

## **Interview with Celesta Lee Floyd Taylor**

**August 28, 2007**

**Conducted at the Kinsley Library, 208 E. 8<sup>th</sup> St., Kinsley, Kansas**

**Interviewers: Joan Weaver and Rosetta Graff**

Interviewer: We are talking to Celesta Taylor today and she is going to tell us a little bit about where she was born and who her parents were, to begin with.

Celesta: I was born about two miles west of the Nettleton School and my parents were Edgar and Cora Floyd. I was just born across the road from Edwards County, so actually I was born in Pawnee County. We lived there until I was going on the seventh grade, when we moved just south of Kinsley for my junior high years.

Interviewer: What did your father do?

Celesta: He was a farmer.

Interviewer: What did you raise?

Celesta: Wheat.

Interviewer: Tell us a bit about you home and what it was like.

Celesta: Well, it wasn't very large, in fact it was moved later up here in the west part of town. But he grew wheat and alfalfa, and as I remember, some sorghum crop. We had milk cows and what I remember earliest was that he farmed by horse and by, you know, horses. And then he finally got a tractor. So that was his farming, and it was a hard life, it was really. I remember one year, it was like in, was it '33 when we had the crisis and all the banks closed? And we had had an enormous wheat crop and we didn't have enough room to put it in and it was all piled up in piles out in the yard, I remember that.

Interviewer: Did you have brothers and sisters?

Celesta: Yes, I had one sister and two brothers. They are all gone now. Lois Titus was my sister and Leland Floyd and Harold Floyd was my brother. But they are all gone now.

Interviewer: So you would have hauled the wheat...

Celesta: By wagon

Interviewer: To Nettleton?

Celesta: Umhuh, at that time there were two elevators, but only one was operating at that time, and I can remember that one year that I drove the wagon to the elevator and it always kind of scared me because if you didn't get the wheels right you would go down with the grain.

Interviewer: How old were you?

Celesta: Well, I was in the sixth grade, so probably, what 12 or 13?

Interviewer: Now Nettleton did have a high school at that time, is that right?

Celesta: Not at my time, no. As far as I know I don't think it ever had a high school, did it?

Interviewer—I don't think it did. It was just grades one through six?

Celesta: Seventh and eighth, I think. But we moved before that.

Joan: Was that one reason you moved?

Celesta: No, my dad got a better farm out here, so we moved. It was closer to town, which...my mother came (she grew up in Colorado and it was a real downer for her to move back here to the plains of western Kansas.)

Interviewer: Why did you move?

Celesta: Well, my dad left here and went to Colorado Springs, and he drove a street car out there, and that's how they met. His route went down through the Broadmoor (*Hotel*) and all around in back. But then he decided he wanted to farm, and back they came.

Interviewer: They got married and then came back?

Celesta: Yes, my oldest brother was born in Colorado Springs, and the rest of us were born here.

Interviewer: You were born at home?

Celesta: Yes.

Interviewer: Did you have a doctor or a midwife?

Celesta: Yes, I had Doctor...I keep thinking of Detar, but that's not right. that might have been right, he might have been Dr. DeTar, guess I'll have to look on my birth certificate. I don't know where it is for sure.

Interviewer: What kind of chores did you do on the farm?

Celesta: Well, actually, not a lot. My mother did the cooking, and we did things like gather eggs and helped her do different things like that.

Interviewer: So when you said, "Life was hard," you meant for your parents? Not for you?

Cora: Especially for my mother, I felt sorry for her because she wasn't used to it, you know, she was used to electric lights and all that. All of a sudden, that wasn't there.

Interviewer: Did your brothers do more chores?

Celesta: Oh, yes. I never milked a cow in my life. You know, a lot of girls who grew up on a farm did, but I never milked a cow. My mother always felt that we had two boys and they could do it. She never

did either. So, the men took care of that part. I had to wash the separator, which wasn't horrible, but no, I never.

Interviewer: So your neighbors were the Olsens, and they were about straight north?

Celesta: They were about a mile west and about two miles north. It is where the Olsen place is right now. Okay, and then the Ray Fields lived next door to them, and the Schroeders lived, where, do you know where Mike Gleason had his farm over there? That's where they lived. And Glen Bidleman lived where Katz lives now. And there was a Clark family, and they lived where Dr. Ray lives now. And there was Abrahamson, and Stukenbrokers were not far from our house. Walt Stukenbrokers parents. So, there were a lot of people...it wasn't like now, where there aren't too many people on the farms.

Interviewer: How did that make life different, did you do things as a community?

Celesta: Oh yes, and a lot of it was done right there at school. You know, and my parents were good friends of the Smiths, who lived where I was saying that Mike Gleason farms now. And you know, they had different friends. They had friends here in town.

Interviewer: What did you do for entertainment, or for social gatherings. What kind of...

Celesta: Well, I was trying to think. They had at the basement of this school, it was kind of a gymnasium, they would have gatherings, you know, and all the food. I think back and I can smell the coffee cooking. A lot of times when I smell fresh coffee I think of that, I can smell the coffee cooking. And they had debates. Evalina Craig's father was the one I remember big, what was his first name? Ed Delander, and there was another man, and they would debate. I remember, sometimes when I was little, and I'd think, "Oh I wish they'd be quiet."

Interviewer: So they debated political issues?

Celesta: Oh yes, anything like that, they'd have debates, and they'd have a big crowd. The auditorium would be full, and then we'd have friends, and we'd go there and they'd come there to see us. So we did that.

Interviewer: So at Nettleton there were two elevators and they were on the east side?

Celesta: They were across the railroad tracks, yes.

Interviewer: But the school was...

Celesta: ...on the other side of the railroad tracks.

Interviewer: ...on the west side.

Celesta: Yes.

Interviewer: Why don't you go ahead and describe the school for us.

Celesta: Well, I can kind of point it out to you here. Where you see the front, let's see, are these pictures the same...This is the front entrance, this faced the railroad or what is now the highway, you

know.

Interviewer: Okay, Celesta is pointing to a picture in the, what would you call this little book? Is it a yearbook or memory book or something? (NOTE: In Nettleton file, "Nettleton School District 24, 1933-1934)

Celesta: I suppose so, yes.

Interviewer: We have a copy of it in the library.

Celesta: Yes, on this side was the girls' restroom, we had inside plumbing. It was west of the front door. And this side was where you went up the steps up into the auditorium up to the second floor.

Interviewer: And that is why the windows in the picture go up at an angle there.

Celesta: Yes, that's the stairway. And this over here was a little dressing room for our little plays and things because we had a stage that was built across the west side of the building and so... right here is where the debates and all those things took place. And I cannot remember this thing here on the top. I don't remember what that was.

Interviewer: Perhaps it was a bell or something?

Celesta: I don't know and I cannot remember what was in there, and you are right, it could have been a bell. And see here are the windows to the bottom of the gymnasium.

Interviewer: And the classrooms were in the back?

Celesta: No, the classrooms were right here on this side. This was one of the classrooms, and around opposite were the others.

Interviewer: There were just two classrooms?

Celesta: Yes, there were just two.

Interviewer: How were the grades divided?

Celesta: One, two, three, and I think four were in one, and then up through the 8<sup>th</sup> grade was in the other.

Interviewer: So four grades were in each side?

Celesta: Yes, and see, that's what these are. That is the bottom grade here. And this is the other grade here.

Interviewer: One teacher for each?

Celesta: Yes, the teachers were Agnes Ploger and Wave Boyer. You probably knew Agnes Ploger, but you wouldn't have known Wave because she moved away.

Interviewer: They were unmarried?

Celesta: At that time, yes. So her name was Agnes Rapp and her name was Wave Boyer and I can't remember her other name.

Interviewer: Could they teach after they married?

Celesta: I don't know. We never had a teacher who was married. We also had a teacher, I don't know what grade, called Lucille Foos. She was from Garfield and she taught before these two taught.

Interviewer: Were you there when the Werners were at Nettleton?

Celesta: Werners? No, I can't remember the Werners. What Werner was that?

Interviewer: Laura Werner and her family.

Celesta: No, I don't.

Interviewer: I guess I should say, what years are we talking about? We haven't established that. What year did you go to school?

Celesta: From first to sixth.

Interviewer: What year would that be?

Celesta: That would be about: Well I was born in '22, so that would be '28 or '29.

Interviewer: Do you remember this store? (Picture in Nettleton file)

Celesta: No, I don't think that was there when I was. It seems like there was a store of some kind, but I don't remember a two storey building so that had to be there before me, the two storey.

Interviewer: Describe the town a little bit. What was it like when you were there?

Celesta: Well actually, there were the two elevators and there was a house there where the (Oliver) Ekstrom lived. He ran the elevator and he was also the custodian and the furnace man at the school, and they lived in that. I don't remember any other building. At one time I think there was a post office there because our mail was delivered by a mailman.

Interviewer: And then there was the big house that's still there in Nettleton, that big two storey house?

Celesta: Where?

Interviewer: Just east of the school across the railroad tracks. There's a big two storey house there now. Is that where the Abrahamsons lived?

Celesta: I don't remember a two storey house there now, I don't ever remember a two storey house. The house that this man came back here, it was a one storey house, and it has a porch out in front. Now that was still at school or it was still there when I was in school. His family, they were all buried there, his wife and one or two children. I remember there was a cement thing that went around the graves. But it was not a two storey house. I'm just sure of that, and I don't remember the two storey house you

are talking about.

Interviewer: There is a two storey house there now.

Celesta: Where?

Interviewer: Right before you get to the Nettleton bridge. Was that bridge there when you were?

Celesta: Yes, to the east. Yes. Arthur Taylor lived in that two storey house you're talking about. But his children didn't go to school at Nettleton.

Interviewer: He was the clerk at Nettleton.

Celesta: Yes, Barbara and Pat, they weren't in school when I was there and I don't remember them ever being in school.

Interviewer: So do you remember when the bridge was built? Or is that way before you?

Celesta: No, that was already built when we lived there. Humm, I see this belonged to my sister...

Interviewer: How far away was your farm from Nettleton itself?

Celesta: Probably a mile and a quarter.

Interviewer: How did you get to school?

Celesta: Horseback, unless the weather was bad. No, we would ride our horses. The others would come from the hills and we'd all meet and race to school. I can remember my mother was so brave in letting us. Everybody raced then to school. I can remember my sister sat behind me and our lunch bag would be way out behind her. And then we had a barn there at the school for the horses. We would come in at what that time seemed really fast, and the horse would dip down in the graded ditch and up and around and we'd have to duck our heads like this so we didn't hit our head on the door of the barn. I wouldn't have let my kids do that.

Interviewer: So then, the barn was where...

Celesta: It was on the west side of the school. It was just off... this was the furnace room, and it was just off here. We would have big crowds when we had our dinners. You know, there's just one thing I can't remember, and that is the lighting. We had indoor restrooms, modern restrooms. I can't remember the lighting. I was trying to think of it the other day.

Interviewer: Well, there wasn't electricity at this time...

Celesta: I don't know, I don't know how they, it's like when we had our dinners downstairs, we must have done that in the afternoons. See, there isn't any....we must have had some sort of a gas lantern of some sort.

Interviewer: You said you did debates and plays and things. Do you remember the lighting there?

Celesta: No, I can't. I can remember one thing we had one time that was in the daytime, because I can remember standing there and looking out these windows. I can even remember the song we were singing, it was "O beautiful for spacious skies, for amber waves of grain..." I can remember singing that and looking out. Isn't that dumb, you can't remember some of the important things.

Interviewer: Well, lighting isn't real important to a kid.

Celesta: No, but what we used when we used the school at night, I don't remember. Maybe we didn't use it that much as night. Maybe everything was done during the day. But if you got a real cloudy dark day, and we wouldn't have been able to see in the classrooms, even though there were a lot of windows in it. It was really quite a nice school. It was really a nice one for those days.

Interviewer: You said there was a furnace room? Did that burn coal?

Celesta: Yes, it did. It burned coal. We had steam heat.

Interviewer: This article says, "In one of the best equipped rural school buildings in the state."

Celesta: Well it was, I think. Having indoor restrooms was in itself was...

Interviewer: It was fun to go to school wasn't it?

Celesta: Ask me anything else you want to...

Interviewer: One thing I just thought of, there were no churches in Nettleton.

Celesta: No

Interviewer: So where did people go to church?

Celesta: Kinsley, and I think some that were east of Nettleton went to Garfield to church.

Interviewer: Now if you were Lutheran, you would have gone up to Bethel on old 183.

Celesta: I don't know where that is.

Interviewer: They would have gone to Garfield?

Celesta: Yes, or some of them might have gone to Lewis that lived across the steel bridge. Most of the kids over there, it was kind of a thing they didn't want their kids coming over to Nettleton and so they sent them to Lewis. They probably had a good reason, because it wasn't too far. You would go across the bridge and then go practically near Lewis.

Interviewer: Now at that time, the river had a lot of water.

Celesta: Yes, the river had a lot of water when we moved out south of town when I was in the sixth grade. There would be places where we would be almost waist deep and it was clear as crystal. We went swimming, we went on picnics, it was wonderful. My dad, when he lived in Kansas and he worked for a while with Donald's Grandfather Rapp, he said he could look off across the river to the

Lewis place being built and there were no trees. It may be that way again.

Interviewer: I've never seen the river like that. What was the river like back then?

Celesta: I was just telling, when we moved from that farm to the one south by the airport, we would go down to the river, and the water would sometimes be almost waist deep. It would be like this and clear as a crystal. It was wonderful, but it never will be again. We had a lot of fun at the river, you know we would go on picnics and we would go down there and swim

Interviewer: Were there times that you couldn't go places because the river was too high?

Celesta: I don't think we ever had a flood while we were living out here. I don't believe we ever did. That's where I learned to drive was out here, in the pasture, much to my dad's ... but back to Nettleton, is there anything else I can tell you?

Interviewer: This article says that in 1917 Nettleton had two elevators, a general store, a post office and then the steel bridge.

Celesta: But see, I was born in '22, so that was before my time.

Interviewer: So maybe it lost its post office?

Celesta: I think so, yes, because our mail was delivered by a mailman.

Interviewer: But he wasn't coming out of Nettleton.

Celesta: Oh no, he came out of Kinsley, he was Edward Gordley. I remember because he would leave gum in the box for us.

Interviewer: What about ice? Was that delivered?

Celesta: It was delivered by an ice truck. I can remember we'd stand around the back of the truck while he chipped the ice, and we'd take pieces of chipped off...

Interviewer: Did the river ever freeze over?

Celesta: Not the river, Coon Creek was just a hundred or a hundred and fifty yards from where we lived, and it would freeze solid. My dad was a beautiful ice skater, and I can remember my brother would bring his high school friends out there and my dad would go out there and skate with them. He could do everything on skates. So...

Interviewer: Where had your dad been raised?

Celesta: Across the river.

Interviewer: So he grew up here too?

Celesta: Yes, he lived over about where the Schaller house is or used to be. And he rode his horse to school and he used to put his horse right there by where I live now, and the Kerns had a barn and that's

where he kept his horse while he was at school.

Interviewer: And what about your mother? Was she a local?

Celesta: Oh no, she grew up in Colorado Springs. She went to school there.

Interviewer: And your grandparents?

Celesta: My dad's father died before he was born. My grandmother died before I was born. I knew my mother's mother. We used to go out to Colorado Springs in the summer to visit. But her father died when she was six. I never had a grandfather, and only one grandmother. That would be the highlight of our year, going to see grandmother. I remember one time early on we only got as far as Lamar or Rocky Ford...

Interviewer: Were you going by train?

Celesta: Oh no, we went by car. I can remember having a car. Our first car I remember my dad would have to crank it, and he would get so mad. That car would not start, so that stuck in my memory. And then we kind of went up.

Interviewer: And you said you got stuck at Rocky Ford?

Celesta: Oh yes, because we couldn't get on to Colorado Springs, it was too big a trip for one day.

Interviewer: What were the roads like?

Celesta: Oh they were like 183 out here with gravel. You know.

Interviewer: How was your grandmother's house different than out here?

Celesta: Oh you know, she had all the modern conveniences. As a child I remember that my sister and I loved it because she was only a half a block from the grocery and we got to go down there and buy things. We didn't do that at home, so that was fun. When I think back about all the things I've seen in my lifetime, it is a lot. I've always tried to make it a point. Last night I missed the moon eclipse, I woke up and it was dark and I missed it. I've always had fun keeping track of everything.

Interviewer: And then you moved to Kinsley and went to high school.

Celesta: Yes, I graduated here in 1940.

Interviewer: Was there any prejudice between the city folk and the country folk?

Celesta: I never found it to be that way. I always found everyone to be really nice.

Interviewer: Didn't you have to take a test because you came from a country school because they didn't think you were taught well enough?

Celesta: If I did, I don't remember having to do it. I just don't think so. But I could be wrong. But you know, we went to a country school, and that's why it is so hard for me to understand today, why kids

can't read and write and know math. I can't figure that out. We learned that in a country school with one teacher and four grades. It just baffles me.

Interviewer: If you were one of the older ones in the class, you would help like the first graders, or whatever ones needed help?

Celesta: No, I don't remember that.

Interviewer: So the teacher did everything?

Celesta: You were just sort of divided off. You had a class for math, and you had a class for reading and a class for writing. I remember hating writing class, but people did turn out to be good writers. My writing has slipped badly. But we learned to write and learned to read.

Interviewer: And good penmanship was very...

Celesta: Very important. It was very important.

Interviewer: Did you do a lot more memorization, like of poetry and...

Celesta: I don't think so, but I think we learned as much as they do today, in our country school.

Interviewer: So, when you came to Kinsley High School, you were equipped to meet the requirements of the teachers here?

Celesta: Oh yes, I went into the seventh grade and I don't remember having any problems. I should have brought my report cards. I still have them. At that time, the superintendent would come around and we would get these really neat award things for spelling and things. They had these marvelous pictures on them and I still have those. I had attendance records and spelling records and we were all happy when she came and delivered them.

Interviewer: Did you have spelling bees?

Celesta: There in the school? I think so, but I don't quite remember.

Interviewer: So what did your father do when he came to town?

Celesta: He still farmed and had cattle. He got into cattle a little more after the move.

Interviewer: Was life easier for your mother then?

Celesta: Yes, she was closer to church and helped with the church and she was in several things and that was good for her.

Interviewer: Ladies organizations?

Celesta: Yes, it was easier for her. That farmhouse burned last winter, or the winter before, where we lived then.

Interviewer: What do you remember about the high school here? Do you remember the high school

library?

Celesta: Yes I do, and I remember where it was too. It wasn't on the left side, that's where we practiced orchestra. It was on the right side. I spent a lot of time there. It was so cozy, that library. You had to go down about three or four steps, it was just such a cozy little place. Miss Riley, I'd go down there and read. I've always liked geography, so I'd go down there and read those Geographic magazines and things like that, while waiting for my brother. I spent a lot of time in the library... What did you ask me?

Interviewer: I just asked what you remembered about high school, and highlights.

Celesta: In fact, the other day, I was a cheerleader in high school and I found my letter the other day, and it looks just like the day I took it off. It is in perfect, perfect condition. I was showing it to my granddaughter. I was in glee club and we were in Girl's Reserves or GR. They call it Kays or Kayettes now. I was telling someone the other day that one of the funniest things, it was funny but sad too. We had our glee club and at our, graduation or something...

Interviewer: Baccalaureate maybe?

Celesta: I don't know. We were to sing. The song was "Glow Little Glow Worm, Glimmer, Glimmer." Do you remember Mr. Hannah? He was such a strange man. Anyway, he was going through all these facial expressions, and somebody got tickled. The whole bunch of us got tickled. It was just a fiasco. Oh gosh, what else about high school...

Interviewer: Did you meet your husband in high school?

Celesta: Yes.

Interviewer: What did you do on dates?

Celesta: We went to the movies, you know. Maybe to the drug store afterward.

Interviewer: You went to the same church didn't you?

Celesta: Yes, but I didn't join this church until '42, but Don was a member.

Interviewer: What church did you go to?

Celesta: I went to Sunday School over at the Methodist church, and then when we started going together I joined the Episcopal Church.

Interviewer: You graduated in '40, and when did you get married?

Celesta: '44. I wonder if it was '45. I can't remember.

Interviewer: What were you doing in the years between graduation and getting married?

Celesta: I worked at Copp Pharmacy. I worked there for perhaps two and a half years.

Interviewer: Was your husband in the military?

Celesta: Yes, he was a medic in Europe. He was over there about two years. Then we got married right after he came home. He came home in January after the war ended. Then we were married in February.

Interviewer: You didn't wait long!

Celesta: I was 22 or 23.

Interviewer: You were practically an old lady! What was your wedding like?

Celesta: It was over here. It was in the morning in the Episcopal Church. It was morning wedding and then we had a brunch type meal and then Don and I went to Kansas City for our honeymoon.

Interviewer: How many people attended?

Celesta: Oh gosh, it wasn't that big. Probably 50 or so, maybe 60.

Interviewer: What did you wear?

Celesta: I just wore a suit. I didn't wear a wedding dress, didn't want one for some reason. I don't know why. Strange. I still have the suit. When I look at it, it is ugly.

Interviewer: What color was it?

Celesta: It was a real light gold. It was lighter than that. Whatever.

Interviewer: Did you buy it specially for your wedding day?

Celesta: Yes, I was kind of strange then. Now my sister had a wedding dress. She was different than I. She was a lot smarter, I'll say that.

Interviewer: Then what did your husband do?

Celesta: When he came out of the army, he went into the office downtown with his father and uncle. Taylor Abstracts and Insurance. That's what he did, and that's where he stayed until he retired.

Interviewer: So he never used his medical training.

Celesta: No, he didn't, in fact he would hardly talk about it, maybe once every so often he would mention something about it, but very seldom. He talked about them going in and having to delouse the people who had been held prisoners and things like that.

Interviewer: And he received a purple heart?

Celesta: Yes. I think they bombed him somewhere, or maybe a truck. You see, they weren't allowed to carry guns. When they went out at night, all they had were medical supplies. They couldn't protect themselves in other words. I don't know how it is now.

Interviewer: They had an agreement with the enemy that they wouldn't hurt medical personnel?

Celesta: I don't know. I still have his Red Cross band. I suppose that made a difference, I'm not sure now. I think that made a lot of difference at that time to the enemy. I don't think they would have shot at Red Cross or vice versa. Anything else?

Interviewer: And then you had your children. Tell us about that.

Celesta: My son (Kent) was born in Dodge, we didn't have a hospital here then.

Interviewer: And what year was that?

Celesta: '47. He was born in December of '47. Then my daughter (Elisabeth) was born here at the old hospital in '57. They both graduated here and they both graduated from K State. That's why I really bleed purple when I bleed. Of course, Don had gone to K State too. I didn't go to college.

Interviewer: Why didn't you go to college?

Celesta: I think times were really rough for my parents then. I think I was really well protected, and maybe I didn't want to go into the world then.

Interviewer: Did the war have anything to do with it?

Celesta: No. As a matter of fact. One of my good friends joined the WAVES, and I kind of wanted to do that, but my folks wouldn't hear of it.

Interviewer: And you lived with them right up until the day you got married?

Celesta: Exactly, I didn't even think of doing anything differently. You know, kids do today, but I wouldn't have then. Things were just different.

Interviewer: And after you got married? Did you work outside of the home? Or were you just the homemaker?

Celesta: No, I never did work outside. I stayed at home the whole time. I told you I worked it Cobbs. And then after Don died, and Virginia (Virginia Gleason) was in the drug store, I worked for her part time, just to have fun.

Interviewer: When was that about?

Celesta: About the time Mike (Gleason) died. That has been I don't know how many years ago. It was just before Brad (Eustace) bought the drug store, so not so long ago. I don't know how long Brad's been here now, but I enjoyed that. But I never worked outside the home. Anything more about Nettleton?

Interviewer: This is something from Florence Katz. I don't think they lived there when you did... She said there used to be 28 houses in Nettleton. Do you remember houses in Nettleton? (One!) She said that they had houses for the teachers, like Mrs. Rapp. They lived in houses in Nettleton.

Celesta: No...*(Celesta has no recollection of 28 houses, only remembers 2)*

Interviewer: You don't remember any of the houses?

Celesta: I remember them driving to... well, look.

Interviewer: There's a car in the picture there. So they would have lived in Kinsley and drove to work?

Celesta: Yes, and that's one of their cars. Well, that's my recollection. I'm not calling her...

Interviewer: She remembers Letha Miller as a teacher, Mrs. Leonard Miller and Coral Atwood, later Mrs. Israel. So this is a different time period after you left. She said that Dave Merwin, they lived out at Nettleton.

Celesta: I'll tell you where they lived. We'd ride over there on the horse, and his mother made these great big sugar cookies. We'd ride over there and she'd naturally make these sugar cookies. He lived about a mile something west of the school and then south across the railroad tracks from the school. He was in my brother's grade, my oldest brother. I don't remember this. I wonder what year that school was torn down. I don't remember.

Interviewer: It was only completed in 1960, so when we got there it was a new school. This interview was in 2004, and she said it was torn down 63 years ago.

Celesta: Oh no, no, no. It can't be. Well, Okay.

Interviewer: So it was torn down right about World War II?

Celesta: Evidently, from what she said. When she said 60 some years, I thought...

Interviewer: It doesn't hardly seem possible.

Celesta: But the math proves it.

Interviewer: It was such a nice big brick building, built in 1916, so it wouldn't have been that old.

Celesta: Unless they had closed it and the man who owns the land now bought the land. But he can't have gained much... I cannot remember what you are talking about.

Interviewer: I can remember elevators there, but I don't remember the school or anything like that.

Celesta: You know, before they numbered the highway, my mother and dad always referred to it as "the trail". They didn't refer to it as the Santa Fe Trail, but as the trail. As in, "Over on the trail" this happened... isn't that funny? But to them it was a trail.

Interviewer: You know, your memories are different from Mrs. Katz's, and we found when we did research downtown on the buildings, everybody's was different, because of what time period it was. Every five or ten years they remembered what the building was like then.

Celesta: You know, I cannot remember that there were ever 28 houses in Nettleton.

Interviewer: That is a lot of houses. Of course, she is saying in the community, so perhaps she included country houses.

Celesta: Who is Mrs. Katz? Did you tell me she was dead?

Interviewer: Florence Katz? Venita was... do you remember Venita Katz?

Celesta: The name...

Interviewer: Velda Katz? Well, they still own the farm.

Celesta: It was the Bidleman farm, they bought it from the Bidleman's. Because that's where Mrs. Bidleman died there.

Interviewer: And then they did live at what you're calling the Gleason place across the creek.

Celesta: They might have, there was a two storey place where the Schobers lived. Well, she was more right than I am.

Interviewer: Well, you are both right at the same time.

Celesta: I'm trying to get is how old she was, what was her time frame.

Interviewer: Well, Florence was 90 some years old when she died, but I don't remember when they moved out there. They lived at the Schobers place when I was in high school, and had lived there for a long time.

Celesta: And what year was that?

Interviewer: 1956, you know. So there is a lot of time that's gone by.

Celesta: From where I'm sitting...

Interviewer: And she said that her family helped tear down Nettleton High School.

Celesta: You know, I was thinking when I looked at those pictures, I wonder what happened to all that wonderful brick?

Interviewer: I think, and this is "I think", it was taken to Garfield, and some building was built with it there.

Celesta: Such pretty brick, isn't it, and all these white slabs. I don't feel like I've given you anything.

Interviewer: Oh no, you've done a very good job. Going back to Nettleton again, I want you to tell me, what was Christmas like?

Celesta: I remember, we would have a Christmas Tree, and when I think about it now, it just scares me to death. We would decorate it, so we were all just right there. You've seen these little candles, and these little metal things that you pinch and attach to the branch. We would light those, can you imagine?

Interviewer: Now this Christmas tree, was it a cedar tree or a pine tree?

Celesta: I think it was a Cedar.

Interviewer: And what were the decorations? Were they glass ornaments?

Celesta: On the tree? They were the thin kind that break so easily.

Interviewer: And how did you celebrate? Was it Christmas eve? When did you eat your meal, do the presents...

Celesta: We ate our meal on Christmas day. And usually we had company and we had our presents on Christmas day. We never really did anything on Christmas Eve, unless maybe there was something on at the school.

Interviewer: What was the meal like on Christmas day?

Celesta: Just like today, we had turkey. My mother was a wonderful cook, so we had a great meal. I remember I was overweight, so that tells you what a wonderful cook she was. I can't remember how old I was in this picture, I think I was in the 6<sup>th</sup> grade, so that was my last year out there.

Interviewer: Which one are you?

Celesta: The one in the plaid dress.

Interviewer: We maybe need to get that noted on...afterwards, we'll write down which one you are. Now, did your mother make your dress?

Celesta: Oh yes, she sewed for both my sister and me, even in high school.

Interviewer: It looks as if you had on short stockings, not hose. The little girl beside you has on long stockings, but you have on short stockings.

Celesta: Yes, this are the Schobers. These are the people who lived in what you said was the Katz house. This is Catherine Boyd and this is the gal who lived straight north of where we lived. And this is Lillian Pickering (*Nystrom*). Barbara Fields. See, Lillian and I, to my knowledge, are the only ones living out of that class. My sister's gone, Wayne's (Field) gone, Calvin's (Boyd) gone, and Dale... is Dale Olson living? No, he's gone. So see, I don't know if there is anybody left from the class below us...

Interviewer: What is your happiest memory of Nettleton? You said the smell of coffee brought back good memories, so what other things are happy?

Celesta: Well, I think I loved my teachers always. I liked school. I think probably these things where everyone got together. Speaking of the smell of coffee, we always had so much fun, just one big picnic there. I think that would be one of the things I really enjoyed.

Interviewer: What would be your saddest memory of the time that you were there, the unhappiest?

Celesta: Well, not that I can remember.

Interviewer: You had a good childhood...

Celesta: I don't think that I can remember a real sad time. About the only sad time that I can remember was my mother was taking us to school one day and we had a car that had something that pulled out (a choke?) no, I don't think so. Something that pulled out, and turned on the windshield wipers or something. My sister and I got into an argument and I pushed her and that thing went in right underneath her eye and she always carried that scar. I never forgot that, it was so scary to me. That was one of the sad things I remember.

Interviewer: This says that in 1939 the depot was sold. Dave Merwin bought the depot from Nettleton and moved it to his farm. Where was the depot? I've just heard about elevators.

Celesta: The depot, where was the depot? I think it was to the right as you go across the railroad tracks. Here was the house where the janitor and the guy who kept the elevators lived, and I think the depot was just right over here, near one of the elevators, west of the elevator or between the elevator and the railroad.

Interviewer: Can you remember it?

Celesta: No, I really can't remember the depot.

Interviewer: Then it said that one of the elevators burned in 1929.

Celesta: The one on west, I think.

Interviewer: I'm just looking backwards through other interviews.

Celesta: Well, don't cross any of them out and put mine in!

Interviewer: No, we don't cross anything out, we just put things in. I'm looking at the newspapers now.

Celesta: I wish I'd had more things from the school...

Interviewer: If you get anything more from the school... do you have any more of these old yearbook things?

Celesta: No, I just have all my merit badges.

Interviewer: Those are from school? Perfect attendance, best speller...

Celesta: I imagine these are collector's items. They don't make things like this anymore, the wonderful pictures on them.

Interviewer: I've thought of an interesting question I've never tried to ask anybody, what things did you inherit from your parents and maybe grandparents, what values and talents that you perhaps see in your children? Is that too hard of a question?

Celesta: I think that honesty is a value that I learned from my parents. My dad was very honest. To this day, I don't like dishonesty. I think that was probably one of the things. My dad and mother of course agreed on that. He said that was the way it was supposed to be done.

Interviewer: What about from your mother?

Celesta: Well gosh, I remember a lot of things from my mother. My mother was a real nice lady.

Interviewer: Did she quilt or do hand work?

Celesta: Well no, she sewed our clothes.

Interviewer: She was more genteel, you said. Did your love of education come from her? You liked school, you said.

Celesta: I think probably even more from my dad.

Interviewer: What about hard work?

Celesta: My mother was a hard worker. I learned that from her too, and I used to be until now.

Interviewer: What about humor?

Celesta: My mother was the funniest person. Gosh she had a good sense of humor. She was in the rest home in Greensburg, and about three or four weeks before she died, Elizabeth was here and she was on her way to Wichita. Of course, we went down to see grandma, and she was so funny. She told the funniest things that day and we laughed and laughed and laughed. She just told funny stories; she had a great sense of humor.

Interviewer: Were they stories from the past, or stories from the nursing home?

Celesta: Stories from the past.

Interviewer: Do you remember any of them?

Celesta: She was a real good looking woman, my mother. And she was telling Elisabeth that she'd had two boyfriends, and neither one of them were my dad. They both arrived at the same time one evening. And how she had to get rid of one of them, and she didn't know how to do it. I don't know, finally, I guess they both got uncomfortable, and one of them left and she followed him to the door with his hat. And she just laughed. And this was only a couple weeks, maybe three, before she died. Elisabeth and I have both talked about that, how we were so happy to have her laugh and be funny because she was funny and had a great sense of humor.

Interviewer: Well, can you think of anything else you'd like to add?

Celesta: I wish I could think of more interesting things to tell you.

Interviewer: I think it has been very interesting!

Celesta: The thing I think of when I think back on my life, this and, you know, like the things I've seen. I remember getting my kids up for the first time when we landed on the moon, and they were so upset because I made them wake up and sit waiting for that first landing on the moon. And I did the same thing when all those things... I've listened to all of that, from the time before television got the first man

on the moon, and when John Glenn orbited the earth, I remember all that, and all the new medicines and the things they can do now. I'm kind of a history and a geography nut, I really am, and now feel so fortunate that I have been able to travel and see so much. I've been to Europe five times. I've been to England twice, three times, no four times. I've been all over Europe. I would have gone back if I hadn't broken my leg. So I've been over there five times and seen a lot, things I never dreamed I would see. But I do enjoy now reading certain things, all of a sudden, and what they are talking about, and I remember being there. I like England it has a special place in my heart, I don't know why, but it is about my favorite place. And I like Scotland, that is where Lois and I went and I took my granddaughter. So I've seen a lot in my time. I really have been very fortunate.

Interviewer: Well, thank you very much for sharing your life story today.