

# Interview with Gene Carver

Conducted by Gay Beaudet, teacher at Nestucca Valley Middle School & Students  
In 2002 at Nestucca Valley Middle School

**Student:** *Please tell me the name of the grade school you attended and describe if you can the exact location of the school.*

**Gene:** It was called Slab Creek School, it was five miles up Neskowin Creek, or Slab Creek, as we called it. Uh... it was a one-room school house with all the grades that were available... sometimes there was three or four grades, and sometimes there were five or six grades, depending on...

**Student:** *Ok... if you have any idea when the school started and/or closed, please tell us.*

**Gene:** That one picture that I brought was taken about 1910, so it was previous to that... I don't know for sure when it started.

**Student:** *Ok... um... after the school closed, what school did the students attend? Who went to the school?*

**Gene:** What... after the school closed....

**Student:** *Did it close?*

**Gene:** *Yeah, it closed. I graduated in the eighth grade there, but my sister was two years... three years younger, and it closed before she finished, and she had to go to Neskowin to finish out her eighth grade.*

**Student:** Ok... please describe the school building in as much detail as you can, telling us about the outside and the inside of the building.

**Gene:** *It was just a one-room building about twenty by forty, probably, with a wood shed built on the back end of it, with a big wood stove, windows along the left side, and that's about it. It was painted white... inside and out.*

**Student:** Ok... was there a bell on the school?

**Gene:** *No bell.*

**Student:** Ok... please tell me how you got to school and how much distance was it.

**Gene:** *Oh, I had to walk about a quarter of a mile, I guess, each way. It was quite close to where we lived. Some of the students had to travel probably two miles to get there.*

**Student:** Ok... what are all the ways students got to school while you were in school?

**Gene:** *Walk. (Chuckling)*

**Student:** What were the days during the year that students didn't attend school, such as Christmas.

**Gene:** *Other than Christmas?*

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**Student:** *Uhh... uh... I think so, yeah.*

**Gene:** I don't remember any vacations, except for the Christmas vacation. And Thanksgiving... we probably had Thursday, Friday off for Thanksgiving.

**Student:** *Please tell us a typical school day from the moment you left home to go to school and when you arrived back at home in the afternoon.*

**Gene:** Wha... would you state that again?

**Student:** *Please tell us a typical school day from the moment you left home to go to school and when you arrived back at home in the afternoon.*

**Gene:** Probably we would get there by nine o'clock... walk to school to have classes for three hours in the morning and then a recess, and then uh... probably left about three-thirty in the afternoon to go home... walk home.

**Student:** *Ok... Please tell us about the regular curriculum.*

**Gene:** That was a long time ago! (chuckling) I don't remember what all I studied. Uh... reading and writing and arithmetic and... that's about it.. geography and ....

**Student:** *Ok... please tell us about any extra curricular activities, like sports, clubs, etc.*

**Gene:** There weren't any.

**Student:** *Ok... How were the students taught? Was everyone taught together in one group, or were there smaller groups of instruction? Did the teacher mostly literature (lecture), or did students study books?*

**Gene:** Well, she would take each individual class, or two classes together, and teach them at a time, depending on how many children were in the class. But, uh... the only thing that we had together was writing, and everybody else was on their own.

**Student:** *Ok... was there much homework?*

**Gene:** None. (chuckling)

**Student:** *If someone misbehaved at school, what were the punishments, and if possible, tell about any incidents that you remember happening in regards to students being disciplined.*

**Gene:** I don't know... I guess you got to sit up in a corner in a chair if you got too loud or rowdy, but that's about the only thing I remember... I don't remember any spankings or anything like that.

**Student:** *Ok... how were parents involved in discipline for school behavior?*

**Gene:** Parents? I don't think they were, to my knowledge.

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**Student:** *Ok... please tell us about technology in the school. In other words, was there a telephone? What did the students typically write with?*

**Gene:** No telephone... no electricity... running cold water was all, no hot water...

**Student:** *What would happen if a student was hurt at school, or if there some other emergency?*

**Gene:** We was late. If we were late at school? You was late?

**Student:** *If there was.... if someone hurt someone else, or if there was an emergency, what would happen?*

**Gene:** I know the teacher's car was there... she'd probably have to take us some place, but I never saw that happen.

**Student:** *Ok... what was the community involved in the school, and was there a parent support club? Tell about programs held for the public and tell how the building was used for community functions.*

**Gene:** I don't remember any public... maybe Christmas programs, about the only thing that was... that happened where the public was invited.

**Student:** *Please tell us the names of any teachers and administrators.*

**Gene:** Ooooh.... I went to a Mrs. Taylor, uh... Miss Wilson, Mrs. Louthier, and Mrs. Bacon were, I think, the three... four teachers that I had.

**Student:** *Ok... what were the games you played at recess?*

**Gene:** Tag and ball... there wasn't enough people to play much of anything. Workup, softball or something...

**Student:** *Ok... Please tell us any stories you remember about things that happened at school or considering (concerning) school.*

**Gene:** I don't remember anything that comes to mind, anyway.

**Student:** *Ok... I'd like to change the subject a little and learn more about you, if I could. If it's ok to ask this, when and where were you born?*

**Gene:** When was I born? In 1926, in Cloverdale, Oregon.

**Student:** *Ok... um... what is your ancestry?*

**Gene:** Ancestry? I guess I'm American. I'm a... English, Irish, Scotch and Dutch... a combination of those.

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**Student:** *Ok... please tell us about where you lived. Did your family live in one place, or did you move when you were growing up?*

**Gene:** We lived on the farm most of the time... my dad was a cheesemaker, also, so parts of two years we lived off of the farm... once at Cloverdale and once at the central cheese factory.

**Student:** *Why did your family or your ancestors move to this area?*

**Gene:** I guess they were looking for a place to homestead. My great-grandparents were homesteaders, and my grandparents on my father's side came here from Iowa around 1910 or 1912, or something like that, and I don't know why they came here, but... just looking for work, I guess, and a place to raise their family.

**Student:** *Describe any significant events that occurred during your childhood. (Student has trouble with question and Gene helps with pronunciation.)*

**Gene:** (chuckling) Let's go over that again... I missed it.

**Student:** *(Repeats question, having problems again and giggling.)*

**Gene:** Significant?

**Student:** *Yeah...*

**Gene:** Oh, I don't remember anything that's significant.

**Student:** *Tell about your chores and responsibilities as you were growing up.*

**Gene:** Choice?

**Student:** *Chores.*

**Gene:** *(Thinking).... I just wanted to be a father and raise a family and support them the best I could... I went into the lumber industry... logging... and retired from that, and that's it.*

**Student:** When you were a child, what did you want to be when you grew up?

**Gene:** *I wanted to be a railroad engineer (chuckling).... really!*

**Student:** What were your favorite games, sports, books, hobbies, etc?

**Gene:** *Favorite sport was baseball and football... hobbies were fishing and hunting.... and that....*

**Student:** What do you remember most about your mother and your father?

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**Gene:** Well, they did a good job of supporting us and raising us, I guess. That's about the... with what we had... what they had to support us with... we had a small dairy farm, and my father worked out to help support the family.

**Student:** *What was the best advice your mother and/or father ever gave you, or what were good lessons you learned from them?*

**Gene:** Work.... (chuckling)... don't be afraid to get your hands dirty, and help other people.

**Student:** *Ok... tell us about any of your occupations and accomplishments throughout your life.*

**Gene:** My accomplishments are few... I went into the logging business right out of high school, and, uh... then my brother and I had a logging company... partnership for twenty-some years, and after that I helped my...

**Student:** *I've got a question.... do you have, um... any stories to tell about your childhood, like fishing or hunting or anything like that... any fond memories?*

**Gene:** Fishing in the river?

**Student:** *What river?*

**Gene:** What did he want?

**Student:** *What river?*

**Gene:** Well, we fished on the Salmon River and the Nestucca River and Neskowin Creek, or Slab Creek as we called it in those days, and uh... hunting was just mostly for deer around... there weren't any elk in that area at that time... they were moved in in the early seventies....

**Student:** *Ok... please tell us about your own family.*

**Gene:** My fam... immediate family? Myself, my wife and two daughters. One of 'em was a teacher in Lebanon, Oregon and the other is a housewife and mother of two boys and they live in Bend.

**Student:** *What special skills and interests did you have?*

**Gene:** Pardon me?

**Student:** *Uh... what special skills and interests did you have?*

**Gene:** (laughing) Skills? I'm not very skillful. I love to fish.

**Student:** *Fish...*

**Gene:** Yeah.

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**Student:** *Are there community and/or religious activities that you'd like to tell us about?*

**Gene:** Pardon me?

**Student:** *Was there anything in the community that you guys did together as a community?*

**Gene:** Um.... not that I can remember.

**Student:** *Ok... what... we're almost finished... please share some thoughts you have about what it was like living in this area.*

**Gene:** What it was like to live there? We had a lot of fun... we made our own recreation, of course, and... but, uh... we didn't have any electricity or... went to, maybe a movie or two a year, so most of our recreation was right there at the ranch... fishing, playing in the creek with the dog, and that kind of stuff.

**Student:** *Ok... we're very interested in stories, particularly incidents you remember. Pretend you are sitting here with your grandchildren. Tell us some stories that you would like to tell to them and for them to hear about life experience or your parents and family.*

**Gene:** I have one good story. My grandmother had lost a horse... they had a homestead that was probably two miles from where our place was. And this was before I was born. And she, uh... went out to look for this horse with a halter in hand and thought she'd catch the horse and lead it home... she got close to the... coming back up the road towards the house and it was getting dark, and off the side of the road she saw what she assumed was a horse standing over there, so she walked over with the halter and tried to put a halter on a bear... it was standing on a log... (laughing) she said she went one way and the bear went the other!

**Student:** *Thank you very much for visiting with us. We will type up your comments and stories and send you a copy. We hope you can come to the Gathering 2002 on May 29th, beginning at 12 o'clock noon.*

**Gene:** Thank you.

**Student:** *Now we'd like to show you some photos we have for you to enjoy them....*

**Mrs. Beaudet:** Oh, I don't know... I don't know about that....

(Tape is shut off, then turned on again)

**Gene:** I don't know what to say... there.. I worked with so many different people that, uh... my brother was my partner and he's still alive, but in poor health, and uh... other than that... well, you meet a lot of people in twenty-five years of logging...

**Mrs. Beaudet:** *You bet.. were the practices... logging practices a lot different...*

**Gene:** They were... when we first started, yeah...

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**Mrs. Beaudet:** *Environmental concerns were not as...*

**Gene:** Strict as they are now.

**Mrs. Beaudet:** *Of course, we have more people now, so...*

**Gene:** Yeah...

**Mrs. Beaudet:** *Yeah...*

*(There was a conversation that has been deleted in which the student discusses his/her current family by name with Gene Carver who knew them.)*

**Student:** *Yeah... did you play any instruments?*

**Gene:** Harmonica.

(Transcribed by Darleen Creecy Cole..... November 18, 2002)