

Poweshiek History Preservation Project

Interview Transcript

Interviewer: Judy Hunter

Speaker: Lamoyne Gaard

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Place: Grinnell, Iowa

Date: December 5, 2013

Persons present: Judy Hunter-I

Lamoyne Gaard-S

Hunter: This is Judy Hunter interviewing Lamoyne Gaard at Drake Library on December...

Gaard: 5th, 2013.

Hunter: December 5th, 2013. Yeah amazing isn't it?

Gaard: It certainly is. Who'd have thought we'd, you know, used to be when we'd talk about something after 2000, well that's going to be so far in the future.

Hunter: [laughs] It's the truth.

Gaard: Now we're thirteen years into it. [laughs]

Hunter: Yeah, it's amazing isn't it?

Gaard: The twenty-first century.

Hunter: Yep.

Gaard: Used to think everything, you know, the twentieth century was so up to the minute and oh wow we ended the twentieth century. [laughs]

Hunter: I know!

Gaard: It's all done and gone.

Hunter: I'm not sure I can wrap my head around that yet [laughs]. But yeah.

Gaard: Mhm-mhm.

Hunter: So can you sort of describe how you have been connected to education in Poweshiek County over the years? How'd you get here? What did you do? Etcetera.

Gaard: Well, I guess just, outside trivia information. My own educational preparation is perhaps a little bit unique. In that, amongst people these days I'm probably one of the few around who started school in a one room school house.

Hunter: Did you really?

Gaard: In southern Minnesota District 91.

Hunter: What Minnesota? I'm sorry.

Gaard: It was District 91 in southern Minnesota. Freeborn county and we had fifteen kids in eight grades. And I was, my class was the big class because there was three of us.

Hunter: [laughs] Wow. So was that kindergarten or first grade through eighth?

Gaard: It was first through eighth grade.

Hunter: Wow.

Gaard: Fifteen students and one teacher. And, towards winter time they experimented with a hot lunch program and each mother was expected to bring a casserole or soup of some kind to feed the fifteen kids and the teacher.

Hunter: Wow.

Gaard: And they did that during the, I think, December, January, and February so we'd have some hot food. Because the school room was heated by a potbellied stove.

Hunter: Just like in the books.

Gaard: Which the teacher had to fire up before the students got there in the morning.

Hunter: Wow.

Gaard: And we played outside. We, you know, like kick the broom and Annie I over the outdoor toilets. [laughs]

Hunter: [laughs] Can you describe that one?

Gaard: Because they would, or no, because we would pop this ball across the outdoor toilets. We, it was like serving a volleyball but it was different.

Hunter: And then, people would try to hit it back?

Gaard: Hit it back.

Hunter: And it's Annie I

Gaard: I think it was Annie I Over was it. Yeah.

Hunter: Annie I Over, okay.

Gaard: It's a little hazy now because it's been a few years ago.

Hunter: [laughs] When did you graduate from eighth grade?

Gaard: Well see I, there was only just, Minnesota was ahead of Iowa in consolidation of school districts because a little over half way through my second grade year we were consolidated into the big town of Haywood. Where along with three other rural schools we joined the Haywood town. And Haywood was a town of about four hundred people. But there was enough kids then; we finished the third quarter. Our little district was in this room and the other little district was in this room and another one was in this room and then the Haywood district was in the other three rooms, two grades to a room.

Hunter: Ah.

Gaard: And then for the fourth quarter we went to our rooms and I got a new teacher, Ms. Potter. And all of the first graders in this room and all the second graders were in this room and the third graders in this room and I completed through sixth grade in that fashion at the Haywood elementary school. And there was between 160 and 190 students there during that time. That was the big school.

Hunter: Yeah. How far was it? How far did you have to travel?

Gaard: And ah, oh, that was about four miles from my parents' farm.

Hunter: Oh, okay. Did you walk?

Gaard: No. They had buses. In Minnesota the buses for that could, the school just only owned a few buses. The rest, there were two different private bus companies that contracted with the school district to haul the students to school.

Hunter: Okay.

Gaard: And that could be done through my senior year in high school.

Hunter: Wow.

Gaard: And then when I went to high school I went to first Southwest, you know, brand new building with all glass windows all around. And instead of stairways between floors there were ramps.

Hunter: Wow.

Gaard: Which of course students would just like slide up and down. [laughs]

Hunter: [laughs] what year was that?

Gaard: And I started there in 1959.

Hunter: Okay. Okay.

Gaard: Uh, and now they have modernized as like the high school here, the windows are now pretty much blanked up with more energy absorbent panels. Because even back at that time, they had these, it was hot, it was, the building was not air conditioned and so summertime was very hot. And cause those windows really extenuated the greenhouse effect. In the wintertime, students moved towards the center of the corridors because the, because of the cold [laughs] from the windows because they weren't that well insulated.

Hunter: Wow. Wow.

Gaard: But the buildings were arranged in three separate buildings. There was one building was the gymnasium. Then the central building was the, where the coregents on the outside of that building and the art rooms and the library and the second floor and the shop rooms on the inside on the first floor. And then in the third building, that was the academic building where social studies and math were on the, no. Social studies and English were on the first floor and science and math were on the second floor.

Hunter: Ah okay.

Gaard: And where we were, there were over 900 students in that building.

Hunter: Wow.

Gaard: And ah, about ah, a little over three hundred of us per grade. Of course in being a 1947 model myself we were the biggest class all the way through school until my brother's class that came along, you know, seven years later.

Hunter: Ah.

Gaard: Uh, but when we moved to the central high school in upper Lee then the middle, the southwest junior high and the central junior high were combined and there were 540 in my sophomore class.

Hunter: Wow.

Gaard: To begin with. But of those only 468 graduated. There was a little higher dropout rate in those days.

Hunter: Always.

Gaard: But we bested my brother's class. My brother graduated in 1961 and again the dropout rates were...[unintelligible] they stated their senior year with 360, or 370 and only 322 graduated.

Hunter: Wow.

Gaard: They lost as many in their senior year as our bigger class lost in three years.

Hunter: And do you—

Gaard: Long story.

Hunter: Do you know why that was?

Gaard: Well there were a lot of things. Uh, social change was running you know, was coming along and for instance, in my sophomore year one of my friends and his girlfriend had to quit school because he got her pregnant.

Hunter: Ah.

Gaard: And they both quit.

Hunter: They both quit?

Gaard: Oh yes.

Hunter: Mmk.

Gaard: And my senior year one of my friends got a girl pregnant and she was the first young lady allowed to continue through to her graduation pregnant. And go to school regularly. She was the first one that was ever allowed in that school district.

Hunter: That's... And that was what year?

Gaard: That was, we graduated in 1965.

Hunter: '65. Okay. And I was going to say—

Gaard: And their twins were baptized on the Sunday before high school graduation.

Hunter: [laughs] Wow. Wow.

Gaard: And—

Hunter: And that's pretty unusual for that era.

Gaard: Yeah.

Hunter: Yeah.

Gaard: Elberry was a generally a little, a pretty forward school district.

Hunter: Yeah.

Gaard: I did my, saving money, I went to a community college in Austin.

Hunter: Okay.

Gaard: My first two years and then I thought “Well, you know, I was thinking I was supposed to transfer but I got to save money.’ There’s a good safe college system of course in Minnesota but rather than go to Men, I was going to go to Mankato but then no, I went to University of Minnesota.

Hunter: Okay.

Gaard: Because having started in a school with fifteen students I graduated from a school with 41,000. And at my graduation ceremony there were 4,200 undergraduate degrees conferred. And about 400 graduate degrees.

Hunter: Wow.

Gaard: And I learned um, after coming here to Grinnell and having a lot of people in class and so on and so forth conversing with Mike Cavanagh one evening or afternoon or so. He was there that same evening receiving his master’s degree.

Hunter: Wow.

Gaard: He was in the master’s class.

Hunter: Cool.

Gaard: And graduation was quite a deal with that many people. We marched down the... It was held at the football stadium and we came with, there were girls carrying these little Greek sign thingies for the College of Education, the College of Liberal Arts, the College of Engineering and da-dunt-da-dunt-da-da. We went across the stage two at a time and received a card.

Hunter: [Laughs]

Gaard: Not a diploma. And then next Monday we took that card to the records office to get, to exchange that for our diploma. It was to prove our attendance. [Laughs]

Hunter: Oh my goodness. Had you always assumed you would go to college? Did your parents go to college?

Gaard: No. Well, yes and no. Actually my mother was the first one in the family to get any education beyond high school.

Hunter: Okay.

Gaard: She got a Richard Nurse degree at the Navy hospital school of nursing in Alberta, Minnesota.

Hunter: Ah. Okay.

Gaard: My father had to work pretty hard because um, in his junior year he dropped out, back in 1933 because his father passed away. And, to keep the farming operation going. And ah and then went back, was encouraged by the schools and the school district you know, there was like fifty kids in that school. And but, the superintendent even came out and visited the farm and encouraged him to come to school and because he was a good student.

Hunter: Wow.

Gaard: And ah, did well and that, that's a pity but tutor and all could get him caught up and he could come back to school.

Hunter: Wow.

Gaard: The super intendant.

Hunter: That's pretty neat. What kind of a farm was it? Was it...

Gaard: Just like here, just like here in Poweshiek County, just you know. Raising corn, soy beans, well the farm was more, much diverse of course in those days—

Hunter: Right.

Gaard: Because—

Hunter: Smaller and more diverse.

Gaard: Ah, I think the farm was only a hundred and sixty, it was a hundred and sixty acres.

Hunter: Okay.

Gaard: But that's important, — my grandmother and two sons and two daughters.

Hunter: Wow. Wow.

Gaard: And they, they also raised you know—and they were good with horses mainly. And you took good care of the horses and then usually you had two teams of work horses in order to you know keep things going. And they milked enough cows to provide milk but also it was a little bit of cash then because you'd separate the cream and you'd sell the cream at the co-op with the, the, the creamery.

Hunter: Ah.

Gaard: In town.

Hunter: Okay.

Gaard: And only bigger operations actually sold milk. [laughs]

Hunter: Ah-ha. [laughs]

Gaard: Because we drank it all or and also you see you kept a lot of milk back because a way you know, when you have little pigs you give them some milk to help them through the weaning process and stuff like that. And also to help with tail enders, runts and stuff.

Hunter: Okay

Gaard: To keep them going.

Hunter: So pretty—

Gaard: And because in every, every farm had knowledge of the competence of horses and often even a colt from one of the teams. And, probably milking by hand about ten to twelve cows and probably having a couple calves raised to butcher and then probably about fifty to a hundred pigs and then probably fifty to a hundred chickens. And sometimes they'd have a few geese.

Hunter: Wow.

Gaard: For butchering. That was a diverse, old fashioned,

Hunter: Yeah.

Gaard: Farming operation of the 1930s and '40s.

Hunter: Yeah. So, so did you always figure you would always go to college or--?

Gaard: I think probably pretty early on I decided that I was not really cutout for farming. Ah, I could do it and I liked taking care of the livestock but I was bored out in the fields. If I'd make three rounds cultivating or doing something I was bored. [laughs]

Hunter: Yeah.

Gaard: "Okay. The next round is going just like the first round." [laughs]

Hunter: [laughs]

Gaard: Naw. I couldn't mow across the fields. Some people you know that's all you know [unintelligible]. I, I appreciated later better I think at, by the time that I was college-age and I had more interest in the operation and things but as a twelve, thirteen year old, you know... [laughs]

Hunter: [laughs]

Gaard: Was not thing that I wanted to do. And early on I was interested in dinosaurs and the fascinatingly old, I was, and even as a rather mature person, you know Jurassic Park was the thing to watch! [laughs]

Hunter:[laughs]

Gaard: I'm still fascinated with dinosaurs and all that kind of stuff.

Hunter: They're pretty interesting.

Gaard: And it's one of the things too I was, I first started being some dinosaur books home and when we'd read them my mother's "What are you reading that for? Those, those things didn't really exist. That's not in the Bible."

Hunter: Oh.

Gaard: I said, "But, Mom, we got all these bones." "No, no, no. That's just, that's just those scientists."

Hunter: Oh.

Gaard: [laughs]

Hunter: So, was it a very religious household you grew up in?

Gaard: Oh yeah. Because we were... see the the farm that my folks purchased, the farm in Minnesota. They lived by Tom's Bible when I was born and the first four years. And then purchased the farm in Minnesota in 1951.

Hunter: Oh.

Gaard: And the farm was lily-niched too because it was a hundred and sixty acres and right in the corner was Lutheran Church.

Hunter: Oh.

Gaard: And our family is very Lutheran.

Hunter: Okay.

Gaard: Because my mother was from Lutheran background and so was my father. In fact, when my mother's sort of you know, an indirect aunt since her great uncle was a Lutheran missionary to the United States from the Norwegian Lutheran Church. And he is ah, very significant in Lutheran church history.

Hunter: Ah.

Gaard: Because he founded a significant congregation in Wisconsin and set up, I think at least three or four new congregations of Lutherans in Wisconsin and then went to Minnesota where he set up about thirteen or fourteen more in south eastern Minnesota.

Hunter: Whoa.

Gaard: And then set up, I think three more in northern Iowa, the last one being at Saint Ansgar.

Hunter: Ah. Okay.

Gaard: And a little old church in Saint Ansgar has the because he designed the building. The Reverend Claus L. Clausen.

Hunter: Clausen?

Gaard: Clausen.

Hunter: Clau-SEN.

Gaard: CLAW-sen.

Hunter: C-L-ah! C-L-A-U-S-E-N.

Gaard: Just like Ted Clausen.

Hunter: Just like Ted Clausen. Okay.

Gaard: And as the, whose ancestors also came from an island in Denmark. [laughs]

Hunter: Oh. [laughs]

Gaard: But anyway. But the Reverend Clausen was quite a guy because ah, those I think sixteen or seventeen congregations that he founded proceeded to ah, at the congregation my parents went to was set up by one of congregations that he set up.

Hunter: Ah.

Gaard: And anyway, those sixteen or seventeen congregations had spawned about sixty other Lutheran congregations in southeastern Minnesota and northern Iowa.

Hunter: Ah. Wow.

Gaard: And probably one of the reasons that that area is still there: are more Lutherans there than any other region.

Hunter: Yeah. Yeah.

Gaard: At this day and age. But the stress on my Lutheran background. Claus was quite a guy too because not only was he did he set up all these you know, Lutheran congregations he and his brother volunteered in the Civil War. Except his brother was actually my great-uncle. My great-grandfather was an infantry man. Reverend Clausen was the first Lutheran chaplain in the United States Army.

Hunter: Really? Wow.

Gaard: And after the Civil War, he came to, also he was interested in advanced agriculture and so on and he, he, St. Anesgar for excitement and he actually brought in people from Minnesota to settle there. At some point, really in the history of the state of Iowa, twice he even was elected to the Iowa Legislator. And served a term in the Iowa Legislator. Which is very very unusual for a minister.

Hunter: Yeah.

Gaard: Especially at that time.

Hunter: Wow.

Gaard: He's quite a—and he was on the board, he was one of the founding regents of Luther College.

Hunter: Ah! Makes sense. [laughs]

Gaard: So he's interested in education too.

Hunter: Yeah. Yeah. So how did you get to Grinnell?

Gaard: Okay. Okay. I graduated University of Minnesota in 1969. And, course there was a certain conflict going on in Southeast Asia. And I was summoned for my physical and much to my surprise, I passed with flying colors. I said that almost everybody else was living and breathing.

Hunter: Uh-huh.

Gaard: And I just said, “well you know I'd also study history in my, in my history I really enjoyed battleships.” I was fast with battleships and I could tell you, you know, the type and size and history of most all the major battleships of the world and you know, the Bismarck, the US Iowa, and all that kind of thing. So I said “well, I may as well go in the Navy then after, if I have to go and serve.” And so I signed up for the Navy.

Hunter: Oh.

Gaard: Since I was going to have to serve anyway. I, my, my, I, I was quite surprised too. My father was not hemp on the idea of me going into the service.

Hunter: Really?

Gaard: And in fact, in the summer of 1966 I didn't think of it too much until later. But, because that was between my, my, let's see. Freshmen and sophomore years in college. And we made a trip to Canada to visit our relatives in Canada and they encouraged me to move to Canada.

Hunter: Oh. Wow.

Gaard: Until the war was over. And come there and get my college education. And I couldn't have move because there was a, ah, a whatever kind of state college system in Canada. There was one in Moose Jaw where my great, one of my great-aunts lived.

Hunter: Wow.

Gaard: I could have gone to live with them. But I decided, "you know, it's one of those things too" and then I was also interested in government.

Hunter: Uh-huh.

Gaard: And, politics and things. You know, I if I'm ever going to run for public office I, I can't be a draft dodger.

Hunter: Yeah. Yeah.

Gaard: And so I. And my father was but no, you couldn't, you, that's not that young. This, this is not a popular war. [laughs]

Hunter: We, we graduated in '71 and many of the same conversations, yeah, yeah.

Gaard: And.

Hunter: Interesting.

Gaard: And, but I really felt that we, you really should think about this some more and later on even after we got back still that next year he, he still knew all the Canadians, our relatives said you could move up there.

Hunter: Wow. Wow.

Gaard: You see, World War II he was just a little bit old but also you know, he made sure he kept everything right so that he was, my folks got married in January of 1942.

Hunter: Wow.

Gaard: They were originally going to be married in December but, my father's mother died on December 6th. The day before Pearl Harbor.

Hunter: Yeah. Yeah.

Gaard: And so, the funeral and stuff, they delayed the marriage until January.

Hunter: Oh. So did he serve? In World War II?

Gaard: Let's see. Then he was, as a married person and a farmer—

Hunter: Okay.

Gaard: You mean. It kind of a needed occupation.

Hunter: Okay.

Gaard: So he watched his P's and Q's too but—but also, they, my, his cousin Eddie was drafted at age 28 like my father was. And, the Army realized that guys that old were too old.

Hunter: Uh.

Gaard: Because, as I learned with some of my, my research about the Vietnam conflict and stuff like that, General Eisenhower said the ideal age to draft people is age nineteen.

Hunter: Yeah.

Gaard: Because they're old enough to be physically mature to handle the rigors but they're not too old. You can, you can mold them. And you can scare 'em.

Hunter: Mhm-mhm.

Gaard: Into discipline. Because discipline is extremely important and my cousin Eddie said, "you know, we just wouldn't take orders from our sergeants and stuff. And they couldn't scare us."

Hunter: Yeah.

Gaard: We'd had too much experience. By that time in our lives.

Hunter: Yeah.

Gaard: And where those young kids who seventeen, eighteen, they could scare them.

Hunter: Scare them.

Gaard: So, and even more the reason as I sometimes told my government students is you know, lowering the voting age from twenty-one to eighteen was not just to enlarge the electorate it was to make them easier to draft. For the Vietnam conflict.

Hunter: Yep. Yep.

Gaard: Because if they wouldn't have lowered the voting age to eighteen they couldn't have, they couldn't have continued the draft so long. Because they're putting all those kids who couldn't vote off to fight in an unpopular and so it was either raise the draft age to twenty-one or lower the voting age.

Hunter: Yeah. Yeah.

Gaard: [laughs] Complex, complexities of politics.

Hunter: Yeah.

Gaard: And all that kind of thing.

Hunter: So you joined the Navy. And how long were you, how long did you serve?

Gaard: I served four years.

Hunter: Wow. Where were you?

Gaard: Actually four plus years. Because actually I was in, the year that I, I signed up was also they ended graduate deferments.

Hunter: Right.

Gaard: That year. And so there was a lot of people signing up for the Navy rather than the Army. [laughs]

Hunter: [laughs]

Gaard: Somehow a lot of us probably had allergies to mosquitos and bullets and things like that in Southeast Asia. [laughs] I don't know.

Hunter: Oh. So where were you stationed?

Gaard: But, and then my, my close buddy was he just said, "I'm just going. I won't go for more than one or two years. I'm just going, you know, let them take me."

Hunter: Let him join the army. Got drafted?

Gaard: Mhm-hm. He was drafted into the Army. Uh, in September. And see, I was, I signed up in September but I was not actually taken active until March, because they were so booked—

Hunter: Ah. Okay.

Gaard: in the camps. Ah, but, when he came home at Christmas, a week before he got his advanced infantry training he says, you know, there's a really good deal. If they, they have this battery of tests but if you do really well on that foreign language aptitude test you might get

foreign language training and that's in intelligence and that's preferred cushy duty. So, I, I'm not too bad at foreign languages because in high school I had Latin and Russian. And I did well. And I learned English in the process. [laughs]

Hunter: Yeah.

Gaard: Because I didn't know my English until I took my Latin.

Hunter: Yeah?

Gaard: I just didn't, I didn't, I didn't know the difference between verb and a noun, stuff like that. I just from memory I think this works this way.

Hunter: Yeah.

Gaard: You know? I fudged my way through. [laughs]

Hunter: [laughs]

Gaard: And all of a sudden in Latin—Oh! [laughs] We've got all these parts of speech and stuff.

Hunter: Yeah. Yeah. That's for sure.

Gaard: Ah. And then "oh okay" and we have to have Russian and—so they might even give me Russian and so anyway. We're we're—we get to boot camp and one of the first things they give me is the ASFAB. This huge battery of aptitude tests which were devised back in World War I in order to look at people's attitudes and see what they could be trained for most easily and all that kind of thing.

Hunter: Uh-huh.

Gaard: And the military actually kind of set the standard on battery testing and all that kind of thing. Anyway. So I saved myself in three years now I did well on but I'm not too tired out and I want to get a good rest because tomorrow we take that foreign language test. And I did very well. And when we completed boot camp then they were handing out all of our assignments and, "oh hey Gaard you got the strange one. CTI. What in the world? I don't remember what that is." My company commander... [laughs] communications...oh! Communications Technician Interpretive. You're been picked for language school."

Hunter: Ah.

Gaard: And then we went to this other little room filled with all of us were picked up from all the various companies graduating that, that week. And I think they put all of our names into a hat and started drawing them out. "Okay, these guys get Vietnamese" and there was a whole raft of them.

Hunter: Yeah.

Gaard: And then these guys get Russian. There was quite a few of those. These guys get Chinese. There was quite a few of those. We need one for Serbo-Croatian. Oh, you got Serbo-Croatian.

Hunter: It was you?

Gaard: No.

Hunter: Oh. Okay.

Gaard: And we need one or a couple for French and one for Japanese, a couple for Japanese. What's this one? Oh, Gaard, you get Korean.

Hunter: Ah!

Gaard: And so I got Korean. And as I figured out later too there were, we were relatively small class but then once the Defense Language Institute in Monterey, California, and that was just a really hard place to take because I just, you know, I'm coming from Minnesota and you know, twenty degrees below zero winters and, and in Monterey I think the coldest temperature got down to thirty-three degrees one February morning. [laughs]

Hunter: [laughs] Oh.

Gaard: And so the Californians are complaining their cars wouldn't start. [laughs]

Hunter: [laughs] Ah, that's funny. John Boyd was there too. Probably about the same time.

Gaard: Um-huh. Um-huh.

Hunter: Johnny got trained in Russian there. Yeah.

Gaard: Mhm-huh.

Hunter: Yeah in Monterey.

Gaard: Mhm-huh. But as I learned from Korean, I thought, that's going to be, that sing-song kind of stuff like Chinese but it wasn't. Because Korean is a Euro-Altaiic language like Japanese and Manchurian and Mongolian.

Hunter: Ah.

Gaard: And they are not tonal.

Hunter: Ah, okay.

Gaard: But they had much more complex grammar. They're harder to learn to speak. Um, because both Korean and Japanese have five levels of formality. There's a whole different set of verb endings and everything for each of the levels.

Hunter: Oh wow.

Gaard: And um, it gives you a little insight into, you know, we talk about the Japanese being so formal and all that kind of thing and these complex levels it's because of their language. Language really affects your culture.

Hunter: Yeah.

Gaard: And uh, in both Korean and Japanese you can easily insult somebody by talking just, go down one level in formality and address them that way and you've insulted them. And you've said exactly the same thing but you put them in their place.

Hunter: Mhm-hm.

Gaard: And that whole thing of, I don't know, signs of hierarchy in someone is so ingrained. And you know, and you know, it's not just the bowing. It's in the whole, all the thought patterns of the language construction.

Hunter: Yeah.

Gaard: It's very complicated. And the grammatical endings, all the clauses. [laughs]

Hunter: Yeah. So did you end up in Korea then?

Gaard: And then finished language school then we got some technical training in Saint Angelo Texas at the Air Force base. And then we went to a Fort Meade, Maryland, which is just next to the National Security Agency.

Hunter: Right.

Gaard: And I worked there for a year—

Hunter: Oh.

Gaard: On the Korean problem. [laughs] And then, I was, I was never going to get to Korea. I want to—I don't—I want to see a real foreign country, you know, I've never really been outside the United States expect for when I got to Mexico and Canada, but that's you know, so close by. I wanted to get sent to Korea. And I spent nine months in Korea and while I was there then, that was a terrific time. I got picked to ... Well you know we needed somebody for some temporary duty in Europe. Europe. Oh. Never been to Europe before. [laughs]

Hunter: [laughs]

Gaard: And it's quite an experience. I and another guy, we, we took some other little booth, training and orientation and we got on a plane in Korea and flew to Japan, to Fairbanks, Alaska, to New York City, to Lisbon, Portugal, to Seville, Spain.

Hunter: Wow.

Gaard: And then we headed down to the Navy base at Rota, our biggest base in Europe. And got a little bit of orientation training there for flight duty which we had never done before. Then we flew, popped off in Italy and then stepped off in a station in Athens, Greece. And spent four months in Athens, Greece.

Hunter: Wow. Didn't use your Korean much I bet.

Gaard: Well—

Hunter: [laughs] Or did you?

Gaard: Yes.

Hunter: You did?

Gaard: But I can't tell you how.

Hunter: Okay. Okay. [laughs]

Gaard: [laughs]

Hunter: Wrong question! Wrong question! Interesting. I was going to say because I knew that Don went to Monterey—

Gaard: Well you see while we were there, there were some experiences because part way through the Greeks had a coup d'état.

Hunter: Oh!

Gaard: And the generals took control and ousted the parliamentary government.

Hunter: Ah!

Gaard: And for two days we were kind of marooned in our barracks/ hotel. And couldn't even make our regular flights because they were controlling traffic in the streets and stuff like that.

Hunter: Oh!

Gaard: And then, the American military you know, "Okay. We're your ally Greece" and they're, "Oh yeah." So the military then could start, we could resume our flights and stuff like that.

Hunter: Ah. Okay.

Gaard: Uh.

Hunter: Interesting.

Gaard: But—and then of course there was the little thing that happened also while we were there that—we were making these reconnaissance flights in the Mediterranean and you get the 1973 October War. Yom Kippur War.

Hunter: Oh. Yeah. Yeah.

Gaard: And you know, so I was a firsthand observer.

Hunter: Wow. Interesting. Interesting.

Gaard: And then, shortly after that I decided not to reenlist. And even though I'd been trained as a school, as a teacher I'm, this military stuff is fun and I've had a lot of excitement tremendous experiences, a lot more than most people have in their four years or so in the military.

Hunter: Yeah. Yeah.

Gaard: But, I think, I needed to be fulfilled and get my professional career underway. And so came home to Minnesota and got, had to take a little course work to recertify.

Hunter: Okay.

Gaard: Human relations course and one other thing just to—and ah, I was more than a little irritated that a couple principals when I entered, as I interviewed for jobs for the next year. “Oh, why didn't you take some graduate courses when you were in the service? Lot of guys do that.” “Well my service didn't exactly allow for that kind of thing.” “Oh well they could, a lot of guys...” “I don't think I want to be here. This guy does not know what's going on.

Hunter: Yeah.

Gaard: [laughs]

Hunter: Yeah.

Gaard: But, jobs were, were, were very tight in education.

Hunter: Yep.

Gaard: You had to—and I didn't get anything until I got a call in August of principal of the other the new junior high school in Elberly. You know, um, we're in declining enrollments and stuff here but we need a part-time social studies teacher for this coming year.

Hunter: What year was that?

Gaard: This would be the fall of 1974, '70, you know, '74.

Hunter: Okay.

Gaard: And, I don't know if I want to staff a forty percent position. I just don't think I can handle that. I was thinking, well if I did a part-time position I might be able to take some graduate, start graduate courses and start on my master's degree. You can't, can't be more than a forty percent. He say's "well let me think. I'll call you back tomorrow." They needed a sixty percent position and he gave me another set of responsibilities and stuff like that. I had to. Okay. [laughs] So I had uh—it was kind of good for me too as a beginning teacher to have not five classes, I just had three classes.

Hunter: Oh that's nice. Yeah.

Gaard: And then in, that'd be done, let's see. They were all morning, I was, I did some subbing duty for some of the teachers sometimes had in the afternoon or filled in, somebody else had to, you know, had to leave and stuff like that. And then I took a couple evening classes each semester at the, at Mankato State University.

Hunter: Yeah? Okay.

Gaard: And got my program underway. And then, had my fifth class reunion five years out of high school.

Hunter: Okay.

Gaard: No! Ten years out! It was ten years out.

Hunter: Oh right! Because you'd been to college yeah.

Gaard: That summer. And lo and behold um at my class reunion one of my best friends from high school, Chuck Hoogland, who was the city clerk here in Grinnell.

Hunter: Ah!

Gaard: You know I think there's an opening in Grinnell. I can, you know, I'll send you an application. I have seen it in a replacement bulletin and stuff like that. And, I interviewed at about five different places in the summer of 1975 but, I got a call from Larry Dickson and Red Rickson, came down here, interviewed.

Hunter: So—

Gaard: And stayed there—

Hunter: What were their positions at that point? Larry was high school principal?

Gaard: Larry was, no, he was not principal yet.

Hunter: Ah!

Gaard: He was the Career Education Director.

Hunter: Okay.

Gaard: And Red Rickson was the principal at the high school.

Hunter: Okay.

Gaard: Because there was, there was federal funding for this career education program.

Hunter: Oh.

Gaard: And it wasn't an associate position because I would be a career education teacher.

Hunter: Ah.

Gaard: And I would have classes in career education. Plus, then I would direct students to work sites in the community. And it was kind of an unusual job. I was in that for two years. And then the federal funding ran out. I continued for about oh, three more years then another person was hired to do the, the, junior high program. And then I needed, they needed me for full time social studies. So—

Hunter: For what time social--?

Gaard: Full time social studies.

Hunter: Full time social studies okay.

Gaard: And so I, I've been, my third year I did some part time social studies and my career education and it became full time after a while.

Hunter: Ah, okay. Okay. What, so what were you teaching, what was social studies like? What was it like to teach social studies at that time? What were your subjects? What were your—

Gaard: Let's see. Well, as junior person on the totem pole in that way—

Hunter: Mhm-hm.

Gaard: Well, I was mainly I did, I was a world history major.

Hunter: Okay.

Gaard: Basically. And I had a minor in political science. But the University of Minnesota also you know, you had to be, you had to have your — you know I minored in Geography. And, political science was kind of my, my third one.

Hunter: Ah, okay.

G: But, being the, a government teacher. So, I, I was, teaching American government mainly plus, I think I had a class, modern European history. I had a class or two each year of sociology.

H: Oh, okay.

Gaard: And then things, things varied and then it really didn't change that much, all during the rest of my next thirty years, forty-seven years because I usually had mostly American government. I revised the first, I wanted to get the African-Asian history course revised to be more up to date and new materials and things because I had a lot of background, of course especially in Asia.

Hunter: Right.

Gaard: And I created a Latin American—there was an—and part of that was there was no, there was no touching actually all on Latin America. In the entire Grinnell high school curriculum.

Hunter: Wow.

Gaard: And I talked to Larry Dickson who then soon became principal. You know, and I talked Tom Wiemer who was a Spanish teacher. “You know there needs to be some knowledge, you know, especially for your kids. You know, we get a lot of kids who are going to major in Spanish.”

Hunter: Yeah.

Gaard: And um, there was no coverage in our social studies curriculum or anything about Latin America any place here. So I created a Latin American studies course.

Hunter: Ah. Okay.

Gaard: It was the history of, you know, going, looking at the, the Indians before Columbus and then going through the history of the Latin American countries. You know: Mexico, Argentina, Brazil, and the differences, culturally and linguistically. You know, all that kind of thing.

Hunter: Yeah.

Gaard: And, we were one of only two—all who that course exists we are one of only I think, two schools in Iowa that have a course in Latin America like that.

Hunter: Wow.

Gaard: And there are Latin, including the Inca, Latin American history and culture. And then, around, around 19—winter of the—we'd have to, you know, we had to redo all of our curriculum. About every seven to ten years and get all new textbooks and so on and so forth. And in the first part of my career here we were really short on, there was only thirty American government textbooks for the entire class of 220 kids. Although we did offer that they didn't all take it at the same time.

Hunter: Mhm-hm.

Gaard: Because it was a one semester class. But still, and Red Rickson said, "you know, I think everybody, every kid's got to have a textbook." And so one of the first things he got through was you know, getting enough money to be enough government textbooks for everybody.

Hunter: Government was a required class? Even then right? Okay.

Gaard: Um,

Hunter: Was that state or—?

Gaard: Actually, it's virtually national.

Hunter: Really? Okay.

Gaard: Because, going back to Thomas Jefferson, pulled some that, if you don't have a literate, educated citizenry then you won't have a democracy.

Hunter: Mhm-hm.

Gaard: And virtually every state in the Union requires somewhere in high school, ten through twelve, at least a one semester course in American government and citizenship.

Hunter: Mm okay.

Gaard: And it's, it's, I think you know, I remain convinced that's probably the most crucial, more so even more so than American history because you got to know how your government works and voting and the importance of voting, and citizenship participation.

Hunter: Yeah. Yeah.

Gaard: And it, but it needs to be synchronized with you know, with your study of American history.

Hunter: Yeah.

Gaard: And but also as one of my extracurriculars early on was the model United Nation program. And, because nobody else wanted to do it. [laughs]

Hunter: [laughs]

Gaard: But, as a person who had been around a little bit too, I was, I became fascinated that I had been in an Iowan high school Model UN as a high school student in Elberly Minnesota.

Hunter: Ah.

Gaard: Minnesota was, I think even a, either just right behind, Iowa in setting up a state-wide Model UN. And I thought it was a fascinating experience to be a United Nations delegate. We were sent as Israel.

Hunter: Ah.

Gaard: The country that I was a delegate from.

Hunter: Wow.

Gaard: And stuff like that. As a high school junior.

Hunter: Wow.

Gaard: And, we'd all come and have a weekend of semi-vacation, take some topflight Grinnell high school students to the Iowa high school Model UN. Cedar Falls was a great deal.

Hunter: Yeah.

Gaard: And oh my goodness. We had as many as three countries and it was always a rich experience. And also it was a thing good for a teacher too because you meet all these other teachers of social studies and things all across the state and ask them "what you're doing and your class" and—

Hunter: Yeah.

Gaard: And get some teaching ideas. And also you're just trading war stories and that kind of thing.

Hunter: Yeah.

Gaard: And the kids enjoy it too because all the students there are, are good social studies students but also, kind of, top flight students in general. And inquisitive and you know, participatory, and enthusiastic about their studies. And a couple students are like, "yeah I learned the most about social studies from being in Model UN as some of my classes."

Hunter: Oh.

Gaard: So it was a fun experience. And, and continues to be fun even to this day because, you know Todd Krieser took my place.

Hunter: Ah. Uh-huh.

Gaard: And he's going to continue with that. And they're going to have, I think, let's see. What is it? A special anniversary this spring because it's a big anniversary. We had a special commemoration of the twenty-fifth and I think now it's the fiftieth anniversary.

Hunter: Wow.

Gaard: Of the Iowa high school Model UN. And, the first student Secretary General, a student at UNI at the time was Congressman Dave Nagel.

Hunter: Ah. [laughs]

Gaard: So Model UNers can go far. [laughs]

Hunter: Yeah. He was a Grinnell professor wasn't he?

Gaard: No. No.

Hunter: Okay.

Gaard: No see, he was a student at the University of Northern Iowa at the time.

Hunter: Okay.

Gaard: He was a college student.

Hunter: Okay.

Gaard: Because the, the leaders of the UN, the Secretary General and all the community leaders are UNI students.

Hunter: I see. Okay.

Gaard: And they, they kind of lead in the proceedings and are partly, you might say the teachers of the Model UN program.

Hunter: Okay. I see. I didn't know that. I didn't realize that. Okay.

Gaard: And so we, we faculty, the high school teachers are all just you know, at this point the kids have been backgrounding their country and all the positions on these issues and writing their resolutions and position papers. And now the UNI students kind of take over and lead them through the proceedings to debate issues and and, and follow the countries' positions and create some type of resolution from that committee for the Iowa high school Model UN. And those are sent to the US delegation in New York when it's over.

Hunter: They are? Okay. Okay. Are there Model UNs in all the states?

Gaard: No.

Hunter: No?

Gaard: No.

Hunter: Okay.

Gaard: But... I think that there are probably twelve or fifteen states that have a state Model UN of some kind.

Hunter: Okay.

Gaard: Iowa and Minnesota are two of them.

Hunter: Okay.

Gaard: ...I think Wisconsin has one too.

Hunter: Okay.

Gaard: I'm not sure. And I think Illinois has one. I don't think Nebraska or the Dakotas have one.

Hunter: Okay.

Gaard: I don't know about Missouri.

Hunter: ...back to the—

Gaard: Back to the—

Hunter: Back to the government course.

Gaard: Yes.

Hunter: I know that one of your assignments or I guess it wasn't an assignment in your government was to have students go out and observe meetings and government—

Gaard: And participate.

Hunter: Right! Yeah. Can you talk a little about that? Where did that come from? How did it work? What are some good stories that came out of that?

Gaard: Well digging actually from my own experience, you know, my senior year at the University of Minnesota was in the 1968 Presidential campaign. And I was kind of an activist for Eugene McCarthy. And so you know, I found that in the process of that and the, the goings on at the University of Minnesota campus and stuff like that. And, you know the way it says in the

textbook is often, it's just kind of, this is the way supposed to be. But then there's sometimes the way it actually is. You know, depends as much on personality and position and a lot things like that. As I read in books you know like *The Making the Present 1960, 1961, 1964, The Making the Present 196*—you know it was one of those. [laughs]

Hunter: Yeah.

Gaard: I think it's important also since I was involved immediately upon coming to Grinnell we had the 1976 election and campaign. And the, there was all new that year that the Iowa Caucuses were moved to an advantageous position for the first time in US history to be a bellwether of Presidential preference.

Hunter: Mhm-hm.

Gaard: And this kind of unknown Governor from Georgia named Jimmy Carter decided that if he was going to get anywhere he didn't have the finances that Ted Kennedy and some other more illustrious better known nationally said he would concentrate on Iowa. And I think about sixty thousand Democrats came to the Iowa Caucuses that year which was like ten times what had come to our Caucuses in any previous, presidential year. And Jimmy Carter did well and that gave him this little run or, significant boost in his aspirations. He wanted then to win the New Hampshire primary which usually had been the previous, you know the bellwether before.

Hunter: Right.

Gaard: The New Hampshire people are still mad at us for taking that away from them. [laughs]

Gaard: Well then come 1980 foom! Things are a lot bigger and we had a hundred thousand people at the Iowa Caucuses in 1980 and you know. Our only kind of off year was I think, '88 when Harkin was talking a lot to them and so a lot of them didn't come to it as much. No, no! '92!

Hunter: Right. '92.

Gaard: '92. This kind of unknown Governor from Arkansas named Bill Clinton. [laughs] Avoided because of the Iowa Delegation was kind of, going to be in the back pocket of Tom Harkin who was still thinking about running for President.

Hunter: Yeah.

Gaard: Uh, but that didn't come through. [laughs]

Hunter: Yeah. Yeah. Yeah.

Gaard: But otherwise I... anyway I... my own political experience that I end up working for Joann Orr, our state senator. Emil Whoshock and you know, other candidates you know, pro and

con. If you can teach government and you learn about government you've got to see some of the nitty-gritty going on. And I ended up wanting to go see Congressman Bob Hale. I'll get kids you know, I'll give them some extra credit and I'll have a little, I verified that, I made my own little form where they would get somebody's signature that they had spent this many hours door-knocking or dropping the leaflets or making telephone calls or doing whatever for somebody's campaign and then write up about a one paragraph summary of it. And I used those forms all my years teaching government.

Hunter: Oh, okay.

Gaard: But when John Deaton moved in to take Steve Crawford's place or no, Jim Lashes' place. You know, this is good, you know, why don't we make it a requirement? Because if we are going to do it we have to know it's not just extra credit. This makes requirements so we have a requirement that everybody should, would have to do that.

Hunter: Mhm-mh.

Gaard: Some of them still didn't. But it wouldn't cause 'em to fail but—

Hunter: Yeah.

Gaard: It definitely if they did, and they could do a little, still some extra credit and kind of boost their grade a little bit and stuff like that.

Hunter: Yeah. Yeah they used to come to the school board when I was on school board.

Gaard: And ...and, and to read their descriptions of the proceedings.

Hunter: [laughs]

Gaard: "You don't read all these things do you?" "Oh yes I do." [laughs]. Some of my best reading of the week. Because...because...you know, because the students have such a refreshing perspective of what's going on. "And that one old guy on city council he sleeps through the whole thing!"

Hunter: [laughs]

Gaard: "This is the third Thursday this councilman hasn't been awake yet!" [laughs]

Hunter: Wow.

Gaard: They wrote that. They were very clear and to the point. And then there's the time too they couple of these kids were there and, "This guy, Kansas City councilman and started blowing a whistle." [laughs] "That damn whistle across the street from my house and blows right in and I got to sleep! You got to stop it!" [laughs]

Hunter: [laughs]

Gaard: And it's just, just, you know, as the former Speaker of the House Tip O'Neal said, "All politics is local."

Hunter: Mhm-hm.

Gaard: And you've got to you know, appeal to those local people sometime and he thought, he'd been reelected to the House two or three time and found out the little lady across the street that babysat for him when he was little hadn't voted for him yet. And he said, "Well, why haven't you voted for me?" "Because you haven't asked."

Hunter: [laughs]

Gaard: [laughs]

Hunter: Oh, yeah. Oh, yeah.

Gaard: You got to ask everybody.

Hunter: Yeah.

Gaard: And you've got to participate directly yourself and see what's really going on too. That's the only way our government works.

Hunter: Yeah. Yeah.

Gaard: Everybody has to participate and um, so, and every, you know, and the, a lot of the kids their whole attitude even towards the class would change some after they'd been to a city council. "You know, now I can see how this stuff actually, you know, those people running aren't high and mighty or illustrative. They're just kind of ordinary people just like us." [laughs]

Hunter: Yeah.

Gaard: Well yeah. They are indeed.

Hunter: Yeah. Yeah.

Gaard: And, and then they come to the school board meetings too. "Wow. How'd he ever get elected to school board? Why would anyone do that? That's such a boring... and they serve them all those reports from the teachers. And read all that boring stuff. Ah, I couldn't stand to do that." [laughs]

Hunter: Wow. Wow.

Gaard: And uh, it was, it was, the reports from the students were very interesting and entertaining. And it gave me ideas too about what, okay, how do I couch my presentations.

Hunter: Uh-huh.

Gaard: Because, I've got across these kids you know, this has got to be interesting and yet informative.

Hunter: Yeah.

Gaard: And, and, and, and so they've got to have a feel for it. And how do we give them that, that little magic feel to like government, to enjoy participating in citizenship? And that's, that's the elusive goal of every teacher I think, always to, you know, find that magic moment that's, that makes real for, that makes them want to do it.

Hunter: Yeah. Yeah. Do you have, when you were talking about the reports I was thinking about assessment and I was thinking, that's probably the most direct and, and useful assessment you can get on a program like that.

Gaard: Mhm-hm.

Hunter: But I've sure that test takers would, test makers would say now do you have any direct evidence that you had an impact on these students? I mean. So do you?

Gaard: Oh yes.

Hunter: Oh. What kind? Tell us about that.

Gaard: We, because it was right there in the reports.

Hunter: Okay.

Gaard: You know, that in, and I could often see a change in the students' attitude towards class and the learning process once they had been to something more, more than they had been door-knocking or other kinds. "Wow, hey this is interesting! I didn't think it would be. It was fun. I liked it. I'm going to go back and do it again." [laughs]

Hunter: Do former students who are in government now?

Gaard: I'm not sure at the moment. But at various times, I've had, oh shoot, several students that did internships in Washington D.C. with congressmen.

Hunter: Oh okay.

Gaard: Not always with democrats but...[laughs]

Hunter: Alright. [laughs]

Gaard: Uh, or, uh, and went on and and oh I don't know how many kids are now teaching political science.

Hunter: Uh-huh.

Gaard: But it's probably a few other than just, I know like, Larry Wilson's daughter was teaching first in Iowa City then in Kalona I think it is. And, Mitch Gross is—

Hunter: Oh right. Iowa City.

Gaard: Is teaching in Iowa City. And, oh shoot. I don't I'd have to go back to the classrooms that, where all the other you know.

Hunter: Yeah.

Gaard: What else do you want?

Hunter: Well, my daughter's working for a union which I think is pretty close. Pretty close.

Gaard: Yeah. Yeah.

Hunter: Yeah. Yeah. In D.C.

Gaard: Yeah. Well and your son too. You know.

Hunter: And my son too. Yeah.

Gaard: He's back and teaching and plays and directing plays

Hunter: Yep.

Gaard: And designing wonderful sets. And now he's working up in Marshall Town with—

Hunter: Well actually he's, he's not working there anymore.

Gaard: Oh, he isn't?

Hunter: Yeah, he's, he's now an independent contractor.

Gaard: An independent contractor? Oh.

Hunter: Well...

Gaard: Designing sets or...?

Hunter: No, he's...well yeah. He's working, you know he's working at the high school and at the art center and he's renovating his house and working on our basement. So.

Gaard: Oh.

Hunter: We say independent contractor.

Gaard: He's building.

Hunter: Or unemployed. [laughs] One or the other.

Gaard: [laughs] Oh, well...

Hunter: Oh, but he's busy.

Gaard: The ground floor operation is sometimes you know, it takes a while to kind of get up and say what you really want to do and to get business and in these tight job markets, it is not easy.

Hunter: I'll say. So, speaking of jobs. Now you, you're retired from the high school?

Gaard: Mhm-hm.

Hunter: But you're still teaching at Iowa Valley.

Gaard: Iowa Valley.

Hunter: What do you teach out there and how does that compare with your experience teaching high school?

Gaard: Well one of the big, one of the huge changes as my career at the high school continued I thought I had quite a bit of paperwork with the federal granted program when I first was teaching in the Career Education program.

Hunter: Mhm-hm.

Gaard: Well, and then teaching regular program stuff while we had more, more, a little, couple of special ed reports on each person on the special education program, couple of them. That progressed to being more and more and special education has really grown, you know there are so many things that we're diagnosing so many more learning programs that weren't— back in the olden days like when I was in school, "Oh those kids are too dumb. You can't teach them anything, out the door." And stuff like that. You know, kids weren't dyslectic, MHD, and all that kind of, lack of, you know, Attention Deficit Disorder and all those kinds of things. And like one little girl I even had, I remember having her in Sophomore year her parents would go to church and anyway she was really working hard and when you'd do a test review she did, you know, she knew answers, but she'd come to tests and she'd just blow it. I couldn't understand quite why. I didn't know she's also having you know, squinting a lot sometimes. She didn't have glasses and I mentioned with her parents, "Have you ever had her eyes checked?" "Well yeah we have, because we thought about that too." But her eyes, her vision is okay but she doesn't read very well. Anyway they took her to a specialist finally and got an opinion. And she had a special visual difficulty which was a kind of dyslexia.

Hunter: Ah.

Gaard: So when she was reading things words got jumbled up or letters got, and she couldn't comprehend stuff. And with other people, even one of my student council presidents at one point he was faking his way through high school. He was so bright he could remember things orally but he couldn't read to save his soul. He was terrible because, but he too. Anyway when you explained that here is your problem with a specialist and some counseling then "Oh that's my problem. That's..." And then things start to fall in place because they know how to kind of even internally remedy it.

Hunter: Yeah.

Gaard: And that, once that takes place then FOOM!

Hunter: Yeah. Yeah.

Gaard: Away they go.

Hunter: So you've seen more diagnosis of these problems over the years?

Gaard: Oh yeah. Oh my yes. I would say in 1975 we did not correctly diagnose more than ten or fifteen percent of the learning problems. And even now I suspect we don't diagnose more than seventy percent of them. I think there's still a great deal of head way to be made. You know, people's minds and the learning process. The human mind is still very complex and synchronization you know, eye-hand coordination and all that kind of thing. There's still a lot to learn.

Hunter: Yeah.

Gaard: About how all that works.

Hunter: That's for sure.

Gaard: A lot to learn. And, and we ourselves you know, one of the—during graduate courses I was kind of surprised at how well I would do and how much better I now remembered. You know, generally you're learning ability declines you know, especially when you reach age thirty but in most, after age twenty-five. But because I knew more about the learning process and, because I was also better at deciphering, I remember one of my, had a graduate class in, government at the University of Iowa and I figured out what the essay questions would be before we had the final exam or the mid-term.

Hunter: Ah. Ah.

Gaard: And the person asked me after the mid-terms, "I must be pretty transparent. You must have figured out exactly, because you wrote exactly what I wanted on the test." [laughs]

Hunter: [laughs]

Gaard: Yeah I did. You know, but as well as having taught American government and I just figured well, the essay question is going to be something about this and you know and this and there's going to be something about this and this and this and yep. And so I prewrote an essay and then wrote it in class. And I did that in several classes and that worked out pretty well from my point of view. [laughs]

Hunter: [laughs]

Gaard: But once in a while I'd still have a feeling that somebody, a professor I had misread or something.

Hunter: Yeah. Yeah.

Gaard: And one guy that was...well one of my professors at Iowa State he was the most convoluted rationality process sometimes in his teaching and he'd, he'd come and make presentation classes and he'd talk about this thing over here, I couldn't even take notes in a rational fashion because he was touching on so many kind of disjointed things sometimes. [laughs]

Hunter: Mhm-hm, mhm-hm.

Gaard: What in the world is he going to want for his essay question? I don't, but I got through it. Because other students had an even harder time at it than I did. [laughs]

Hunter: [laughs]

Gaard: And so he was quite complimentary in my essays too. So that's what he taught us.

Hunter: So what are you teaching at Iowa Valley now?

Gaard: Well as I was thinking about retiring, I called over at Iowa Valley, "You have a need for, you know, evening instructors, because I'm..." and I got a return call and interviewed with ah, what was her name? Anyway, the dean and she says, "Yeah I think we could make use of you. What would you like to teach?" [laughs]

Hunter: Cool.

Gaard: And so I started immediately teaching both North American government and Western Civ.

Hunter: Ah.

Gaard: She said, "Take direction!" because our, you know, your adjunct faculty, our head teacher is in Marshall Town and he prefer there is a course outline you should follow. And he chooses the textbook. Oh I can handle that.

Hunter: Yeah.

Gaard: Because there was still a lot of, and, “You’re going to have to do an awful lot of paperwork because we have to have both a mid-term grade and a final grade.” Yeah. “And, you’re going to have to furnish attendance records at least once a week.” Oh my goodness how difficult. I don’t have to do it every period, every day? [laughs]

Hunter: I was going to say you were a high school teacher. Wait a minute.

Gaard: In a nutshell the paperwork for a semester of class at Iowa Valley is about equivalent to my paperwork for one week at Grinnell high school.

Hunter: Wow. Wow.

Gaard: I did that much paper work for each class in a week.

Hunter: Wow.

Gaard: There’s that much paperwork at the, you know. Because I don’t have special ed. reports I don’t have daily, I don’t have to put together all the goals and objectives for the week and lesson plans for the administration to put in a paper file and. You know, like...[laughs]

Hunter: So you enjoy teaching out there?

Gaard: Yes. It’s it’s it’s, you know, it’s like an ideal teaching world because I can... College teaching I think the students come because they want to be there. I’ve had some students who didn’t do well but it’s something, you get students from diverse backgrounds because I’ve had classes where I have students ranging in age from sixteen to forty-eight. And everything in between.

Hunter: Yeah.

Gaard: And of course, then in most cases probably half the students I’ve had in class there were students I had at Grinnell high school. [laughs]

Hunter: Okay. I wondered.

Gaard: But I’ve not going to get any beyond that because it’s not been, it’s already seven years.

Hunter: Wow.

Gaard: Since I quit teaching at the high school.

Hunter: Wow.

Gaard: And so I’ve beginning to run out of alumni.

Hunter: Yeah, yeah.

Gaard: Who are still going to be in the education process. Expect for a few older students coming back.

Hunter: Coming back yeah.

Gaard: For a, for a labor decrease and stuff. And so I just, I mean, the people I had in class are, they're now older students. [laughs]

Hunter: [laughs]

Gaard: Well as it's kind of shocking. You know I just, in the obituary in the paper the other day Mike Corban, who, that kid just graduated, I guess it was that long ago, 1980 when he graduated from high school? He's fifty-one years old. But still that's pretty young to die these days.

Hunter: Yeah. Yeah.

Gaard: Stuff like that. But, also sometimes the students I had in class, that old person he's over forty, he's over fifty yeah, I was there once. [laughs]

Hunter: Yeah. [laughs]

Gaard: You know, it was back in our rebel generation in the '60s, you know you can't trust anybody over thirty.

Hunter: Right that went away. [laughs]

Gaard: For me thirty, that was thirty-six years ago. [laughs] But some things change and some things do not. However much things change and yet some things stay the same.

Hunter: Yeah.

Gaard: The younger generation never trusts the older generation fully.

Hunter: Yeah.

Gaard: They've still got to learn somethings on their own. And just let them have some experiences. That's how they mature and become adults.

Hunter: Yeah. Yeah.

Gaard: All that kind of thing.

Hunter: Well cool. Anything you'd like to say about the, Grinnell's public education system?

Gaard: Well, it was, it's always been a treat you know, as I've done studies for my masters program and stuff like that too, whether we realize it, a lot of the time a lot of education studies seem to indicate the high school that has between six hundred and fifteen and seven hundred and fifty students is an ideal sized high school. Not too big, not too small. It's big enough to be diverse but not so big that your kind of malcontent disciplinary problems, are large enough numbers to become a difficult number to manage.

Hunter: Mhm-hm.

Gaard: And even in some really big school like the student council convention back in 1977 out in Massachusetts that building had I think about four thousand students in it. And to get past the problem basically they divided the school into three sections. And so there actually, there were like three separate student bodies in that same building with you know. They didn't cross boundaries you know, except for a few specialty classes that you know. The mixed up Russian class and Chinese class and stuff like that. And so they could offer some extreme specialties that way. But basically they ran three student bodies in one building. And that's been done I think in a number of buildings and it's one of the more refreshing effective educational ideas in American high schools.

Hunter: To go for that size?

Gaard: Yeah. And also for some logistics when they're planning their buildings, too often American education and American industry and a lot of other things, "Oh bigger is better!" The biggest is the best you know. And not necessarily especially when you're dealing with individual people. But even in, even in industry a lot of business organizations you get too many office workers all in one building. You get all in one room and you know the, individualization and individual attention is so crucial in the human element that's involved and you've got to tend to people. And so again, that's way I long appreciated my in talking with my Model UN things or other kinds of state meetings things like, "What are you doing in Cranlog? How do you handle this problem?" "Well we do this." Oh. Grinnell is always in the forefront in a lot of educational reforms and forward thinking ideas. And blessed also with good administrators and things you know to, to get things done well and effectively.

Hunter: Okay.

Gaard: And so that's why I stayed a whole thirty years here. Because I, I, and then also Grinnell also, is kind of a nice unique community because it's not real big but yet it was big enough. I do regret not being able to go downtown shopping like I do. Back in 1975 you go downtown there was a JC Penny store and there was Spurgeon's store, diverse shopping. Now all we've got left is some consignment stores and curio shops and a Walmart.

Hunter: Yeah. Yeah. We suffer that way.

Gaard: Our shopping isn't what it used to be.

Hunter: Yeah.

Gaard: But yet, we do have a lot of things and here in Grinnell we've a nice location because okay, in an hour or a little more you can be in Iowa City or Cedar Rapids or Des Moines, or Ames.

Hunter: Yeah.

Gaard: And you know, those are the hubs of Iowa. For shopping, for meetings, or anything else.

Hunter: Cultural events.

Gaard: Culture events, yeah.

Hunter: Yeah.

Gaard: So Grinnell's location is a huge advantage.

Hunter: Yeah.

Gaard: And because also, going to some other similar sized towns elsewhere you know even in Iowa they just don't have what Grinnell has. They're kind of a long ways off the beaten track. [laughs] You don't get a lot of very rural Iowa and they're way out and they just don't have access to a lot of things that we have here in Grinnell.

Hunter: Yeah.

Gaard: Or at least it's much further away.

Hunter: Yeah. Yeah.

Gaard: Louisiana the computer has learned all of the technological changes. I feel like I've kind of—when I was working at the National Security Agency, NSA in 1971 had the largest computer in the world. And it still is. They're always in the forefront of computer technology and information technology.

Hunter: Yeah.

Gaard: And they divided in half after a year because it was too big. Because they couldn't get enough access ports. But in order to access you had to punch your stuff in on and that would create a punch card.

Hunter: Right.

Gaard: And you went over here and write the answer out on. This was how you accessed computers in the 1970s.

Hunter: Yeah.

Gaard: And then, they started having this guy named Stephen Jobs. You know he puts some technology into just a small desktop type computer—"Oh my!" The Apple computer.

Hunter: [laughs]

Gaard: And, back in the, the early '80s, so well maybe we had three of these Apple computers at the school and and students are learning computer language. If you type it up this type of programming to use a computer to type, keyboard, and then all of a sudden several will show up on this little screen and stuff like that. And you could access stuff. Oh, wow. But you have to learn Apple computer language.

Hunter: Yeah.

Gaard: Oh wow. And then in 19—about 1986 they sort of "Hey, there's another system, it's called a mouse." A mouse. And you just move it around and you click it on something on the screen and you don't have to learn all that computer language anymore. Oh my goodness. I got my first Apple in 1987 and I had one of the first Macintoshes.

Hunter: Okay.

Gaard: And, I had, one of my students showed me how to run it. Because they... [laughs] You know, the student teaching the teacher.

Hunter: Yeah.

Gaard: And that happened several times. "Hey how do I do this?" [laughs] You know. And, and then they advanced in programs. I still have that old Macintosh up in my attic.

Hunter: Do you really?

Gaard: Still works.

Hunter: Wow.

Gaard: Because I figure that's going to be historic. I'm a history major. [laughs]

Hunter: Yeah. [laughs]

Gaard: And and then I got a G3 and then I had an Ibook and now I've got a new one. You know the, the memory on this little thing that I have on my desk is equivalent to gigantic computers ,

and I seem to remember, what was his name? Grinnell College had was it the computer facility over there by Darby gym?

Hunter: Ah...

Gaard: And there was a computer that stood in there that was about oh, this wide and this long and this high [presumably gestures with his hands] and it had like 6 million bytes of information in it. [laughs]

Hunter: [laughs]

Gaard: Six megabytes and now we got that much on the desktop.

Hunter: Right, right yeah. It's amazing.

Gaard: And that in 1982, '84, '85 that one did all the computer scheduling and then a whole limit of information technology for the whole Grinnell College campus and professors and all that stuff.

Hunter: Yeah. [laughs]

Gaard: How things change.

Hunter: I'll say. I'll say.

Gaard: And the information system and information access that is amazing how you know you still got to read

Hunter: Yeah.

Gaard: And that's one of the things I still try and press of students. Even if it's available on the computer you've still got to get it up on the screen and you've got to read it.

Hunter: You've got to read it.

Gaard: And something has to go in between your ears.

Hunter: Yeah.

Gaard: That computer between your ears because you can't just depend on being able to find in the computer, on the internet what you want.

Hunter: Yeah.

Gaard: And, you've got to be very discriminating consumer of information because yes the internet has almost everything on it. Not everything but there is an awful lot of stuff on there. But

you've got to know how to access it and you've got to be discriminating when you access it because a lot of it is blogs and garbage.

Hunter: Right. You've got to know how to figure out what's good.

Gaard: And so, like when I'm grading my research papers now with each of my courses has you know a research paper required.

Hunter: Uh-huh.

Gaard: Only copy righted information is acceptable as a source on your paper. Because if it does not have a copy right it's probably not reliable.

Hunter: Okay.

Gaard: You've got to. And if you can't show me a copyright you can't use it. And when you're going through all those websites to look at find a copyright.

Hunter: Yeah.

Gaard: Because even say, the whitehouse.gov has the date and it is copy righted.

Hunter: Yeah.

Gaard: There's a, that's informed proper information. Or a campaign, or a, political candidate's brochure. It's—

Hunter: Copy righted.

Gaard: It's copy righted because they don't want somebody else changing it or putting it down for something that he doesn't subscribe to. And stuff like that.

Hunter: Yeah.

Gaard: Oh. So that's the easiest way to discriminate between good information and junk.

Hunter: Yeah.

Gaard: On the internet. It's having a copyright. If it's not copyrighted because you need all the CNN News and all those other kinds of Google News, whatever, somewhere in there there's a copyright.

Hunter: Yeah.

Gaard: And if there isn't then you know, it's not legit.

Hunter: Yeah.

Gaard: And so you're still going to have a little bit of writing skills to know how to document and give proper and learn from coaching debate and you know you've got to document, you've got to support your assertions. That's how you learn to argue because if you have unsupported information it isn't any good.

Hunter: Yeah. Yeah.

Gaard: It's not supportable.

Hunter: Yeah. Yeah.

Gaard: And you've got to support your arguments, you've got to support your information, your assertions, your thesis and whatever.

Hunter: So yeah.

Gaard: Got to have real information and not just opinion.

Hunter: Yeah. Yeah. Well cool.

Gaard: How's that sound?

Hunter: Sounds good. Sounds good. Okay well I'm going to...

Gaard: Did I give you enough to get started with?

Hunter: I think so.

[End]