Jessie Ruth Gilbert Saiter Memoir

Preface

This manuscript is the product of tape-recorded interviews conducted by Francie Staggs for the Oral History Office during October and November of 1981. Ms. Staggs transcribed and edited the manuscript. Ms. Jessie Gilbert Saiter reviewed the transcript.

Jessie Gilbert Saiter was born seven miles southeast of Marshall, Illinois on April 25, 1895. She lived in this farming area until her marriage in 1915, when she moved to another farm with her husband. Her reminiscences of these days provide a wealth of information on early twentieth century farming practices and rural life. There is also information on family life, education, and religion. She tells of many incidents which happened to her family during this period. Her memoir includes recollections of her youth, married life, career, a discussion of women and women's rights, and a discussion of her ancestry. This memoir sheds invaluable light on the changes in life around Marshall, Illinois during her lifetime.

Francie Staggs, who is the granddaughter of Jessie Gilbert Saiter, was born in Terre Haute, Indiana in 1941. She grew up on a farm near Martinsville, Illinois in Clark County. At age 18, she moved to Champaign, Illinois where she attended college for one year and later worked at the University of Illinois. After several years of living in different areas, including Okinawa for one year, she returned to school at Sangamon State University and received a B.A. in history in 1981. She is currently working on a master's degree in history at Sangamon State University. She is married and the mother of two children.

Readers of this oral history memoir should bear in mind that it is a transcript of the spoken word, and that the interviewer, narrator and editor sought to preserve the informal, conversational style that is inherent in such historical sources. Sangamon State University is not responsible for the factual accuracy of this memoir, nor for the views expressed therein; these are for the reader to judge.

Jessie Gilbert Saiter
1969

Jessie Ruth Gilbert Saiter, October 24, 1981, Martinsville, Illinois.

Francie Staggs, Interviewer.

Q: Grandma, let us begin with the date and place of your birth.

A: Well, I was born April 25, 1895 in Clark County [Illinois], the same county I've lived in [most of] my life.

Q: Could you tell me the name of the township?

A: Yes. [Wabash] Township.

Q: Tell me your dad's name, your mother's name, a little bit about their ancestry, and I would like you to tell me the names of your brothers and sisters.

A: Well, my father was John W. Gilbert. He was a college graduate and a school teacher--a very good school teacher. And my mother was Joretta Taylor. She was Irish--very pretty. My father was English. His father was a doctor, Dr. [Samuel S.] Gilbert, and he died of cancer--he married a Fredenburger. That's our ancestors. My father and mother had ten children, only two of us are still living. Do you want the names of the children?

Q: Yes. I would like the names of the children.

A: Well, Dora was the oldest and then Clarence [and Bess] and Charles and James, Nellie, and then Fred died in March before I came in April, and then Frank and Ernest. We grew up on a farm . . . my father taught school and farmed weekends and nights--many times in the evenings.

Q: Could you tell me what your brother, Fred, died from?

A: Pneumonia.

Q: And was a doctor called?

A: Yes. But you see in those days they had to come on horseback, and he died in March and the roads were very bad. They didn't realize he was so serious--you know, pneumonia. He was two years old and it came so quickly.

Q: Tell me about your school and what education was like when you were a child?

John W. and Loretta Taylor Gilbert

(circa 1910)

A: Well, in the first place--when I was a little girl, education and religion were two of the most important things in our lives. Just like our ancestors, they felt that God had a definite place in the home. You had to have education to be intelligent, you know. So we were sent to school and my father definitely believed in an education and, of course, being a teacher, many of my aunts were teachers. And so we were fortunate in many ways--we children were. You would like to know something about our school that we attended?

Q: Yes.

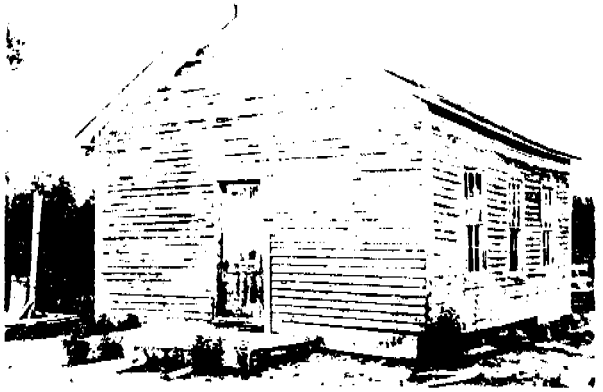
A: Well, it was not like the schools now. (laughs) But it was a white clapboard school. I suppose about forty feet long by thirty foot wide and the whole north end across was blackboard about three foot deep, because most of our work had to be done on the blackboard. We didn't have copybooks like you have now. We didn't have a lot of lead pencils and things like children have now. We didn't have crayons at all--that wasn't thought of. But the older ones had slates and one slate pencil per year, so you had to be very careful because it broke if you dropped it.

Q: Could you describe the slate to me?

A: Yes. It was, of course, you know the material slate is black. And then around it would be a red--usually red yarn interwoven around and made it sort of pretty, you know. If the older ones took care of their slates, they could have what was called a double slate which was two slates together--woven at the side together like you would have a copybook or something put together. But little ones just had a single slate similar to your paper--about the size of your paper there. (points to notepad) We would have one slate pencil about eight inches long to start school. And it, of course, was breakable. And (laughs) by the time the school year was over, we just had mere little pieces of slate pencil. Now that (laughs) seems odd to children of today with all the things that they have to do with, but we had never seen any of those things so we didn't miss them, you know.

But inside our schoolhouse we had four windows on the east and west and a big porch across the south. The road ran in front of the schoolhouse on the south side. Just as you came in the schoolhouse to the left, there was a bench about eighteen inces [that] ran clear around the walls of the schoolhouse because our church was held there too. That was our only church and we needed the space and needed the seats. Then there were three rows of desks, seats and desks for us to sit in. Well, above each of these windows was a small kerosene lamp. Now this is all the lighting that we had. There was a light then up in front, of course, a good lamp because of the pastor or the teacher, whichever. They would have to have a light at their desk.

But the heating--all we had to heat that large room was a stove, a wood stove, I should say four feet long maybe and two feet wide. It was large because they had to put in large [sticks], we called them small logs, but, of course, they were just large sticks of wood.



Oak Grove School
(circa 1890)

Oak Grove School
(circa 1979)

Q: Could you tell me who cut these logs?

A: Yes. The directors. There were three directors in charge of each school. Our school was named Oak Grove because it was placed in a beautiful grove of oak trees. The directors would have plenty of wood on hand and then the older boys would carry this in at recess so that we always had plenty of wood. But, of course, there were a lot of chips and dirt and snow on the floor, but those things were not thought so much of in those days.

Then at the left as we came in, there was a water bucket--always, winter and summer. This was a cedar bucket with brass bands around it. A long handled dipper. The older children would go to my uncle's [farm] just connected with the school and get fresh water out of this spring. It was so cold and good. But can you imagine about sixty children as we came in at recess and so forth, we would each grab a dipper of water, take a swallow and back it went into the bucket. And, of course, nowadays the way they talk about germs they would have sworn we wouldn't live to be six years old, but then many of us are living to be a hundred, I mean, you see how it is. But we did have a good minister who would come about twice a month and stay the weekend, and that was the church that we had.

Q: Could you tell me something about the diseases you had then? You mentioned about the germs.

A: Yes. Really we were very healthy because we ate healthy food, we had lots of rest and, of course, the air was pure. It isn't like it is today and we seldom saw a doctor even with a large family. We went through all of the contagious diseases: measles, smallpox, mumps, and everything. We didn't have a doctor. Mother seemed to know just what to do.

Now for colds in the winter which we, of course, had a lot of, she would always prepare in the fall the cough medicine, which it is a tragedy that we didn't have her recipe because it really did work. But all I know is, she would go out in the fall and gather the hearts out of the mullein in the pasture. She would boil those and also boil hickory bark, and slippery elm, and wild cherry [bark]. But farther than that, I don't know what all she did nor don't know the amounts. But then she would put rock candy and a little whiskey in it to preserve it. But then when we would take a real cold she would give us that and she would grease our throats and chest with turpentine and lard, put a hot cloth on, let us drink a lot of hot ginger tea, put us to bed and make us sweat (laughs) as we called it then instead of perspiring. Well, when you had a cold, it brought it out of you. You didn't stay in bed very long. Because, you know, that just took the cold right out of you. And we didn't need a doctor.

Q: Would you miss very much school because of these illnesses?

A: Not many. No. Very seldom. Because we dressed warm. You see mother knit beautifully and she always knit our stockings, our gloves, our mittens, and our fastenators they called it then. Of course, it

would be called scarves now. But they were so warm. Then, of course, we wore heavy underwear, boots, and outing flannel dresses and heavy coats. Well, it was necessary because many times in January and February the snow would be so bad and it would blow through the broken glass onto our desks, and it was so cold in the back of the school we would have to wear our boots and coats all day to keep our feet from freezing. And so you see we learned, (laughs) and we dressed warm.

Q: Could you tell me something about your subjects that you learned in school?

A: Well, I think they were very important. Of course, reading and spelling came first for the little ones. We learned to read quite well and to spell. That was very important.

Q: Did you ever have spelling bees?

A: Oh, yes. That was one of the things through the winter that we had about every, at least once a month on Friday evening, sometimes twice a month. And we were very proud to win. And we always got a gift which was usually a good book because books were very important in those days. And our teacher would give us a good book.

And then another thing that was important in those days were our games. Now you might think we didn't have any fun but we did. In the wintertime we played fox and geese, we played pilgrims and Indians, and we would make snowball fortresses and have fights, you know, the battles. And then in the summer we would have baseball, darebase, tug-of-war, and Andyover which is throwing a ball over the building. You can't now because the buildings are too large. But we had a lot of fun. It seemed like children had to make their own fun in those days. They created it.

Q: Could you describe how you play fox and geese?

A: Yes. Of course, that was in the snow. We would make a circle and the old fox would be in the center and the geese would hold hands and make a circle around, and as we went around the fox would watch and if he could see some weak spot, he would run in and jump against it and if he could break the line, whoever he broke they would have to be the fox. But tug-of-war was a lot of fun because the older ones would take we little ones in between them and that way they could hold to our wrists, you know, and we would be strong that way.

Q: Did the boys and girls play these games together?

A: Yes. Always.

Q: Did you have any games where just the girls would play and the boys would play their own game?

A: No. I don't think so. We really didn't have that many people, you see. And that was another thing about schools back then. The older boys and girls never got, well, the girls got to go [to school] but not

the boys. They never went to school until after Christmas was over and the corn was out. You see they had to help their dads on the farm. And then that's another place where my father helped out a great deal. Some of them were very poor and their children didn't get to go all of the time, and he would go to their homes and teach them and keep them up with their grades. He would often have five or six to meet in a home and he would tutor them, you know. He always loved education and was a great help to the community in that way.

Q: Do you remember the amount of money he would receive for tutoring?

A: Oh, nothing. Oh, no, no. Those things were done out of love for one another. It's just like when someone in the neighborhood took sick, the neighbors all went in and did whatever should be done. They didn't ask for help, they just went in and gave it.

Q: Now, when you were in grade school, did you have the same teacher throughout grade school or did you have different teachers?

A: Oh, occasionally one teacher would get to stay two years, but not often. That's another thing that is different than today. We started school in September, but it would go through March. Then April was a month of vacation. We called it our spring vacation. Then we had what we called summer school; May and June. And just, of course, the younger children were all that got to go to summer school because the older ones had to be working at home by that time. They were really busy.

Q: Now, did most of the children that you attended school with, did they go onto high school and graduate from high school?

A: Seldom. My oldest sister went to college and my next oldest sister went to high school. Outside of that none of we children got to go to high school. I had wanted it and would have gone had my mother not taken very ill. But being the only little sister at home, and I had two little brothers and an older brother and my father when she took ill. In those days you didn't send them to a nursing home. You took care of your own, you know. And we thought she would be well in a year or two, but she was sick for six years so I didn't get to go onto school.

Q: Did most of the boys not go onto high school because they were needed on the farm?

A: I think mostly because they just went on and did as their fathers did, you know. Farming was quite different then than it is now and, of course, there were no pressures. You didn't have to keep account of everything that was going on. It was a life of peace in a way. As I look back on it, I used to think that it wasn't very pleasant, but you know as I look at the world today, I can see where we were really almost living in a paradise.

Q: So it was hard work but you enjoyed it?

A: It was hard work, but we came in in the evening, we had a good meal, we went to bed, and had a good night's rest, and the next day was the next day. We didn't have government standing over us telling us what to do or anything. And two men wanting to make a bargain or a contract, they would just shake hands. That's all that was necessary.

Q: So there was more trust then?

A: Oh, honesty of course. And reputation! Oh my goodness, anyone that caused a scandal, that was really something. And nowadays, why, my parents and grandparents would truly be shocked, I am sure.

Q: Before we move on to another topic, is there anything else you would like to say about when you went to school?

A: Yes, one or two. The teacher we had, of course, taught all eight grades which isn't done now. Another thing, we all had to walk. We walked a mile and sometimes, like I said, the snow was so deep it would be over the fences, and we could just walk across the fields and cut off the distance.

Then another thing was our lunches. (laughs) Now the children have hot lunches, and we would take a sandwich of meat, if we were lucky, or a sandwich of pumpkin butter, or something like that. Sometimes mother would have sorghum cookies and we could have a cookie. That was quite a treat. But we didn't get to take jelly because that was for company--we couldn't afford the sugar and everything.

Q: So, school was quite important to all of the youngsters when you were a child?

A: Oh, yes it was. We tried never to miss a bit of it.

Q: You mentioned that your church was also where you went to school. Could you tell me something about religion and what it was like when you were a child?

A: Well, that would be hard to describe in a little bit because, as I said, our minister really only came about twice a month. He would be there for a weekend. It was very different. We had no music, of course, only singing. And, of course, they really were severe. I mean they really preached the gospel.

Q: When you say there was no music, do you mean no piano?

A: We had nothing like that because we could not afford it. You know, back in those days there were so many things that people just couldn't afford. They had the necessities--they worked very hard for those, but we didn't feel the need for so many things like they do now.

Q: Could you tell me what the men would do in the church and then later what the women would do in the church?

A: Well, of course, the men took care of the church and they saw that it was in good condition. And usually there was a man who was the superintendent of the Sunday School and my father led the singing, he had a beautiful tenor voice--just happened to be the one who could do that.

The women, we had some lovely voices among the women. They always had their part. When there were dinners the women, of course, played their part. I don't recall any severe line of difference in our church. Now in the German church back then, the men had to sit on one side and the women on the other side. But that was not so in our church.

Q: Could the women teach Sunday School classes?

A: Oh, yes. They did.

Q: Now what denomination?

A: Methodist and Christian at one time. It was Methodist and then it became a Christian Church.

Q: So, you mentioned they were strict, really strict in their beliefs?

A: Yes. Very strict, yes. Many things that are allowed in the church today were just not allowed, you know. It is just so different.

Q: What were the sermons like?

A: Oh, they would take a sermon from the Bible. Very similar to what they do now. (laughs) They stressed it pretty strongly. They would hit the desk, you know, and stamp their feet. It would seem odd to young people today.

Q: Was there a lot of stress on hellfire and damnation?

A: Yes, there was. (laughs) Tried to scare you to death.

Q: Looking back on that, how do you feel about that part of it?

A: I have never felt that a minister needed to be rambunctious, if you want to use that word. Christ was so gentle. He was so very quiet and so gentle all of the time he was on earth that I don't see why they can't put across the same message.

Q: So you feel scaring people is not the answer?

A: I don't think it's the right answer. No, I don't.

Q: You mentioned before that the women would take care of the meals. Did you have a lot of social gatherings with people in the church?

A: Not in the winter, it was so cold. In the summer we would get together, but in the winter it was just so bitterly cold.

Q: Could you describe something about these gatherings?

A: Well, just a lot of food. Just a lot of food, and singing, and just a good time. The kids would play, you know. We'd just have a good time.

Q: Would you eat these meals at the church?

A: Oh, yes. At the school house. (laughs) Because that was our church, you know. And, of course, out in the grove, as I said, it was a beautiful grove--so shady in the summer--so pretty and awfully nice to play out there. And in the [fall], of course, they had lots of leaves to play in and that made it nice, too. (stopped the recorder)

Q: I would like now to have a sense of what farm life was like around 1905. Could you tell me something about your experiences on the farm?

A: Well, what time of year?

Q: Could you start with what you did in January?

A: Yes. I think the first thing we should mention is the change in weather, which is very important. Back then you knew just about what each month was going to be; November, December, January, and February were bitterly cold. Now it's up and down.

Q: You would say it was colder then than it is now?

A. Oh my goodness, yes. And then a very interesting thing that we had to do in January was butchering. Really, I thought that was the highlight of we children's life.

Q: Could you describe butchering for me?

A: Yes. Father would butcher about eight hogs and a beef, because like I said, there were ten children and then we always had lots of company. And it lasted the year, you see. The neighbors would come in at daylight, they would butcher the hogs, then open them and clean them and hang them to chill out overnight. Then the next day they would come in and start cutting them up, fix the lard to render, the sausage to be made into sausage, and so forth. Now the women's part was, of course, to get dinner for all those men and then to clean the intestines because that is where the sausage was stuffed. The meat was so nice.

Then as soon as the third day after it was chilled out thoroughly, my father would weigh the meat and to every hundred pounds he had a recipe of brown sugar, rain water, saltpeter, and salt. And he would mix that together in a big iron kettle and bring it to a boil. Well, he would pack the hams down first in this big barrel which, of course, was never allowed to be used for anything except for his meat. Then the shoulders were put on top and then the sides. Well, after this came to a boil, he would skim off the scum that came to the top and cool it. Then that was poured over this meat in the barrel and a weight put on it to keep it down in the brine six weeks. Then it came out of the brine and he would

boil that brine and skim it off because the saltpeter brought this extra blood out of that meat. He would boil this, and skim it, and cool it, and put it back over the meat every other day for three days. And then it was taken out and drained, and the meat was hung in the old smokehouse by strings on the rafters and there it dried, drip dried.

Then the process of smoking began, and we'd have a small iron container underneath and sawdust in it and usually we used sugar or maple and hickory. Hickory, of course, always burned well, but they thought the sugar tree wood gave it a sweeter flavor. But at any rate, we'd take the small pieces and lay them on this. Well, if it started to blaze, you put sawdust on because it would burn your meat. It was the smoke that you wanted--you wanted the flavor of the smoke. Well, we did that until the meat was a golden brown--usually, off and on three weeks.

Then it was taken down and Mother had nice clean white sacks that she would put them in, and then it was hung back up out in the [smokehouse] and it would keep all summer. And, oh how delicious that ham was when you cut that open in the center--just so pink and oh, there's just nothing like it.

Q: Did your mother ever preserve any of the meat by canning?

A: Well, we didn't have glass cans--she had very few glass cans, and what few there were she used for raspberries, and cherries, and blackberries. Even our tomatoes were canned in tin and sealed with sealing wax. You see, back in those days there was so little glass, and then at butchering time, the Gypsies usually came around.

They were people that made their living just going from place to place begging and we children were so frightened of them. We always ran under the bed as soon as we heard them say, "Gypsies!"

Q: Did they wear colorful clothing?

A: Yes, they did, and I guess they really were harmless. It was just the rumors that we heard, that they stole little children. Of course, you know, we believed it.

Q: About how many Gypsies would you see?

A: Well, not usually more than two or three caravans, you know, during the winter would come through.

Q: Let's get back to butchering. Could you describe to me how you made the sausage?

A: Well, it was the leaner parts of the hog as it was cut up, but that of course, was used for lard and the fat around the head, it's called jowls. But that and the ears, and so forth, that was cooked in and put with the liver and made liverwurst. The liver was so lean, it had to have some fat, you know, to put with it and salt, and pepper, and onions. And it made it very tasty.

And then the sausage, of course, was the leaner strips of [meat]. We didn't have pork chops in those days, it was backbone and then, you know, the lean was trimmed off of the hams, and shoulders, and everything to make them shapely. And then that was all ground and it was fine, and then that was stuffed. We had a stuffer. You put that in a container thing and then you pressed down on that similar to a, I don't know, sort of a little kitchen pump I would say or something, you know. As you go up and down, you press on that and it would push that sausage out into those intestines.

Q: Yes.

A: And some people would hang it and smoke it, but we didn't hardly ever. They just put salt, and pepper, and sage in the sausage and mixed it that way.

Q: Did your family ever go around and help other neighbors at butchering time?

A: Oh, yes. Everybody did, oh yes. That was the fun of it. (laughs)

Q: Now the women that prepared the meals, did different families get together and eat the meals, and the women would bring the food?

A: Oh, yes. Everybody brought in food. Oh, that was quite a day. And we kids always got a headache or stomach ache or something so we could stay at home.

Q: So you wouldn't have to go to school that day? (laughs)

A: Oh, yes because we were never allowed to miss a school day unless it was an emergency. And we would find some way to get that emergency.

Q: Could you tell me anything else that was done on the farm in January?

A: Oh, of course, every week it was wash and iron, and the washing was so difficult for many reasons. First, was the method. We had to carry--they did, carry the water in from outside at the pump.

Q: Would the men carry in the water?

A: Oh, not usually, because they were so busy feeding. It was so bitterly cold and they would have to do the feeding. They had to cut a lot of wood. They'd have to get in some of their shucked corn, you know. There were so many things that they had to do.

Q: So the women would carry in the water.

A: Well, the younger children as a rule, you know, carried the water, and the wood, and the kindling, and stuff like that. But you would bring that water and get it hot, and then as I will tell you later on, Mother made her own soap.

Q: Could you describe for me now how your family made soap?

A: Yes. As I told you before, of course, we burned wood and that made ashes. Well, Father had an ash hopper and it was built like a "V" and that "V" fit down in a trough. And we would start in during, oh, February and all the ashes from the stoves were taken out and put in this hopper, and by the last of April or May, of course, it would be full of ashes. And then we'd start pouring water on in April, everyday and that was the younger ones work to carry water and pour on those ashes. That would drip down--the water would go through the ashes--go out the trough into a big iron kettle which, of course, was pure lye.

And then when Mother got ready to make her soap, through the winter months she had saved all the bones and the rinds from the meat and odd things like that, and tallow. Father always butchered the beef, I forgot to mention that, and she'd have a great deal of tallow and she would put that all in that lye, and stir it over a fire outdoors in this big iron kettle. And it eventually would thicken. It was much like jelly, it would quiver and it was just a sort of a pretty amber color. It was really strong.

Q: Is there any soap today that would compare to this lye soap?

A: I shouldn't think anyone would dare to use that strong a soap on synthetic things. I don't think you'd dare. But another thing they did was to make butter and, of course, the men would do the milking, That was another thing in the winter, the men usually did the milking. Well, there were no separators in those days. You didn't go to the store and get your two percent milk or anything.

Men brought the milk in and it was strained very carefully into crocks. Each crock had a wooden lid just especially for that. Well, then when this milk would sour, the cream, of course, came to the top and Mother would skim that off. We had a stone churn with a dasher up and down in it. Well, when she got enough cream she would put it into that, and usually on Saturday is when we would have to do our churning. We children, if we were old enough, that is what we did.

Q: How much would this container hold?

A: Oh, many of them six gallons, but you wouldn't have that much cream, you know. It would go up and down, up and down, but it was such good sweet butter. It was so good and then Mother would use the buttermilk off of it to make pancakes and biscuits. She could make wonderful buttermilk biscuits.

Q: Did your mother ever make cottage cheese?

A: Oh yes, all the time. Oh yes, you always had cottage cheese. You would put this rich cream on it and it was so good. Then another thing the women had to do, of course, was ironing which was very difficult. We had no ironing boards so you padded your old table with quilts and things, and you did all your ironing on that. The irons were just flat irons, they were called.

Q: How many would you use?

A: If you were lucky you had six or seven because then you wouldn't have to wait so long for them to heat. Because, you see, you put these on the stove to heat. And some of them had a handle of their own which you had to pad carefully or you would burn your hand, but some had a separate handle that would slip on. Mother did have that. You were very careful to watch because if the iron was a little too hot you scorched things. If it wasn't hot enough, it wouldn't iron because everything was dampened in those days to be ironed--the towels, the pillowcases, the sheets--everything was ironed.

And, of course, I'm sure the younger people--probably adults listening to this would say, "Well, how foolish. Why would they want to iron all of that?" But you see, we didn't have synthetics. It was cotton, or linen, or woolen, and it would have been a mess, and in those days, women were proud of their achievements. They wanted things to look nice.

Q: Did the men ever help with the ironing in any way?

A: Oh, no. Oh, no. Back in those days men's work was men's work, and women's work was women's work. My dad was very good to help with the garden; however. Some men didn't, but he was very good about that, and awfully good with the children. And then, of course, all women . . . you had to make all your bedding. You didn't buy blankets, you didn't buy anything, you made it. And they would piece quilts and then they'd have quilting days, you know, neighbors would go from one place to another and take a dish of food.

Q: Did you call it quilting bees?

A: Well, they just met and quilted, and you could put out a quilt in a couple of days that way if you had enough women on it. And we always had lots of pretty quilts and, of course, they took great pride in that too, you know.

Q: Could you describe anything about quilting for me?

A: Well, it is just a matter of--well, you put it in the frame and stretch it. Of course, you have to have your cotton in the middle, and between the lining and the top, and then it's a needle it's just a very fine--they used to quilt in feathers, and all sorts of things. It was quite an art, you know, to do those things.

Q: Did most of the women quilt?

A: Oh, yes. I think in those days most everybody did. And then most of them knit. Then another thing that we younger children could do was to clean the lamps. We had coal oil lamps, you know. And, of course, by morning after they'd been burned at night, the chimneys would get all black with soot, and we'd have to take them off, and clean them, and refill them with kerosene.

Then our--what we call silverware today--it was tin with wooden handles and, of course, they rusted so each morning we had a tin pan with a brick dust. We'd take a brick and pound it up real fine, and keep it in there with an old cloth. And we'd dampen that cloth and that's what we scoured the knives and forks with every morning so they'd be bright and shiny.

Q: Now you'd do this all throughout the year?

A: Oh, yes. We had to do that all through the year--that was a part of women's work. And then, of course, they made their bread. Mother usually baked bread about three times a week and that was quite a job. She was very unusual because she made her own yeast, which no one in the community did. They always came and got yeast from her.

Q: Could you describe how you make yeast?

A: Well, I can partially tell you. I know it was made from hops. The hops grew on the vine on our garden fence. The vine was similar to a passion vine, I should say. And the hops came in sort of clumps like grapes only they were silver in color and they had open--I don't know how to describe it--flakes, they looked like a fish flake. But they would look like a pine cone off of a tree, you know, how they open out. Well, that's what they looked like, and they were from an inch to sometimes two inches long. But they would be ready to pick in July and we would pick those hops for Mother, and then . . .

Q: Now hops, are they used in making beer?

A: Yes. It's the same thing. You rarely see a vine nowadays. But then I suppose they have them somewhere. Then Mother would take those hops and she had a recipe, of course. She would boil them and skim that juice. And then I know one thing she thickened it with cornmeal, but outside of that I have no idea what else she put in it. But I know it made beautiful bread.

END OF SIDE ONE

Q: We were talking about how your mother made the bread. Is there anything else you would like to share with me about how she did this?

A: Well, I know that it [the yeast] would harden and she would crumble that up into small portions. I know the neighbors would come and get a certain amount. And Mother would use a half teacup for a large batch of bread. That's all I can remember. I was just a little girl, you know. I wish we knew her recipe. It's sad that we don't know these things.

Q: You mentioned that your father would take care of feeding. What kind of livestock did he have?

A: Oh, they had cattle, hogs, and they'd feed the chickens, and the geese, and the turkeys in the wintertime so Mother wouldn't have to get

out and do that. Of course, the cattle took a lot of care and the hogs--it was so cold.

Q: Could you tell me how many of these that he had?

A: Not like they do today. I think he only had about forty or fifty head of hogs or something like that. And probably twenty head of cattle--something of that sort. We milked our cows, you see, we didn't go in for big cattle [herds]. He just had two hundred acres of land.

Q: Was this considered a large . . .

A: Oh, yes, indeed it was! Particularly if you made it from scratch and raised ten children. That was quite an [accomplishment].

Q: You mentioned earlier that your dad was a school teacher and then he became a farmer. Could you tell me why he became a farmer?

A: No. (laughs) No, I don't.

Q: Could he make more money farming than teaching school?

A: I don't know whether it's because he married my mother and, of course, farming was the usual way of life at that time. I don't really know. You see that was never talked about.

Q: You mentioned that you had chickens. What did you do with the eggs?

A: We didn't get very many through January and February. It was so bitterly cold. We had no heat in the chicken house, and sometimes even their feet and their combs would freeze and thaw, you know, because it was so cold. But later in the spring they'd start to lay then.

Q: Where would your mother sell these eggs?

A: At town if we had any. We didn't eat them because we had to use that to buy our sugar and coffee which were the only two things that we bought at the store, outside of our shoes.

Q: Now, where you bought these things. Was that in Marshall?

A: Yes.

Q: And how far was Marshall from your farm?

A: About seven miles.

Q: Would your father sell any of the hogs and cattle, or would he use all of them for butchering?

A: Oh, no. They'd always sell what they didn't need.

Q: And where would he send these to market?

A: They would take them to Marshall.

Q: . . . to Marshall.

A: Yes.

Q: Do you remember what kind of price he would get for the livestock around 1905?

A: No. I was too little then--I don't remember, but it couldn't have been very much, you know.

Q: Tell me some of things you would do on the farm in February?

A: Well, it was pretty much a repetition--it was just bitterly cold. And, of course, as I said, we walked to school. The women washed and ironed. There was one thing that the women did through February since butchering and everything was out of the way, was to start cutting carpet rags. They had to cut every little old thing up into rags, and then those had to be sewn together and made into balls and woven into carpet ready for spring housecleaning.

Q: So you had a new rug each year.

A: New carpet, most of the year. You see if our carpet was pretty good, you would get long throw rugs made which would lay over that and cover it, you know. But you always had to try each year to have new quilts, and comforts, and carpet, and so forth.

And (laughs) my sister and I did a very nasty little trick one time. We wanted to go out to play. And on Saturday, Mother would ask us to sew these rags together and make them into balls to take to the weavers. Well, of course, we were just little children and we didn't realize, you know. And so after three or four hours of sewing those, it got pretty tiresome. And so my sister, who was five years older than me, said, "You know what we can do and get through with this?" I said, "No." She said, "We'll just hold them, and put them together, and roll them up, but we won't sew them and we'll get done real quick, and Mother will never know." Well, it seemed like a good idea. And so Mother said, "Oh, you did it quick today." Well, we got to go play never thinking that it would backfire. Later on when my mother took the balls down to the weavers, which were three sweet old maids and a bachelor brother who did all this weaving.

Q: That was their livelihood.

A: That was their livelihood, and it was a dirty trick because they had to do all of that work that we didn't. Well, they sent word to Mother that her carpet was done and when she went, one of the ladies said, "Mrs. Gilbert, would you sew your rags the next time?" Well, she was horrified because my mother if ever there was a lady, she was one, and honest as the sun. She said, "What do you mean?" And they said, "Well,

really there weren't half of them sewn, they were just rolled. And immediately, of course, she knew who did it and she apologized. When she came home, of course, we got what we deserved. And we should have learned our lesson, but that wasn't the last thing we ever did to get punished. Like I said, we didn't have any commercial toys or anything and so . . .

Q: Sounds like you had a lot of fun though.

A: We had fun but some of it wasn't like we should have done.

Q: Do you remember any other times when you would do some of these things?

A: Oh, yes. Later on my dad told us . . . that was along about in May and he had cleared a little piece of ground. Of course, he had so many stumps, he had to just take a one horse and little drill, and drill corn in there. So he told my sister and I that if we would take pumpkin seeds over and plant in the spaces that were missing, and if we were real good until noon, he would take us fishing all afternoon. Well, we didn't care about fishing, but we sure loved to wade in the water. So we took our pumpkin seeds and went back and oh, the first two or three hours were fun. But when that sun got a little hotter and a little hotter, it got tedious and so she said, "I've got an idea." I was all for it, of course.

Q: Now, is this your sister, Nell?

A: Yes. And she said, "Let's just dig a hole over here around one of these stumps and dump the rest of these in, cover them up real deep. Dad will never know." That's what we did and so we went to the house and Dad said, "My goodness, you worked awfully hard. I didn't think you'd be back so soon. Are you sure you planted them all?" And my sister said, "Oh, yes. We planted every one." Which we did, but not the way he told us to, you see. Well, again it backfired because in three or four weeks, he went back to see how his corn was doing. He walked by the stump and there were about two pumpkins for every seed we dumped in there. And so he came back to the house kind of smiling and he said, "I thought you said you planted all those pumpkin seeds?" My sister said, "We did." Yes, he said, "I see what you mean, you planted them all right." He said, "Now what do you think you deserve for doing such a trick as that?"

Q: So he saw them all come up in the same place.

A: Yes. And so again, we got it. And then I'll tell you a later one as we go through the seasons when summer comes--that was a doozy about the tramp. But we didn't mean to be mean.

Q: Well, it sounds to me like just children's fun.

A: Well, we just had to create things and we weren't allowed to do a lot of things. I know, one day it was awfully cold, and Father and Mother had both happened to have to go to town. I don't know why Mother

did because she rarely ever went to town, but they did. Anyway, they took the little one with them. Well, I was next to the little one and we were not allowed to touch the sewing machine because Mother made all of our clothing--even the men's shirts and everything--all of our dresses, she did all of our sewing.

Q: Would she get the material in Marshall?

A: Yes, sometimes. And then there was a huckster through the summer who came by and she could buy from him.

Q: Could you describe what a huckster is?

A: Yes. He drove a covered wagon. He had a place underneath where he put crates of chickens if you wanted to sell some chickens, and he could take eggs and he could take butter. Then we could buy syrup, or material, or buttons, or pencils or . . . Oh, tobacco--men always got their tobacco like that, you know, as he came through. I think he carried sugar if I remember, too. Different things like that the people would need out through the country. He came one day a week.

Q: So would you buy from him more than in Marshall or about equal . . .

A: Oh, yes. Oh, yes. Because as long as he came through, we didn't really need to go to town at all.

Q: I see. Before we started talking about the huckster, you were starting to tell me about the sewing machine. Could you describe this incident now?

A: Well, as I said, we had no commercial toys, and so we were always thinking up something to do. And Mother forbid us to touch the machine because she had just one needle left and she had so much sewing to do.

Q: Now this happened when your parents went to town.

A: Yes. And so as quick as they got out of sight, my older sister said, "I'm going to sew." And she got a little piece of cloth and put in and, of course, being five years older than me, she did very well. She put the cloth through pretty good. So I thought it looked so easy that surely I could do it, too. She told me I couldn't, but then I wanted to try, which I did. Well, I thought that my finger had to follow the cloth, so my finger did follow the cloth and the needle came down through my finger. And, of course, in order to get it out my sister had to break the needle.

Q: I'm sure that was quite painful.

A: It was, but it wasn't that pain that I was thinking of, it was the pain that was going to come when Mother got home. (laughter)

Q: I see.

A: But oh, then we begun wondering, what can we do, just what can we do because I figured, my sakes, I'll get killed. And so she said finally, "You know, I've got it. You are going to get real sick." And I said, "I am." And she said, "Oh, yes. You get a real sick headache, I'll put you to bed, and I'll have a cloth on your head when Mother comes. And she'll not know anything and when she finds it out, she'll feel so sorry she won't punish you." We weren't sure it would work, but I went through with it.

And when they came home, she asked where I was and Nell told her I was in bed--sick headache--oh, so sick all afternoon. Mother came in and she kissed me and said, "Oh, you poor little thing." And I felt like a dirty dog. Oh, I felt so bad if she'd of killed me, I'd have felt better. But I couldn't get out of it then. So she did everything she could for me and then after everybody was in bed, she put the baby to sleep and started to sew, and there was no needle. And, of course, she found it. So she asked my sister the next morning what happened. And she said, "Well, I wanted to sew, and I tried it and I pulled the cloth and broke it." Well, after it had passed over she thought that was too late to do the punishing so I wasn't punished in one sense, but in another sense I was so ashamed of myself to pretend to be sick when she was so sweet and good hearted.

Bless her heart, taking care of all those children and her only needle. So, I've learned through life that it doesn't pay--it'll backfire just about every time. You just can't do anything wrong and not expect to not pay for it.

Q: Well, it sounds like you had a lot of good times with your brothers and sisters when you were a child.

A: Oh, we did! We did! We were a happy family. We have always been a very, very close family. We are today.

Q: And that has continued through the years.

A: That has continued through the years and not only with my brothers and sisters, but with my own children, my grandchildren, and my great-grandchildren. They are very precious. (tape stopped)

Q: You described to me some incidents that happened when you were a child and what your life was like. Could you tell me some of the things that you would do after school and on the weekends, other than chores?

A: Oh, we always had games. There was a family living right on the farm next to ours that had ten children, so we never wanted for people to play with. (laughs) And we had swings, you know. And the creek ran close by. We could fish, we could wade, we could take the cattle down to the creek to drink and--oh, we always had something to do.

Q: Could you describe to me how you caught the fish?

A: Well, with just a line and a worm on it. We didn't have any of the modern equipment. We just had a pole cut from a tree.

Q: How did you shape your hook to catch the fish?

A: Well, that the boys bought, they bought the hooks.

Q: I see.

A: Yes, but, it was a lot of fun. We had games according to the time of year. We popped corn in the winter. That was another nice thing we had plenty of. And . . .

Q: Like in the evening.

A: Oh, yes. In the evening we would pop corn. We had apples to eat and things like that, you know.

Q: Would you sit around the fireplace?

A: Oh, yes.

Q: And tell stories?

A: Well, I don't remember. I think they were probably too tired to do much telling stories at that time.

Q: Would your dad ever read from the Bible?

A: Yes, sometimes he did. And I think we treasured our evenings a great deal because like I say, our family was very close and we liked being together, you know.

Q: So you think all in all, that you had a good life when you were a child.

A: Oh, yes we did. I think we had a wonderful life, and we certainly were brought up to be honest and respect other people's property.

Q: Did you have a strong sense of respecting authority?

A: Oh, yes.

Q: Like how did you look on the teacher and the minister?

A: Oh, my father always said if your teacher punishes you at school, you'll get punished when you get home because he felt that the teacher--we did have awfully good teachers, you know, and he felt that they should have obedience. Being a teacher himself, of course, he understood. So he felt that if we disobeyed, then he would punish us, too. But we were very smart there. (laughs) We never told on each other so they never knew. (laughter)

Q: You protected each other. (laughter)

A: Yes. We learned young in life not to tattle.

Q: Did you see your father as the boss in the family?

A: Oh yes, always. That was just as natural as daylight.

Q: In what things did your mom have the most to say?

A: Well, I just can't remember her ever saying anything--it just seemed to be an understanding between them.

Q: Do you think they talked over . . .

A: Oh, I am sure they did. I am sure they must have. But I mean, I never heard my father and mother say--I never knew them to have a quarrel. You know, it's surprising now that I come to think of it.

Q: Do you think he respected her and her opinions?

A: Oh, I'm sure he did. Oh, I'm sure. Because like I said, he was very helpful in so many, many ways and I know he liked--like when we would go to church on Sunday morning. We had a surrey which a lot of people didn't own and it had the fringe around the top, you know. (laughs) And he would work for an hour or more to get the harness all shined up, the horses curried and the buggy just shining for us to go to church in. I mean he--we always looked up to him, you know.

Q: Could you describe the buggy that you used when you were a child?

A: Well, it was just like an ordinary surrey except it had fringe around it.

Q: Did you have one like for going to market and one for attending church?

A: Well, we didn't go to market, we didn't have to, we raised everything. If Father went to town for any purpose, he went in the wagon.

Q: So the surrey was more or less to go to church.

A: Yes, or if Mother had to go to Marshall to get shoes for the children, but usually Dad got those.

Q: So your mother wouldn't ride in the wagon.

A: No. It just wasn't necessary, you know. It kept her pretty busy with three meals a day, and washing and ironing, and all those children, and sewing, you know. (laughs)

Q: Did your mother have any hobbies or was she too busy?

A: She didn't have to have, she had plenty. (laughs) No. But then I mean, she knit beautifully, she sewed beautifully. She was an excellent cook and very economical. I would say that she was very creative.

Q: Could you tell me how holidays were celebrated in your family?

A: Well, back then they were few and far between because--oh, I suppose there were several reasons. You didn't go any distance because, I mean, you didn't have the automobiles or things, and you didn't have telephones. So most everything was done just in the home. Now Easter was quite an interesting time. We really enjoyed Easter.

Q: Did you have an Easter Egg Hunt?

A: No. Those things were not known. But what was interesting, like I told you awhile ago, January and February were so bitterly cold and, of course, Easter doesn't usually come until in April. And by that time, the hens were starting to lay so Mother would say, "Now, if you children can find the eggs, you can save all the eggs from three weeks up to Easter, and you shall have all the eggs you want and any way you want them. You know where you didn't get any eggs and ten people, you can't feed them eggs, you know. So eggs were precious to us . . . so come Sunday morning we would have boiled eggs, fried eggs, and colored eggs.

Well, of course, there were no commercial dyes then, and so Mother would take the bark of the walnut tree and boil it. And that made beautiful yellows and dark brown, depending on how strong you made it. And then she raised the red, and yellow, and white onions so she would take the yellow skins, and the red skins, and boil those. That made beautiful pinks and reds. And so, you see, we had pretty colored eggs, and we could eat them because there was nothing to hurt us, you know. So Easter was quite a time. Thanksgiving--I really don't remember it ever being celebrated in any way whatever. I just can't remember us doing anything.

Q: You don't remember having a turkey?

A: Oh, no. Mother raised them but she sold them. I never tasted turkey until my daughter (laughs) was married and lived in Chicago, and I went to visit her and we had a turkey. I didn't even know how to fix it (laughs) because I had never seen a turkey fixed.

Q: Could your mother get a lot of money for the turkeys?

A: Oh, yes. They were a nice little income for her. And, of course, she had so little that everything helped. That bought material for our clothing, and the wool for our knitting, and our shoes, and so forth. Then another thing about shoes, my father always had what he called a [shoe last]. Well, it was set to put the soles on shoes and sew them, you know. He had a tool where you could make holes and he had wax that he could wax a certain thread. And he had a little cast iron pattern for even little tot's shoes. And he could fit that on this cast and he took care of all of our shoes. He cut the leather and . . .

Q: Where would he buy the leather?

A: In Marshall. He'd half-sole our shoes and he did all the sewing on them. And so, of course, that saved a lot, because one pair of shoes

had to last us a whole year.

Q: So you just had one pair of shoes each year?

A: One pair of shoes is what we had to last the year. I was so envious of one of my neighbors--my schoolmates. I guess I shouldn't have been because her father was a crook. But I didn't know that. It seemed like she always had such pretty dresses and she had such pretty shoes.

And I remember so well, we started to school in September, and my shoes were new and they squeaked. And as I went up in front to class, she giggled and made fun of my shoes squeaking. Well, of course, that hurt. So I told my mother about it and she said, "I don't think I'd let it bother me. I'm sure that you can be very proud of your father." But, I didn't quite understand what she meant about my father. Well, what she wouldn't come out and say was, that this girl's father was a crook and that he would steal stuff, and that's how they had all of this.

Q: So you could be proud of your father for making your shoes.

A: Yes. Because we didn't. And I know when I would go to her house to stay all night--oh, they'd have those boughten cookies, and boughten bread, and those little sweet pickles that you would buy, you know. And I thought, oh my goodness, they must be rich and I'd tell my mother, you know, "They have the best things to eat." Well, it wasn't any better than what we had. But, you know, it's just because I was a little child and it was just a little fancy to me. But I have to say this about my mother. She would not say a nasty word about them. I had to learn that later in life as I grew up. She never ran her neighbors down.

Q: And she didn't want her children to run anyone down either.

A: No. I never heard my mother use a word of slang, I never heard her scold, I never heard her talk cross to my father or anything like that. She was a very quiet and gentle soul.

Q: Getting back to holidays. Could you describe a family Christmas for me?

A: Yes. Now that was one thing, we always had a real tree because we had lovely cedar trees on the farm. They'd go out and bring the tree and, of course, we'd have a deep snow on and we'd put it up in front of the fireplace. Well, of course, Mother couldn't afford ornaments, naturally. But during the summer when she'd buy shoes for the children or any clothing, every store had their own colored paper in those days. Mother would unfold every piece of paper and press it with an iron and put it away and the string, every bit of colored string. And then when it came Christmas, she and the older girls would cut that [paper] into little inch strips and make chains out of the colors, you see.

And then they'd pop corn and sew that and make chains, and they'd trim the trees with those. And then she'd bake gingerbread boys and girls out of the sorghum molasses and hang those on the trees. And we'd each get a little peppermint candystick and that was hung on the tree. Often

we got an orange in our stocking, but not often did we get any gifts because we just couldn't afford them. And we didn't expect them--I mean, it is odd but, you know, we were so satisfied. You know, we were not like the children of today, I want this and I want that.

Q: So you were happy with what you did have . . .

A: We were so happy with what we had. We just seemed to think--well, that's all there is in the world, we didn't know any different. And I think maybe that was why--you talk about women's lib and stuff like that--I think that that is why they notice those things nowadays because they have more time on their hands. Back then, a woman was so awfully busy just keeping ahead of things. (laughs) I never heard my mother complain. I never heard women complain back then.

Q: Did you feel a man was as busy as a woman?

A: They seemed to be. Yes. They always found things to do. My father was a very busy man. It seems they always wanted to keep everything in good shape--the fences, and harness, and everything like that. And, of course, like I say, each month brought its own work, you know.

Q: Did you celebrate Christmas on Christmas Eve or Christmas day?

A: Just Christmas day.

Q: Did you have songs or . . .

A: Oh, no. Oh, no. But, of course, we didn't have school and we didn't have a long vacation--we just didn't have school Christmas day.

Q: Oh, you didn't get approximately two weeks vacation?

A: Oh, we never had a vacation--none of the months. We didn't get any vacation. Just April was our . . .

Q: . . . your spring break.

A: Yes, but, like I said, Mother always made a great big fruitcake. That was her specialty. She'd make that a month ahead and wrap it--dip a cloth in rum or whiskey and wrap it, and put it in a stone jar. And they called that mellowing it--oh, that was delicious by Christmastime. All the candy we'd have would be that stick of [peppermint].

Now, when Dad would occasionally go to Marshall on Saturdays, we would run a half mile when we would hear the wagon coming, because we knew he would have us a little sack of candy--hoarhound. He could get a whole sack of hoarhound sticks for a nickel, and we would run that half mile to get up there and jump in the wagon and get it out of his hip pocket, so we'd have a stick of hoarhound. But children just don't . . . it isn't their fault nowadays, it is just that they have so much.

Q: So a sack of candy was so important then.

A: Oh, a sack of candy was really something to us.

Q: Did you have a lot of family gatherings?

A: Oh, relatives.

Q: Yes.

A: Oh, yes. And, of course, my grandmother . . . my grandfather died quite a long time before she did. And Mother would send us across the fields every Sunday afternoon to see to it that she was all right. But Grandpa Taylor was Irish and he was [nice and] he had such a sense of humor.

But one winter, we were all over there for dinner and grandma made taffy--that was quite the thing in those days, you know. She'd make taffy and you'd put a little on a plate, and you'd wash your hands and put butter on them--you'd go outside in the snow and pull it. The longer you pulled it back and forth, the whiter it gets and the nicer it gets. Well, Grandpa had an old dog that he treasured--poor old thing had lost his teeth. So the boys thought it would be kind of funny to give the poor old dog some taffy, which they did. And, of course, it got caught in his mouth, and he couldn't get his mouth open. Well, he was howling and Grandpa came to the door, and when he saw what had happened--well, I want to tell you they never did that again.

Q: So he punished them for it.

A: He surely did for he loved his old dog. It was a nasty trick to play on the poor old thing.

Q: Well, it sounds that you had nice family gatherings.

A: We did.

Q: Do you think you gathered together then more than families do today?

A: Oh, yes. Yes. I'm sure of that because I think today people are so involved in so many things. And they are under so much pressure that most of the families--the husband and wife have to work, the children are in school, they are in 4-H, they are in Brownies, and all these other things that really I don't know how they get it all done.

Q: So you had more time for family get-togethers?

A: Yes. Yes. We worked hard. I think maybe sometimes nowadays young people look back and say, you know, that we were awfully far behind the times. (laughs) I guess we were in a way. But, you know, we didn't realize it because--well, it's all we knew, and we were happy, and we would go to Grandma's, and we'd have a nice meal, and go to Aunt Mary's.

Q: Would you each take something to eat to share?

A: No, we didn't have to. Everybody had food then. Oh, my goodness, everybody had worlds of food.

Q: So if your mother had a family get-together at your house, she prepared all the food?

A: Yes. Not only that, but you'd go to church on Sunday morning--you never knew how many you were going to have for dinner.

Q: Oh, I see.

A: Because . . .

Q: You'd invite people over.

A: Oh, yes. Maybe whole families. "Come and go home with us for dinner."

Q: And this didn't bother your mother at all?

Q: Oh, no. Because on Saturday, the older ones would bake a big cake, they'd make pies and, of course, you couldn't fix your chickens ahead of time because we had no refrigeration. But, my mother could go out there and kill a chicken, and have it dressed and in the pan in no time. So if my dad asked somebody home--well, the men took care of the horses, the women came in and they all pitched in and, of course, you had your jellies and all of your vegetables. And ham, you would slice ham and fry it.

Q: Did the women help your mother clean up?

A: Oh, yes. You bet everybody did their part. But they just had a real nice time.

Q: The children probably enjoyed all of the children being around. (laughs)

A: Oh, yes we did. And I remember so well one Sunday, my mother didn't get to go to church. It was along in latter March, I think. It was thawing and muddy, but still chilly. And I had a very dear friend, [Clara] Dittman, she was my age, and Emma Craig, and she asked us to go home with her for dinner. She lived oh, I expect she lived three or four miles from the church and then we lived a mile from the church, but those were no handicaps to us. We were used to walking. So I said, "Well, I will have to ask my father," which I did. And he was so busy talking to some of the men that he said, "Oh, yes if you want to." And I guess he really didn't hear what I said. Well, I didn't wait for the second answer. I was so pleased, you know.

So away we flew and when we got up there her older sister--they were German people, and her grandfather lived with them and couldn't speak English at all. He talked so Dutchy and he always returned thanks.

And so her sister told us beforehand that when he started to give thanks, that for us not to giggle because it would make him so angry that he would punish us. The Germans were very strict in those days. Well, that frightened us so terribly, I don't think we could have giggled at anything. We were so terribly frightened, and I didn't know people could be so cross. My father said a blessing, but then I never thought about him ever hurting us. So anyway, it's a good thing she warned us though because it really was funny to me. I never heard anybody talking Dutch before. By the time he got done saying that, it was really hard to keep from laughing.

So we got the dinner over with and her sister said . . . I mean, her sister's name was Emma and her name was Clara. "Clara, take your little friend upstairs and you can have my big doll to play with, and my buggy, and you have a nice time." We did, and she did the dishes and got everything done. She popped some corn and brought up to us. But we were playing and having such a wonderful time that we didn't notice the time. The days are very short anyway, at that time of year.

And finally she came to the stairs and she said, "Girls, I hate to tell you to go home, but it is beginning to be dark and I'm afraid your folks will be worried." Well, I wasn't only worried then, but I was scared because they always told us never to be out after dark, and we had a long ways to go. So we really flew home. Well, Dad and Mother met me at the gate--it was dark. And mother said, "Oh, you have frightened me so. Where have you been?" And I said, "Well, didn't Dad tell you that I went home with Clara for dinner?" And Dad said, "No, you didn't. You never told me anything at all."

Q: He really hadn't heard you then.

A: No. And I said, "Well, don't you remember you were talking to those men, and Clara and I asked you if I could go home with Clara for dinner," and you said, "Yes, if you want to." Well, he said, "I didn't hear you." And [we were] there all day, and Mother didn't know where I was.

Q: Were you punished for that?

A: Well, she said, "No, if Dad told you that you could go, that's all right. That's his fault and not yours." And I explained to her that I was real sorry because I didn't realize time was slipping by and we did have such a wonderful [time]. Oh, she had a doll eighteen inches tall and such pretty clothes for it, you know, and a baby buggy. And, of course, I didn't have even a little tiny doll.

Q: You never did . . .

A: I had one doll for Christmas. Mother gave me one doll. It had a little china head, and my sister dropped it on the rocks and broke it. But, oh, to hold a big doll like that--well, that was really something.

Q: So you really enjoyed your day with her?

A: Mother was very understanding and she kind of felt sorry for me. She knew we didn't have many things like that and so she said, "Well, after this be sure that your father hears."

Q: You mentioned that the Germans were very strict. Could you tell me why they were so strict in comparison to the other families?

A: Well, no I don't think I could, Francie, because that was the only German family we had in the neighborhood.

Q: Could it have been their type of religion that made them so strict?

A: Partly, maybe and partly the way they were raised in the old country. I really just wouldn't know.

Q: So the parents of this girl that you played with, they came from the old country?

A: Yes. The rest of the family, of course, were perfectly normal. It was just him.

Q: I see.

END OF TAPE ONE

Q: Grandma, could you tell me something about farm life in the month of March?

A: Well, much of it was repetition, but I was just going to say, now our weather is so peculiar, it's warm one day and cold the next. We have such changeable weather. Back when I was a little girl, it was just like a clock, you know, November, December, January, and February were cold as could be. But March, you always knew that was the beginning of spring. March would bring the sap up in things, you know, and we had a sugar orchard and the sap begun to run [from] the sugar [trees]. Mother would plant her early cabbage and tomato seeds for early planting. My dad would go out to the crib and get his ears of corn ready to trial plant for his seed.

Q: Where would he trial plant this?

A: In a little . . . he had a box about two foot square, and he would mark that off in little plots, and he'd pick out choice ears of corn and shell off both ends, and then use the choice grains in the center. He'd take two seeds and plant in each little plot and then he marked that and marked the ears. And if it grew, then he knew that ear was good. And so that is the corn they used then to shell off and to plant.

Q: Would the majority of it germinate?

A: Oh, yes. We didn't have hybrids then. You see, you just saved your own seed. The same way with Mother--Mother saved her onion seed, lettuce

seed, cabbage seed, and tomato seed. She raised her own--really her onion seed, and then she'd plant and raise her little sets for the next spring to put out, and so forth.

Q: Did she have a special place where she'd store these seeds?

A: Well, yes. You always hung them in bags--you'd dry them, and hang them up in bags, and you'd have them. But in March, she'd start her cabbage and tomatoes and then by April they were ready--it was warm enough the latter part of April and we got them out . . . she'd put them out in the ground. But the corn, it was so interesting to watch him fix that seed corn, you know. Because nowadays, of course, you buy your corn commercially and its all hybrid which, of course, you couldn't save your seed. It just wouldn't grow. And the same way with your garden seeds, they don't either. You see, you just go in the store and buy your seed--you buy your onion sets--you just buy everything commercially.

Another thing in March was mud and oh my goodness, I remember sometimes the clay mud was so bad, we would have to go up on the bank and hold to the fence to get by. We couldn't go up the road to school. The mud was just that deep, you couldn't get through.

Q: Did you have any gravel roads in the township at that time?

A: No.

Q: Do you remember when they built the first gravel road?

A: Well, it was sometime later. I was much older--because each man paid a poll tax of $1.00 and that's what the township used to fix roads, so you can imagine it wasn't too much.

Q: Well, what did they do? Did they just keep them graded?

A: [Yes], graded. They'd keep them graded. And through the winter, of course, they were frozen, and then in the summer, they were dry which was all right. It wasn't too much of the time that they were so bad. Again, as I said, it was the thing you were accustomed to, and so you just thought nothing of it, and you accepted it, you know. I think that maybe is the secret of a lot of our happiness. We accepted things in those days as they came, and we did the best we could about them. And nowadays, I think people rebel. They are wanting more, and more, and more, and do less, and less.

Q: So you accepted the roads the way they were and didn't complain.

A: It was just a matter of fact, you know. And like I said, at Christmas we didn't resent our parents because we had no gifts. We understood that they were buying the land and eventually before Mother died, we had a beautiful two-story home and owned over two hundred and forty acres of land.

Q: How old were you when you moved into this home?

A: I was five years old.

Q: Could you describe the home for me?

A: Well, it was an old home, but it did have an upstairs. It had two rooms upstairs. Just sort of--oh, it was just wallboard between, it wasn't plaster. That's what made it so cold. The boys all slept in one big room and the girls all slept in the other room. Of course, there was no fire, only just what little might creep up when you'd open the stairway.

Q: Did you ever use bricks to heat the bed?

A: Oh my, yes. And then, like I said, we had feather ticks, straw ticks, comforts--we slept between the wool blankets. Of course, it was terrible if you had to get up. (laughs) But, once you got in and got your feet warm, it was really nice to snuggle down in there.

Q: Could you describe the feather tick and how you made this feather tick?

A: Oh, Mother raised geese, as I told you. And through the summer, they'd have to be picked every six weeks, and she always had plenty of feathers on hand. All of our pillows were feather pillows and she kept them washed--she'd take the feathers out, and wash the ticking. Mother was very particular--she was very clean. And, then our straw ticks--I'll tell about that in housecleaning which will start in the month of March, partially.

But such as the early garden, and seed corn, and getting the carpet rags woven into the carpet ready, and things like that were done. And then some of the early things such as onions, radishes, lettuce, beets, peas, and turnips and stuff like that could be planted the latter part of March. But . . .

Q: Well, the straw ticks, how were these made?

A: Well, in the spring then Mother would--oh, by that time the straw would be all crushed and fine, you know, and not much to it. And so Mother would take that out and empty it and wash it. Then it would go to the straw stack and get [filled with] nice clean fluffy straw.

Q: Was this straw stored in the barn?

A: No. Straw was put into a straw stack so that your cattle could stay around that through the winter, and for shelter, and for bedding. And they'd get that nice clean straw and stuff it so tight, you know, it would be so high. And then by the time you put your feather tick on it--oh, that was fun--that was really fun to sleep . . . If you've never got to sleep on anything like that, you've missed something.

But then in the fall--then, of course, when Dad threshed . . . they usually threshed in September and then Mother would do the same thing, she would change the straw again to last . . . Now sometimes if you didn't have the straw, after they were done shucking corn, the men would leave the inner shucks which are very [soft]. You know, there is an inner shuck that's sort of thin.

Q: . . . finer?

A: Yes. It's so much nicer. Well, they would leave plenty of those because the women would go through the corn and take all those shucks off, and they would [work] until they got enough bags of those to fill the straw tick. And they were a little nicer than the straw. They didn't mash down so quickly or crush up as bad as the straw did. So sometimes that is what we used in our straw tick and, of course, it was just on slats, we didn't have springs.

Q: So you had the slats, and then the straw tick.

A: The straw tick was for the mattress and then we had the feather tick.

Q: And then did you have feather tick pillows?

A: Oh, yes. Oh, yes. And every bed had a bolster--what they called a bolster. And that was a long pillow about six foot long that reached clear across the bed, and that's what you slept on. And then in the morning that was taken off and then your pretty pillows, with those tucked slips, you know. Oh, the women went to a lot of pains to make their pillowcases real fancy with tucks and ruffles.

Q: This was to make the bed look nice during the day.

A: Yes.

Q: Now, were these pillows made out of feather tick, too?

A: Oh, yes, of course. And then we didn't have bedspreads. But they always had pretty quilts, and so we had a nice pretty quilt on the bed which made the beds look nice.

Q: How many quilts did your mother have when you were a child?

A: Oh, she would have had several because there was so many of us--you see, they had several beds.

Q: I know I have about four or five today, but I just keep them put away.

A: Yes.

Q: Did she ever keep any of her special quilts away in the closet?

A: Well, I don't think she had--oh, I suppose she did in a way too because we always had a special bed--what we called a special bed in the

front room. I know my grandmother Taylor--oh, she had a beautiful bed. It was a four poster in her living room. And her pillowcases had this little narrow red braid made [into] peacocks all over those pillowcases. And then beautiful ruffles all around those peacocks, and I thought those were truly beautiful. And then she had a big spread that had the big peacock on that to go with it. But not many people [had those], you know, we just had quilts.

Q: Could you describe what the kitchen was like?

A: Didn't have much. It was a wooden floor and the cook stove just burned wood. It had one oven door that opened--the whole side was a door that opened out so you could put in your bread or your cake. And the fire box--I would say would be about--oh, possibly, a foot wide and probably two and a half foot long, something like that.

Q: Is this where you stored your wood?

A: Well, that's where you put your wood in to make your fire burn. Then it had a grate in front, and it had a little shelf that came out and that's where you had the damper that controlled the blaze. You see, nowadays you've got your microwave oven (laughs), and you go to the store and you get your cake mixes and stuff like that. It tells you the temperature and you go to your stove and turn on the proper temperature, and stick your cake in there, and so forth. But you couldn't control a wood stove that way.

Q: How could you get things done?

A: Well, you just had to learn from experience how much wood to put in it and when it was getting hot enough. Of course, you never did it just right, but now like for light bread--on here you would say 350 degrees, [points to her stove] but there you had to have your fire very slow because if you got it too fast, you see, it baked your bread before it got to finish raising. But women in those days were pretty smart. My sister could make a six layer cake--oh, they used to make huge cakes, you know, and put seven minute icing on it. She'd stand and stir, and stir, and stir [the icing]. I never made much seven minute icing. I thought it was too much trouble.

Q: Could you tell me the recipe for seven minute icing?

A: Oh, you can get it in any of your cookbooks--the old cookbooks. They still have it. But it is so much sugar, and so forth like that, and then you just have to stand and stir until it boils down to the proper consistency, you know, to put on your cake.

Q: Did your mom ever cook in the fireplace?

A: Not to my knowledge. Now, she could have when the older children were little. She could have but, you see, I was the third from the youngest, you know. And by that time, of course, she used her stove. But she did use the old iron pot an awful lot. That's another thing you don't see now. But oh my, soup beans and everything were so good cooked

in it. And they would often take ham bone that had quite a bit of meat on it and put on in the morning with water and let that simmer along.

And then a little bit later, they'd cut a head of cabbage in large pieces and lay on that, peel some potatoes and put on top of that, and maybe cut up an onion or two on that, and then steam that altogether. And then when it was just almost time for dinner at noon, they would take a colander, you know, it has holes in it that you run things through. You put that on top and if you had dry bread which usually you'll have some dry pieces of bread and she would sprinkle water over that bread, and put it in that colander, and then lay a cloth over the top of that. Well, the steam from those vegetables would go up in through that, and that bread would be just like fresh baked bread and oh, it tasted so good. And there you had your meat and all your vegetables for dinner.

Q: Could you tell me now when your dad built the new house?

A: I think I was just about twelve years old.

Q: And could you describe how he built this house?

A: It was on a hill where the old one stood, at the top of the hill.

Q: What did he do with the old house?

A: Well, he used that as a sort of a summer kitchen--in the summer we could cook out there and keep the heat out of the other kitchen, you know. But our new house was really nice. We had a parlor in those days--you had a parlor and the living room.

Q: Was the parlor like a sitting room or a family room?

A: An extra fancy room. It was out in front and had a--oh, oval window in front. And, of course, dainty lace curtains and that's where the girl entertained her beau, and it was just for special . . . And then the living room was where the family would gather around the stove, or in the summer we would enjoy it.

But then we had three bedrooms, three large bedrooms upstairs. And Dad and Mom's bedroom was just off the parlor in the living room, and then we had a big dining room, kitchen, and pantry. Dad wouldn't allow us to have a basement because he said it was just a woman killer. He never believed in basements.

Q: What does he mean--woman killer?

A: Going up and down stairs for everything.

Q: I see.

A: He said it was enough to have to go upstairs, you know.

Q: Well, it sounds like he was considering your mother when he built the house.

A: He was. And we had a large front porch that went clear around. And we had a great big back porch that went across. We had a cistern and lots of nice rain water.

And then another convenience he fixed for Mother--as I said, we had no refrigeration, of course, and as the weather began to grow warm, your milk would sour quickly. Of course, your well water was just icy cold. So he fixed an iron pipe to run from the well to this summer kitchen--just a short distance of maybe fifteen feet. And inside of that, he built a trough for her, about twenty inches wide of tin--real heavy steel tin sort of, you know. And, of course, it had a bottom in it, and the sides were about six inches high, I would say. And then every morning some of us would pump that real cold icy water all around those crocks of milk. And then in the evening, there was a hole he left where it would plug out, you know. We would let it run out and put fresh water in it again, and he could keep the milk and butter so sweet there. That helped . . .

Q: Was this a new invention at the time?

A: Oh, I don't know if anybody else had it. I never heard of anybody else doing it, but Father did.

Q: Do you know whether he read about it some place . . .

A: Oh I don't know.

Q: . . . or just figured it out on his own?

A: Oh, not to my knowledge, I don't know. He just did it. It was a way of keeping things cold, you know. Like I said, he was always a great help in the garden. He always helped Mother get all the garden out. I remember that very well.

Q: Could you describe this kitchen in your new house?

A: Well, we had a nice stove. That was a range.

Q: It was different than your other stove.

A: Yes. It had a lovely oven and it had a top to it--a warming oven they called it where you could set things up in there and keep them warm. And then it had a big reservoir on the side. Dad ordered an oversized reservoir which held twelve gallons of water because in the winter, he would take hot water, and put hominy hearts in it and mix it for his pigs. And so he ordered an oversize which was really nice--we always had lots of nice hot rain water to use, you know, for dishes or for whatever we wanted. Outside of that, there was the kitchen table where Mother would make her bread and everything on. I don't remember much else.

Q: Would the family eat in the kitchen?

A: Oh, no. We ate in the dining room.

Q: At all times?

A: Yes. And it was pretty--it was very pretty. I was very proud of that. That was . . . I was beginning to be older, you see, and I appreciated those things like that. My sister had gotten married and . . .

Q: Would you set the table nicely all the time?

A: Oh, yes. We were taught to be mannerly. In fact, we'd better because we were never allowed to criticize Mother in any way whatsoever. I know my brother was sitting close to Dad, and one morning the bacon was just slightly crisp, and he said, "Gee Mom, you pretty near burned your meat." And he didn't get that said until he fell off the bench, that's for sure. Dad said, "Don't ever again let me hear you criticize your mother."

Q: Were you taught to praise each other?

A: I don't know that we did much praising. I think we just sort of lived happily together. But there was another thing that Dad was rather unusual [about]. I don't think I've ever known any other man to do that. But we had the one rocking chair, and I was little, and that was Mother's. And whenever one of the children came in, if anybody happened to sit down in that chair and Mother came in, they'd better get out quick because we were taught that Mother got the rocking chair. And to this day as old as I am, I cannot outlive that.

The last time I rode a bus, I really felt silly for doing it, but you know, there was an older person that got on that bus and it was full, and I wanted to stand up and let them have a seat, and I realized that I was older than they. But when you are brought up to respect old age like that and respect your parents, it's a little hard to outgrow it. And I never knew--I had six brothers, and I never knew one of them to ever ask their wives to wait on them. It is done quite a lot now.

Q: So if they wanted something they would go get it themselves?

A: Yes. Naturally. It was just understood. Men were very proud of being men in those days--leaders, you know. They were very proud of being men.

Q: And so they had a sense of wanting to protect their wives?

A: Yes. And they felt sort of a superiority--stronger and more strength, or something. I don't know what it was, manliness. (tape stopped)

Q: Did your dad expect the girls to do more at home than the boys, or different types of things?

A: I don't think he ever had anything to do with it.

Q: So your mother supervised the work that the girls did?

A: Yes. Mother's work was in the home and his was outside. I don't remember my mother ever questioning him about anything that he did outside. And I know he helped--he was very good with the babies and the little ones.

Q: What about the girls? Did your dad expect you to help your mother and the boys to help him?

A: Naturally.

Q: . . . or did he ever want you to help him in the field?

A: We never did except in a real busy time. Now, after my sister and I were eight and twelve, or something like that--she was five years older than me though. But we would shell corn for the horses--we had a sheller. We would turn that sheller and shell corn. That would help them in the evenings when they came in because, you see, all of the farm work was done by walking--you walked from dawn till dark. You used horses for everything--you just didn't ride. It was very crude or primitive, maybe--if you want to call it that, but again--they were use to it and they accepted it. I don't think anyone thought a thing about it.

Q: Could you tell me something about the horses that you had on the farm?

A: Yes. I think Dad had six--we'd have a team of mules and four horses. And he always took awfully good care of his animals. His cattle were always well cared for, and the hogs, and everything. He was particular about keeping up his buildings, and fences, and everything like that.

Q: Did he have a special team to pull the surrey or did he use the work horses?

A: Yes. He used one of our teams--they were more--or they weren't so much like a draft horse. They were more like driving horses, and then he had a nice harness that he put on them. Oh, we were pretty proud to ride in our surrey--go riding out in our surrey.

Q: Yes. I can understand that.

A: Yes.

Q: You mentioned fences. Could you tell me something about how your dad would build a fence?

A: Oh, out of rails. They had to saw the length of the log and then split them. They made their rails and then, of course, just laid them crisscross so that they would . . . You've seen pictures, I think everyone has seen pictures of how rail fences are made and, of course, you've seen them, I'm sure yourself. But then there are people, of course, who haven't had that privilege.

Q: Did your dad ever build a barbed wire fence?

A: Yes. Later, yes he did and later on they had . . .

Q: Do you remember what year?

A: . . . I don't remember any woven wire fences, though.

Q: On your farm?

A: No, I don't. No, I think that that came after I was away from there and after Mother died.

Q: And, how old were you when you left your family home?

A: Well, Mother died when, as I said, I was just out of grade school when she took sick, and then she lived six years and died and so . . . Then that next spring--she died in July and that fall, Fred and I were married and stayed to take care of Dad and the folks. And then Jim was married in March--the next March he and Anna--and he took the homestead then and farmed. And he kept Frank, the older of the little boys with him, and we took Ernest. And my dad wasn't very well, and he went to Indianapolis to be with my older sister who was living there. And then later on her husband had trouble with his lungs and they sent him out to the farm, so Dad bought a farm and they went out there to live.

Q: So, all that time you did not have any [woven wire] fences?

A: We had barbed wire, but not woven wire--mostly all rail fences.

Q: So when do you think you got the [woven wire] fence?

A: Oh, probably right after that. I don't know. Maybe my brother might have--I wasn't around there, I don't know.

Q: I see.

A: Yes.

Q: Could you describe life on the farm in April?

A: Well, it was sort of interesting because by that time, it was starting to get warm. We could go barefooted and it was our month of vacation, which was a lot of fun. And Easter came, and as I've explained and described to you about our eggs, that was quite a day. And then another thing that we enjoyed--the men would haul up all the wood that they had cut during the winter--they would haul that [wood] up on Saturdays and unload it in the woodlot. And then my sister and I would rick it up into tall ricks, you know. And we would fix it so that we would call it our castle. We could fix it like houses and we would go in and out, in and out, you know. We had a lot of fun and, of course, made a lot of nice chips to start fires with. And then Mother would set her first eggs for little baby chicks.

Q: How long did that normally take?

A: Three weeks. And then . . . oh, another interesting thing in April was the fish. The latter part of April the fish came down to go south to spawn, you know, to lay their eggs. And so the men would start watching and anyone up the creek spied them coming--they came in great schools of fish.

Q: What kind of fish were they? Was it quillback?

A: Quillback, yes. They had lots of bones, but they were good. Well, the boys had made them a great big net--fish net that they could stretch clear across the creek and all the neighbors--they had a way of sending the word, you know, and they'd all meet down there. And some would hold the net tight across it at the ford, and the others would take the clubs and get behind the schools of fish and make a noise. And that would scare them and, of course, they would just rush right into the net. Well, then they would drag that out on the bank and they would put those in big gunny sacks and oh, they'd just have gunny sacks, and gunny sacks full. And those were divided among the neighbors, of course.

Q: So what would you do with these fish?

A: Well, they'd bring them home and the men would dress them. And, of course, we just had fish--at that time we'd have fish three times a day until . . . I remember thinking many times, I hope I never see a fish again in all my life. But, you do after the season is over. But she would put some of them down in salt in a jar. And she could keep them that way for three or four weeks, and we would have to soak them out, of course, [when we ate them].

Q: So you would eat them all in a matter of a month's time?

A: Oh, yes. It was a lot of fun for the men to get those fish and then . . .

Q: What was the name of the creek?

A: Big Creek.

Q: And how far was that from your house?

A: Just down the hill. Our house was up on a hill--I would say it would be maybe half a mile.

Q: I see.

A: And that's where we took our cattle to [drink]. Sis and I would ride an old cow down, and we'd take the cattle at noonday in hot weather down to the creek, and let them wade, and drink, and bring them back. That was a lot of fun, too. But, in April then another thing--Mother would begin to find wild greens. Then, of course, now that's the one thing that we didn't have.

Q: Now, was that something like spinach?

A: Well, no. She went out in the pasture and I know a few, but I never learned to do all she could. But she would find wild beets, and wild lettuce, and wild mustard, and dandelions, and dock, and I just can't think right now of any more. Oh, she would find so many different things.

Q: Would she try to preserve these things or would you eat them right away?

Q: Oh, no. You cooked those real quick--you cooked those right away. But they were real good. You see, we didn't have any lettuce to wilt until a little bit later on when our early lettuce came on, then we had onions and radishes, and peas, and things like that that would take the place of greens. Now you really . . . you don't know winter from summer because you go to the supermarket and you can get anything you want--it doesn't make any difference.

Q: So these greens were the first really green vegetable you had seen after the winter?

A: Yes, that's it. And they were very precious, you know. They tasted awfully good. It was in that month that Mother made her soap. I told you, of course, how she did it. The men, of course, were busy plowing for corn and sowing oats.

Q: What would your dad use the oats for?

A: Oh, to feed the horses.

Q: He didn't sell any?

A: I don't remember him selling oats. I think that was all used to feed your horses. It was suppose to be so much better for them in those days. Then, of course, April was the month, as I said, Mother started house cleaning and fixed the feather ticks, and straw ticks, and the new carpet was brought home, and new straw put under that.

Q: Were these carpets attached to the floor or just laid on top of the straw?

A: Oh, no--laid on top of the straw. You see, they came in sections--they came in panels. And Mother had to sew them together, and then when you got it large enough--you knew exactly what size you needed. And then they got on each side, and they would have to stretch and stretch, and have long tacks, and they would go along and tack it. And, of course, when you walked on it--you walked on soft straw.

Q: I would think it would be lumpy.

A: Well, in a sense it was. But there again everybody had it. Really, you don't notice it because it was the usual thing--you just accepted it. It was nice to lay on--we kids would lay on it. (laughter)

Q: I can imagine.

A: And then, of course, you always had to have new paper--wallpaper. Because . . .

Q: Oh, every year?

A: Oh, yes. In the wintertime, you see, you couldn't hang your clothes out--you had no dryers, and they would freeze stiff, and break all to pieces. So you would have to stretch cords from wall to wall and hang your clothes in there where the heat from the stoves would dry them. Well, of course, that steam and that smoke from the stoves--naturally by spring, your paper was pretty dirty.

Q: Was this like wallpaper that we know of today?

A: Oh, yes. Later on . . . now when I was married, they had begun having sponge like stuff that you could wad up, and you could clean your wallpaper pretty well for one or two times. And then from then on you had to put up new paper. But back in those days, Mother always papered fresh. And often they would paint the woodwork, you know. They had beautiful lace curtains in those days--they were so dainty.

Q: Would the curtains touch the floor?

A: Usually--about so anyway. And they were put on a frame, and this curtain frame as it was called had tiny little nails in it--every inch and you could set it the size of your curtains. And then, of course, your curtains were washed and starched stiff--pretty stiff. Then they were put on this and stretched and, of course, when they were off they were perfect--I mean, just exactly the size they should be. You would sort of press them and hang them up. By the time you had your windows washed, and your woodwork painted, and your new carpet, and your new paper, it was rather pretty. You know, it gave you a lift. (laughs) Spring seemed to mean so much.

Q: Kind of a starting anew?

A: Starting a new life, you know. And then we began having rhubarb out of the garden, and they always had a big bed of asparagus, and so little by little, you know, we were having . . . actually there was no time that we didn't have really good food though. (tape stopped)

Q: Could you describe for me how life was on the farm in the summer months?

A: Well, then by May, school started again. We had school in May and June. We always had what we called a spring term teacher.

Q: Oh, you had a different teacher for the spring term?

A: Oh, yes--for the spring term. And usually it was just we small children that got to go. Because like I said, the rest had work to do. The men were planting corn, and sowing oats, and sorghum. And then we kids had a lot of fun hunting the turkey nests, and the goose nests.

Q: You mentioned sorghum. Could you tell me how you did that?

A: Yes. Well, they would plant that like--it looks a little bit like sweet corn when it is coming up. But . . . then it has skins on it or I don't know what you call it--like on corn. You've got to take those off--those blades off because it would ruin your sorghum molasses. And it will grow through the summer and then come fall--why we little children, those of us who knew how, we had to strip it. We had to strip all those outside skins off of it, and then Dad would cut the tops and lay them in piles together, and take them to the sorghum mill. And they had a horse that pulled this mill around and around and ground the juice out of that sorghum into a big vat where it was boiled down into sorghum. We always had a barrel of sorghum, and it was pretty good on hot biscuits, fresh bread and butter . . .

Q: Now, was this mill located in Marshall?

A: No. It was one of our neighbors--not too far away. Up until, oh I should say maybe twenty years ago, they still did it. They were very old, but they still did it for a few people. But then also . . . that was just about all there was extra in May because the garden was out and you had to hoe, of course . . .

Q: How big was your garden would you say?

A: Oh, Mother had a large garden: gooseberries, currants, and everything, you know.

Q: What is a currant?

A: Oh, you don't know? Well, they are a little red berry. They grow on little bushes and they grow in clumps of little red berries about the size of a pea. And they make beautiful jelly.

Q: Would you use them for making pies?

A: Yes. But mostly Mother saved them for mincemeat which she made each spring when they butchered.

Q: Could you describe how she made this mincemeat?

A: Yes. When they butchered . . . as I said, Dad butchered a beef and hogs. Well, she'd take the head meat--Dad would cut the head all up, and it would be cooked and taken off. And that was all ground fine, and then when she mixed this pork and beef meat, then she ground--had apples chopped up and we had raisins. I've wondered so many times what happened to our big raisins. Back then, Mother would get raisins that were puffed up like a nickel and now they are the tiniest little things.

Q: Do you know where she got them?

A: Well, at the store, but I don't see them nowadays. I don't know why. But they were so large, and she put so many nice raisins, and currants, and cherries, and apples, in with that. And it made awfully good pies. A little sweet vinegar, and spices, and sugar.

Q: How much of this would she make each year?

A: Oh, she'd always have a pretty nice sized jar full. Because all spring, you know, we could make pies off of that. Then, of course, Dad raised rows of pumpkins for the livestock as well as for us to eat.

END OF SIDE ONE

Q: You were talking about your Dad would butcher a beef. Did he ever make head cheese?

A: Oh, yes and it was very good.

Q: Could you describe how he made this head cheese?

A: Yes. They took the ears and the bony parts of the head and, of course, after you butchered so many hogs, you know, you've got an awful lot of those different parts. And they would take . . . Mother would take just what she wanted--the amount she wanted of the beef, and the pork and then they put . . . oh, for head cheese, I was thinking of mincemeat. For the head cheese, they would just take that, and grind it, and put salt and pepper in it. Now, later in life they got to using a little [onion] in it which made it taste good, too.

Q: Could you describe the taste of this head cheese?

A: No, I don't think I could.

Q: Would you eat it on bread?

A: Yes. Oh, yes. It made wonderful sandwiches. Then they made liverwurst. They would cook the liver separately which is very lean. There is no fat about it. And then they would take some of the fatter pieces, like from the head where there is a lot of fat around the head [or fat] trimmed off of the hams. And when they would cook that, and then that would be ground, and put in with the liver enough just to make it mix good. And there would be salt, and pepper, and a little ground onion in that. And that made awfully good liverwurst--that would make awfully good sandwiches. You put that out where it was cold, and you would slice that thin. It was so different from what you can buy in the stores today.

Q: There's no comparison?

A: Oh, no. The head cheese doesn't taste at all like it used to. And then they would take the broth . . . now my parents had never done that but when I married, Fred's parents were German and they would boil all this meat, you know, like the legs, (points to legs) and all about the head--everything that was taken off that didn't go into sausage, you know, or lard. That was all boiled in a great big iron kettle. Well, that was picked off the bone and as I said, some was put in the liver for liverwurst, and some for head cheese. The Germans called it Schwatta Mauga. But our summer sausage, it was delicious.

Q: Could you spell Schwatta Mauga?

A: I think I couldn't. (laughter) No, I think that was a German name they called it. Then that broth--they would strain that hot broth, and put a little salt in it, and they would thicken that with cornmeal, and then they would put about a gallon crock of that ground meat back into it, and that was all through that mush. And that we looked forward to, I think, almost more than any part of butchering. We would just have every pan available to put that mush in to harden, you know.

Q: Is that anything like the mush you can buy in the store today?

A: Oh, I suppose only you don't have any meat in it. It wouldn't have any flavor.

Q: Would you fry it?

A: You could fry it. Ours was so tasty because, you see, it was made in that broth. And I know your dad and mom--we were talking about it one day and your dad said, "Oh, what I would give to have some of that good old mush." So I thought that the next time I would go to the store, I will get a pound of hamburger, and a pound of sausage. And I mixed it, and I just steamed it until I thought it was tender enough and wasn't raw. And then I made my mush and as I was making mush, I put this meat in it and salted it, and I took them over some and oh, they loved it. He said, "Well, how did you make this? I didn't know you could do it." And I said, "Well, it isn't like using the head, but you can't buy . . . when you go have your meat butchered, you know that yourself, they won't let you have any of the head."

Q: I wonder why they won't anymore?

A: I don't know. I don't understand why because I told him if we could get one of those heads, I would cook it, you know, and then we would do that. And the same way in mixing mincemeat, you know, he's so fond of mincemeat and so is Ray [narrator's son-in-law]. So, I just get hamburger and sausage, and I mix it together, and then I put the same amount of apples--chopped apples that I have in that meat, and then I put cherries, and gooseberries, and currants, and raisins in it, and spices and sweet vinegar, and a little salt and pepper, you know, and it makes real tasty mincemeat.

Q: How does it compare with the mincemeat you had when you were a child? Can you tell the difference?

A: I like it better nowadays. I don't know the amount of meat, they used more meat then. I like it better with more fruit, and that is the way your dad and Ray likes it so well. So I made some last year--I think I made six or eight pints, and they sure did love it. So I'm going to--if I can have the health a little longer, I'm going to try to get them some made before Christmas so they'll have it.

Q: You mentioned a little bit earlier that your dad would raise pumpkins for the livestock as well as eating. Could you tell me why he raised these for the livestock?

A: Oh, they thought then that they were nutritional. I don't know whether they are or not, but pumpkins are valuable. I know a lady down south of us--her husband died last year, and she had them plant pumpkins and she sold $3,000 worth of pumpkins--they came in trucks and got them.

Q: But I mean as far as for the livestock . . .

A: They felt they were nutritional, and the cattle and hogs would just love them. They would take corn knives and chop them up, and they just loved them. And, of course, we would have to . . . on Saturday Mother would have us cut up pumpkins, and cut them up in big hunks, you know, and then we'd stand over the stove and stir those in a brass kettle until we could get them fine enough to run through a colander. And then she would run those through a sieve or something to make them fine to go into pumpkin pie.

Q: So you had a lot of pumpkin pies?

A: Oh, yes.

Q: Did you ever make jack-o-lanterns around Halloween time?

A: No. No. I never saw one of those until after we had our children.

Q: So you really never celebrated Halloween?

A: No, it didn't mean a thing. Well, now I think the first time that I ever went to anything about Halloween was when Dorothy . . .

Q: Now, is Dorothy your daughter?

A: Yes, your mother. (laughs) . . . and Evelyn were real little. Evelyn, I think was only about five, but we had . . . that was at the Stump School, and they had a pie supper and a box supper which was very popular in those days. Girls that had sweethearts--they would fix a very fancy box--shoe box or anything and make it all fancy, and have fancy sandwiches, and pie, and so forth in it, and then they would have an auctioneer, and he would get up, and auction off those boxes. Well, of course, that girl's sweetheart wasn't about to let any other boy eat with his girl. So they would pay enormous prices. I remember one time when a cake brought $20 because she was very pretty and he wasn't about to let the other guys have it so he paid $20 for a cake. But they had just finished shucking corn usually up on the prairie, and had money to spend when they begun having these things.

Well, that night they had that and then they were to have a masquerade. Well, Fred and I decided we would dress up like a man and wife, only he was the woman and I was the man. So he borrowed a neighbor lady's clothes, and she was an old maid so no one recognized him. And I don't remember whose old clothes I wore, but then they guessed who I was. Fred wore furs around his neck and he was really fixed up.

So, Mrs. Geisert who lived right by the school--she sent word that she was very sorry, but she wouldn't be able to come because the little ones

were sick. So, of course, we didn't expect to see her at all. So when they were just about done judging, well in walked a ghost in a sheet, you know. And no one could guess who in the world that was, and they never would have thought of her because she wasn't suppose to be there. But your mother--(laughs) at that time a lot of people used what was called Fels Naptha soap.

Q: And what is that?

A: Well, it was a bar of soap about six inches long and three inches wide, and it was a very nice laundry soap we used on the washboard. And that's what she used and it had a very special fragrance--smell, if you want to call it. And little Dorothy piped up and said, "I know who she is."

Q: By her smell.

A: Well, no one could imagine (laughs) . . . and they said, "How do you know?" She said, "Because I smelled her." Well, of course, that didn't sound very nice, you know, that she smelled her, but it was the soap on the sheet, and she was right. She guessed her.

Q: So you didn't have those types of things when you were little?

A: No. I know when Evelyn was quite small, Fred was auctioneer for another box supper down at his cousins--down at Black Hawk [School].

Q: Black Hawk?

A: A school down south of Marshall. Well, there used to be just crowds--they would just crowd in, you know, at those things and they'd spend a lot of money. So, he got ready to auctioneer, and he tried to get their attention, but they were pretty rowdy, and laughing, and talking, you know. So pretty soon, he (laughs) hit the desk and he said, "Now, be quiet and let's begin." And (laughs) they were still so noisy that he shouted and as he shouted, everything was as still as a pin. And little Evelyn whispered to me and she said, "Don't you think Daddy got a little loud?" (laughter) You know, they all paid attention and it went on.

Q: Did Grandpa auction off a lot of these boxes?

A: He could do a pretty good job.

Q: Did they have these often or was it like once a year?

A: Usually every school would have at least one during the winter, and sometimes two--it would be along around the holidays. Now, I don't remember but one time when we had a Santa Claus. (laughs) I had never seen one and I didn't know what they were.

Q: Now, this was when you were a little girl?

A: Oh, yes. I was a little thing. I heard those bells--they were the large sleigh bells, and I couldn't imagine what was making that terrible clatter. And he came up on the porch, and he opened the door, and walked in. And my land, I had never, like I said, seen a Santa Claus--all those bells and he jangled, and jumped up and down, and I hit for the teacher's desk, and under the bench I went. And I cried--I was scared to death, and I wasn't the only one--the other little ones did, too. So, she told him to be quiet, and she explained to us that he was Santa Claus, and that he had brought us something nice. Well, that sounded real good.

Q: Do you remember what he brought you?

A: Some candy and an orange. We each got a little sack of candy and an orange. From then on, Santa Claus was pretty special.

Q: Do you remember who played the role of Santa Claus?

A: No, I don't to this day. No. It was someone the teacher found, but I don't know who did it.

Q: That is interesting. Was he dressed just like a real Santa Claus like you see today?

A: Oh, yes, indeed he was. Oh, yes. But I know now that would sound very odd to little children today because they see everything and know everything. You remember the time that Fred and I tried to be Santa Claus for you and your little brother?

Q: I think I was around five or six years old.

A: I think you might have been six and he was about four.

Q: I was afraid, I know.

A: Yes. We had arranged . . . we had taken the gifts beforehand down to your other grandparents, and put them on the front porch so you wouldn't see them. And then we were to . . . I believe that we called down and said for some reason that we couldn't come. We wanted you to think that it would be impossible for us to come. And we were to come for supper, I think is what it was or something. Of course, you weren't suppose to know anything about a Santa Claus.

Q: We didn't know.

A: So then we dressed and got up there, and left the car up at the corner and came down. And so we couldn't find a woman's Santa Claus face, and I had to wear a man's. And, of course, it was long white whiskers. I didn't think you children were old enough to understand. I was dressed like a woman, but I had those long whiskers on. Well, Fred knocked on the door and Dickie said, "Oh, my goodness, that must be Santa Claus!" And they asked you to go to the door and you were so scared. And so Jim was sitting on one of their laps and they asked him if he would go. I guess the little thing was scared too, but he wasn't

old enough to understand. Anyway, he came and opened the door for us, and in we walked. Well, that was the year that you each got a little wagon and oh, I don't know, I think Polly had you a doll house, and you got a lot of nice things. We just had a lot of nice things for you. (tape stopped)

Q: Did my brother or I make any comments about Santa Claus and Mrs. Santa Claus?

A: Oh, yes. As I said before, I couldn't find a lady's face and the first thing we knew, why you piped up and said, "I don't see why Grandma Santa Claus has to have whiskers on her face [because] you don't have it Grandma"--you said to your other grandma. And they had to think pretty quick for some reason. And your Grandpa Dickie said, "Oh, she had to because it is cold at the North Pole--very cold."

Q: Did I believe that?

A: Well, you seemed to accept it because it was--he told you that I had to have that protection, you know. (tape stopped)

Q: Okay. Let's get back to farm life in 1905. When did you cut the hay?

A: Well, that was cut in May and very different than it is now.

Q: Could you describe this technique?

A: Yes. They would go out with just a scythe--they called it a sickle and, of course, they cut the hay and let it dry. And then they had to rake that up, and they went along and put it into little shocks.

Q: Could you describe a shock?

A: Well, did you ever see a little mound of snow?

Q: Yes. About how high?

A: You've seen wheat shocks, haven't you?

Q: About how high were these?

A: Oh, they would make them about four feet across I suppose, and about three or four feet high.

Q: I see.

A: And it was left to ripen as they called it. And then after a certain time--then they would stack the hay. Well, then one of we children would ride the old grey mare. And it had a long pole with a real razor sharp end on it, and they'd shove that pole under that shock, and throw a rope over, and loop it over it, and we'd ride into the stack. They'd unfasten it and start us back to get another shock. And they'd throw that by pitchfork up on the stack and form it into a real nice rick--some made a round stack, some made a long oblong rick, you know.

Q: Was this in the barn or . . .

A: No. That was outside. The hay wasn't put in the barn then. And then later on the oats were harvested--that was done with horses, of course, too. But that was put in bins at home because, like I said, that was fed to the horses. Well, then the wheat was cut with a binder.

Q: Could you describe this?

A: Well, it would be a little hard to explain to anyone that had never seen one. It cut and separated the straw from the wheat, and the wheat would go through an elevator out into a wagon much like it does now only on a very small scale. And the heat was so desperate at that time that many times they would have to change horses--a horse would die from overheating. That was how different our seasons were. When it was summer, it was summer, but when it was winter, it was winter, too.

Q: Did you have a lot of humidity?

A: Oh, I don't know. We didn't know that word then. (laughs) We didn't understand about those things at that time.

Q: You just knew it was hot?

A: Yes. We did. And I look back and think, no refrigeration, no air-conditioning, and all we had was a palm leaf fan, or something like that. And, you know, I look back and I think how did we go to bed at night with that heat. But, we did.

Q: Well, you didn't know the difference.

A: No. We were . . . I wonder too if maybe the country wasn't so populated--I wonder if the air wasn't fresher at night. You know, it could have been very different, you know. And I think now, the houses are built tighter, there are no windows to open like it used to be, you know, maybe that made a difference. I just don't know.

Q: Well, you mentioned the binders. What about the threshing machines?

A: Now, that didn't come until in September. I was going to tell you.

Q: I see.

A: This wheat--like it was put in shocks. During the war, before your mother was born, Nellie and I did all the shocking of Grandpa's wheat and oats because we couldn't get any help. The help was all gone, you know, to the war. And you put--it was an uneven number and I believe that it was seven, what they call bundles. The binder would go along and cut this, and tie it into certain sized bundles, and kick it back. Then we'd go along and pick up the bundles and you made shocks--and it was either seven or nine, it was an uneven number. [The actual number was seven.] We would stand it up on the butt ends, you know, and hold their heads together. Then we would take two bundles, and you threw it over your arm, and you break that head--like the wheat is, you know, you

break that down so that it will hang, and you spread that out over the one--over one side of the shock, and the other one over the other side [of the shock]. That protected it from water. Well, that wheat then went through about four to six weeks ripening.

Then it would be hauled into the barn and put in long ricks or stacks, whatever the man wanted done. Then the threshing machine--when it came, well, they'd just pitch from that right into the separator, and then they had a place where they made the big straw stack in the feedlot where the cattle could be around it, you know. That's how the wheat was harvested.

Q: The threshing machine, did your dad own one?

A: Yes. Well, he and his uncle together did, and it was a steam engine.

Q: How many men had to be on hand to operate this machine?

A: Well, he ran the engine and Uncle John the separator. Then there was one called the water wagon boy, and he had to haul water to put in the engine as well as to drink. I mean, you know, they had to have fresh water to drink.

But there were not so many men to cook for as there was in filling silos. Now, that we would have as much as thirty-two men. I remember back when I was married and we went to Grandma's to get dinner and, you see, they'd go in the field--one group of men went in the field and cut the corn in bundles. Others came along with wagons and threw it on; others came in, you know, and that went up into the silos.

Q: What were the silos like?

A: I expect you've seen a good many of them. It isn't like your brother, Jim's. Your brother, Jim's is a big oblong, casket like thing. But these were tall and round--you've seen them.

Q: Slender?

A: Yes. You've seen them through the country, I am sure.

Q: Yes. I thought maybe then they were a little bit different than they are now?

A: No. And back then in order to make dampness, there was a hose with a real fine spray, and two people had to be up in the silo--crossing constantly. Now, they weigh it down with a tractor, you know, they run a tractor over it and mash it down real hard. But they couldn't get up in there with anything like that. And Fred's sister and I used to tromp so much, and we'd have a bonnet on to keep our heads from getting wet. And boots--we wore boots and you'd tramp constantly for hours. And that was constantly coming in, in a fine stream. That corn was shredded and was brought in, in a real fine stream, and then that water in a fine spray was coming all over that while we tramped that. Then as that . . . they called it a souring stage, you know, the corn was sort of soured.

Q: How long did that take?

A: Well, they wouldn't start feeding until--that would be done along in September, and you didn't start feeding that usually until Christmas, or something like that.

Q: I see. Did you ever see a hay baler when you were a child?

A: Oh, yes. But it again was a lot different--oh, so difficult. That was really hard work. Someone had to lay flat on his side, and they'd pick up this . . . enough hay to make this bale. And when it was formed, then somebody was on the other side, and they had to stick wires through, you know, and wire that bale. Well, now your brother sits up there in a cab and goes down through the field where that hay has just been put in a row . . .

Q: Windrows?

A: Yes. And he just goes riding down that row, and it makes those huge round bales. When he gets a bale a red light shines on, he punches a plug, and out shoots the bale behind. It closes and starts another bale, you know.

Q: So it was much harder work then?

A: Oh, it was really. That was terribly hard.

Q: Did your dad ever have one?

A: Yes. They had a baler to bale their hay. They didn't do much of that because at that time then he begun putting his hay in the barn. They built this nice barn and he had a good haymow, and it had a place in front that came out over where you could drive up under it with a load of hay. And then a big fork came down on a pulley and it would take a big fork full of hay up, and you'd ride a horse and the horse would pull the pulley, and it would take it sliding way back in the barn, and it would trip it, and that is how they would fill the haymow with hay.

Q: Would a man usually be in the barn during . . .

A: Yes, in the haymow. Oh, yes, to see that it was in place.

Q: I see. Could you tell me something about the other farm machinery when you were a child--like a plow?

A: Well, a plow, of course, was out of the very best of steel, and it was shaped in such a way that the blade would cut through the ground. And it had a handle that came back, you know, that the man held to these two handles. And, of course, he had to walk, like I said, he walked constantly. And they would make one furrow at a time. While now I expect your brother with his great big disk, I'd expect he could take ten or twelve rows at a time.

Q: Do you remember how many acres of land your father could plow in one day?

A: Oh, no. It wouldn't be much. I mean one row at a time, you know, it is pretty slow.

Q: I think I read somewhere where it was around two acres a day. Does that sound right?

A: It might be. You see I didn't know that much about farming. Women didn't . . . weren't suppose to know too much about men's work. You know, they did their work. They were supposed to be good at baking bread, and sewing, and things like that. And men were supposed to do those things [outside].

Q: Could you describe a planter?

A: Well, I know it had boxes on the back and it would drop the seeds in there--but just one row at a time--then finally they got it with two rows. They finally got a two row cultivator that they could cultivate two rows of corn at a time, too. (tape stopped)

Q: Did your dad plant more corn or wheat in those days?

A: Oh, I think more corn.

Q: Did he ever raise soybeans?

A: No. Oh, no. They never heard of such a thing. They did raise whippoorwill peas.

Q: Could you describe those?

A: They were a long pod--long slender pod [about eight inches long]. Like you would have a pole bean today--a green bean. And it had little peas in them--they were speckled. The most unpleasant thing I think about them was that they raised them down in the creek bottom where the sandburrs were just thick and, of course, in those days we always had to go through and cut out all of the morning-glories and weeds out of the corn with hoes--row after row, a mile long. And we little ones would be between two big ones so they could reach over and help us--barefooted, of course, we were all barefooted and that sand was so hot. And you'd step on those sandburrs, and if you never saw one--they are just about the size of a large pea, I suppose, and they have little razor like thorns all over. You can't miss getting stuck with them.

In fact, that's what my brothers did when I was married--we were married in Indianapolis. And my aunt came to stay while I was gone--with Dad and the boys. And I had my room fixed real nice, of course, for when I was to return, you know. And when I got home, my oldest brother--he just couldn't wait until our meal was over. He thought we should go to bed, and we weren't used to going to bed so early, and we couldn't understand his haste, you know. So afterwhile, I went to the kitchen to help my aunt with the dishes, and she whispered to me and told me, she

said, "Don't get in that bed! They'll kill me if they find out I told you, but you can't get in that bed. They put a whole quart of sandburrs on that sheet."

Q: You were happy [she] told you.

A: Well, that would have been torture, absolute torture. So we just meandered around awhile and finally went up to bed and, of course, we could hear them just giggle, and giggle, and giggle. They were waiting to hear us "yell." And it would have happened. I had told [Fred] so he took a comb, and we laid the covers back very carefully, and just combed it, and combed it. We thought we had every one, but we missed one and he got it. And that tickled Jim--they laughed out loud. So I went to the door and I said, "Well, you weren't so smart because we got them all but one. But, you know, that could have poisoned us." Those were horrible things. He said, "Who told you?" And I said, "A little bird--that's all, I just guessed it." And he said, "You didn't either." And so he was really angry with our aunt, and he never liked her from then on. But, my goodness, it was a horrible thing to do. (tape stopped)

Q: Since we are talking about pranks that happened to you when you got married, could you tell me if you ever had a charivari or if you ever went to a charivari?

A: Everybody had to have a charivari, and some of them were rougher than others. Some of them--they would take the groom and put him out in a barrel of cold water, and shove him up and down. And others would ride him on a pole, but most generally they wouldn't be quite that severe. They would have music and dance.

Q: Do you remember when they discontinued the charivari?

A: Oh, I think they've always had it more or less--in forms. I think they still do--more or less. Now, I don't know if they call it by another name, but I still think they have something in through the country at least.

Q: But it appears they played more pranks then than they do today.

A: Yes. I think so. (laughs)

Q: Let's get back to discussing farm life when you were a child. Is there anything else you would like to talk about that happened in the summer months?

A: Well, June was still our one school month. That was when the wheat and oats were shocked, like I said, and the early garden was all [planted], and we had things to eat, and we had fruit and rhubarb to use. The little baby chickens were coming on and turkeys and geese. Then in July, no school and the corn was laid by, and we gathered the hops for Mother to make yeast for the bread. And the gooseberries and currants were ripe, and Mother canned those. I believe I said the corn was laid by, didn't I?

Q: Yes, you did.

A: Yes. And that was all very primitive, but then it was awfully good anyway. Then in August, it was terribly hot and no school again. The huckster came one day a week and that was time to dig the potatoes and pull the onions to dry for winter. And, of course, Mother saved all her seed for the next year. And Mother began getting her cucumbers in salt brine. Now, she didn't fix cucumbers like they do nowadays in vinegar because, as I said, she didn't have glass cans. So she would pick them, and wash them, and put them down in a big jar--make a salt brine that would hold an egg, and put it in that, and they would just keep perfectly. And then in the winter when she got ready for cucumbers, like on a Saturday, she would take out a quantity of whatever she wanted and soak the salt out of them, and fix her sweet spicy vinegar, and we had our pickles.

Q: Did she make different kinds of pickles?

A: Different things, oh my goodness, yes. By September, she was making pickle relishes, green tomato relish, and dry corn. That was another thing, you see, because we couldn't can corn. She would dry sweet corn. You just cut it off the cob, and put it on a clean sheet up on the roof, and then lay a mosquito bar over it so nothing could touch it, and the hot sun would dry it--it would just shrivel it all up. And then in the winter, when you put butter and cream in that and cook it, it was so good.

Q: Would it be tender like it is today?

A: Oh yes. But you see, otherwise we couldn't have had corn because there was no way of cold-packing. We didn't know those things then--there wasn't the glass. We didn't have it.

Q: How did she store the corn?

A: In a sack. When it was dry, well, you just put it in a sack. And usually a ten pound sugar sack full. She always tried to get that much. Well, then there were all kinds of beans, soup beans, kidney beans, lima beans. And by that time they had to be picked, but they weren't hulled yet. They were just picked and stored out in the summer kitchen.

Q: Who would pick the vegetables out of the garden?

A: Oh well, the women always did that and the children.

Q: The men would not harvest it?

A: The only thing that I remember that my dad helped with in the later season after farming started--he was the one that always fixed the cabbage and tomato squares ready for . . . to bury--the cabbage to bury. And we had a special plot of ground they always had [for planting], and he would lay that off in two good squares, and then they would plant a couple cabbage seeds in so many squares and so many tomato seeds, you know. And then the strongest was left to go. And [after those

vegetables matured] that was the late cabbage that Mother raised, and that was what was buried to go through the winter; so that we had cabbage, turnips, apples, potatoes and . . .

Q: What did you do with your fruit, like your peaches and apples?

A: Well you see, since we had few cans and Mother used most of those for the raspberries, and blackberries and cherries in the spring, there was one way to do it and that was to dry them. And so they had boards fixed on things you know, up and down through the garden and we'd sit around at night, and peel the peaches and apples and pare them, you know. They'd slice them and then those were put out in the morning and this mosquito bar put over them, and then they were dried. And then those could be put into bags and you made pies out of them. Really, they were very good.

Q: Did you ever try to make dolls out of dried apples?

A: No. I've seen the dolls made out of them, but we never tired to. But then always the rest of the apples, of course, then were buried. We had a big sack of dried peaches, a big sack of dried apples, and then the corn. Like I say, the tomatoes were canned in tin and sealed with sealing wax because . . . . Now as Mother got syrup from the huckster--it came in little half-gallon tin buckets, and she usually kept those for the late October peach trees. It was little red clings about the size of a large walnut, and they were just the best clings--they didn't come off the seed. So she peeled those and put them in sweet syrup, you know, and then in the winter when it was cold, you'd open up those and they were so good.

Q: It sounds good.

A: Yes. And then in October, of course, she began making other relish and sauerkraut had to be made--a big keg of sauerkraut. And then the hominy was made and she'd take a great big kettle and make hominy.

Q: Hominy. How do you make hominy?

A: You can buy it. I keep hominy, I like it very much. But it is white corn, and she would use Lewis Lye and put that on it. Of course, I've forgotten how much lye you use in the water, but you have to bring that corn to a boil, and boil that until it is tender. And you try to flip the skins and when it is just right, those skins, outer skins, would all slip off and leave that inner kernel of corn--whole. And then you take it out of that, and you've got to wash it, and wash it until there is no sign of the lye, and then she'd pack that down in big jars.

END OF TAPE TWO

Q: Grandma, you mentioned burying vegetables. Could you tell me something about the technique used and what you would bury?

A: Yes. It was interesting in many ways because, of course, we couldn't go to a supermarket and get cabbage, and turnips, and lettuce, and green onions, and things like you do now. You can go and get anything, fruit or just anything. But we never saw green stuff until spring again, so it was necessary to do this. I told you how we raised the late cabbage to bury.

Q: Yes.

A: And it was a special kind. And when it got real cold, my father had a special place in the garden that was high because, of course, you had to have good drainage. And he would measure off a space for each hill--whatever he was going to put in it. And then he would pile straw about eighteen inches deep on that nice clean straw. And then if it was cabbage, he'd turn the heads upside down in that straw, cover them with straw, and then dig a trench all around that, and throw dirt up on the straw. That way, you see, there never was a speck of water could ever stand on them at all--it'd just run right off in that ditch. And the same way with the turnips, and the apples, and potatoes.

When it got real cold then--of course, our winters were very, very different. I think I said when November came, we had winter--and we had winter clear through and it was cold--just a steady cold. So they would have to put the dirt on, maybe eighteen inches thick on those hills. And then they would take straw from the stables and cover that. That would keep the heat in, you know.

On the south side of those hills they would leave a hole--oh, usually a foot across, and they'd stuff an old dress or something in the hole first, and then put a board over that, and then put straw and dirt. Well then, in the winter no matter how cold, when we needed to have some apples or potatoes or something to use, the men would go out, and open that hole, and reach in, and get buckets of it, and bring it in the house. When those were gone, we'd get some more, [and this would go on] until spring.

And then, of course, the onions were raised and dried so that we'd have our supply of onions. And like I said, we had our sorghum, and Dad always bought a barrel of flour in the fall when he threshed his wheat.

Q: Did he buy this in Marshall?

A: Yes. Oh, yes. And we had the fresh homemade bread, and homemade butter, and sorghum, and everything--we had peach butter, apple butter and plum butter, pumpkin butter, [et cetera].

Q: Could you tell me anything about gathering nuts?

A: Oh, yes, that was fun. Yes, after school the children would all go out--and, of course, in those days there were rail fences and in all the rail fences would be hazel brush. You could call them--oh, I forget what they're called as you buy them out of the store today. But filberts I think is what they call them now. But we called them hazelnuts and they grew in clumps. Well, we would take big gunny sacks and [pick] off

those clumps, and we'd have possibly four or five big gunny sacks of hazelnuts and walnuts, hickory nuts and butternuts.

Well, those would be taken [up to] the house and put up on the chicken house roof and they were left there, you know, three or four weeks to dry in the sack--ripen. Well then, when it came cold winter evenings, that would be our job--to sit around the stove and shell out these hazelnuts. And, of course, the hickory nuts we would have to crack/break off the outside shell of those because that was better done outside--and the walnuts too, you know. They were ready to crack and pick out the kernels for baking--which, of course, they were--people baked with a lot of things like that in those days.

Q: What did you do about the stain from walnuts?

A: Well, sometimes it was so bad--so our brothers found a way of making a hole in a board and putting that board across a couple of blocks of wood, and then they'd lay the walnuts on that, and take a club or something and hit that. Well, that would mash the walnuts and they would squirt through, and that would leave the hull on the outside--that way our hands didn't touch it so much.

Q: I see.

A: Speaking of that now--they were so cheap everywhere. My niece up at Culver, Indiana, told me the other day--they pick out their walnuts and they sell them for $5 a pound. And this one man gets ten pounds every fall and sends to his mother in Florida.

Q: Did your family ever sell any of these nuts?

A: Oh, no. Oh, no. No, that was just part of living. Yes, you just didn't--you just had all those good things to eat. You didn't sell them.

Q: Did your mother bake a lot of things around Christmastime and use those nuts?

A: No, not a great deal. She made a big fruit cake every year. That was made a month in advance because it was packed in a jar in cloths, and a little wine or something was poured over it. And then it [ripened] and it was real good by the time it set [that long] until Christmastime. All that fruit--she had so much good fruit in it, and then she'd slice that off and that was so good. Then she made molasses cookies--little boys and girls.

Q: I remember when I was a child, it was quite popular in Clark County to go mushroom hunting in the spring. Did you go mushroom hunting when you were a child?

A: Oh, yes. I can remember I was too little to go with them. Some other people from Terre Haute would come out in early May and, of course, our seasons--like I told you--they were so different. When spring came it was spring, and beautiful and warm. And Dad always had some new

ground nearby where around these stumps, where they had cut the trees, the mushrooms were so large. They were nothing at all like we have today.

Q: What kind of mushrooms?

A: Well, they were the sponge mushrooms [morels] mostly.

Q: Did you have the long-necked kind?

A: Yes, they had them, but really the [morels] were more popular. And there would be nothing unusual to have them six inches long--even more, really just huge. I remember one Sunday so well. They came over and they took six gallon milk buckets back to get them in. They came back with those full and put in sacks to take back to Terre Haute.

But you see--it was like I said--we had warm spring rains and the new ground--it was all new--cattle hadn't tramped it. It hadn't been farmed. And you take like now--like the animals have gone over the pastures, the hazel brush is gone. The fences are gone. The blackberry briars are gone. It gave way to progress.

Q: Would you call it more progress or simply change?

A: Well, [that] depends on how you look at it. I think progress is wonderful. And in many things we've come a long way. In many other things it's rather pitiful--we've gone the wrong way. I think back over the changes--politically, economically. You know back then--take war--really we just didn't know what it was because we didn't have phones--usually no newspapers, just a county paper. But things were so peaceful.

You felt so safe and I remember--really the first war that I was conscious of was when our first little child, your mother, was born. That was in 1918, when World War I was settled. And I remember how horrible the news came across when they were fighting the Germans, and all over there. Oh, the neighbors were just horrified. We didn't understand that--it was so far away from us.

Now you jump on a plane and you're there in just a little bit--like your mother and daddy. In ten days they visited Switzerland, Germany and different places like that. Well, we couldn't do that [in] those days, you know. And it was so frightening. But, I think it's like television. Television has been a most wonderful thing. But it's just been used in the wrong way because of the people's morals and things like that. It's our fault because they're going to put on what [the people like].

Q: You felt the people were more moral then than they are now?

A: Oh my goodness, I should hope to tell you!

Q: Could you tell me something about maple candy or did you make maple candy when you were a child?

A: Yes. I think I mentioned in March that the sugar sap--my dad had a sugar orchard. It was a lovely place. It sloped down to a little creek bottom and they would tap those trees. And then in March--late March--when the sap began to run, he'd hang buckets on those with tubes out, and then that water was gathered in.

Mother never made a practice of making molasses much for us because it would have taken gallons and gallons [of sap]. I used to know how many gallons it took to make just a pint of syrup. You boiled it and boiled it for days, you know. But she would always try to make us a little maple candy, and it was awfully good--and a little maple syrup. So we always had a little to taste every spring.

Q: Did they try to sell any of this sap?

A: Oh, no. Oh, no. It wasn't commercial at all. It was one of the nice things we had on our farm.

Q: Did most of the farmers have this around the area?

A: I don't think so. I didn't know of anyone else that did.

Q: I remember hearing about people going into the woods and gathering wild honey. Did you ever do this?

A: Yes. My brothers--my big brothers used to. And that would usually be along in July. It seemed like it was along in that month when the weather was so hot, and the bees would start swarming and they would go to make another hive. And the men would be out in the fields and they'd see this big swarm of bees--so, of course, when they saw them forming, they knew if they'd follow them it would take them to this place where they had their honey, or else where they were going to have it.

And so they would try to follow them and--oh, I remember many times they would come to the tree, and it would be an old tree with a hollow place in it. And the bees would swarm around it and so they would stake it--know where it was--then they would come to the house and get the saw, and axes, and the tubs, and pans, and go back and cut the tree down. And then they would reach in and get all that honey out. It would still be in the comb, of course. It wasn't as clear and pretty as what you buy naturally.

Q: Did your mother try to strain it?

A: Sometimes. But they liked mostly to eat it with the comb, you know. And, of course, honey was healthy and it was used a lot in a medicinal way.

Q: In what way did you use it?

A: Well, honey is supposed to be very healing and sort of a laxative, in a way you might say. In different ways, honey and vinegar are noted for their healing.

Q: Did your mother put vinegar with honey?

A: I don't remember that she did that. But we always had honey on the table.

Q: Anything else you'd like to talk about regarding farm life when you were a child? I remember you telling me a story once about a tramp. Could you describe this to me? (laughter)

A: (laughs) Well, that was sort of unusual. Of course, tramps were not unusual in those days. There were a lot of poor people who would come through the country begging. And we were used to the word "tramp." And, of course, more or less we would shy away from them--kind of afraid of them. One Saturday my mother had to go to town--which was very unusual. Usually Dad went [to town]. But she had to go, and she just left my older sister and me at home so if anybody should come, she told us to entertain them until she got back.

Q: So you weren't taught to be afraid of strangers?

A: No, no. And, of course, we didn't know that was a stranger. So one of the things that my sister and I had always wanted to do--and mother forbid--was to climb the big cedar tree out in our front yard. It was a huge thing and it was quite a challenge to us. And so as soon as they were up far enough that we felt sure they couldn't come back and catch us, we went right out and climbed the cedar tree.

So we got up in the top of it, and my sister looked up the road and she said, "Oh, my goodness. There comes a tramp." Well, of course, I was five years younger and that just frightened the wits out of me. And I said, "What will we do?" Well she said, "We're going to have to be still. We won't dare go down. And we can't make a noise, let us hide up here. And he'll probably go on. So we'll just be real quiet."

Well, what made it appear to be a tramp--in those days, of course, people walked a great deal and the dust was terrible. You know, there were not any paved roads. And they had what they called dusters. They were a long, thin coat that men wore over their suits to keep them nice, and to keep the dust off.

Q: If the man would go in a house, then would he take off this duster?

A: Oh, yes. Oh, yes. That would be left outside or shaken--shaken so the dust would come off.

Q: I see.

A: Another thing, of course, that made him appear worse, there was a red scar across his face, and he was dusty, and dirty, and tired. Well, he came up to the gate and we were so frightened. [Nell] whispered to me and she said, "Well maybe he'll just--when he sees there's no one home he'll go on." But he came up to the front door, knocked, and no one came, of course. He went around to the pump and pumped good cold water on his handkerchief and washed his face and hands, and got him a

cold drink, and went to the back door, and nobody was there. Well, that frightened us then. We were so afraid he would go in the house and steal something. But we stayed quiet and pretty soon he came around and sat down on the front porch.

Well, then we were in a predicament because if we went down, we'd have to face him. If we didn't go down, Mother and Dad would come home. So either way we were in a serious (laughs) position, but we thought we'd rather risk Dad and Mom. Well, pretty soon, we heard Dad and Mom coming. They drove up to the gate. Just as quick as Dad jumped out of the surrey to take Mother out, he looked and saw--he said, "Oh, John!" Well, right then we knew it must be a friend of Dad's and we knew what we'd be in for. We were supposed to entertain anyone. And so this man got up and walked out toward Dad and our mother shook hands with him. She said, "Well, John, why didn't the girls take you in the house where it was cool?" And he said, "Well, Jo, there were no girls. I haven't seen anybody." "Well," she said, "that's odd. I left them here and told them if anyone came, to entertain them." "Well," he said, "they're just out playing, that's all right." So Dad said, "Well, you go on in John, and just as soon as I put the horses up, I'll be right in."

Well, we hurried and thought, and we figured right then was the time we'd better get down that tree. Mother took him inside and Dad went to take care of the horses. So, if we could get down out of that tree and get out to the woods, we could come in with some wild flowers or something and pretend we had just gone to the woods to pick some flowers, which we did. So we got those and came walking in and Mother said, "I told you to stay here and just see who came to visit us." And we asked who it was, and she said, "Well that's your father's very good friend from Kansas--the state of Kansas." He had come on the train to Marshall. Rather than calling Dad, he just walked seven miles through that dust. Well, of course, then we enjoyed him--he was very wealthy. He had--oh, I don't know how many sections of land he owned out there.

Q: How did he know your dad?

A: Well, they had met somehow years before--I just don't recall whether they met in college or how. But he had wanted Dad to move us out to Kansas, and he would share part of his ground and they'd farm together. They almost did at one time and then for some reason--I don't know--they decided not to. So I really don't know whatever became of him. His name was John Kunz, and he was such a lovely man. I remember so well listening to them--my father loved to talk about future events--what would happen to our country politically and (coughs) they would sit and talk and . . . I just loved to sit on Dad's lap and listen to them. You know, that intelligent talk to a little tot and it seemed great to me.

Q: What would your dad say about the future?

A: Well, they got to talking about our [U.S.] Navy and how we were protected, and so forth. And, of course, that all was over my head. I didn't understand anything, but I thought those big words coming from my father were just marvelous. I thought my father was just the smartest

thing in the whole wide world. And so he said, "You know, John, the day will come, and my children and your children will live to see it, when Japan will attack America." And John said, "Oh, my goodness! What would make you think such a thing as that? Why, that's impossible! We have a good navy. We're well protected." Dad said, "Just wait and see. You will find out because Japan is very, very smart and they would just as leave die, you know, to win their victory." And he said, "We will be attacked one day." And of course, it came to pass--in 1942, Pearl Harbor.

Q: What insight he had!

A: Yes, and I think back over those things, as he discussed them--there were so many things that he could seem to see in the future.

Q: Did he ever talk much about religion with this man?

A: Well, that was a subject very reverent in those days, Francie. I mean, it wasn't talked about or discussed freely like it is now. Of course, we just went to our little school, to church, and so we really didn't know what it was to go to a real church. I had never been in a real church.

Q: Well, this friend of your father's--was he the man that wanted to send you to school?

A: Yes. Yes. He had six boys and he didn't have any girls. And I had thick yellow hair and it would--Mother would just take her fingers and shape it in curls all around my head. So he called me Goldilocks. And so one night he asked Mother if he could adopt me. He'd like to take me home with him and adopt me. And she said, "Oh, my goodness! No!" And he said, "Well, you've got nine other children. You don't need her and I don't have any girls at all."

Q: How'd you feel about that?

A: And, oh I would have gone willingly because he told me I could have a piano, and oh, just all the wonderful things I could have, you know, just anything I wanted I could have. So, of course, I wasn't old enough to understand--nothing can take the place of your father and mother, but then when you're little that way--he'd dangle lots of things with money and it counts. But anyway, of course, Mother would have cut her arm off before she'd have given up one of her children--there never were enough children. You know, I mean she just loved us all. So it was--I'm not sure that we ever got to see him again. I don't think we ever did. But it taught us a lesson that appearances are not always what they seem.

Q: I see.

A: He was a very nice, very nice man, you know--but it was just circumstances and conditions that made him look like that. And I believe it was in the service that he had gotten his scar--from the Spanish War or something like that, he had gotten that scar, I don't remember.

Q: Well, did your mother ever punish you and Nell for going to the woods and [not doing as she said]?

A: No. She said, "What have you been doing?" And so, of course, we didn't exactly tell a little lie. We said, "Well we thought we'd just go out into the woods and get some flowers." But, of course, we wouldn't have done it otherwise. But we did go get the flowers, so in a sense we didn't tell (laughs) too big of a story. So Mother said, "Well, I don't like what you did. Now you see he was very uncomfortable. He was awfully tired. And you could have gotten him something cold to drink, and something to eat you know--made him comfortable." But then, well children will be children, you know.

Q: You told me earlier about the fact that you took care of your mother prior to her death, and that you didn't get to finish high school because of this. Can you tell me a little bit about your feelings about taking care of your mother for six years, and also your feelings about not getting to finish school?

A: Well, I'm a little ashamed of that because there were times that I was very bitter, for I was the only one in the family that just passionately wanted to go to high school and college.

Q: What did you want to study in college? Was it . . .

A: I loved music, so particularly. Oh, I loved music. And I thought of medicine. My grandfather was a doctor and many of my aunts were nurses [or teachers]. I don't know what I would have turned out to have been. But I did like school, and I was so fond of music. But, I just finished grade school when our mother was taken very sick. And, of course, she was so young. And we supposed that she might be sick a year or so, and then she'd be well.

Q: So you thought that you'd go back to school?

A: Yes. And in those days you didn't put your mother in a nursing home. You took care of your family. And since I was the only one at home, and I had two little brothers, and an older brother, and my father, it was up to me, of course, to stay home. Well, the years went by and she lived to be--lived six years very ill.

Q: How old was she when she died?

A: Fifty-three. So young.

Q: Do you know what was wrong with her?

A: Well, she had complications.

Q: Change of life complications?

A: Yes. Several things wrong. And it was such a shock to us and as the years went by, I sort of became adjusted to it. We had a lovely home and I learned to bake real bread. (laughs) That was really a

specialty with me--was homemade bread. The young man I went with--his family were German--and they were awfully good cooks. And one Sunday he brought his mother over for dinner. And oh, when she went home she was just amazed at the light bread I could make. She said why it's so unusual. Of course, that made me very proud.

But anyway, then there would be times that I'd drift back and become a little bitter. But, of course, it kept me pretty busy with the little boys, and kept them in school and everything, and taking care of Mother. And I sort of forgot about those things. But, you know, then what made me feel so bad about it--one morning she called me in the bedroom, and told me to sit down on the bed and I did. And she said, "I'm going away and I just wanted to tell you how proud I am of you, the way you've taken care of my little boys." She said, "I have known all along that I wouldn't get well. But it worried me what would happen to my little boys--who would love them--who would care for them." And she said, "I've watched you and you've been a real mother to them, and now I'm going away happy because I know they are going to be all right now."

Q: I'm sure that made you feel very . . .

A: It made me feel good in a way, but it made me feel bad in another way to think that I would have been bitter at having to give up my schooling, because she couldn't help it. She was sick. It wasn't her fault. But, of course, by the time she was gone, the little boys and Dad needed me, and so then I married, Dad married, and Jim married.

Q: Do you remember what year you met Grandpa--this German boy that you were dating?

A: Well, yes, I suppose so. That would have been in 1914 I guess, because we were married in 1915. I met him--rather, I saw him at a Children's Day Service at the Zion Church. I went with my sister and her boyfriend on Sunday evening. And he was in the choir, and I was sitting back with my sister and her [date]. And he kept looking at me and I kept looking at him. And he had an awfully pretty girl with him. She was from Terre Haute--Alma something--Alma Abel, I guess her name was. Of course, it never entered my mind that he would notice me or like me.

And he had a beautiful black driving horse. So we started home from the services and it came up a terrible storm. Oh, the lightening just flashed and the thunder rolled. The rain came down in gallons. Well, in those days the buggys had a front--they called them curtains--with nap on. There was a place through the front where the lines would come through. So Arthur hurried when it started to look bad. He hurried and put the curtains on. And I was sitting on their laps driving. Well, of course, the country was strange to us. We really didn't know exactly where we were.

Q: How far was this Zion Church from where your father lived?

A: Oh, about eight miles. And pretty soon it seemed like the horse wanted to go one way and I thought he was going wrong, and Arthur kept

saying, "Pull him to the left, pull him to the left." And we did, but the horse wanted to go to the right. Well, in a little bit, of course, we knew why. We were pulling him up on the side of the hill. We were going down a big hill and we slipped on the side and the buggy turned over and, of course, that threw us right there in the mud. And the shaft broke out of the buggy and the horse broke loose, and that drug me down the road in the mud, and so Arthur called to the horse. And he was gentle and he got him stopped.

Well, our clothes were just ruined. It was [clay] mud and Arthur looked up and he saw a buggy coming, and it happened that it was Fred and this girl. So Arthur said, "Well I don't know who you are but we're having a problem." And Fred said, "Yes, I think you're having more than a problem." He said, "Do you know where you are?" And Arthur said, "No, we don't know where we are?" "Well," he said, "I do," and he said, "If you will hold my horse, he's so wild. His name is Bob." He said, "If you'll hold my horse, I'll go back to the top of the hill and get help for you."

So he got out and waded through the mud--went back up to the house, and Mr. and Mrs. Henry Berner lived up there. They had [put out the lights]--they were ready to go to bed. And, of course, in those days if you needed help, everybody was ready to help. So here they came with their lanterns--her in her nightgown pacing down through the mud and she said, "You just come right up to the house." Took us right in the house--mud and all. And I realized when we got inside I had that laprobe yet--carrying it with me, and Nell had the buggy whip. We had just taken those two things with us. So Mr. Berner said, "Now your buggy you can't use, but your horse is all right." And he said, "You just hitch it up [with] my harness to my buggy and take the folks on home." So, unknown to us, Fred thought he would just follow. So he hurried and took the girl home. He got an idea of where we were going, then he hurried up, and he followed us home, so he knew where we lived.

Q: Sounds like he was interested in you already.

A: So the next week I got a letter then from him, and that's how we really met and got acquainted.

Q: You say you met in 1914? How long did you go together?

A: Well, we were married then in 1915 after Mother died. We were married then, and I stayed there and took care of Dad and the children.

Q: When a couple wanted to get married in those days, did you have to do anything special, like get parents' permission?

A: Oh, no. Not necessarily. No, you didn't get shots or blood tests--anything like that.

Q: What ceremonies were held before the wedding day? Like did you have an engagement party? Or a shower?

Fred and Jessie Saiter

Sept. 12, 1915

A: No. Oh, no. They didn't get gifts in those days. Later on they did, but at that time just your immediate family would--like my sisters would make me pillowcases or something of that sort. Of course, like I say, Mother was gone and we needed just about everything to start housekeeping with. So it--things were very different back then. They were not plentiful.

Q: Could you describe your wedding day?

A: (laughs) Like, well . . .

Q: Your wedding dress or . . .

A: My wedding dress was a suit--a navy blue suit--and a hat to match and white glvoes, and my shoes were--at that time the style was patent leather bottom and velvet top. And it was a very pretty suit and I had a silk blouse--it was pale, just a real delicate pink, a lace blouse.

Q: I think I've seen a picture.

A: You have. In my wedding picture you saw it. And since my mother was gone, my older sister had me come to Indianapolis, and she and Arthur were going to be witnesses, you see. And they had to get a lawyer to sign papers that I lived in Indiana. One of us had to live in Indiana.

Q: Oh, I see.

A: So Arthur's aunt had a lawyer, and she called him and he wrote up some papers that I was living with my sister and her husband. Of course, I was right then for a few days, but that was all. But then it answered the purpose. It went through all right. So then they had their minister from the Christian Church to come--and it was about 8 p.m. He married us and then we went out to the park, and it was on September 12, [1915].

Oh, how hot it was! It was desperate. And Fred's shoes were too small and his feet got to hurting. Nell took the baby with her in a buggy. We had to push the buggy around. Well, we decided to stay for the concert. Oh, we waited and waited--came 9 p.m., and no music. Then we learned that it had been cancelled. We had a hard time finding a streetcar to get back home. So it was rather an eventful day.

Q: Sounds like it.

A: Arthur and Fred exchanged shoes. They changed shoes so he felt a little more comfortable. (laughs)

Q: Well, when did you go back to Marshall?

A: Well, then we stayed there a day or two. And then we went off to Terre Haute to some of my cousins, and we stayed there a day or two. And then we came on over home then.

We hadn't threshed yet--Dad had his threshing to do yet. It was in the rick then. They put all the wheat bundles into ricks and all, so Fred and his uncle John would [thresh it].

Q: Was Grandpa in the threshing business?

A: Yes. He and his uncle John owned this machine. So they came and did the threshing then.

Q: Can you tell me something about the techniques Grandpa would use in his threshing business?

A: Well, of course, they were crude compared to now.

Q: How long was he in this business?

A: Oh, quite a few years. I don't remember. Of course, he was doing that when--before we were married and he [still was] when the children were--oh, I don't know, in grade school.

Q: So probably until what, 1930?

A: Oh, I should say so, yes.

Q: Well, did it change much over the years?

A: Oh, yes. You see back then it was a steam engine and a separator and, of course, this separated the wheat as the men pitched the bundles in and it went through this process, and the straw went up into a pile and the wheat went into a wagon--hauled it to the bins.

Q: Well, how was it different say in 1930 than it was earlier?

A: Well, by then they were starting to have--well, I don't know by 1930 whether they were starting to have tractors yet or not. Grandpa got a little tiny tractor. I think Uncle John Hawker had about the first little Ford tractor that I saw. And then they began getting the binders [combines] that you could cut your grain with--with this little tractor.

Q: Do you remember what kind of money Grandpa made in this business?

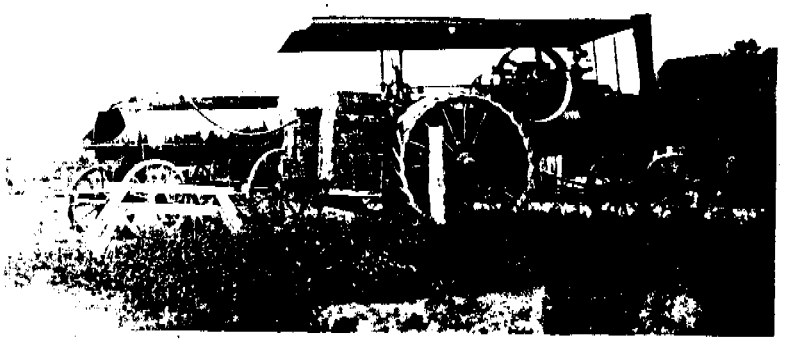
A: How much what?

Q: How much money he made?

A: Oh, my! It was so little I don't think anybody ever discussed it.

Q: During the period when Grandpa was threshing for a living, was he gone from home very much?

A: Yes. They would go down on the sand prairie, south and thresh wheat, and by the time they got through with all of that, they'd go north up to what they called the grand prairie and thresh oats up there.



Steam Engine and Water Wagon

(circa 1921)

Threshing Machine and Bunk Wagon

(circa 1921)

Q: Now is the grand prairie north of Marshall?

A: Yes, that's way up north of Paris.

Q: I see.

A: Yes. Of course, in those days it looked like they made quite a little bit, but then by the time they paid for their machinery and their help, there wasn't any profit left.

Q: Would he stay in the homes of the people that he would thresh for?

A: [No]. They had a bunk wagon. The crew lived in the bunk wagon, but they ate in the homes.

Q: So when Grandpa was away, you were in charge of the family?

A: Yes, and course, we raised our own meat, and had our own cows, and we milked, and made butter, and I made bread. And we had chickens, and ducks, and geese.

Q: So you would do the milking when Grandpa was away?

A: Oh, yes. Oh, yes. I had to do all the feeding and everything, you know, take care of the garden, truck patch, and yard. It was hard, lots of hard work.

Q: So you really did more outside work then than your mother did?

A: Well, Mother didn't have to because she had so much to do inside. And then, of course, Dad had the boys to help him. My dad had the five big boys, you know, to help him.

Q: Did you have any land that you farmed there around the house?

A: Yes. There was 80 acres and so when he wasn't [home]--it was just during a certain season that he would be away, you know. So he would put out a crop. He'd raise that and then, of course, we had our--like I say--we raised our meat and things like that.

Q: Where was this farm located? Can you describe where it's located?

A: Yes, it's just south of Marshall, south and east just a little bit. It's called down by Harris Springs.

Q: Was it in Marshall Township?

A: Yes. And the children went to school—Dorothy and Evelyn went to school at what they called Stump School when they were little.

END OF SIDE ONE

Q: Grandma, before you had your children, did you ever discuss how many children you wanted?

A: Oh, I don't think people did in those days.

Q: I wonder if you, since your mother died at an early age because of change of life problems, did you ever think about this?

A: No, we didn't understand it.

Q: So you didn't think anything about . . .

A: It was just one of the ways of life. Like I said, we were way down there in the country, you know, away from the city. We didn't know about all this modern . . .

Q: You didn't know anything about birth control?

A: Oh no, they didn't have those things then. No. At least if they did, I never heard tell of them. Oh no, things like that were not discussed at all. It was a sort of a reverent thing, you know. I mean . . .

Q: When did you have your first child? In what year?

A: Well, I can't think just now. She's . . .

Q: Dorothy in--what 1918?

A: Yes, that's right. You knew because that was when the war was.

Q: Okay.

A: Yes, that's why Fred didn't--he was supposed to go--he and his brother Herman--as soon as the crops were harvested. And the reason they didn't take him in the fall was because his father needed him, you see, to harvest the crop. And so Dorothy was born the first day of March then, and then they--but the armistice was signed, of course, just when they were to go. They were to go in November and . . .

Q: Did you feel a sense of relief?

A: Yes.

Q: . . . that they didn't have to go?

A: Yes, it frightened us. But, of course, others all around had gone. They had to go so it would have been right that they should go, you know.

Q: Did you know of anyone around Marshall that was killed in World War I?

A: At that time, no. I don't remember.

Q: How did the war affect your lives then? Did it affect it at all?

A: Oh, I'm sure it must have.

Q: Did you have trouble buying certain items?

A: I don't recall that we had a problem then because we raised most of our living. But later on, by the time President Roosevelt came into office was when we began to--they started having--oh, we used hominy and cornmeal a great deal instead of flour. You know, we had very little flour.

Q: But you don't remember any hardships during World War I?

A: Well, I don't think we called them hardships, Francie, because back in those days people were so different.

Q: What you call self-sufficient?

A: Yes. If your president said do without something, you did. I mean, you thought that was right. You should do what he said. But, you know, nowadays people want what they want regardless of whether they feel they should have it or not. And they want so much. And they don't want to work for it. You know, if they--oh, conditions are just so different now.

Q: So if you did have a hardship then, you really were not aware of it?

A: No, I think people now would think it was very, very difficult. And there were times when we each were issued so many points--they called it--they were little books.

Q: Well now, was this World War I or World War II?

A: No, that was in World War II, I think. And we had so many points--you'd get a pound of sugar or a pound of bacon, things like that. And since I tried to can and make jelly and things, I rarely ever--we couldn't have a lot of things that you would naturally think you'd have like bacon, and cheese, and things like that--just what we could raise, you know.

Q: Well now, when do you remember getting your first car? Or do you remember when your father bought his first automobile?

A: Your mother was just a little tot. I don't remember just how old she was, but she was just a little tot.

Q: Did your dad have a car?

A: Oh, no.

Q: He never owned one?

A: Oh, no. No, we had a surrey.

Q: Well, how did you get--when you were in Indianapolis for your wedding--how did you and Grandpa . . .

A: On the train.

Q: Oh, so you didn't have a car then?

A: Oh, no. No, we came by train to Terre Haute and then from Terre Haute over home.

Q: What did you think about the first car that you saw?

A: Well, the first car now--that I remember now was Mr. Finkbiner, Abe Finkbiner. He called himself a millionaire, because he had a Ford automobile--the only one in the whole community.

Q: Did he live in Marshall?

A: No, down around Zion [Church]. And he did have nice land. They had a nice home, but he was far from being a millionaire. But he loved to brag and that's what he would always brag--that's what he was, you know. But it was quite a thing to see him riding around in that automobile and everybody else, you know, with a buggy and horse.

Q: Well, you said it was a Ford. Could you describe what it looked like?

A: Oh, I think everybody'd know what a Ford looked like then. Of course, it's different. Now, of course, it's enclosed. You roll up the windows.

Q: This was a convertible?

A: Oh, no. Oh no, far from it. No. It was a two seat, but there were curtains in those days that snapped on--something like oilcloth. They were made to fit, of course, so that if you had to go out in the rain or if a storm was coming up or if it was cold, why you could put those curtains on and you were protected, as good as you could be.

Q: Do you remember when the first car came out with a rumble seat?

A: Yes, I do remember that. I remember seeing people riding in one. I never thought I'd like to. The only time I ever had any experiences with [riding in the open] was your father and mother had a new truck. And we were going to Indianapolis to visit my sister and her husband. And we were going in the truck. Well, of course, we couldn't all sit in the front seat of the truck. So we fixed blankets in the back and [Evelyn] and I decided that we would sit back in the back. And your mom and dad were in front.

And so we started in the evening. We were to go over there for supper. And the moon came out. We had gone, and gone, and gone, and we were not getting there. And I tried to get the folks' attention up in front to tell them that we were going in the wrong direction. I could tell by the moon. And I couldn't--they'd just laugh. They thought, you know, it was kind of funny that we wanted to get up in the seat instead of back there. So they wouldn't pay any attention. Well, after a time, finally I did get Fred's attention and so Evelyn said, "Dad, we're going wrong. We're going the wrong direction." And he said, "Well, why do you think so?" And I said, "Well, look at the stars. Look at the moon." So they decided I was right and they pulled up to a station and asked. And he said, "Well, where were you going?" And your dad said, "Well, we were going to Indianapolis." "Well," he said, "you're in Paris, Illinois. You're going home."

Q: You were going north . . .

A: We had gone away out around, you know, and came back north. We were coming home.

Q: Could you tell me what year that was when you . . .

A: Well, it must have been around in 1938 but--anyway it was getting to be chilly weather and so we stayed overnight. And the next day it turned awfully cold.

Q: Did you return home the next day?

A: Oh, yes. We had to. Well, somebody had to sit in the back of the truck because we couldn't all sit up in front. So Fred said, "Well, he'd sit back there with me." Well, my sister--she got us some old coats, and comforts, and bricks, and they heated the bricks real hot. And put straw in the back of the truck and put blankets on it. And we got up right against the back of the truck, you know, and wrapped up just as good as we could to try to stay warm.

Well, your folks always had trouble with that new truck. They could go just about from one station to another, and they had to stop and fill it with water. The water'd leak out. Well, it just took us for an eternity to get home.

Q: Was it a Chevrolet?

A: Yes. And we stopped, and we stopped, and we stopped. But finally we did get home. And that was my only experience with riding in the back of a truck. I didn't want any more of it.

Q: Let's discuss a little bit about what you raised on the farm with Grandpa. You say you had eighty acres.

A: Well, it wasn't his, it was Grandpa's--but he farmed it.

Q: His father's, wasn't it?

A: Yes, it was his father's land. Well, he had some in corn. We had cattle. There was pasture. And we had hogs. I don't recall that Fred ever tried to raise anything except corn. I don't remember that he ever did.

Q: Do you remember about how many bushels he would make to the acre?

A: Not then like they do now, no. If they got sixty bushels, they did real well.

Q: And how did he harvest this corn?

A: Well, you had to shuck it by hand.

Q: Could you describe this technique?

A: I sure could, for I've done a lot of it. Oh yes, you take a wagon with a team. Go down through the rows and--they had what they called bang boards--that was boards up on one side so that the corn wouldn't, as you threw it, it wouldn't go over. And you had to shuck it by hand. Some people used the pegs--shucking peg they called it. You put it on your right hand and you grab that ear corn, and you grab that with the hook and pull the shucks down. You give it a twist and throw it up in the wagon, you know, and go on to the next ear. And the horses were trained. They would just, you mention "git up" you know, and away they'd go.

Q: How many acres could you do in a day?

A: Not too many. It was slow work. Now, some of the young men got so they could go up on the prairie and make quite nice money at that time shucking corn. And there were a very, very few that got so they could shuck a hundred bushels a day by going out real early, you know, and then if they didn't have to haul too far, they could get a hundred bushels a day. Now I don't remember, they just got a few cents a bushel. But, of course, a dollar in those days meant more than ten or fifteen dollars would now.

Q: Did you feed all of this corn to the livestock?

A: Yes, most of it. Yes.

Q: And you did sell some, though?

A: Well, I don't recall that we'd ever had very much to sell because there was pasture and we didn't have very much corn.

Q: Was the farm machinery that you and Grandpa had when you were farming very much different than what your dad had?

A: Oh, it had improved some, of course, because back then things were really rather crude, you know. But, I think the change came after the war.

Q: You mean World War II?

A: Yes. I think that the people began to--science and everything--they began to make things much easier for living. And, of course, now Fred didn't get to see these big binders [combines]. I don't know what he--he would be so excited if he could get on one of those big binders with your brother.

Q: Now he died in 1950?

A: Yes.

Q: So he didn't see . . .

A: July 13, 1950. And that hasn't been so long ago. You see how things have changed? Your brother got a new binder and picker--corn picker--the other day, a couple of weeks ago, $72,000.

Q: And what would something like that cost when you and Grandpa were farming?

A: Oh, well, of course, they couldn't be bought. They weren't made even in those days.

Q: But I mean a similar type thing that would do similar type work?

A: Oh, if I recall, when they bought their threshing outfit, they gave something like $2,000 for it--for their whole threshing machine.

Q: I see.

A: So it was very different, but oh, when Fred farmed, he did have a two row cultivator. It had a seat on it. You could ride it. While my father, his was all walking. That was an improvement. But then, look at what your brother has now and your father.

Q: Oh, in some cases they don't even cultivate at all, anymore.

A: Oh, no. And then I think sometimes now on the prairie and all like that, they'll have plows--they'll have maybe twenty plows. You can go down through the field and make forty furrows as you go around, with those huge tractors. Oh, of course, things like that just were not, they were not even thought of in those days.

Q: No. I know you had a second child after my mother was born, about seven years after. And then two years after that you had a son. Could you tell me something about your son?

A: Well, he was stillborn and they said that he looked a lot like Evelyn did. I didn't see.

Q: And he was your last child?

A: Yes. I had spasms and I was real bad. I never even saw him, so I don't know. But they said he was a nice big baby and would have looked just like her.

Q: Did you have your children at home?

A: Yes.

Q: Did you have a midwife?

A: No, a doctor.

Q: And the doctor lived in Marshall?

A: Yes. That was the way things were done in those days. (laughs)

Q: Could you tell me something about education when my mother started to school? Had it changed very much? You said they went to Stump School?

A: Yes, she walked a mile. And, of course, it was heated the same way it was when I went to school.

Q: Was it a large room?

A: Yes. And then later they did get better heating facilities there, and they did get better lighting as they grew older than what I had when I was a little girl. But, of course, then when they were just, I think, in third or fourth grade, something like that, the school was closed and they were taken into Marshall at South Side School. At the city school.

Q: Now, was this still a one room school or . . .

A: No. They had more than one room and they taught--they had a principal and different teachers, you know, taught different grades. And then it was--we had moved to Marshall by that time. We were just across from the South Side School. And then Dorothy went to high school and . . .

Q: Well, when Mom was in grade school, did she study the same type of things that you did when you were in grade school?

A: Oh, no. No, no. It was quite different. I just don't recall. It was--they were beginning to have things more modern.

Q: Like did she still--the emphasis was still on reading, and writing, and arithmetic?

A: Oh, yes. Oh, yes. Very much like that.

A: Now you talked about spelling bees. Did Mom ever participate in a spelling bee?

A: I don't recall that they had many of those things. However, I think everyone was very proud of making good grades. It was important, very important to have an education.

Q: Now you mentioned the fact that you had a garden. Did you raise the same type of things that your mother had before you?

A: Oh, yes. Yes.

Q: And did you bury your vegetables?

A: No. That I never did. No. You see, Fred would be gone at that time of year and it would have been too hard for me to do. And then, of course, we lived just a mile south of Marshall. And there were stores then where you could begin to get cabbage and different things, you know, in the wintertime. You'd go to the store.

Q: Did you can very many things?

A: Oh, yes.

Q: You did have the glass cans?

A: Oh, yes. By that time we were processing food. We could coldpack green beans, lima beans, tomatoes, and corn. And we'd spice peaches and pears and crabapples. And, oh, make preserves and jellies. Of course, that seems like you wouldn't use all that food but, you see, you didn't go to the store [very much]. You used what you had at home.

Q: Now you mentioned the fact that your mother would obtain items from a huckster. Did you have a huckster that came around when you and Grandpa were married?

A: Yes. For awhile, just when your mother was little. And then when we moved up toward town--like I said, a mile out of town--then we never had a huckster up there.

Q: Would Grandpa go out and gather wild honey and nuts?

A: No. I never knew him--I think he did as a boy at home. I heard him tell how they used to do that as a boy at home. But after we were married, he was busy, you know, with Uncle John. They had the threshing machine and the shredder, and then Uncle John bought a rock crusher. And there was a big lime quarry down on Mrs. Geisert's.

Q: How far was this from where you lived?

A: Oh, possibly a mile or maybe not that far. And they began crushing rock and limestone. And the supervisor, the road supervisor, would buy that. And they started building good roads. That's when the roads began to improve.

Q: So this was probably around what, 1920, early 1920?

A: Well, it was when the children were small.

Q: Did the farmers ever come to this rock quarry and buy this limestone for their farms?

A: Yes. Yes, that's when they began learning that the soil needed lime. And, of course, it's a common thing now. Your brother buys it every spring. It's put on their ground, you know.

Q: Well, did they have special wagons that they'd haul this in or who would spread it over the land?

A: Yes, in a way, or you could just use your regular wagons on the farm if you wanted to. But now, of course, it's so commercialized that they have huge trucks to haul it.

Q: Right, right.

A: They make a business of it.

Q: But, do you remember how much they'd sell each year?

A: Well, I know Mrs. Geisert said that she made a small fortune off of her rock quarry.

Q: So that's how she made her fortune?

A: Oh, yes.

Q: Oh, I thought it was in farm land.

A: Oh, my land, no, no. They just dug way back in and took out what was the purest--they said it was the purest limestone in the United States.

Q: Now, how is Mrs. Geisert related to Grandpa?

A: She's his father's [niece].

Q: I see. Did you have family reunions at this time? Like with the Saiters or the Gilberts?

A: Back when we were little?

Q: No.

A: Or after we were married?

Q: Yes.

A: Oh, yes. Yes, the Schroeders and the Saiters and Hawkers would get together. I remember the year they were at our house when--well, I don't think we had Evelyn. I think there was just your mother. And we had 92 there. But we had a big front yard, you know, and a big oak tree out in front, and they spread tables out there. And then they had ice cream in great big containers. Uncle John looked after that. And, oh, cakes--just cakes and cakes. And my, the food.

Q: I'd like to discuss now how the Depression affected you and your family. Or people around the Marshall area.

A: I think it affected everybody. And I would say with us I know that one fall Fred had Mr. Knowles buy some cattle. And he was an auctioneer. And Fred had him to buy a bunch of young cattle from out west. They would send them here on the train and then he'd put them out on the pasture, and feed them all winter, and in the spring you could make a profit. But that fall he had to give five cents a pound. Imagine now! And sometimes they're up to as much as seventy cents a pound now. But he gave five cents a pound and when spring came, they were sold for the price he could get, he took three cents. So he actually used up all of his corn, feed, and everything, and made nothing at all.

Well, then that same spring I bought my baby chicks through commerical people, you know. You could write and they would ship them to you by train and then you'd go pick them up. A hundred or how many hundred you'd want, you know, to put in your brooder house. In that year I remember I got three hundred, and I gave six cents a chick for the baby chicks. And I fed them all summer, you know, took care of them. And in the fall, I took three cents for them. So it was rather discouraging. I can remember so well that winter, I wouldn't go to church because I didn't have a penny to give, and I was too proud to go to church and not give.

Q: Now, did you attend the Zion Church at this time?

A: No. After we moved up close to Marshall, we started going to the Methodist Church in Marshall. Many of Fred's family were already going there.

Q: So can you remember how the Depression affected you in any other way?

A: Well, it was just difficult to go through, that's all. Prices, you know. I mean, you just couldn't get a good price for anything.

Q: Do you remember how you heard about the crash? The 1929 crash?

A: Oh, I don't think we fully understood back then like we do now.

Q: Did you have a radio that you could hear what was going on?

A: No. No. We did get one later on when Fred began to haul gas for Mr. Goble in town. Mr. Goble gave him a nice little radio. And it was on it that I listened, you know, about the war and things like that.

Q: I see. So then, you did have a newspaper that you would get at the house?

A: Yes, yes. Well, not then we didn't. We were very poor. Fred didn't make very much. He had arthritis and some of the days he couldn't work at all.

Q: I see.

A: Yes.

Q: Do you remember when you first received a telephone?

A: Well, I don't remember. I think it was when we moved to the north end. I don't think we had a telephone when we were in the south end of Marshall. When we went up on Michigan Avenue, then we did have a telephone. [We did have a phone in 1934 when we lived in the south end of Marshall.]

Q: You mentioned the Methodist Church in Marshall. Were they very strict, doctrinally then?

A: More so than now. Yes, they were. Of course, all the churches really were. Down at the German Church, they were extremely strict. And the Baptist Church. They were, too.

Q: But the Methodists weren't as strict?

A: Not as strict as they were.

Q: Did you have revivals then?

A: Oh, yes.

Q: Now this was what? In the late 1920's and 1930's?

A: Yes.

Q: You mentioned that you moved to Marshall in the 1930's. What was Grandpa's occupation when you lived in Marshall?

A: Well, he worked for the city some and then he got the job driving the gas [truck] for the Diamond DX people.

Q: Now he would deliver to farmers?

A: Yes. Clear across the river. He'd go down, go across the river into Indiana and all around. You know, he'd be gone from daylight till many times late at night if it was in farming time.

Q: Now this was the Wabash River?

A: Yes.

Q: Where did he cross the river?

A: Down at Darwin on the ferry. The old ferry.

Q: Could you describe the Darwin Ferry to me?

A: Yes. It's gone now, but it was a thing made of boards. [The Darwin Ferry is still in existence.] And had chains, great big chains on each side, and a motor would pull it from side to side. And when you would

be on one side of the river and want to go across with a load, he would come across and drop an anchor, you know, so that it would stand still. And you drive on and then he'd lock your truck or whatever you were in. He'd lock that so it couldn't slide off. Then he'd start the motor and it would pull you across to the other side. Then you would go on and drive off. And then when you'd come back and want to come across, then he'd come from the other way.

Q: I see.

A: I don't remember what it cost. It seems to me like it was something like a dollar--a dollar a trip across--but I'm not quite sure what it was. [The current charge is $2.]

Q: When Grandpa would come through Darwin coming back home, would he ever stop and buy some fish? I know there are fishermen that lived around Darwin at that time.

A: Yes. But I think mostly--I think we did get some fish down there, but I think mostly we'd just go fishing, you know. I don't think we bought all that much fish. And then back in those days, you could buy a whole keg at the store, especially in the winter. In spring you could buy a whole keg of salt fish. And we liked those at that time. Of course you had to soak them out, you know, to get the salt out, but they were really good.

Q: Do you remember what kind they were?

A: I don't know. They were small fish. But you can't get those things now.

Q: When you moved to Marshall in the 1930's, could you give me your impression of Marshall? Has it changed very much?

A: Oh my, yes. (laughs)

Q: Could you tell me something about how it was laid out then?

A: Well, of course, it's much larger now. There are more stores. It's more modern.

Q: Was the parking very much different then than it is now?

A: Well, yes. In a way. Back when I was going with Fred, they had what they called [livery] stables. Of course, everybody drove horses. And you would go into town and I think there were three of those stables in Marshall. And which ever you chose to go to, you would drive in, and they would take your horse and rig. And then, however long you were going to be there, they would take care of it until you came back for it. And, of course, you always had to pay something for taking care of it.

Q: Do you know how much they charged you for this service?

A: I just can't seem to remember. It was so little, though--like a quarter, fifty cents or something like that. Of course, it'd depend on how long you kept it there.

Q: When you were living in Marshall, did you raise a garden at that time?

A: Oh, yes. We had a nice garden.

Q: Did you raise the same type of things?

A: More or less. Yes. We had strawberries, asparagus, grapes, and raspberries.

Q: Did you have chickens?

A: Yes, for a time we had a dozen hens. We couldn't have many, you know, we didn't have the space.

Q: Now could you describe this house that you lived in in Marshall across from the school?

A: Across from the school on the south side?

Q: Yes.

A: Yes. John and Irene Saiter own it now. Irene still lives there. It had six rooms. It rambled around, you know, sort of all on one [floor]. And it did have electricity, but it didn't have any running water. We had a pump outside. We pumped our water. But, of course, now it's strictly modern.

Q: Could you tell me if you had any labor-saving devices then that you didn't have on the farm?

A: Oh, in a way, yes. It was much nicer in a way because we had electric lights and the water was right there and, of course, the heating was with a stove at first. Now, of course, they're using furnaces, but we didn't have any.

Q: Can you describe your kitchen stove?

A: Range--I had a range. It had a top on it. I think I described that as one sort of like we had back down on the farm.

Q: Yes, you did.

A: Yes. I think I described that. But now I had a pantry where we would keep things in.

Q: Now when you moved to the house at the north part of Marshall, could you describe this house?

A: Yes. I thought it was so nice. I always liked it up there. That's when you and Jim were real little. And you stayed with us so much.

Q: Yes. Did you have the same kind of cooking stove then that you had in the south end?

A: Yes. And then I had a little kerosene range. It was so handy and I had that on the back porch. I had a big long back porch enclosed with screen, you know. And that's where we ate in the summertime. There was a big maple tree which stood there and it shaded it so nice. And we had a table out there.

Q: Did you have any other type of employment?

A: Oh, I used to sew for people. I'd babysit. And, of course . . .

Q: You did all this during your years in Marshall?

A: Oh, yes.

Q: Could you tell me why you had these jobs?

A: Well, Fred made so little, you see. He just made $15 a week. Can you imagine!

Q: Is that what he was making in 1950 when he died?

A: No, he was making $30. He had for two years.

Q: So then you had . . .

A: We raised two girls, and sent them to high school on $15 a week.

Q: So these jobs that you had helped to put your daughters through school?

A: Oh, yes. And, of course, my sewing you know, made all their clothing and everything. And then, babysitting at night helped out because we had our phone to pay for.

Q: Do you remember how much it cost to have a telephone then?

A: I don't know. I don't really know.

Q: Well, the fact that you did not get to finish high school--did that affect your attitude about what you wanted your children to do?

A: Oh, yes. I was determined that my children should have what I didn't. And I saw that they did get to go to high school. And not only that, but I saw that they got music. I did ironing, and I would stand and do ironings so that your mother could take piano lessons. I had to iron four hours to give her one hour of music.

Q: I see. So you were really determined that they would enjoy these . . .

A: I was determined they should have it. And I'm glad I did because your mother did real well on the violin, and then, of course, now she has her piano. And she is enjoying it. And then Evelyn wanted a clarinet. So, of course, I couldn't do ironings then because the man came from Terre Haute, you know, for [her lessons]. I would do sewing for people and I'd have to pay for her lessons, you know, like that.

Q: How did Grandpa feel about your doing these other jobs?

A: Well, he was never as interested in high school. He didn't go to high school and he wasn't really much enthused about the girls going. That was the one difference I would say between the Saiters and Gilberts. Grandpa was a doctor and most all my aunts were either nurses or teachers. And Dad's two sisters were teachers. My dad was a teacher. And it seemed like to us that an education was very important. But to them, it was just a convenience, more or less, you know.

Q: Would you say that the Gilberts were more ambitious than the Saiters?

A: I think so.

Q: Did this ever bother you when you were married to Grandpa?

A: Yes, quite a bit, because we had many opportunities that we could have taken advantage of, but . . .

Q: You mean job opportunities?

A: Yes.

Q: But the fact that you did sewing for people and washings for people didn't bother Grandpa? The fact that his wife was out working.

A: Oh, no. Oh, no.

Q: Now Grandpa died in 1950. Did you work in Marshall any after he died?

A: No. There was no place to work.

Q: So, what did you do to pay your bills?

A: Well, of course, I had such a big garden. He died in July and my garden was almost matured, so I finished that up. There was no way, the way our home was so open, that I could get roomers and make a living that way.

So my daughter Evelyn lived in Maywood and they had just been married. And she wanted me to come up there, and she tried to find me work. And then I'd be close where they could, you know, sort of look after me.

Your mother and father had married and you were both little, you and Jim, and they were in debt for their farm. And they had all the struggle they could do, you know, just taking care of you children [and the farm]. And, of course, that was one of the things that just broke my heart, was going away to leave you because you were my first grandchildren. I dearly loved you and, of course, we would have you [at our house] two and three weeks at a time. In fact you were at our house when dad died or would have been, but that evening for some reason your dad called and said that you must come home. And I remember Jim cried. He didn't want to go home. He wanted to go with Grandpa on the truck, you know. But your dad said he must come home. So we took you home. And, of course, it was fortunate because the next evening is when he died in the car on the way home.

Q: So how did you feel leaving Marshall for the first time?

A: Frightened. I guess frightened to death because--like some would go back to where I needed the education, you see. I'm very ashamed that I would get bitter because it was not my mother's fault. But on the other hand, had I had an education, I could have found employment, you know. And it would have been much easier. But fortunately, I had an instinct for nursing and I'd done quite a bit of it, because having cared for Mother, and then my own children, and a neighbor lady, who died of cancer . . . I had quite a bit of experience along that line.

So when he died, I went to factories and things trying to find work, and I was 55. I was too old. Well, of course, I couldn't go in an office because I didn't have any education. Well, Evelyn said, "To come up here and I'm sure we'll find something." And they lived in Mrs. Haske's basement apartment and Mrs. Haske said she wanted me to come and stay with her. Which I did.

And so your mother got a man with a truck and we took a bedroom outfit up for Evelyn because they didn't have anything, you know, like that at all. And I took food up for them and Mrs. Haske. So I had only been there, just about a week or so. I did some sewing for her, and Evelyn took me down to the employment office.

And I got work making salads in a private tearoom, called the Cottage Tearoom, in Oak Park. And that was awfully nice. The people were lovely. I learned a lot of lessons there. I learned that many, many people besides me had gone through the same experiences--had had their own troubles and everything. But they were very sympathetic. And then when I was there about three or four days, why I came home and Mrs. Haske said, "A lady was here wanting you to come and take care of her mother," and, of course, that is what I really wanted to do, was nursing. And so I said, "Well, I wouldn't go until this lady had found somebody to replace me," because that wouldn't be right. So when I told them they said that they would try to get someone. I was going to get $10 a week more, plus I wouldn't have to be out in the weather. It would be a private home, you see. I'd be in a private home. And so, the next Sunday, why she found someone to take my place.

END OF TAPE THREE

Q: Grandma, we were talking about the employment you found in Oak Park. Could you continue this discussion?

A: Yes. So the lady came to see me the next morning before I went to work and she said, "Oh, I know my mother will like you and I want you to come." She told me what I would do and get, and so I told the lady at the tearoom if they could find somebody, I would like to take the place. Because the winters were awfully bad in Chicago, and of course, I wasn't used to being out in traffic and changing buses. You would go in from Oak Park, and Maywood, and different suburbs, you know, and have to change. This way I would be in a private home. So, I said, "If I finished over there I would come over."

On Sunday, Ray and Evelyn took me and what impressed me was before leaving Marshall, I had the same dream three times and it was very strange. I had gone to a big city. I didn't know anyone, and I saw this tall house, and there were flowers out in front, and I went in and no one was there. I saw a circular stairway so I went up to try and find somebody. And as I went up, at the head of that stairway was a big room, and it looked like dark drapes all around it, and in the center was a high bed. There was a person in it, but I couldn't see their face--I couldn't tell who it was. And there was a big thing up above them, and I couldn't figure out what it was.

Then it seemed like the dream would stop there and it turned out when I went to find this place, here was this house. You would go in the front door and here was this circular stairway and it went right up, and then here was this big room and it was Ruth's mother in this hospital bed. Her brother had an electrical appliance made above her by which I could just touch a button, and I'd take this lift down and slip it under her, and lift her out into her wheelchair, you see. Now that was what I saw in the dream, but I couldn't figure it out. And there were drapes all the way around.

Q: How interesting.

A: Yes. I thought so, too. Well, anyway I went on Sunday evening and, of course, right away she said, "Oh, yes, they wanted me from then on." That was way back, of course, in 1950 and I got $45 a week. And George paid my social security--that was six cents then, six cents on the dollar. He paid that. And I got my washing, and ironing, and all my food, and my room, which was quite a lot.

Q: So you were making more than Grandpa was at the time of his death?

A: Oh, my, I should say so. The $45 was all clear--because I had no expenses at all. So, of course, I had a mortgage to pay off, which I did. And then we finally--your daddy finally did get to sell our little house down there, but the real estate man cheated us. I would have been in better shape, but he was such a cheat and later he died. He cheated so many people out of everything. But anyway . . . then I was with [this family] twenty months, and it was interesting because he had been a lieutenant colonel. [They] came from the South--they all came from the South. And they were very nice people,

and [the mother] had had a stroke and was paralyzed from her waist down. I enjoyed taking care of her.

Then Ray and Evelyn lived just up on First Avenue and she lived on Third [Avenue]. I would get Friday off, and I'd leave Friday morning early and go up. Evelyn would have a basket of ironing ready--they both worked, you know. And I would do her ironing and have supper ready when they got home. And then later that night I would come home. I just got one day out of the week.

Q: So you worked every Sunday.

A: Yes. So then, of course, when they went on vacation, I had to stay there and take care of her alone. They had a daughter, Ann, who was ten years old. She was very spoiled. But I was there twenty months and the doctor said on account of my heart, I had to leave and get something where I could work sitting down.

So I went up to Evelyn's then and stayed, and saw where a French dressmaker right up the street from Evelyn's was wanting someone to help make formals for the college girls that fall. So I went up to see her and she said she would love to have me help, so I did. I worked for her until we got those done. And that was a real experience--I never saw such beautiful materials in my life. Just bolts and bolts of it, you know. And, of course, formals are pretty anyway. So then another thing I learned--there was a young German girl who came there and she could speak very little English--but oh, how she could use a sewing machine. She could make men's shirts like nobody's business and suits--oh my, she really could sew. And she said in Germany by the time you are six years old, you have got to start making your own patterns. You've got to learn to sew and knit, and do all those things. That was part of a girl's education. So that is the reason she knew so much about sewing.

Q: They would learn it in the schools or at home?

A: At home and in the schools. They were really taught. So her husband had come to America before--he'd been here a few years, and he was driving one of those big cranes, and was making huge money. He could speak English real good. But then when he brought her over and, of course, she was new, but she really knew her stuff.

Q: Well, you mentioned that you were scared about leaving Marshall. What was your first impression of the Chicago area?

A: Oh, it was huge--(laughs) it was huge and the crowds, of course, and the streetcars. I didn't know my directions and naturally that was difficult in a big city like Chicago, you know. But like I said it--I learned that whatever you face, if you have the determination to face it with courage and do your best, you are going to make it and I did.

Q: Do you feel your faith in God helped you through all of this?

A: I think so to a great extent. I think that maybe I failed him more than he dd me. I'm sure he was going on ahead preparing all of this for me, but you know, I think I was just so frightened that about all I could think about was myself. You know, trying to make ends meet.

But then after the sewing was done, then Patty came in February. That was their first baby. Evelyn thought it would be better for her to continue working, and for me to stay and take care of the baby. I wouldn't have to be out in buses, or be out in the cold, or anything like that, you know. And, of course, she didn't enjoy children like I did anyway. So I dearly loved taking care . . . that filled in where I had to give you and Jim up--that began to kind of fill that sore spot.

Q: So how long did you take care of Patty?

A: Two years. And then Evelyn was due [with her second baby] and she decided she would like to quit work for a time. So I went to Indianapolis then. I thought--well, I'll go down home and get work there. So she quit her job, but she felt it wasn't too easy to take care of a new baby, and a little two year old. But, anyway, I came to your mother's and visited over the weekend, and then she took me over to my sister's in Indianapolis.

So I told them that I'd like to find some work over there. And so my sister's daughter worked in the same office that another young lady did. Her mother was bedfast and they were looking for someone to come and take care of her. So Dora said, "Well, don't go and look anywhere until I can talk to [Marietta]." So she went to the office the next morning and talked to her. [Marietta] said, "Oh, is that Aunt Jessie that you are always talking about?" And she said, "Yes." Well, she said, "I just know that mother will want her." So she said, "Wait until I come over tonight and meet her." So she did and she took me over to her mother's--well, her mother was very sweet--she was a very pretty lady--seventy-two years old. And they were a lovely family--very, very nice family. So I went there to work right away. And I was there a year and they wanted me to stay longer, but I needed an operation. They didn't really need me because by that time her mother was up, you know, taking care of herself, and going to church and everything. They really didn't need me at all.

So then after I had my operation, I didn't go out then to do nursing from then on. Evelyn called and said that she wanted to go back to work, and would I come back up and take care of the little girls. So I did. And I enjoyed it. I used to think it was a lot of fun on Saturday to get their hair curled ready for church, you know. They would go on vacations and I would take care of them. I remember one time they were on vacation, and your mother brought you two little ones up and surprised me. We didn't know you were coming and we had had a picnic in the front room. I said, "Well, now, it is just us today, so we will have a little picnic tonight and watch television." And we were sitting there when you folks came to the door. So, of course, you hadn't had anything to eat, so I had chicken and noodles, and different things that I had fixed. Your Mom said, "Oh no, let's go out to eat." So we just put those in the refrigerator, and we went out to a place in the country where they had awfully good eats and got us something to eat. But we used to have some awfully good times up there.

Then I stayed there with them until Patty was in the first grade--she was just starting in first grade that fall when Ray had been transferred from Maywood to St. Louis. The company, Metalflex [Sales] transferred him. And so they were to sell their house, and then come down there and they would buy a home down there. But, of course, it took time--it was the next spring before they could get the house sold. But Evelyn went down and they chose the home where they were to be, you know. And so then we moved and came down there, and they have been in St. Louis ever since.

Q: When was it you returned to Marshall then?

A: Well, that was when--actually when Patty was eleven. It was just before her eleventh birthday and her mother was getting her a bedroom outfit, because they had just really been sleeping on cots so far. And she thought that she was old enough that she should have a bed. So I was getting her room all ready for her, and they were to bring her furniture the next day on her birthday. And we had waxed the floor the night before until it was just like glass. I took a wooden chair and was trying to wash the traverse rod up above the windows. I had the curtains all done up ready to hang, and I reached too far and the chair slid behind me and threw me, and threw me on this left knee and crushed it. And I pulled on the traverse rod, of course, I grabbed that for safety, you know, and I just pulled a whole gob of plastering out where Ray had worked so hard to put it in. So, of course, then I was in the hospital three weeks, and then your mother came and stayed two weeks with me, and my sister came and stayed two weeks.

Q: Well, that's too bad about your falling and hurting yourself like that. Do you know what year it was when you returned to Marshall?

A: After I got so I could walk with a walker. They said I would never walk again. I couldn't walk again because my knee didn't heal. But they made a steel brace that fit onto my shoe and up to my hip, you know, and I could walk that way.

So I thought--well, if I could come over to Dorothy's with her out in the field that way, I could just cook their meals, and do the dishes, and make the beds. It would help a lot because she had to haul the grain to Casey to Huisinga's, you know. [Dorothy's son, Jim, was in the war in Vietnam.] And many times it would be 11 p.m. when she'd get back to eat a bit of supper. And so that's what I did, I stayed there then until they finished their crops.

Q: Well, then that was in what year?

A: Well, that would be the fall of 1964. And after she got the crops in, I begun to feel like if I could just have a little apartment by myself, I might be able to take that brace off, and I might get so I could walk just a little, you know, around in the room. But we looked and looked, and there was just no place we could find one. But finally a friend of mine called, and she said she just had a wonderful place for me. We went in right away and sure enough, I got three lovely big rooms with a big porch all around it for $15 a month.

Q: That's reasonable.

A: Yes. Well, this old lady was having to go to live with her daughter which she did--right across the street from her, and they were friends of mine. Her daughter was in my Birthday Club, and the girls all knew them, and it made a difference, you know. But in the back three rooms then was Mrs. [Ethel] Wiser, and she had lived there for ten years. So we became real good friends, and soon Mrs. Cole died in the nursing home. Then her two children sold the home and divided up.

So Ethel and I had to get us another home, which we did over on Archer Avenue, and this home belonged to Ethel's nephew. We sure had a happy time there. Oh, we had so many nice rooms and we had a big porch across the front, and we had a swing and chairs, rocking chairs. Evelyn got us those grass rugs that the Japanese make--you put on the porch floor. I had porch boxes all around on the railings, you know, with [many flowers] blooming and everything. It was just beautiful.

Q: Sounds like it.

A: And our yard was so pretty. In fact the ten-cent store man--he had heart trouble and he always had to walk everyday, and he would come down by, and he would always say, "That's down where the flower ladies live." (laughter) We enjoyed it. We were there four years or would have been if [Ethel] had lived just a little longer, but she died in January of 1970 with a heart attack. Then I went to take care of a lady with cancer who was in my Sunday School class, and I was with her until Easter.

Q: Was that in Marshall?

A: Yes. And then by that time my sister had fallen and she broke her hip, and so I went to Indianapolis to take care of her. So I got rid of my things--the children just stored them. I was with her then, I guess, almost a year.

So then I went back out to Evelyn's, and they were trying to get his business started, and it was awfully slow. And she went back to work, so I stayed there four years then, and took care of the girls, and kept them in school, and did the washing, and everything.

Q: So then when did you move to this apartment in Martinsville?

A: I think I've been here about seven years--as near as I can think, about seven or eight years. I know Ricky was almost two years old--Kim wasn't born yet.

Q: Yes.

A: But Ricky was about two years old. (tape stopped)

Q: Well, you've had quite an experience since Grandpa died in 1950. How do you feel about this experience or would you have preferred staying in Marshall?

A: No. I think it was one of the greatest things that could have ever happened to me. And I think sometimes when we are tested and tried, and things discouraging comes, it is for our own good, but we don't think it is. We don't realize it until it is all over. But, my goodness, I wouldn't take anything for the experience.

Q: You feel you did grow by the experience?

A: Oh, yes. Oh, I should say so. Because I met so many nice people and you learn that there is a lot of heartache all over the world. Everybody has their own problems. It just comes in a different way sometimes, that's all.

Q: Do you feel that you were a little bit sheltered by growing up on the farm and living in a small town?

A: I don't know if I would call it sheltered, but I think I was probably hindered. Because you see, I just didn't know a thing about the city. Because I had no education--I was so limited. Fortunately, like I said, I instinctively knew nursing because grandfather was a doctor and there were nurses in our family. I guess just by instinct, it seemed like there were so many things I knew and liked to do. It sure came in good stead for me because there is always a demand for a nurse. I never could fulfill all of the places.

There was one time when I was taking care of Marie Kile after Ethel died--there were four people who called me at one time wanting me, Benny Marrs, the undertaker, when his wife came to the hospital. But you could only be one place at a time. No. It was a wonderful experience. I loved it--it's hard work, nursing, but I think it's fulfilling. Because if you like it--I enjoyed making them feel comfortable.

Q: Grandma, I know over the years you have done a lot of sewing, and I've some of your work that you have done and it's quite beautiful. I know you tat and a lot of people do not understand what tatting is. Is there anyway you could describe this technique right now?

A: I don't think I could make you understand that on a recorder. Because it's just a little tatting shuttle. You put the thread on and then it's the way you put it between your fingers, you know, that you form these little wheels, and patterns, and so forth. I think you would just have to get a picture or have some of the real tatting to show. But, yes, I did enjoy doing those things.

I made my first applique quilt for your mother. The next was for Evelyn, and then I made one for you, and then Jim. Well, I had made you and Jim a pieced quilt in the meantime though. Grandma [Carlena Marie] Saiter had pieced these little blocks, called the tie--the bowtie, and I made you each a big quilt, and one for Patty and Debbie. And then I made you--you wanted the dogwood, so I made you the pink dogwood, and I made Jim the red poppy. Your mother's was the flower garden and Evelyn's was the pansy. She always loved pansies. Well, then Patty and Debbie, of course, came on and I made them one. Patty's was the iris--a big basket of delicate colored iris, you know, it was a beautiful thing. And then

Debbie's was tulips. Well, I had made baby quilts, of course, for all of the babies that came then, you know. I would embroider, or applique, or so forth, you know.

Q: How many great-grandchildren do you have?

A: Seven. And, I wouldn't begin to know how many pairs of pillowcases, of course, that I have embroidered and put tatting on for all the children.

Q: You have sold some over the years, haven't you?

A: Yes. When I stayed with my sister after Arthur died, she would crochet and I would tat, and we'd sell them. But, then I made Marcia, your little girl, the sunbonnet quilt and I made Ricky the cowboy. I wasn't able to make one for Sherry so I gave her a pretty quilt that my Aunt Alta [Gilbert] had that was a basket of roses. It was beautiful quilting. So then I made Kim, and Ricky, and Marcia, and them each a sort of a comfort like--it was a heavier quilt, one winter. But I never did get to make Natalie one. I made her a baby quilt, but I never got to make her a big quilt. She's the only one that I never got to make one. I made Lindsay . . . I pieced it. Well, let's see--all I ever made for Rae Ann was just like what I made for Ricky and Sherry and put together with the dark colors.

Q: Are you able to do any of that now?

A: Oh, no. I couldn't see in the first place. Besides it has become so expensive. My neighbor finished a quilt just awhile back and she charged $80 just for quilting it, and her daughter charged $40 for piecing it, so you can imagine what the quilt cost.

Q: Well, there's money in that now.

A: Yes. But my children all have their quilts and things like that. And to go ahead and piece it, and quilt it, and it would cost them so much. I don't think they use things like that anyway. You know, now the houses are heated, and air-conditioned, and so forth. They use thermo-blankets and . . .

Q: Sometimes I use the quilt you made me when I have company to kind of show it off on the bed.

A: Have you still got some pillowcases?

Q: Yes, I do. I have several left.

A: Yes. (tape stopped)

Q: Grandma, there is a lot of discussion today about the women's movement and women's rights. Could you tell me your feelings about this--the women's movement and ERA [Equal Rights Amendment]?

A: Well, I would have to say I've got mixed feelings.

Q: Could you explain that?

A: Yes. I think there's been one thing that is lacking all these years, and I don't understand why Congress doesn't do something about it. I don't think it's fair that a woman will do the same job that a man does and do it just as well, but because she's a woman, she won't get paid as much. And in many professions they are, they have many restrictions, and I don't think that's right.

But on the other hand, I think they've gone too far with it. There are many women who have to work, they just have to do it. And there are many women who are very capable that it would be a pity if they didn't go on and use their talents. But I do think there are so many, many just--I'll say in the middle of the road that will do almost anything like wash dishes or anything to get away from their little children. They just don't love their little children like they used to years ago. And I really think that is the backbone of America--our homes and always in years past, mothers were there when their little ones came home, you know.

Q: How do you feel about a father taking time off to be in the home? Like the father and mother both working, and both taking time off to be with their children.

A: Well, I think a father is supposed to be the head of the family. And it is supposed that he would work and provide for the family. But I think he should never be too busy, but what he has some time for his family. I think it is very important. Because if children don't get to really know their parents or know that they are loved, well, they don't have the security. I think a little child that knows their daddy and mother is back of them, and loving them, and will stand by them, you know, no matter what happens they will be able to undertake it.

Q: Well, you know there is discussion about what is a man's work and what is women's work. Now I know my mother, when I was growing up, would work on the farm just like my father. Did that ever bother you that she got out and worked on the farm? I know a lot of women thought that they should be in the home at that time.

A: Well, I think during that time and even today women are very capable. They can go out and drive a binder, or drive a tractor, and they can drive those big trucks. They can do most of the things that a man does.

Q: So it never bothered you that Mom did this?

A: Well, I think it is very common. Most of the women did whatever they had to do to help make things move.

Q: How would your mother feel about something like that?

A: I don't know because, you see, it would be so far from their knowledge. You know back in those days, you just didn't do those things. Women just didn't go out in the field.

Q: But you're not knocking women who do that?

A: Oh no, indeed, I should say not. No, I say that whatever they can do to help--I think a wife ought to help their husbands all they can.

Q: Your only concern would be how it might affect the children.

A: Yes. What I'm thinking in general about women's lib is where they really don't have to go out and work, you know. And they think well, they can go out and get a little job, and when they get out among people they seem to be very bored at home. And, of course, I suppose if you didn't love children, you would. I just don't understand the word getting bored with children because I love them so much. To me, to watch a little child grow, I think, is just one of the greatest things in the world because they are never the same for two days.

Q: Well, how do you feel about a lot of women who today have to work and place their children in Day Care Centers?

A: Well, I think they should be very careful where they put them because some are not good.

Q: So you are not opposed to Day Care Centers?

A: If it is a good place. Now, Patty was very fortunate. Of course, she was compelled to work and raise little Rae Ann. She found . . . the first nursery she had was no good, but then she found this one and this was superior. They love children and they had special teachers, you know, for different subjects--different things, and they had such good food for the children. They had to have a nap in the afternoon. They were very disciplined. So in a way, Rae Ann came out much ahead of what she would have been if she would have been in a normal home. Because she was taught so many, many things to be ready for school when she went into school.

Q: I see.

A: And she is a very, very happy little girl. In fact, now Debbie is starting to work because little Lindsay thought, you know, Rae Ann went to school, so she should go to school. And she is going now--she goes from 9 a.m. to 1 p.m. at the same place that little Rae Ann went. And how she loves it--oh my goodness, she dearly loves it.

Q: How old is Lindsay now?

A: She'll be three in April. And Debbie . . . that isn't early, she doesn't have to rush to go to work. She can get Lindsay's breakfast, and gets her over there, and then she picks her up at 1 p.m., and bring her home, and puts her in bed for a nap, and has time to get Mike's supper. So really it doesn't interfere with her home--five days a week. That way she has plenty of time then to . . . and she says that Lindsay just cries to be with children.

Q: She enjoys the association.

A: Yes, she does. And you ask her what she has done--oh, she colored a baseball bat or she does this or that, you know. And so Debbie thought that she was learning and, of course, Debbie can make a little on the side to help, you know.

Q: Grandma, what values did you stress the most to your children? Like work, religion, education, a career, or did you consider them all important?

A: Oh, yes. I suppose I did. I don't think that I stressed any of them. I just stressed the fact that they should always be honest. (laughs) I think maybe that was one of the things I always liked for them to be honest and have a good reputation. It seems to me a good reputation is a mighty important thing.

Q: Now, I know you said that your little boy was stillborn.

A: Yes.

Q: If he would have lived, would you have expected the same type of things out of him as your daughters, or different things, or . . .

A: Well, of course, being a boy he would have been different, but my how we would have enjoyed him. I think we would have, of course, he would have had to have been in the war--might have been killed.

Q: Did you feel it was all right for a man to help in the kitchen?

A: Oh, yes. I think it is wonderful.

Q: Did Grandpa ever help in the kitchen?

A: Well, no. He wasn't around that much. Although now when we were going to have company or anything, if there was anything he could help about, he always was helpful. But some men are natural cooks, you know. They can do things that other men can't do, you know. Not everybody does the same things.

Q: So as far as you are concerned then a person should use his or her potential.

A: I think so, yes. And I think the more a husband or wife can help each other, you know, I think it makes it very interesting. They share each other's problems and fun.

Q: Well, now when Grandpa was alive, did you ever handle any of the money in the family?

A: No.

Q: . . . or did he pay all the bills?

A: Yes. Because he was out and I wasn't. I was home with the children, you know. And like I say, by the time I sewed, and raised a garden, and canned, and did my housework, and everything, I was pretty busy. (laughs) So he always just paid them.

Q: Since we are on the subject of women and women's work, in August of 1920, the Nineteenth Amendment came into being in this country. How did women feel about women's suffrage at the time, and Susan B. Anthony and Elizabeth Cady Stanton?

A: I don't think I would be a good judge of that, Francie, because you see back down in the country, you know, we really weren't concerned too much about things like that. That was more or less in the city where they were fighting for that. In the country it was pretty much the same things. But I think now in later years things are so different. I think people in the country have things just as nice as they do in town. The country homes, you know, they have refrigerators or deep freezes, dishwashers, vacuums, air-conditioning, heating, and washer and dryers. They just have everything that you have in the city.

Q: So women then really didn't think that much about it when they went to vote for the first time or . . .

A: I don't think we would because, like I say, I don't think we were involved. But you take in cities, it was in the big cities where this started.

Q: Well, did you vote as soon as you could?

A: Yes. We were taught--my dad taught us that that was a gift to be able to vote in our country.

Q: Of course, women couldn't vote until 1920.

A: Yes.

Q: Did you ever hear him say how he felt about that?

A: Well, he just always felt, you know, you should love your country and you should help wherever you could.

Q: So it didn't bother him when women had the right to vote?

A: Oh, no. My dad was a broad-minded man.

Q: Do you remember being happy at the prospect of being able to vote for the first time or . . .

A: I think we just took it as a natural thing. It seemed like in those days, you know, we just thought it was important.

Q: Of course, you were only twenty-five at the time . . .

A: Yes, something like that.

Q: . . . when women had the right to vote.

A: Yes.

Q: Grandma, I have in front of me the genealogy of the Humphrey Gilbert line from 1616 to 1981. It says that this is a record of the direct descendants of Humphrey [Gilbert] from the first generation through the Samuel S. Gilbert family starting with the seventh generation. Now, Samuel S. Gilbert, could you tell me about him?

A: Well, I never got to know him very well because he died when I was pretty small, but he was a doctor. I do know that, and he died of cancer.

Q: Now he was your grandfather?

A: Yes. My father's father.

Q: So then Samuel S. Gilbert was your grandfather and his son was named, John. And then John's daughter was named, Jessie . . .

A: Yes.

Q: . . . and Jessie had a daughter named, Dorothy, and then Dorothy is my mother.

A: That's right.

Q: . . . and then I have two daughters, Marcia and Sherry. So that brings the line up to 1981.

A: Yes.

Q: Grandma, in the historical record, is there anything you know about Humphrey Gilbert?

A: Well, it says as far as we know there is no real information as to where Humphrey Gilbert of Ipswich, Massachusetts came from. All of the New England families seem to have tradition that claimed descent from Sir Humphrey Gilbert, the famous explorer of Devonshire, England. I know they did come from England. In case of our own Humphrey, there is a possibility that the traditions may have some basis, in fact Sir Humphrey, though his son Raleigh did have a grandson of about the same age as Humphrey of Ipswich, Massachusetts. There is no evidence of what happened to him. The claim that he was Humphrey of Ipswich has never been proved but so far as we know, it has not been disproved.

Sir Humphrey Gilbert (1539-1583) one of the earliest of the North American colonizers, first won fame as an English navigator and explorer. During his early manhood he attained distinction in the English Navy. In 1578, he received a commission from Queen Elizabeth to conduct an expedition in search of a new route to India, a little known

land in which he became interested. The history of this voyage is obscure, but it availed nothing. He returned to England the next year having lost one of his chief ships and one of his bravest captains. Undaunted; however, he started out in 1583 in command of a second expedition, accompanied by his half brother, Sir Walter Raleigh, who owned the largest ship and who turned back two days after their departure from Plymouth, England. Sir Humphrey went on and this time succeeded in planting a colony near St. Johns, Newfoundland, taking possession of the island in the name of Queen Elizabeth. After this he proceeded southward, encountered a storm, and was never heard of again.

Q: Let's discuss now about the documented family history of generation number seven. And there's a brief discussion about Dr. Samuel Slaughter Gilbert, who was born on September 10, 1830 in Jackson Township, in [Coshocton County] Ohio. Could you read the rest of this for me please?

A: Yes. He died on January 8, 1900 and was buried in Marshall, Illinois. He married Mary Susan Fredenburger [on August 25, 1856]--daughter of John and Emma Fredenburger. There were twelve children--seven lived to be adults. John Wendell, that was my father; George Adam, Lizzy Helen, Margery Emma, Mary Viola . . .

END OF SIDE ONE

Q: Grandma, would you continue reading the names of Samuel Gilbert's descendants?

A: . . . Lucinda Eunice, she died in 1957 at the age of ninety years.

Q: I remember her.

A: Yes, you do. She was a school teacher. Linos Willis, Kissie Florence, Charles Franklin, Anna, Harry J. and Alta Vada. Alta was born in 1881 in Clark County, Illinois. Margery Emma married Fleming R. Black and after her death, he married her sister, Anna Belle. Eunice was a beloved teacher in the Marshall, Illinois schools.

Q: I see here the eighth generation, John W. Gilbert, was born in 1858 and died in 1930. He was born in Coles County, Illinois. Grandma, would you read the generations starting with your father down through the present time?

A: Well, he married Joretta Taylor and he had ten children, of which I was one. (laughs) And then, I married Fred Saiter and then the tenth generation was Dorothy Saiter Davidson, and the eleventh would be Frances Davidson Staggs, and James Davidson. Frances had two children. The twelfth generation is Marcia Anne and Sherry Lynn; and James had Richard Clinton, Kimberly Michelle, and Natalie Nicole.

Q: Would you now explain your other daughter's family?