

RICE: Yes. As I said, so many of those have passed away already, that there's not too many of them left. Of course, as I said while ago my brothers and sisters have all left here, the ones that haven't died. This schoolhouse, before we get away from that, it was later moved a half a mile. The teacher then was an old cripple fellow who was another homesteader down there, who was teaching school wherever he could get a job. In this school when I was going there, incidentally I went to six different schools trying to get my education.

BURROUGHS: You'd go a few months one place and a few months another?

RICE: Yes, that's right. We had co~~o~~scription schools a lot of the time. Just whatever the parents could pay, that's the money the school had to hire a teacher.

BURROUGHS: Now did they pay the teacher?

RICE: Yes, they paid the teacher. When I went to school in this dug-out the second time, this teacher taught from first grade to high school.

BURROUGHS: You had that many grades?

RICE: Yes, that many grades. He and his wife taught all of these grades. Incidentally, I'm not down grading our school system now, don't misunderstand me, I'm for education and I am glad that all of my children could get it. But then we wanted an education because it was so hard to get it. I think we learned as much under this system of teaching as probably anywhere.

BURROUGHS: I imagine so. And too you were exposed to a lot as you sat

through classes of the higher grades and I think you absorbed some, you must have.

RICE: That's right. Incidentally, I remember one time the teacher was sick, and I being a high student in the school, there would be just three or four of us in high school, for two or three days he turned the school over to me. Right then I decided I didn't want to be a school teacher. (all laugh).

BURROUGHS: You looked for something else? Can you estimate how much the teacher's salary was on this conscription bases?

RICE: Oh, possibly from twenty to twenty five dollars a month, not more than that.

BURROUGHS: About how much did each family pay? Was it on a bases. . .

RICE: It kinda added out.

BURROUGHS: On how much land they had?

RICE: No, on how many children. It depended on how many children and how able they were.

BURROUGHS: How much a head?

RICE: That still depended. Just whatever they'd have to do to make up so much for this teacher for so many months. If my parent's happened to be the ones that couldn't pay as much or could pay more, why they just went ahead and did it.

BURROUGHS: And they were willing?

RICE: Yes.

BURROUGHS: Now did someone give the land for these little dugout schools?

RICE: Yes. Off of the quarter section of their land.

BURROUGHS: You said there were so many in a community, it would amount to almost every family giving a little bit of land, wouldn't it, eventually?

RICE: No. You see each township had a place for the schoolhouse. And it only took them an acre or so, but the kids had the privilege of running all over the 160 square miles. (all laugh).

BURROUGHS: I imagine some of the boys did.

RICE: Yes, we did. I remember two or three boys in that school had burros and we would get our a ride those burros and teach them to pitch, kick and everything else. We'd get out on somebody elses land and play baseball and things like that.

BURROUGHS: They didn't have crops there?

RICE: There would be pastures around. They didn't put all of this land into cultivation, Mrs. Burroughs. They had to put a certain amount of it in cultivation, to prove up on our homestead. In other words to get a deed to it.

BURROUGHS: So you had plenty of pasture land?

RICE: We had plenty of cows.

BURROUGHS: I could believe it. I imagine you had quite a few adventures there on the prairie without to much discipline.

RICE: Yes. I remember this little old schoolhouse, we had it, believe it or not, a literary society meetings for the community, spelling matches and various things like that.

- BURROUGHS: What kind of programs did you have in the literary society? That's the first time I've heard anybody mention that.
- RICE: We would maybe have somebody, a speaker or two people debating, somebody quoting poetry, just anything that was educational.
- BURROUGHS: What kind of debates, were they political, religious or what?
- RICE: It didn't make us any difference. (all laugh).
- BURROUGHS: Just so you had somebody talking?
- RICE: This fellow was a school teacher, it was Mrs. Carl Cox's daddy. I remember when I was in high school, he and I debated one time. I don't remember how the debate was stated but it was more or less on women's suffrage.
- BURROUGHS: Oh. So, one took one side and one took the other?
- RICE: That's right.
- BURROUGHS: Then how was the decision made?
- RICE: I don't even remember. We did it in a spirit of more or less entertainment and at the same time practicing speaking and things like that.
- BURROUGHS: That was really great. What about the churches, Mrs. Rice. Did they have churches in the school or where did you go to Sunday school and church?
- MRS. RICE: We had to have church in the school building. We didn't get to have church every Sunday, we would only have it maybe once a month. In our community, church happened to be Baptist. There was a pastor, Brother Calloway who would come out every church day. ...

BURROUGHS: He'd come from Portales?

MRS. RICE: Portales, yes. Then have church.

BURROUGHS: The families had to go some distance to come to the church on Sunday. Did they just pack up the wagons?

MRS. RICE: Yes. But it was just about the distance the school children would go, not over two or three miles.

BURROUGHS: Did you eat your dinner there?

MRS. RICE: Not very often. We'd go home with each other for noon. You know how people used to visit, we had more time than we do now. Big families and that was part of our entertainment was getting together on Sundays.

BURROUGHS: Then you would go home with somebody else [indistinct] in the afternoon.

MRS. RICE: Or someone would go home with us.

BURROUGHS: Those were the days of big dinners, I imagine.

MRS. RICE: Big dinners, big families and big get togethers for the amount of people there was.

BURROUGHS: Since the homes were all so small and the families relatively large, how did they accomodate another family or two who would come home after church?

MRS. RICE: The children would all have to wait.

BURROUGHS: I think that was a cruel custom.

MRS. RICE: Yes, it was. We just pulled up another chair and put down our plate and played outside in the afternoon.

- BURROUGHS: Then they would come in for another serving and those children would go out, is that right? Sort of a relay.
- MRS. RICE: If we needed to do it that way. Occasionally we would have something outside, but basically we didn't, it was in the homes.
- BURROUGHS: I know you are a very good cook, how would you mention the food that you had in those days and how does it compare with what we have at family gatherings? What did you have available?
- MRS. RICE: We didn't really have too much available, only as we bought it, Mrs. Burroughs. In those days, in this country you couldn't raise too much without irrigation, and so many of the homesteads didn't windmills, which was our supply of water. Sometimes we would have a garden. Pickled beets, brown beans, and we all of course had our meat and our cows for milk, our chickens.
- BURROUGHS: You raised your own?
- MRS. RICE: We raised that. We had Karo syrup which we had to buy and the old times is still alike. Then beans, brown beans. Of course, the old ancient chicken and dumplings, fried chicken, ham, and things of good old country eating. There wasn't as many different varieties as we have now days, but I believe it tasted better than it does now. (all laugh).
- BURROUGHS: And there was plenty of it. What kind of pies did the women make, without fruit. Except what they could buy, canned fruit.
- MRS. RICE: My mother would make buttermilk pie. There are recipes nowadays that are real nice and flucey, but mother would make the cobblers. They were real good, my mother was a good cook. She

had to be to raise ten children in New Mexico. And a good manager and believe it or not, in the spring the thistles, these tumbleweeds that come up just as thick as they could be and when they were real young and tender they were so good for greens, like spinach and things. Then there was this lambs quarter that's wild, and we managed and were happy.

BURROUGHS: Do you know you are the first person that has mentioned eating of the native plants and I'm glad that you did. Because now people are thinking in the terms of natural foods. Those two things have been mentioned many times in current magazines and being particularly a helpful food.

MRS. RICE: We had quite a bit of company from town. I'll tell this little incident. It was Sunday morning, we had unexpected company, probably our pastor, I can't remember who it was. Mama had already picked enough of this thistle for our dinner so she told us children, "You go out behind the barn, and don't let them see you picking this." So she didn't want them to know. It was not supposed to be eaten, so they thought, probably.

BURROUGHS: Oh, really.

MRS. RICE: Yes.

BURROUGHS: They didn't know the difference?

MRS. RICE: They didn't know the difference, it was delicious when it was cooked.

BURROUGHS: What kind of green did they think it was?

MRS. RICE: I don't know what they thought it was. But they weren't

acquainted with getting it like that, going and picking it out in a prairie.

BURROUGHS: So you had to sneak behind the barn.

MRS. RICE: We had to sneak behind the barn to finish out our noon meal.

BURROUGHS: (laugh). What did she do, cook that with slices of pork?

MRS. RICE: Yes. It was delicious. We'd make some cornbread. In the fall we would have turnips lots of times.

BURROUGHS: That's real interesting. I'll think about next time I see these brush and thistles.

MRS. RICE: You have to get them while there tender.

BURROUGHS: Yes, I'm sure you do. Was there ever any other use made of the tumbleweed?

MRS. RICE: No, not to my knowledge, there wasn't.

BURROUGHS: The stock didn't eat the greens?

MRS. RICE: Oh, yes they would. The stock would eat it. It was real good because it was so tender in the spring. It seems like when we first came to this country, spring doesn't come as early as it does now.

BURROUGHS: I don't believe it did.

MRS. RICE: Maybe it was drier or something. I know when I was a little girl, my birthday's in May and I'd know when I saw the little green grass coming, it was near to my birthday. In May now we have everything.

BURROUGHS: I'm sure it's because we have a water supply to water during the winter time and early in the spring. Wouldn't you think that would be the reason why things green up sooner?

RICE: Well, partly Mrs. Burroughs. I think the beautiful things in our life when we was kids are the ones that seem like all time. The years there would be more moisture and things sprang up quicker, we appreciated it more than after we grew up. Because it was a synonymous of our young lives. I think that had a lot to do with it. We were happy and we would remember the good years and forget the bad ones.

BURROUGHS: That was a good philosophy.

MRS. RICE: This old prairie, when we came here was covered with beautiful purple flowers, as far as you could see almost. But we don't have those now.

BURROUGHS: [indistinct] feel that cultivation has taken them out. Is that the wild verbena that is seen along some of the roads?

MRS. RICE: No, I think not. It was a larger flower, it stood up more, it didn't spread.

BURROUGHS: Was it a lupine?

MRS. RICE: I believe not.

BURROUGHS: I don't remember what they called them.

BURROUGHS: What other wild flowers did you have besides that?

MRS. RICE: Well, not too many.

BURROUGHS: What about Indian blanket, wasn't there a lot of that? That's gaillardia. That red and yellow mixed flower.

MRS. RICE: Not too much. I just vividly remembered that our front yard was just covered with them when we moved out to Doss.

BURROUGHS: So, you did not have your front yard all plowed up then, you just put this little dugout in and you had the natural prairie growth in the yard?

MRS. RICE: We did for awhile.

RICE: Oh, Mrs. Burroughs, talking about flowers made me think about it. We have in our backyard, here now what we call Grandpa's Whiskers that came off of my parents' homestead that they put out there in there early part of their homestead life. We went down and got a plant of them, my wife and I.

BURROUGHS: Isn't that the plant that has the little yellow bloom with the red stamen that come outs that look like. . .

RICE: Yes.

BURROUGHS: I think people now call it Bird of Paradise.

RICE: I didn't know what they were called.

BURROUGHS: The common name is the Grandpa's Whiskers and it is a very hearty drought resistant shrub. Where did they bring that plant?

RICE: I don't know where they got it, but they set it out on their first homestead. My parents always set out trees and flowers.

BURROUGHS: So that's how you're such a good gardener now?

RICE: Well, I'm not a very good gardener, but I guess I've set out about as many trees in Portales as anybody.

BURROUGHS: Yes, I'm sure you have. And your yard now is lovely and Mrs. Rice is famous for her African Violets. Well now let's talk about the time that you two married. We know all about your

schooling and some of the things that happened when you were young. When did you marry?

RICE: Speaking of, pardon me, I didn't finish my schooling in New Mexico. Oklahoma and Texas.

BURROUGHS: Well, how did you get back to find Mrs. Rice?

RICE: Maybe I was more or less a globetrotter in my small world. My parents were still here and I came back. And as for our meeting, it was purely incidental. Well, I'll let her tell part about it.

BURROUGHS: All right you tell about the romance.

RICE: I'll help her.

BURROUGHS: All right.

MRS. RICE: I lived in town, right here where we live now, my parents did.

BURROUGHS: On this same location?

MRS. RICE: Yes.

BURROUGHS: Well, how interesting.

MRS. RICE: My husbands parents lived out at Richland. So a friend of ours was holding a revival, they held the revival out at brush arbor out there and I went along to be the pianist, these little pump organs. My husband had come home to visit his parents.

RICE: I was working in Clovis.

MRS. RICE: And that's how I met him.

BURROUGHS: Out at the brush arbor?

MRS. RICE: Out at the brush arbor, at Richland.

BURROUGHS: How soon after that were you married?

MRS. RICE: Eight months.

BURROUGHS: And you came to Portales to live?

RICE: Yes. We were married right here. But in a different house. Backing up a little to our courtship days, we didn't have a chance to live together then like the kids do now days. That year I had a farm down there, just working in Clovis during the summer. After I met her, I was hauling my grain to town and then is when I'd walk out here, put my team in the wagon yard, walk out here and see my wife.

MRS. RICE: It was to late to go anywhere and if we did we had to walk and he was tired after he had walked out here, he couldn't walk back.

BURROUGHS: (laugh) How far is this from the center of town?

MRS. RICE: One mile.

BURROUGHS: Your home now?

MRS. RICE: Yes, one mile.

BURROUGHS: So, you just had to sit in the parlor?

RICE: Part of the time I was in the kitchen and the family was in the parlor?

BURROUGHS: Yes, I can understand that. Mrs. Rice, I would like for you before we get into your marriage and children, to mention the members of the Hatch family, with whom you are related, the people who are living here now.

MRS. RICE: Just the ones living here now or should I mention all of my brothers and sisters?

BURROUGHS: I think the ones that are living in Roosevelt County now that we can remember.