're on tape still, what are some of the other examples of stuff you've brought?

Pipkin: Well, this is my father-in-law's automatic speller. And it—

**[End Track 8. Begin Track 9.]**

35

Pipkin: Also was from the Bennett School. And this was in 1918.

Corrigan: So this was—

40

Pipkin: This was his father. My husband's father.

Corrigan: Okay. And so this was his—

Pipkin: At Bennett School.

45

Corrigan: Bennett School here in 1918.



Pipkin: Here's another one in 1912.

Corrigan: Morris Stanley Pipkin. So, okay.

5

Pipkin: Staley.

Corrigan: Staley. Okay, Staley. Now let me ask you, why, have you just, why did you keep all these all these years?

10

Pipkin: The family before me did.

Corrigan: Okay.

15

Pipkin: These were precious because my father-in-law went to Normal, which was MSU, the beginning of MSU. And he went to MU (University of Missouri-Columbia) for two years. And he was eighteen years old when he was sent to MU. And he was always, well, the education of this family that I married into has always through the years, my father-in-law's dad was in Extension, ASCS gentleman that was in charge, has always just been a connection. My mother-in-law was a teacher. My father-in-law's mother was a teacher. And I'm a teacher. My husband was a single, only child. My father-in-law was an only child. It goes back, but it's just been all through the years. This has just been something that is very important.

20

25

Corrigan: Now did any of your children become teachers, or no?

Pipkin: I had three children. All graduated with honors. I have a son that's in partnership with Clearwater Angus Farms, that we own. Has been in the family since 1867. Then I have a middle daughter who is a partner at Baird, Kurtz & Dobson, the accounting firm. And I have Nancy, the oldest, she's at Mountain Grove and she is in the cattle business.

30

Corrigan: Okay. So you have two in the cattle business. And, now what was the name, say that again. What was the name of the farm you said—

35

Pipkin: Clearwater Angus Farm.

Corrigan: Clearwater Angus Farm. And it's been in the family how long?

40

Pipkin: Well the land has been there, 1867. But we have sales. And in 1933, they bought their first registered Angus in Kansas. So we have had Angus, and we still have Angus. Every one of the children have shown cattle at the state fair since 1947. I mean, W.D. was showing in 1947 at the state fair.

45

Corrigan: So you're still raising Angus cattle.

Pipkin: Oh, mercy, yes. Five hundred head. (laughs)

Corrigan: Oh, really?

Pipkin: Yes.

5

Corrigan: Okay. So between you and your husband and then your son?

Pipkin: Yes. Uh-hm. And his wife. And they have two children.

10

Corrigan: Now is that all in, are we—

Pipkin: 900 acres.

Corrigan: Are we talking in the Republic area? Or no?

15

Pipkin: Yes! Uh-huh. We're all in the Republic district.

Corrigan: Okay. And are you, I mean, do you still live on this farm where—

20

Pipkin: Sure!

Corrigan: Okay.

25

Pipkin: Live there for, well, we built our home in '62. We lived in an older home prior to that. We've been married fifty-seven years.

Corrigan: Okay. So you're still on the cattle farm.

30

Pipkin: Oh, sure. I work every day. (laughs) And so does he.

Corrigan: Am I keeping you from your chores right now?

35

Pipkin: No, no! I'm enjoying the relaxation. This is one of these books. This is my, mine. And this is Blades School.

Corrigan: So District 111.

40

Pipkin: Sure. And you may have that book. And then here's another one of Morris' that you can have. It's a Grand School reader. These are books that I don't think you all are probably familiar with.

45

Corrigan: Well, no. I mean, we have a large book collection of about 200,000 books, I think. But they're either about Missouri, from Missouri, from Missouri authors or they're from Missourians.

Pipkin: Right.

Corrigan: I don't know that we have too many from—

Pipkin: The schools.

5

Corrigan: A specific one-room schoolhouse, no. And so what was the name of your husband's school?

Pipkin: Bennett.

10

Corrigan: Oh, that's right. Bennett. And so these are a mixture of Bennett School—

Pipkin: Bennett

15

Corrigan: And then the other one was the Blades School.

Pipkin: Blades. And this is Saint Joe. And you may have this.

Corrigan: Your—

20

Pipkin: My mother.

Corrigan: Your mother's, yeah. The Saint Joe, the, okay. So it's a mix of three schools.

25

Pipkin: And my mother-in-law went to Salem.

Corrigan: Okay.

Pipkin: Which is the one, the other one, my mother-in-law.

30

Corrigan: So three one-room schoolhouses in this area.

Pipkin: Oh, yeah. And four, really. Salem.

35

Corrigan: Salem.

Pipkin: Here's another one. Anyway, you can just take the ones you want and then—

Corrigan: Yeah. We can, yeah.

40

Pipkin: You just take the ones that you want.

Corrigan: Okay. So just to kind of wrap up here a little bit, I do appreciate you coming in and sharing your story today. I think this is great. A lot of information. And a lot of extra stuff, too, that we can learn a lot about one-room schools here. So if you don't have anything

45

else to share, I'll go ahead and shut off the recorder. Thank you very much. I appreciate it.  
And you'll—

**[End Track 9. Begin Track 10.]**

5

Corrigan: --hear back from me after this in a little bit. Hold on one second.

Pipkin: Thank you so much. Thank you.

10

**[End Interview.]**