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TEACHING EXPERIENCE PLUS

by

Edgar Wolfe

Stoneville High gave me my first teaching experience. I taught there two years and left in 1930, 43 years ago. Since then, outside of Meade and Butte Counties and Rapid City, I have never met anyone who had ever heard of Stoneville, not even at Weta in Jackson County, South Dakota, where I taught the second year after I left Stoneville. Stoneville is just naturally a very unfamous place.

I wouldn't call that bad--not bad at least for Stoneville. I do feel sorry, though, for a world of unfortunate people who have never experienced Stoneville.

Last summer I spent a couple of weeks in Los Angeles and, for contrast, I thought of Stoneville. I pitied that great city full of unfortunates who will never know Stoneville, never see those clear distances or breathe that pure air. But let's be glad that they won't, for who knows? They might like it too well! Just imagine those energetic millions deciding that they liked Meade better than their polluted Los Angeles and Orange Counties and suddenly descending upon you, throwing up houses and skyscrapers, piping in water from the Missouri or Lake Superior, stretching out eight-lane freeways to speed them from Sturgis to Faith, Mud Butte to Viewfield, Maurine to Elm Springs, Newell to Howes, with poor Haydraw perhaps and Hereford transformed into vast, ugly slums, while

millionaires perched upon Bear Butte and Fox Ridge or even, somehow and marvelously, on the tips of the Deer's Ears. Imagine the traffic, cars and trucks by the millions, now speeding, now creeping, now brought to a standstill, jammed bumper to bumper, all spewing out fumes, to befoul and haze your God-given air. Oh, be glad that central Meade County is off the main roads, that tourists pass it by in favor of the more spectacular Black Hills and Bad Lands, even though I swear that there is nothing on earth more beautiful than certain aspects at certain times around Stoneville. But these are special, I suppose, and not for tourists nor will ever be.

Certainly there was no danger of an influx of tourists in 1928. I was 21 then and had just graduated from the University of Kansas. A teachers' agency informed me of a job in Stoneville High, and I wrote an application. Earl Jones's reply was, I must say, no effort at salesmanship. It was honest and fair. Stoneville, he said, was isolated and unpopulous. Winters were cold. Conditions were comparatively primitive. No doctors, no druggists, ^{no barbers, no preachers,} no movies, no a lot of things. Finally, he said if I still wanted to teach "in such a place" I should write again.

I wrote again. It all sounded like an adventure to me.

Well along in August I received a letter from Paul Talich of Bristow, Nebraska, he too a recent college graduate, from Hastings College, ^{like me} and about to be ^{a high} ~~an excellent~~ school teacher at Stoneville. If I had no better way of getting to the job, he invited me to join him at Bristow and we would drive from there in his old 1918 ^{or '19} Dodge touring car. That is how it came about that the faculty of Stoneville High, newly expanded to a three-year school, "all" arrived together.

I still remember that journey and all that was new to me, the treelessness of the towns, the sight of blanketed Indians on the road near Winner, the driving for miles by moonlight only (to save a bad battery) without meeting more than one or two other cars ^{more than} ~~and~~ and seeing the lights of ~~and~~ a few distant ranch houses,

sleeping at White River under a surprisingly great pile of blankets, and the almost absolute night quiet of the place, my first inland town. To Paul, though, none of these things were new, since, having relatives at Redig, he had visited western South Dakota several times before. Yet even he was to learn something the next day, the result of the simple decision to go north to Stoneville from New Underwood.

Getting lost, I learned later, was something that could happen even to a native South Dakotan. Once I talked to a disgruntled citizen of New Underwood who appeared in Stoneville late one Saturday afternoon. He had got a nice early start that morning and had been driving, he said, ever since, covering I don't know how many lost and unnecessary miles at the slowest of speeds. We did better than he did, but I sympathized. The trouble was that the Rand-McNally roadmaps of that time always gave South Dakota credit for having many more "graded and drained" earth roads and even more graveled roads than the state actually possessed, and there were other eccentricities, equally inaccurate.

I suppose that the grumpy filling station attendant at New Underwood knew this, but, having heard where we were going, all he said was, "Stoneville, huh? Y'oughta have an airplane instead of a car."

He bit off his words so scornfully that we decided to let his put-down or witticism, whatever it was, go unquestioned. We thought we knew what to do about a rough road anyhow. Just slow down.

All I recall about the road for some distance north of New Underwood was its monotony. It seems as if we ought to have passed through--or by-- Viewfield, but I don't remember. I have a clear recollection, though, of rolling over an unending succession of precipitous, close-together, drouth-whitened hills, untilled and unfenced, at about twenty miles an hour (instead of the thirty we'd been averaging up till now). At last we crossed the Belle Fourche River, and soon

afterwards, against the evidence of our map, the road took us persistently west. After some miles, we spied a ranch house and stopped to inquire. Wrong road, yes. We had almost reached Hereford. Go back, we were told, to where we had turned west and go east. We did as directed, but what went east was hardly a road, merely a pair of ruts leading off over the prairie. They brought us, presently, to an unpainted two-story house with a few outbuildings, the ground about the place much rutted and worn bare. The trail, however, continued over the next hill, going north now, and we didn't stop. Paul guessed shrewdly that what we had just seen was not just a dwelling but a store and a postoffice--in fact, the town of Jonesville on our map. I was astonished, but bowed as usual to the judgment of one who had been to Redig.

Soon after that we both became increasingly unsure and anxious. Our trail kept branching. The rancher back there had told us: "Keep to the right. Always take the trail to the right." We did so, but absolutely without confidence, for ^{few} what/signs of recent travel ~~we could see~~ we could see were always on the left. We saw no more houses and nothing alive except a few small herds of wild horses and some antelope once watching curiously from a hill. I don't even recall a jackrabbit. But the way the afternoon sun kept obligingly on our left gave us some hope, and at last, as the hills grew less, we saw, far ahead, the upper half of a car speeding (as it seemed to us, creeping along in our ruts at maybe ten an hour) on a course at right angles to ours. It felt for a moment as if we were seeing things, but then we congratulated ourselves. We weren't lost after all, but coming to the graveled state highway out from Sturgis. When we reached it, it brought us soon to Clough, a store, a house, and a dance hall, all neatly painted white.

The highway went on to the east and we left it, headed north again but this time on an authentic dirt road, eminently satisfactory after those Jonesville ruts. Clough, we judged, was on a plateau, for the land seemed to fall away

from it in irregular hills and valleys with trees and brush. A little farther on, there were rock-crowned buttes with steep grassy slopes, and we saw barbed-wire-fenced fields of wheat stubble and short-stalked corn, and occasional tarpaper shanties. Farming country, however unprosperous it might be. And, indeed, we expected to see more signs of population than we had been seeing, for did not the next town, Fairpoint, have a population of 150? Rand-McNally said so. But, however such an error came about, an error it evidently was. When we saw Fairpoint, we decided that a tenth of 150 might be an overestimate.

East now. Six miles more to Stoneville. The low sun behind us, or from the side, depending upon the curves of the road, bobbed in and out among the hills and buttes. Three miles to go, now two, one, less than one! For my part, I was getting decidedly nervous.

Then the road climbed up and around a large hill, and off to the east a half mile or so a neat-looking farm swung into view. I remember distinctly: a bright red barn, a shiny steel windmill, a painted bungalow, other buildings. When had we last seen such a farm? But there was no time for that question now when a little cluster of buildings was visible to the south of us at the bottom of the slope.

"Stoneville," Paul said.

"But where's the school?" I said. "I don't see any school."

Yet the letters on the store front said Stoneville right enough, and a black-haired young man with a grin and an extended hand appeared on the platform above us as we climbed out of the car. "Is it Mr. Wolfe and Mr. Talich?" he asked, explaining that he knew us from our application pictures. He said he was Bob Poe and his employer, Mrs. Hal Doran, postmistress and school board member, was inside, and, furthermore, we had some mail already.

Mrs. Doran, a very amiable lady, sent us on east three miles to Jack and Celestine Doran's house and store, where we ate and spent the night. We also saw the school, catty-cornered across the road from Jack's, which is, of course,

though the Dorans are gone, the site of the present Stoneville, while our 1928 Stoneville, store, garage, community hall, and ~~two~~ ^{two or three} dwellings, population at most of eleven, has vanished completely.

The next day we arranged to room and board with "Grandma" Orth, Mrs. Margaret Orth, in her pleasant, new-looking house, on the farm which had caught our eye from the hill above Stoneville. Just a few rods away was the tarpaper-covered house of Henry and Anna Orth and little Katherine and Virginia.

We had only a weekend plus Labor Day to prepare ourselves for the beginning of school. I remember that most of Sunday we spent helping Henry Orth and Earl Jones, both school board members, do some needed carpentry and repair work around the school, and that at that time it hadn't even been settled yet exactly what subjects would be taught and who would teach ^{which.} ~~which.~~ By Tuesday, though, the schedule was settled upon, textbooks selected (though I remember that we did not like some ^{of them} ~~of them~~ and ordered others later), and we began.

The two grade school classrooms, taught by the Kapsa sisters, Martha and Helen, were at the front of the main school building. The high school used the largest room, at the back, plus the old one-room school located a few feet to the west. Thus you see that little Stoneville High, holding classes in two buildings and making use, we must not forget, of three others, the outdoor toilets and the horse stable, could claim to have one thing in common with the largest and most up-to-date big city high schools. Stoneville was a campus high school!

~~Mr.~~
~~Paul~~ Talich and the freshmen took the old building as their home room,
 Mr. Wolfe
 and ~~Paul~~ and the sophomores and juniors took the large main room. When the schedule called for me to teach a freshman class or for Paul to teach the sophomores or juniors, usually we teachers changed rooms rather than the students, who did not, as a consequence, get unduly restless because ~~of our~~ of our twenty-minute recesses, which we took like the grades, though at different ~~times.~~ times.
~~School~~ School began at nine and ended at four, with the day

divided into eight forty-minute periods. I taught, that first year, English I, II, and III, Latin I and II, and geometry, and the next year bookkeeping instead of Latin I, dropped in favor of a subject considered more practical. Paul taught--but I cannot altogether recall. I do remember algebra, physical geography, ancient history, and American history.

We began in 1928 with about 25 students and the next year with about 35. Draw a circle with ~~about~~ a twenty-mile radius around Stoneville and you have about the area from which we drew students. They came from as far away as Cedar Canyon, White Owl, and Marcus, as well as from nearer communities, Royal Center, Chalk Butte, Red Owl, Fairpoint, and, of course, Stoneville. Just as they would have done if they had gone to the larger high schools, Faith, Newell, or Sturgis, the students from some distance away/~~had to room and board~~ had to room and board with someone near the school.

Since that was so, what was Stoneville's attraction? Paul and I supposed that the parents saved some money, that room and board were more expensive in "town," and that the parents did not value much the extracurricular activities such as athletics, school plays, and music which were difficult for us to manage at Stoneville, ~~and perhaps those other activities around town, such as pool playing, which might have been considered even more undesirable.~~ to say nothing of those other activities around town, such as pool playing, which might have been considered even more undesirable. For our part, Paul and I regretted that we could not ~~offer~~ offer more extracurricular activities than the very few that we did.

So how good an education did students get at Stoneville High? I admit that conditions in some respects were not ideal. ~~no shops, no facilities for manual training, drawing, or commercial instruction,~~ no shops, no facilities for manual training, drawing, or commercial instruction, We had no laboratories, ~~7~~ ~~the library was very small, and for distractions from study, perhaps fewer than in the average high school.~~ the library was very small, and for distractions from study, perhaps fewer than in the average high school. True, our students about half the time had to ~~study~~ study in the same room in which another class was reciting, but study halls in many city high schools are noisy and badly disciplined. At least, the student whose

concentration is broken by another class's discussion may learn something. Then, too, our classes were small. Most of our students probably got about as much individual help and instruction as they wanted or requested. But in all high schools there are students who become extra-interested and ambitious, who really commit themselves to acquiring all the knowledge which the school can help them to get. In better-equipped schools such students stay after school, working in laboratories, using the library, studying, conferring with teachers. They are usually free at home in the evening to spend undistracted hours reading and doing home work in their own rooms or to go to the city library and study there. It was in this matter of the possible extra time to be spent in reading and learning that I think some city students had an advantage over ours. Nobody lingered at Stoneville High after four or came early in the morning. We teacher-janitors only got to school in time to light our fires and get our rooms warm by nine. After school we had to clean our floors and blackboards in a hurry before it got dark. We had no convenient electric lights. I believe there was a gasoline lamp in the hallway closet, but it took time to fool with a gasoline lamp and I never did. As for home work, we could not count on much. Many of our students had chores or housework to do at home, and when possible time for studying came it had to be done crowded with others in small space around the family stove.

In view of all the difficulties, the quality of the teaching was probably of particular importance. I shall not pretend that we were wonder-workers. We were young and inexperienced, but at least we took our job seriously. We tried hard. Speaking for myself, that did not keep me from making some pretty asinine mistakes and misjudgments now and then, but on the other hand there is the matter of ability. Teachers cannot teach what they do not know or understand yet I have known too many high school teachers, including experienced ones, who try to teach English ~~but are themselves puzzled by grammar, to teach~~ mathematics but cannot themselves solve the hardest problems in their texts,

or to teach history almost without ever having read any, etc.

~~was a great deal smarter than that. Charlie Soules's score, I seem to remember, was 107. But that restless and mischievous boy had the ability to learn quickly anything he wanted to. He was much smarter than that. David Shaw's score was 98, which is average, but David ~~would~~ I believe, would have been able, after a period of adjustment, to do above-average work in any high school in the country. Psychologists insist that the ability to make good puns (in spite of the common saying that a pun is the lowest form of wit) is always indicative of very high intelligence. Well, once I overheard David saying to Ethel Bauer, "'Nix' iss 'no'~~

I do not believe that Paul Talich and I could be so criticized. I knew my English, Latin, and geometry, and was ignorant only (for a while) when I was asked to teach bookkeeping, which I had never before studied. As for Paul, there is no question in my mind that he had much to give his students. I was always learning things from him myself, though I didn't sufficiently appreciate the fact at the time.

Of course, the quality of a school also depends upon the students. Good students help to teach each other. Good students inspire others, including the teachers, to do better. We had some such students, and I do not recall that we had any who were detriments to the school. We had a few who got discouraged, but none, I believe, who just didn't want to learn. Our disciplinary problems were mild.

I guess it was because we did think we had some above-average pupils that we decided to give so-called intelligence tests. I have had a very imperfect faith in intelligence tests ever since. The results were not flattering. We did not believe in those results then, and I do not believe in them now.

According to the test, for example, William Larkin, who did the best, had an I.Q. of 111, but, while that is above average, I ~~am~~ feel certain that he ^{a great deal} was ~~much~~ smarter than that. Charlie Soules's score, I seem to remember, was 107. But that restless and mischievous boy had the ability to learn quickly anything he wanted to. He was much smarter than that. David Shaw's score was 98, ^{which is} average, but David ~~would~~ I believe, would have been able, after a period of adjustment, to do above-average work in any high school in the country. Psychologists insist that the ability to make good puns (in spite of the common saying that a pun is the lowest form of wit) is always indicative of very high intelligence. Well, once I overheard David saying to Ethel Bauer, "'Nix' iss 'no'

in Latin." And so it is. "Nix" is "snow" in Latin. It was an excellent pun. And then there was Lloyd Lee, whose score was ridiculously low. Was Lloyd dull? No, slow and thoughtful perhaps, but not dull. He understood geometry. In Rapid City or Sioux Falls or anywhere else, only the best high school students really understand geometry. Once I lent Lloyd my copy of The Return of the Native by the great English novelist Thomas Hardy. It is not an easy book, especially for a reader of his age. We discussed it, and I was surprised by how well he understood it. "That's the kind of book I like," he said. Yes, Lloyd was thoughtful--and very smart.

These four will do for examples, though I think the test results presented in no instance at all an accurate appraisal of any of our students' ability to learn. The fact is, of course, that children who are in any way isolated, as country children always are, average lower on such tests than city children do. I can't discuss all the reasons, but one is that the tests always test in part what has already been learned rather than just the ability to learn. Then, too, city children are tested so often that they become test-wise. They know that on any timed test speed counts more than perfect accuracy and so they don't stop to check and double-check their answers, but hurry on. The contradiction is that ordinarily it is an intelligent child who checks and double-checks to be sure he is right. I don't recall that we gave intelligence tests the second year I was at Stoneville. We knew without testing that our students had the ability to think and learn, and that was all that mattered.

One quality which our students had which I found tremendously admirable was--I can think of no better word for it--hardihood. They were not spoiled children, did not overvalue themselves, accepted things as they were. I remember once when Paul arranged for the school to visit the Stainbrook lignite coal mine how girls and boys alike went down into that hole of absolute blackness without the least fuss or sign of anxiety or fear. Afterwards Paul remarked that if the high school girls in his home town had been asked to do such

a thing half would have hung back, shrinking and shrieking, scared to death, ~~that high school boys in the winter months would not be so easily deterred~~
~~backseemed to be~~ some perhaps refusing to go at all. Then there was the way ~~that~~ our students stood the cold without complaint. On days when the unceasing northwest wind kept pouring down from Canada, it was impossible to heat our rooms adequately, especially the old school, which was more ^{exposed} ~~skawzed~~ and had west windows. Everyone kept his overcoat on and worked as hard as on the comfortable days.

I shall never forget the day during my second year, after I was married and living at Stoneville, when I couldn't start my old Essex car and had to walk the three miles. It was one of the coldest of days, the temperature down in the lower thirties, ^{below zero} and of course I was late. I barely got the fire in the big stove started by nine o'clock. My students--those that got there at all that day--huddled in chairs and desks about the stove. I was so ashamed of being late that I was no proper disciplinarian that morning, so that when Frances Soules plopped her attractive self down on Lloyd Lee's lap (all for the sake of greater warmth, ~~Edgar~~ you understand) I couldn't decide what to say and said nothing. But I did conduct class. It was time for Latin II, which Lloyd was in, but not Frances. Be sure that I kept Lloyd busy translating and translating and translating. The amazing ~~thing~~ thing is that he did well. Frances did not affect his concentration in the slightest. During all this, I stood at the front of the room as on ordinary days, but wearing my overcoat, you may be sure. I did walk over once to have a look at the thermometer on the west wall. It was ten below zero. By the end of that first hour, though, the room had warmed up, and the students returned to their regular seats.

It does seem as if a good many of my most vivid memories of Stoneville are concerned with cold weather. In the first place, especially during the first year, for two long months after Christmas, there was the daily struggle to drive to school. This began with cranking the old Dodge, driving it to the well, and

using a tin can to pour water into the radiator. It wasn't easy. Sometimes hardly a drop ^{got in.} ~~reached the radiator.~~ The fierce gusts of wind blew it away. What Paul's old Dodge had, you see, was a radiator so leaky that it could not possibly hold antifreeze. So it had to be watered before each trip and drained immediately upon arrival. Paul took pride in always managing, no matter the weather, to get his passengers to school, they being, besides me, Dorothy Iserman and little Marian and Jimmy, Paul and Esther Orth's children. Since we had plenty of wind and drifting snow, the managing turned out to be considerable. Paul wore out ^{tire chains} and bought new ones, he and I plied scoop shovels, and we followed a surprising assortment of snake-like, off-the-road routes, avoiding as best we could the daily changing drifts. We circled around and through pastures and cornfields, even very occasionally jerking out a few staples from fences in order to get through (coached to do so by Henry Orth-- I believe we wouldn't have dared otherwise), and finally we would arrive at school or home again, as the case might be. Carl Lee, as I remember, just could not keep the grade open, no matter how often he got out with his scraper. The drifts would ~~re~~form again immediately.

Then there were the winter amusements, such as scoop-shovel tobogganing. Paul and I, sometimes with Byron Wall, would seek out a high steep snow drift in a ravine and slide down in an incredibly brief, swift flurry of snow. There was a lot of cutting snow in the face, but no danger--except from the shovel, which we could never stay on and rarely keep hold of. The lost shovel could sail high and come down hard, on our heads as likely as not.

Another amusement was one-wall handball, which I was responsible for introducing. I was pretty adept at the game, being the intramural tournament champion once in college. At first we played at school, using the back of the main building for a wall and scratching boundary lines on the ground with a stick. Later, Paul and I bought shiplap in Sturgis and nailed it on the bottom of the raised and hooked-up stage in the Stoneville hall. When we had pieced

it out with a removable ^{portion} ~~position~~ at the bottom, we had an excellent wall to hit the ball against. We chalked boundary lines on the floor each time we played. The only troubles were the nearby windows, inadequately protected, and the slipperiness of the waxed floor after dances. Some of the best of my handball pupils, I recall, were Paul himself, Byron Wall, Irwin and Lloyd Lee, Buster Jones, and Charlie Soules.

That slippery hall floor, I recall, was a bother, too, when we attempted to have a basketball team. A school carnival was held to raise money for goals and uniforms, and we put up two goals in the hall with the baskets placed the requisite ten feet from the floor. It was far from an ideal court, though, since it was both short and narrow and the roof was too low. Besides, a couple of steel braces stretched across the hall to get in the way of balls launched toward the basket. Very frustrating. Yet we were happy to have the goals and had high hopes for the beginning of competition. We lined up a two-game schedule, with Newell and Faith, but, alas, these games were never played because of our smallpox epidemic in December 1929. I have always regretted not playing, for the experience would have been educational. I have no illusions about our possibly winning. Boys who have never even seen a basketball game don't go on the court with experienced players and win. They have to take their beatings first. But when I taught at Weta in 1931-'32 I coached such another bunch of boys. They'd never seen a game and had no real court to practice on. So they played and lost nine straight games--and then at last won two games in a row in the district tournament. Actually, Stoneville had more good, strong boys, some with pretty fair quickness, than Weta had, but we would have lost the first games badly. We would have got our education.

Since no games were played, though, I consider the ~~game~~ high point of the season to be the first practice session held in Stoneville hall. It was a

cold night, and the boys retired to the "dressing room" while Paul and I shot baskets. Then our players emerged, their dark uniforms contrasting nicely with their unremoved long winter underwear! It was one of the funniest sights I ever saw, but who could blame them? As I said, none of them had ever so much as seen a basketball team in uniform and the community building was cold, heated by one small stove at the south end. The choice, I ~~guess~~ guess, was between long winter underwear and the most and largest goose pimples anybody ever saw.

Now for one last cold weather memory, one which perhaps I ought not to tell about at all, because it certainly was no credit to me. Everybody knows that it is students who play tricks on teachers, not the other way around. When a boy plays a trick on his teacher, the teacher is supposed to apprehend him if possible and then punish him in some appropriate manner, not return the compliment and let the boy guess who. No, I just didn't play the game. Still, my motives weren't all bad. I wasn't just out for r-r-revenge. I was trying to do something educational. I insist that I am not ordinarily a sneaky person. I was just trying to teach a certain boy a needed lesson.

While back, I referred to Charlie Soules as mischievous. He was that. He played tricks, I believe, right and left and seemed to get away with them. Whoever played a trick on Charlie? No one that I could see. I became pretty observant of Charlie--after someone put melted limburger cheese in one of my nice, warm new leather mittens. I thought at the time that the perpetrator might be Kenneth Lowder--for no better reason than the way he laughed when I put the mitten on and that horrible smell first dawned upon my olfactory sense. But Paul said I was wrong, that I should have looked a little farther away where I probably would have spied Charlie, enjoying my discomfiture in a more restrained, more innocent-looking kind of way. Paul said I ought to know by then that Charlie was behind most of the mischief that occurred around Stone-

ville High. Well, I hadn't known, but now I took to observing Charlie and decided that Paul was decidedly right. Then came the temptation and the desire to educate Charlie a little, if it were possible. I also developed a considerable curiosity. I told myself that what I would do to Charlie would not be mere, sneaky, ignoble vengeance, but a kind of psychological research. Charlie could dish it out, but could he take it?

So one day when I was presiding in the old school building and had to leave the room, I brought back in with me a couple of big handfuls of snow, which I put into Charlie's leather airplane cap,⁷ which was hanging in the entryway. By the time school was out the snow had become ice-cold slush. Charlie rushed out after school, cap in hand, and headed for the stable and his horse. I followed to observe. Then he put on his cap. Down the slush ran about his ears and down inside his collar, and Charlie--laughed! I saw no apparent anger. There was no snapping at people, no cussing. Charlie laughed. And so I was ~~educated~~ educated, whether Charlie was or not. There are practical jokers in this world (I don't know how many) who aren't really mean, and Charlie was one of them. Charlie could take it. I thought as he rode off that it would be terribly ironic if now the boy caught pneumonia, but he didn't and I was glad.

During the summer after my first year at Stoneville, without giving anyone notice of any such intention ~~anyway~~, I got married. I felt when I did it that the community might possibly resent such secrecy, but the fact is that my real failing was simply a kind of cowardice. More than once I went to see Henry Orth, Earl Jones, or Elmer Wall, who had replaced Mrs. Doran on the school board, for the particular purpose of bringing the matter up and ~~discussing~~ finding out how they felt about it, but I couldn't begin. I would open my mouth and something else would come out. Nor could I tell Paul. I wonder at myself now, but certainly at that time I was one of the most singularly shy young men to be found anywhere, or so I imagine. Anyhow, the board considerately decided

not to fire me, and my wife and I rented the one-room house at Stoneville which in the past had been used as a cream station. It was by no means a tight little dwelling, and my wife got such a chilling in it that winter that we suspect her later health troubles may have started there. She has multiple sclerosis, a paralyzing disease which occurs only in the colder parts ^{of} the earth, never in the tropics. She has been completely bedfast for the last ten years.

Be that as it may, we decided after that winter in the cream station that she could not stand another. The next year I taught at Axtell, Kansas, then at Weta, South Dakota, a town that exists no more. That was the last of my high school teaching. For a good many years now, I have been a professor of English at the University of Kansas.

In spite of her long illness, my wife, like me, remembers Stoneville ~~with~~ ~~interest and affection~~ and the people we knew there with interest and affection. I particularly remember my old pupils, and there isn't one of them I wouldn't like very much to see again. What I feel toward Stoneville is homesickness. That is the word for it exactly.