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Narrator

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Interviewer

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WJ: Alright, this is December 3, 1984. I am William Jones and I am interviewing Helene Kaeding. And we are in the audiovisual studio of Moorhead State University. Hmmm. And I guess we should start first with maybe a summary of your...of your present family situation, your family background as a child, and when you arrived in Moorhead from where, and so on.

HK: Okay. I have...I live alone. And that's because my husband died in 1966. And our three children, instead of staying here where they should, took off to different parts. So Judy lives in Palo Alto, California, and John lives in Worcester, Vermont, and Paul lives in Minneapolis. But this was not my original home.

WJ: Mmmm-hmmm.

HK: It was the children's original home. But Harry had come here in the 1930s to teach, and I came to Moorhead in the 1940s. And hmmm...we went together for about a year before we were married. And hmmm...that sort of takes care of that part. But I was reared and say and I am a first generation American, because both of my parents emigrated from Sweden.

WJ: Mmmm-hmmm.

HK: They didn't know one another there. Hmmm. My mother came from the northern part. Obviously, both of them from very poor, poor families.

WJ: Mmmm-hmmm.

HK: My father came from an area about an hour south of Stockholm.

WJ: Mmmm-hmmm.

HK: And life was wonderful for them. Compared to what it was over in Sweden.

WJ: Mmmm. Yeah. So they had a limited educational background, I suppose, too?

HK: Well, when I visited in Sweden, they assured me that maybe they had the equivalent of third grade.

WJ: Mmmm.

HK: Because a teacher would come and stay maybe three months, and then move on to another area.

WJ: Mmmm-hmmm.

HK: And so they had nothing, I'm sure.

WJ: Yeah.

HK: And as I understand, my uncle came here in 1891, and my father in 1893. So my uncle sort of knew the language and knew the ropes. But when I visited my father's home in Sweden, I could understand the poverty. There were no jobs. There wouldn't have been enough food.

WJ: Mmmm-hmmm.

HK: And there they had that patriarchal system, you know, where the eldest son is the inheritor.

WJ: Sure. Inherits the farm.

HK: Right. So my dad and my uncle then came here and learned a trade, and that was the cement business.

WJ: Mmmm-hmmm.

HK: And then...I'm not sure about the historical facts, but they set up a cement business in St. Peter, which really turned out to be a wonderful thing for the two of them.

WJ: Mmmm-hmmm.

HK: Because I was born in the house that my father and uncle had built as a business venture and rented out until our family...I was the fourth in the line, and so in 1910 they moved into this...my family moved into this large house where I was born. But by that time my father and uncle not only owned a business, and each had a home, but they each had cars.

WJ: Mmmm. So they were really, ah, the upper crust of St. Peter by that time.

HK: [Chuckles] Well, I didn't realize that ever though.

WJ: No.

HK: I thought that we were poor.

WJ: Mmmm-hmmm.

HK: But I realize that in the eyes of the people in Sweden, they were *indeed* well-to-do.

WJ: Very well-to-do. Yeah. Now they...now they insisted that you have more education, obviously.

HK: Took it for granted.

WJ: Uh-huh.

HK: And, you know, now that I am an adult, I marvel that my father thought that five of his kids could go through college, and saw that we did.

WJ: That...that's remarkable.

HK: No expense to us, because we graduated debt free.

WJ: Mmmm-hmmm.

HK: My dad took care of it, feeling that by so doing, if he left anything in property, that wasn't important, but to have educated each of us...

WJ: Mmmm-hmmm. That's a vision that a lot of immigrant parents had, obviously.

HK: It amazes me.

WJ: Yeah. Yeah.

HK: Just amazes me.

WJ: And where did you go to school?

HK: Well, I went to Gustavus [Adolphus College], of course, because that was right in St. Peter.

WJ: And lots of...

HK: As each of us did.

WJ: And lots of good Swedes there.

HK: Oh, yes! [Laughing] Lots of good Swedes!

WJ: [Laughs]

HK: Though we never used the Swedish language in my home, unfortunately.

WJ: Is that right? So you never learned the language then.

HK: No.

WJ: Mmmm-hmmm.

HK: Not until I went to Sweden. And then none of my relatives my age spoke English. So I learned Swedish in a hurry.

WJ: Mmmm-hmmm. Did you spend quite a little time in Sweden when you were there?

HK: I spent a month...five weeks the first time I went.

WJ: Mmmm-hmmm.

HK: And then the second time I went, then there was no problem because I had taken Swedish here at Moorhead State.

WJ: Oh, yes. Mmmm-hmmm.

HK: And so now I write to them in Swedish and they write to me in Swedish.

WJ: Had you always been interested in languages? I know you taught language, too.

HK: Yes.

WJ: You taught Latin, basically.

HK: I think I had been, though I think that's accidental. I fell into Latin, because one of my best friend's mother was a major in Greek and Latin.

WJ: Mmmm-hmmm.

HK: And Doris was taking it, and I thought, well, if she does, I might as well, too!

WJ: [Chuckles]

HK: And then I *really*, truly liked it. So I kept on with it.

WJ: So you majored in classics then, did you?

HK: Mmmm-hmmm.

WJ: Mmmm-hmmm. Mmmm-hmmm.

HK: And public school music, Bill, which might interest you.

WJ: Oh, really!

HK: [Laughs] Yes.

WJ: Well! Well. Hmmm, and had you taught before you came to Moorhead?

HK: Oh, yes.

WJ: Mmmm-hmmm.

HK: I taught. See, my eldest brother taught at Roosevelt High in Minneapolis. And then my sister taught also, who was older than I. So that was sort of a natural thing for me to do, and I taught at Sebeka, which is right out of Wadena.

WJ: Mmmm-hmmm.

HK: Then, hmmm, got a better job at St. James, where it was primarily Latin. That's why they were interested in me.

WJ: Mmmm-hmmm.

HK: And I came here in the middle of the year from Warren, where I had not been very long.

WJ: Mmmm-hmmm.

HK: But the Latin teacher here resigned and Mr. Reinertsen[sp?] picked me up, so I came in January.

WJ: Mmmm-hmmm. Mmmm-hmmm. That was January of when now?

HK: 1940.

WJ: 1940. And you continued in the Moorhead system until you retired then?

HK: [Chuckles] Oh, but you know, when I was here, you couldn't teach if you were married.

WJ: Oh...And when you got married then, you had to leave the teaching profession?

HK: I had to leave the teaching profession, yes. So then I didn't teach again until the Latin teacher got mumps, and they couldn't find a replacement. So they came and asked me if I would sub. And then she'd only had two years of Latin ever, so when she found there was a sub, she requested that she not teach Latin.

WJ: Mmmm-hmmm.

HK: And then I taught one hour a day. I got seventy-five dollars a month for that.

WJ: Oh...my.

HK: [Laughs]

WJ: [Laughs]

HK: And that was, I think, in 1960.

WJ: Yeah. Even in 1960, that's not exactly a munificent sort of stipend.

HK: [Chuckles] My husband said to me, "Don't you think it's sort of stupid, tying yourself down five days a week to teach one hour?"

WJ: Mmmm-hmmm.

HK: But I did like teaching, and you got the cream of the crop, actually.

WJ: Sure.

HK: In class.

WJ: Mmmm-hmmm.

HK: And that was a challenge. And then in 1963 I went back full time, and taught then until I retired in 1975.

WJ: In 1975.

HK: Mmmm-hmmm.

WJ: So you had twelve years of full time teaching?

HK: That's right.

WJ: And you taught Latin...

HK: And English.

WJ: And English. Mmmm-hmmm.

HK: Mmmm-hmmm.

WJ: Okay.

HK: But the latter years, I taught straight Latin.

WJ: Did you?

HK: You know, the enrollment was so that I would have, usually, 125 kids a day in Latin.

WJ: Mmmm. Mmmm-hmmm.

HK: So then the...I no longer had any English.

WJ: Mmmm-hmmm. Mmmm-hmmm. Well, let's think a little bit about your first position. Ah, in the first place, had you always thought you were going to be a teacher?

HK: I really wanted to be a nurse.

WJ: Oh, really?

HK: Ah...and that would have meant that I would have to go to Minneapolis for nurses training. My mother did not like that idea because she thought that nurses got too many of the dirty jobs scrubbing and all of that.

WJ: Mmmm-hmmm.

HK: And then in the third place, I would have had to wait a year between the end of high school and the beginning of nursing because I was too young. You had to be eighteen.

WJ: Mmmm-hmmm.

HK: And so my parents said, "Well, go to college in that year, and *then* think..." Well, they were wise.

WJ: [Chuckles]

HK: Because, of course, after I had made friends for a whole year, I didn't want to leave.

WJ: Yeah. Yeah. Can you remember...where you lived, and how you got the job, and...and just how you felt when you first started?

HK: Oh, I...it's like as though it were yesterday. Because I was on a choir tour when this vacancy came, and that was 1931, so that was the Depression.

WJ: Mmmm-hmmm.

HK: Very few people were getting jobs.

WJ: Mmmm-hmmm.

HK: But I had left my resume at home, and also I had left the letter that we were...it was suggested that we follow in making application. So my sister actually wrote my letter of application.

WJ: Mmmm-hmmm.

HK: And I remember very well, I thought that if you were going to be well prepared, I ought to go early, so I went three days early.

WJ: [Laughs] All the way up to Sebeka, hmmm?

HK: Oh, it was terrible! There were no other teachers in town. I was sick from loneliness, absolutely physically ill. And then that first day of class, I had students who were equally as old as I, because they hadn't had a continuous education. And I taught American history, modern history, ancient history, social studies, all of the music, from first through high school.

WJ: Mmmm.

HK: And girls phys. ed.

WJ: Versatile! [Laughs]

HK: [Laughs] And no Latin!

WJ: [Laughing] No Latin! Of course, in those days, it was a small school, I'm sure. And...

HK: It was a small school.

WJ: Yeah.

HK: But there was a Latin teacher!

WJ: Oh, there was. I see.

HK: But she'd had two years of Latin also at Concordia.

WJ: Mmmm. Mmmm-hmmm. Mmmm-hmmm.

HK: And so the next year we swapped. She took one of my subjects (very likely modern history) and I took her Latin, because she felt unqualified.

WJ: Mmmm-hmmm. Mmmm-hmmm. That first school, ah...what size school and what were size of your...your classes?

HK: The classes were relatively large, twenty-five and thirty to a class.

WJ: Mmmm-hmmm.

HK: And we were in two buildings. And so you just ran outside, regardless of what the weather was like. You didn't have time to get a wrap or anything. And just ran from one...The high school building was concrete blocks, I remember. But the classrooms were large and very light, sunny. And hmmm, they were *always* in constant use.

WJ: Mmmm-hmmm.

HK: The assembly, if you had a vacant period anytime, you always were in the assembly hall. And I can remember that, of course, I had to have all sorts of musical events, because PTAs...this...see, the...anything that went on in town needed music.

WJ: Sure.

HK: So you had trios and you had quartets. Thank heavens, they didn't have an orchestra, or I would have had to have that. [Chuckles]

WJ: [Chuckles]

HK: But the girls phys. ed. was a problem, that...for a place, you know. And furthermore, I didn't know anything about phys. ed. [Chuckles] So that was sort of a nightmare.

WJ: And you didn't have an adequate gym, evidently, then?

HK: No. No.

WJ: You were outside when the weather was decent, but...?

HK: Absolutely.

[Recording static interruption]

HK: ...walked. That was the only thing I really knew about it to have them do. [Chuckles]

WJ: Mmmm-hmmm.

HK: So I would take them out in the country, and then come back, watching the clock all the time.

WJ: Oh, boy. The...the community itself, were you heavily involved in the community?

HK: Very.

WJ: Mmmm-hmmm.

HK: But we were very accepted. And while a lot of people criticize small communities as being full of gossip, I never felt that they were really gossiping. They were terribly interested in the teachers.

WJ: Mmmm-hmmm.

HK: But they were kind.

WJ: Mmmm-hmmm.

HK: And if anything ever happened health-wise or anything else, they were all *very* helpful. I...I really never felt that they were malicious in their gossip.

WJ: Mmmm-hmmm. Mmmm-hmmm. Mmmm-hmmm.

HK: We came, and we were out of the community, and we should be sort of a challenge, you know, because we had had opportunities that they hadn't had. And I never found that they were in any way trying to be detrimental.

WJ: Mmmm-hmmm. Where did you live?

HK: I rented a room in a home.

WJ: In somebody's home, yes. Yeah.

HK: Oh, and it was cold! Oh! It was *so* cold.

WJ: [Laughs]

HK: [Laughs] And I had...oh! It was a *long* march! I marched...walked, of course, because there were no cars. The only member of the whole faculty that had a car was the science teacher, who was unattached, fortunately, and filled his car up with all these women.

WJ: Mmmm-hmmm.

HK: And then the married men on the staff had cars, but none of us. So I walked a good mile every morning to get to where we had breakfast. It was maybe more than a mile. And then walked half that way back to the school, and then again at night.

WJ: What was your salary, do you remember?

HK: Yes. I was well paid compared to a lot. I got \$125 a month for nine months.

WJ: For nine months. So that was a little over a thousand dollars for the year then.

HK: So if I...my parents hadn't supported me in the summer, I would have been right out there on skid row.

WJ: Mmmm-hmmm. Mmmm-hmmm. Did you get integrated into the community as far as the social activities are concerned?

HK: Bill, that's where I learned to dance.

WJ: Oh!

HK: [Chuckles] I'd pick...

WJ: Couldn't do it at Gustavus Adolphus, could you?! [Laughs]

HK: Oh, no! You couldn't! [Laughs] So I picked my sin, and that was dancing.

WJ: Oh, yes.

HK: And that's a Finnish community.

WJ: Mmmm-hmmm.

HK: And so they would have dances in town, and the community had *no* kind of restriction on teachers in dancing.

WJ: Mmmm-hmmm.

HK: They wouldn't have liked it if you left for a weekend...

WJ: You were supposed to make your home there, period.

HK: That's right.

WJ: Mmmm-hmmm.

HK: But the Finnish people were *very* accepting. And we would go to dances. We went roller skating at Park Rapids, I remember. Hmmm. And they were very...they were very socially inclined. I think we did have to sort mind our our p's and q's. One thing that I think is very interesting is that...hmmm...our greatest chance for recreation was to go out and walk around the section after school. And I was one of the few women who didn't smoke. So I always carried the package of cigarettes, because they said, "Nobody would ever suspect you would smoke."

WJ: [Laughs]

HK: [Laughing] And I didn't, so I carried the loot...on me!

WJ: But that would...that would have been frowned upon?

HK: Oh...that would have been *terrible*.

WJ: Mmmm-hmmm. Mmmm-hmmm.

HK: And I know that...

WJ: For the women or for...for women and men?

HK: For the women.

WJ: For the women, mmmm-hmmm.

HK: The men, it wouldn't have made that much difference.

WJ: Mmmm-hmmm.

HK: And for the women to...hmmm...have beer in a beer parlor would have been frowned upon *dreadfully*.

WJ: Mmmm-hmmm.

HK: The men could go into the beer parlor, but not the women.

WJ: Mmmm-hmmm.

HK: And several would go...if we got as far as Wadena, they would look to see who was around, but they'd slip in and have a beer.

WJ: Mmmm-hmmm.

HK: I didn't like beer. So it was no problem as far as I was concerned.

WJ: No problem. Yeah. Yeah. Hmmm, as you think about...you've kind of had an early career and a late career, really, as far as education.

HK: That's right.

WJ: Let's...let's think about the early career first, as to...some of these topics. For example, the public attitude towards education, in the kind of priorities that education enjoyed.

HK: Well, in Sebeka...hmmm...education was not high on the list.

WJ: Mmmm-hmmm.

HK: Those students that really were outstanding were likely to go on someplace, but not with a great deal of family support.

WJ: Mmmm-hmmm.

HK: It wasn't that important. And, hmmm...

WJ: Most of the students ended up just going back on the farm?

HK: Right.

WJ: Mmmm-hmmm. Mmmm-hmmm.

HK: Became housewives.

WJ: Mmmm-hmmm. Mmmm-hmmm.

HK: You know, that was accepted.

WJ: Yeah.

HK: Very few that actually ventured out at that time. But then after three years, when I went to St. James, then things were completely reversed because, boy, that was a stronghold of education.

WJ: Mmmm. So communities really could vary in all of that?

HK: Oh, decidedly.

WJ: Yeah.

HK: But the community at St. James, now that's south of St. Peter and Mankato.

WJ: Mmmm-hmmm.

HK: So the area was different. The people in Sebeka were Finnish by background. The soil was poor. There was not...hmmm...affluence.

WJ: Mmmm-hmmm.

HK: In St. James, that was primarily a farming community where the land was good.

WJ: Yes.

HK: There were a lot of well-educated people. *Very* well educated.

WJ: Mmmm. Mmmm-hmmm.

HK: And so there...really, truly, I was hired with the understanding that the Latin classes, which had not been passing state boards, I was to see that that was raised.

WJ: Mmmm-hmmm.

HK: Because to them...

WJ: They were concerned about the quality.

HK: Absolutely. And see, the rest of the school was doing well. But that subject, which had involved bright youngsters, was not doing well.

WJ: Mmmm-hmmm.

HK: And so the superintendent talked to me very frankly about the fact that he expected those grades to go up.

WJ: Mmmm-hmmm. And were you successful?

HK: They went up. That...

WJ: They went up! [Laughs]

HK: [Laughs]

WJ: Or else, hmmm? [Laughs]

HK: Right! I would have...I wouldn't have lost my job, but he would have been very disappointed.

WJ: Sure.

HK: And he was an excellent administrator.

WJ: Hmmm. Let's talk about the relationship between a teacher and administrator in those days.

HK: Ah, he was the lord and master.

WJ: Mmmm-hmmm.

HK: You didn't question. I can remember a few incidents at Sebeka, and he was able...there was no doubt about that. But...hmmm...I would have questioned his judgment on several things. He was very rigid.

WJ: Mmmm-hmmm.

HK: Exceedingly rigid. And I think there...hmmm...his social mores were, ah, too restrictive, really.

WJ: Kind of out of touch as far as...?

HK: Right. Mmmm-hmmm.

WJ: Mmmm-hmmm.

HK: In St. James, he was equally high in his ideals, but he was living in realism instead.

WJ: Mmmm-hmmm.

HK: And I think that, you know, they never checked on how much we went home weekends.

WJ: Mmmm-hmmm.

HK: Or left the city weekends. And he was not as likely to feel that it was your obligation to be involved as heavily in the community. He was far more interested in the fact that we went on and did more with our own education outside of the school year.

WJ: Mmmm-hmmm. Did you do that?

HK: Oh, yes. Mmmm-hmmm.

WJ: Mmmm-hmmm. Where did you take any courses? Did you?

HK: I went to University of Wisconsin at that time. Mmmm-hmmm.

WJ: Mmmm-hmmm.

HK: Took more Latin, took more library...

WJ: Summers?

HK: Yes.

WJ: Mmmm-hmmm. Mmmm-hmmm.

HK: And I still had my salary of \$125 a month.

WJ: Oh. So you got into a better school system, but it didn't do much for you as far as the money.

HK: Not finance, no. No.

WJ: Yeah. Yeah. The...was there an expectation that all students would take Latin? Or...?

HK: No. No. You...it was always sort of restricted to the better student.

WJ: Mmmm-hmmm.

HK: Until I'd been here a while in Moorhead, and hoped that the average student would take Latin, because that person would benefit tremendously from having that background.

WJ: Mmmm-hmmm. Mmmm-hmmm. Mmmm-hmmm. What was your typical course load? How...what was your schedule like, back in those days?

HK: [Chuckles] Oh, you never had a vacant period, let me tell you.

WJ: No vacant period.

HK: Absolutely not.

WJ: So you'd start...the school would start at what time in the morning?

HK: Well, we would have to be there normally around, oh, eight o'clock.

WJ: Mmmm-hmmm.

HK: And the school day...well, in Sebeka, by the time that I would be through, I suppose it would be five.

WJ: Mmmm-hmmm.

HK: And then, of course, with all those preparations, you never had to worry about recreation, because you didn't have any time for it!

WJ: [Chuckles]

HK: By that time, I had three histories and social studies.

WJ: Oh, yeah.

HK: You know, with all the reading that you needed to do...

WJ: Oh...yeah, yeah.

HK: But at St. James, it was somewhat different because I had library.

WJ: Mmmm-hmmm.

HK: I taught three hours a day, and library the rest of the time. So if the library weren't full, even though there would be a lot of physical care, you know, ordering books, accessioning books...doing...checking shelves and all of that.

WJ: Sure.

HK: Because you didn't use students as much. They were expected to use their study periods for studying.

WJ: Mmmm-hmmm.

HK: And they really did.

WJ: Mmmm-hmmm.

HK: You expected more of the student. And so a lot of the mechanical things with books I had to do, too. But it did free me so that I could do more preparation as far as Latin I and II would be concerned.

WJ: Now it's interesting what you expected of students. Hmmm...what expectations as far as homework did you levy? And did you find this changed during the course of the years?

HK: It changed a *lot*. When I was even first in Moorhead, you could easily expect a student to do an hour's homework.

WJ: Mmmm-hmmm.

HK: And because of that, they advanced, but I'm not even so worried about the advancement as the fact that they had a far better basic background.

WJ: Mmmm-hmmm.

HK: You know, because you would...you would have them *really* trying to ferret out information on their own, and if they didn't get it, they'd come and ask for help.

WJ: Mmmm-hmmm.

HK: And the parents expected that they were going to be prepared. And especially at St. James, where they expected them to raise that state board system, you know.

WJ: Sure.

HK: The pressure was on.

WJ: The students were on trial to some extent, too.

HK: Oh, absolutely.

WJ: Yeah. Yeah.

HK: And...but then as time went on, you know, after the 1960s, for instance, hmmm, then the parents were more eager that kids *like* school than if they learned in school. You became more of a babysitter.

WJ: Mmmm-hmmm. Mmmm-hmmm.

HK: Keep them happy, keep them occupied. And nobody really was so terribly concerned about whether they were really getting an education.

WJ: Mmmm-hmmm. Mmmm-hmmm. Mmmm-hmmm.

HK: And hmmm...there were a lot of people—especially in those years when we were monkeying around with modular scheduling—who came out with a horrible lack of basic knowledge.

WJ: The modular scheduling...how did that impact on the typical student's experience?

HK: If they were bright, they could handle that.

WJ: Mmmm-hmmm.

HK: The average student was *not* capable of using his time wisely. And they spent ninety minutes going from class to class during a whole day.

WJ: Mmmm.

HK: We had fifteen mods, five minutes of passing time, with seventy-five minutes just *wandering* around in the halls.

WJ: Hmmm. I guess I don't even understand how that works. How...how did the modular system work? I mean, okay, you had fifteen mods. What size was the...was a modular class?

HK: Usually twenty minutes.

WJ: So that it's conceivable that you could have had how many different twenty minute assignments there that...for a student then?

HK: It was a nightmare. I never did figure out how many times I would see the same child in a day. Some days maybe I would have that person, depending on the mods, back to back, and then that was wonderful. If the rest of them had been in that same situation...

WJ: Mmmm-hmmm.

HK: Because then you'd have forty minutes.

WJ: Mmmm-hmmm.

HK: But if part of the class had been in another class, and then you got them mixed in with the ones that were there the first mod...

WJ: Then what did you do with the ones that you'd already given this particular lesson to from the new ones who were...?

HK: This was the whole problem.

WJ: Sure. Ah, well, what was the objective of this modular system anyway?

HK: They felt that if you had mods, that the child's attention span would maybe be not more than that.

WJ: Mmmm-hmmm.

HK: Well, I agree to that. Ah, junior high school students, if you have a concentration span of twenty minutes, that's pretty good. But then if you can keep them another twenty minutes with directed study, and you're there to help them, then you've got a learning process in which you're reinforcing what you've done the first twenty minutes.

WJ: Mmmm-hmmm. Sure.

HK: But the idea was that they would never be bored, and they would like it, and therefore they would put forth their best efforts.

WJ: Mmmm.

HK: [Laughs] Well, even adults aren't always too thrilled about an education, so they're just going to lap it up.

WJ: Mmmm-hmmm. Mmmm-hmmm.

HK: And I just thought it was...a tragedy.

WJ: When...when was this instituted?

HK: Ah, it was in the 1970s. I wonder if it could have been maybe 1970-1973, or 1972-1975.

WJ: Mmmm-hmmm. So that...?

HK: And then it was done away with because they realized that it had not been a fruitful...

WJ: Mmmm-hmmm.

HK: Then also think of the number of teachers that had to be hired because you had fifteen mods. Well, you needed to double. You almost needed to double the size of the faculty in that school.

WJ: Hmmm. That's hard to visualize. Now how many mods were actual classroom experiences for the student, and how many were study hall? Did they...?

HK: [Sighs] I don't remember how many study halls I had. But you see, if you were lucky enough to have your own students in a study hall, that was one thing. But if you got mods in which you had other students from other classes, you could be of no help.

WJ: Mmmm-hmmm.

HK: You didn't know these youngsters. They could have been seventh through ninth. And hmmm...then if you did have extra mods again, you were very likely in the assembly hall where all of these kids would come who weren't really involved in some particular class.

WJ: Mmmm-hmmm. Now you were teaching when they moved into the new high school, I guess, then weren't you?

HK: In the new high school, and I was teaching when the new junior highs had opened up.

WJ: Is that right? Mmmm-hmmm.

HK: Because in my first experience here, I taught at what was then Central Junior High, where Hornbacher's [Foods] now stands.

WJ: Mmmm-hmmm.

HK: That had a magnificent library.

WJ: Mmmm-hmmm.

HK: It was beautiful!

WJ: [Chuckles]

HK: And then that was superseded by the two north and south junior highs. And I...there was a time when I was teaching in all three junior highs.

WJ: Mmmm-hmmm.

HK: I drove from one building to the next building.

WJ: Mmmm, that must have been interesting.

HK: [Laughs] Well, let me tell you! It was a *wearing* experience!

WJ: Yes. Yes.

HK: Because you never had really the time. And there was even a time when senior high opened, when I had no lunch break.

WJ: Mmmm.

HK: I taught on my lunch break. And I took a sandwich from home in the morning and ate it in the car as I drove from South Junior High to Senior High.

WJ: Oh, my. [Chuckles]

HK: That was my lunch break.

WJ: Hmm. Did you...? You know, as far as student receptivity and student willingness to work, you've said that, ah, that that seemed to be much less the further along you went in your career, that...particularly in the 1970s, was this...was this the case?

HK: Well, I think maybe that I did not suffer that as much as most other teachers.

WJ: Mmmm-hmmm.

HK: First of all, they elected my class.

WJ: So you had a really...kind of a cream of the crop.

HK: Absolutely.

WJ: Mmmm-hmmm.

HK: But there was that underlying factor that, hmmm, it was more important...[Coughs] Excuse me. It was more important for a person to get into college with a good grade.

WJ: Mmmm-hmmm.

HK: And if then Latin was going to be difficult, *maybe* they should take something that would be easier.

WJ: Mmmm-hmmm.

HK: So, in a sense, then that made you aware that if you wanted to keep that student, and you wanted him to have the experience of the foreign language, you *had* to make that class so attractive that he was going to come back in spite of it.

WJ: Mmmm-hmmm.

HK: You know.

WJ: Even though you were...he or she is going to have to work harder than a lot of other classes.

HK: That's right.

WJ: Yeah.

HK: And I think maybe that consciously or subconsciously you sort of lowered your standards.

WJ: Mmmm-hmmm.

HK: In order to keep the students, because you felt that they were going to gain by it.

WJ: Mmmm-hmmm. Was a real challenge in that environment then to teach...teach the students?

HK: Mmmm-hmmm. And I think that the country as a whole sort of went through that, where the student was asked, "What would you like in the curriculum?" As though they would know what the needs of the future were going to be. And they *didn't*.

WJ: Mmmm-hmmm.

HK: Which one of us knew? Furthermore, that was the time, too, when the student was supposed to *rate* the teacher.

WJ: Mmmm-hmmm.

HK: Well, how ridiculous *that* is! Why would you elect [to take] a class if you didn't think the teacher was adequate?

WJ: Mmmm-hmmm.

HK: I said that to the principal. I said, "I feel this is a *terribly* unsatisfactory kind of thing. Of course they're going to rate me high. They don't know me from a hole in the ground as far as a teacher is concerned, because what other Latin teacher is there?"

WJ: Mmmm-hmmm.

HK: *None*. There was no comparison to be made! [Chuckles]

WJ: [Laughs]

HK: And they didn't know whether I really had a basic knowledge of Latin.

WJ: Mmmm-hmmm.

HK: They *assumed* I did, but...

WJ: This...hmmm...this kind of leads us into some of the things that...from outside education that had possibly an impact on education. You, of course, started to teach in the Depression.

HK: Mmmm-hmmm.

WJ: And obviously, that had an impact on your salary, if nothing else.

HK: Absolutely.

WJ: Ah, were you aware of other things that...that influenced education, just simply because you were in a Depression era?

HK: I think that, hmmm, I was much more aware then of the economic differences. Hmmm. Even though everyone felt the Depression. I could never remember that in my own life. My father did not lose his business.

WJ: Mmmm-hmmm.

HK: He lost in bank failures. Hmmm, but we always had adequate clothing, we always still continued to have that car, or a newer car, of course. Hmmm. We always had plenty of food. Though I do remember in the Depression that farmers who owed my father huge bills would bring in a dozen eggs, or a sack of potatoes, or things, and my father very meticulously kept records of that as against that big bill.

WJ: Mmmm-hmmm.

HK: But we never knew what it was like to be hungry.

WJ: Mmmm-hmmm.

HK: I did realize that, when I got out teaching, there were children who should have had dental care that weren't getting it. That...hmmm...never had any spare money...which didn't bother me, because on our salaries, we didn't have spare money either! But we...there were so many areas in which there was absolutely nothing of any cultural impact.

WJ: Mmmm-hmmm. So this...nowadays, when a student is asked to bring fifty cents so they can go to the Planetarium, or go to the Children's Theatre, or whatever, that wouldn't have been possible in those days?

HK: Never.

WJ: Mmmm-hmmm.

HK: It wouldn't have been possible at all.

WJ: Mmmm-hmmm.

HK: And I can remember what a great event it was in the life of my girls' sextet when they were able to go to a competition, a district competition, and they got out of town even.

WJ: [Chuckles]

HK: And it was no cost to them. But it was the thrill of a lifetime for many of them just to get that far.

WJ: Mmmm-hmmm. Mmmm-hmmm. Mmmm-hmmm. How about...? Let's see, now you weren't teaching during World War II, I guess.

HK: No, but an interesting incident. My husband was in service. And hmmm, he had a business and math background. And because all the men were drawn into service, they came and offered me my husband's job at more money than they paid him.

WJ: [Laughs]

HK: [Laughing] I was *irate*.

WJ: [Laughing]

HK: And of course I couldn't accept it because I was pregnant, and you weren't allowed to teach if you were pregnant.

WJ: Oh, that was...that was impossible, is that right?

HK: *Oh, absolutely impossible.*

WJ: That would affect...affected your teaching? [Laughs]

HK: [Laughing] It...would have made me not know my subject matter!

WJ: [Laughs]

HK: [Laughing] Absolutely. And when I returned to teaching after that interval, boy, the one thing that I fought for in the western division...But then I was sent as a representative to the state for a number of years. I fought for women's salaries, and being on contract, because I was not on contract in, I don't think, any of the time that my husband lived. He died in 1966, and I taught full time from 1963. I was never on contract.

WJ: Does...does that mean that you did not qualify for retirement benefits during that time? In other words, you...you not being on contract, you got no fringe benefits, for example?

HK: Well, I didn't get fringe benefits, though it did count for Social Security.

WJ: Mmmm-hmmm.

HK: And I could repay that in pension plan later.

WJ: Mmmm-hmmm.

HK: But I never *knew* until the day before school started whether I would be hired.

WJ: Oh, I see. Yeah. So that you were an occasional...supposedly, an occasional employee?

HK: Right.

WJ: Mmmm-hmmm.

HK: And hmmm...I don't know whether I was really on the salary schedule. But you didn't make any ripples...Because I wanted to teach, and I needed to teach.

WJ: Mmmm-hmmm. Mmmm-hmmm.

HK: And hmmm...so it wasn't until I became president of the local MEA [Minnesota Education Association] and then worked into division and then the state that I fought for contracts for married women.

WJ: Well...well, that was the reason, supposedly, that you didn't have a contract?

HK: I was a married woman whose husband was on the staff.

WJ: I see. And so the only justification for hiring you as a married woman is...was that it was an emergency?

HK: Right.

WJ: A last minute emergency. I see.

HK: Mmmm-hmmm.

WJ: Ah...now, you were involved in the MEA. And in that, were you ever involved in collective bargaining then?

HK: No, but I was the faculty representative with the school board in which I *really fought* for the teachers.

WJ: Mmmm-hmmm.

HK: And I remember that very decidedly, because that was the first year that Dr. [unclear] was here, and there was going to be no raise in the salary schedule. And I felt that it was unfair for the teachers to have to take the burden of taxation.

WJ: Mmmm-hmmm.

HK: And it always has been a point...really sore point with me when my friends said, “Well, we would like to see *your* salary increase because *you* are a good teacher.” But they don’t want to see *anybody’s* salary increased when they talk to you like that and *you know it!*

WJ: [Laughs] Yeah.

HK: [Laughs]

WJ: So, actually, there was no formal collective bargaining then? There was a professional association, the MEA, and you were active in that?

HK: Right.

WJ: At...at both the local and the state level?

HK: Mmmm-hmmm.

WJ: And...but without collective bargaining, ah, all you could do is develop positions, and convey those positions to the board.

HK: That’s it.

WJ: And hope they would listen.

HK: Mmmm-hmmm.

WJ: Mmmm-hmmm. Mmmm-hmmm. Hmmm...How about Sputnik? You were teaching when Sputnik came through, too, didn’t you?

HK: Well, you know, so many of those things I...it was sort of...interesting. You know that so many events were supposed to have great impact. I was thinking especially of the fact that when TV came...

WJ: Mmmm-hmmm.

HK: ...the schools were wired so you could have TV and be an up-to-date teacher. Well...

WJ: [Laughs]

HK: [Laughing] That was a...certainly a *lovely dream!*

WJ: Yes.

HK: That availed *nothing*. And I think that things that sometimes surprised me were...hmmm...things such as the walk on the moon and all of that, that that was so taken for granted instead of being a source of wonder.

WJ: Mmmm-hmmm.

HK: And I remember saying to my classes often...When people would come, and you'd know what the discussion at home was: much too much money was being spent. And I would say, "You can't harness men's minds. You'll *never* be able to stop the space program."

WJ: Mmmm-hmmm.

HK: It would have been like putting Christopher Columbus back in Italy or Spain.

WJ: [Laughing] In a rowboat, hmmm?

HK: Right!

WJ: [Laughs]

HK: And I found that that was a very thrilling, exciting, and imaginative thing, to bring to date even in a classical language, and the study of that period, how man has always superseded, because of the ability of his mind.

WJ: Mmmm-hmmm. Mmmm-hmmm.

HK: And you can't stop it.

WJ: Mmmm-hmmm.

HK: Somebody is always going to have that dream, and that dream will be fulfilled, come what may.

WJ: [Laughs] Well, that...there...there are some of those dreams that weren't so happy, however. I'm thinking of one of the more negative ones where we had a time of...of McCarthyism, where there was a real concern about the loyalty of teachers, and a real concern about the communist threat, and I guess a kind of stultification of man's imagination and electoral freedom at that point. Were you conscious of that at all?

HK: Yeah, I was very conscious of that. Because, hmmm, I...I still feel that...hmmm...when that phrase was coined, the only thing we have to fear is fear itself, that that was such a truth.

WJ: Mmmm-hmmm.

HK: But that people so abused anyone who dared to have a different thought. And I still think that today. I am not so sure that democracy is the right government for everyone. That you're...there are places in which communism is the right way to go, and that we fear that because we don't want to think about it.

WJ: Mmmm-hmmm.

HK: That we could possibly be wrong, and others could be right. And of course the fact, I think, the sad part of McCarthy, was that instead of really investigating thoroughly, people took his word for it.

WJ: Mmmm-hmmm.

HK: And such a hullabaloo existed that really damaged a *lot* of people.

WJ: Yeah.

HK: Just awful.

WJ: Yeah.

HK: It was like in the early days, when any new scientific evidence came up, that person was immediately treated as a heretic by the church, by society, and all of that. And then following generations or centuries proved him to be right.

WJ: Mmmm-hmmm.

HK: Well, McCarthy, I felt, was sad.

WJ: Yeah.

HK: A sad commentary.

WJ: Yeah.

HK: And I used to try to point out to my classes, you know, where you would have had statesmen among the Roman people who were really fine people, and then those that did a *lot* of damage.

WJ: Mmmm-hmmm. Mmmm-hmmm.

HK: And that was so equivalent to McCarthy.

WJ: Right.

HK: And new thoughts of government as well.

WJ: Let's talk about discipline. That's one thing that as a new teacher you're very, very conscious of, and I suspect that even after you've taught for a while, it was all...maybe not with the kind of selective sort of classes that you had, but how...ah...was that difficult for you and ah...?

HK: In the first years, it was never difficult.

WJ: Mmmm-hmmm.

HK: Even though students were my own age. A teacher was...hmmm...something that the whole community respected.

WJ: Mmmm-hmmm.

HK: And the student was expected also to respect that person.

WJ: Mmmm-hmmm.

HK: And I do remember at St. James that I had a student who was a football player and hmmm...was failing in my subject. And I wouldn't change his grade to make it possible for him to play.

WJ: Mmmm-hmmm.

HK: And, hmmm, the coach came to me and pleaded with me. And I said, "Absolutely not." There would be no way I would pass Glen in order to make it possible for him to play football. And hmmm, I don't think that the whole community ever *wondered* about that kind of decision.

WJ: Mmmm-hmmm.

HK: I did find that hmmm, as time went on, I never had a problem in my classes, because they were elected. But when I had....

[Recording interruption?]

HK: I did find that hmmm...as time went on, I never had a problem in my classes, because they were elected. But when I had homeroom and some of the students from other classes, I was afraid.

WJ: Mmmm-hmmm. Mmmm-hmmm.

HK: Even in Moorhead.

WJ: Mmmm-hmmm.

HK: I can remember going down the corridor in Moorhead in 1975 and taking a knife away from a seventh grade student who...hmmm...called me every name under the sun.

WJ: Mmmm.

HK: Which *never* would have happened.

WJ: Mmmm-hmmm.

HK: And I wondered what would have happened if I hadn't been strong enough to physically remove that knife.

WJ: Yeah. Hmmm...did you...you know, when...in the 1930s, when I was in school, it was very common for a student, at least in the little kind of school I...ah...to...to slap a student, for example, if they were misbehaving. Hmmm, was that the case in your early teaching experience?

HK: I never had to slap anyone.

WJ: Mmmm-hmmm. Mmmm-hmmm.

HK: Hmmm, and I think it was the difference...the respect with which they....

[End of interview]

