Marie South Williams Memoir

Volume I

Table of Contents

Preface

This manuscript is the product of a tape-recorded interview conducted by Elizabeth K. Dixon for the Oral History office in November 1984. Julie Allen transcribed the tape and Linda Jett edited the transcript. Elizabeth K. Dixon reviewed the transcript.

Marie Williams was born on August 14, 1893 in De Soto, Illinois. She was raised in a strict environment by her grandmother South. Marie attended Southern Illinois University at Carbondale and after graduating began a teaching career which took her from De Soto, to Gorham, to Herrin, and, when she married, to Carterville, Illinois. Marie and her husband, Frank, moved to Springfield, Illinois when he lost his mining job at the peak of the Depression.

The interviewer, Elizabeth K. Dixon, was born and lives in Springfield, Illinois. She received her Bachelor of Arts Degree in History from Knox College, Galesburg, Illinois and her Master of Arts Degree in History from Sangamon State University, Springfield, Illinois.

Readers of this oral history memoir should bear in mind that it is a transcript of the spoken word, and 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 the memoir, nor for views expressed therein; these are for the reader to judge.

Marie South Williams, November 5, 1984, Springfield, Illinois.

Elizabeth K. Dixon, Interviewer.

Q: Marie, what is your full name?

A: Marie South Williams.

Q: When were your born?

A: August the 14th, 1893 in De Soto, Illinois.

Q: What are your parents' names?

A: My mother's name was Lucy Katherine Walker to begin with. That was her maiden name. And my dad's name was Byron South. Now I know he had a middle name but I don't remember that.

Q: Did your parents have any brothers or sisters?

A: My father had one sister and a brother. And my mother had—let's see, there were four girls and two boys.

Q: Do you know their names?

A: Besides my mother's name, Carrie, Dollie, Abbie—did I name Carrie?

Q: Yes.

A: And Lois and Harry and Lester.

Q: What were your grandparents' names on your father's side of the family?

A: Mary Rude.

Q: This would be on your father's side.

A: Yes. And—let's see, Mary Rude.

Q: And what was his name?

A: And Thomas South.

Q: And what are your grandparents' names on your mother's side of the family?

A: Their name was Farner, my great-grandmother and grandfather, but I don't know what their—they were dead before I was . . .

Q: Your grandparents were dead on your mother's . . .

A: No, my grand—oh no . . .

Q: Your grandparents' names on your mother's side of the family.

A: On the mother's side—that was Rebecca Farner Walker and Samuel Walker.

Q: Okay.

A: But, Samuel Walker, my grandfather, was dead before I was born. But my grandmother was living.

Q: What did your grandfather do on your father's side of the family? What was his work?

A: At one time at the beginning of their life he was a farmer in Ohio. And he served in the Civil War on the North's side. And then they moved

back to De Soto. I mean, she was born in De Soto, Mary, my grandmother was born in De Soto out in the country. And then later on, after she had had three children—she never was home—after she went to Ohio they lived there until they had these three children.

Q: Yes.

A: Then they moved back to De Soto and my grandfather was—he sold fruit trees and strawberries and things like that, plants and he traveled through the country. A nurseryman is what he was, that was the name of his occupation.

Q: Did he carry his plants by wagon and . . .

A: Yes.

Q: . . . and just traveled throughout the countryside?

A: That's right.

Q: Did he grow his own plants there?

A: Yes.

Q: And then would take them up in the spring?

A: And then take them up in the spring and then sell them. And he also had a nursery that he bought from, certain kinds of trees that were hard to raise, the climate wouldn't be suitable there.

Q: Yes.

A: I don't remember the nurserymen because, you know, I was little . . .

Q: Yes.

A: . . . when he passed away.

Q: What did your grandfather do on your mother's side of the family?

A: Oh, he run a store. He had a store in De Soto and he sold furniture. He had a warehouse full of furniture. You know, at that time people didn't travel around to buy things. They didn't have means of transportation, only just wagons, you know. And he would have it shipped it in by railroad, you know, and they'd unload it there at the depot. And that's the way they got their groceries even for their store. It was set up—there was a local train that brought in things like that. It didn't travel very far, maybe to two or three other little towns around, you know.

Q: Yes. Well did the furniture come from New York that way?

A: I expect they did come from New York?

Q: Did the furniture come by train or by water?

A: No, by train.

Q: By train.

A: Yes. It was fifty miles to Cairo and that's the nearest big water that there was around. That's the Mississippi there.

Q: Yes.

A: And maybe it came to Cairo by train or water, I don't know how it came from New York. But my grandfather they said—of course I didn't know him—that he at one time went to New York. Now I don't know if he went any other time or not, but while he was there he bought two pianos and brought also that big mirror that I have in my living room that you saw.

Q: Yes.

A: And one piano was for the girls at home that wasn't married and the other piano was for the oldest married girl in the family. And up to the time of the tornado that was still in my grandmother's house and also in my aunt's house. And of course after that it was just pieces I suppose.

Q: You don't have any idea where the furniture was made, do you?

A: No I don't, but it came from New York. But more than likely it wasn't made there. Maybe up into the New England states.

Qtf Q: How big of a store did he have, Marie?

A: Huge. Everything.

Q: What? A block?

A: No, half a block, but he owned all the buildings in that block. And he sold men's suits. They measured men for their suits and also had some on hand, you know, to sell.

Q: Yes.

A: And groceries, all kinds of groceries, had a bank in the store.

Q: Groceries in with the clothes?

A: Yes. Yes, just aisles of clothing, men's shirts and shoes and everything. Then there would be an aisle of groceries in the center. And then one end was the meat and they even dressed chickens and turkeys and things like that out in a big warehouse in the back.

Q: Oh. Where did the meat come from? Did that come from . . .

A: They had a man to butcher.

Q: Yes. Did he find that meat in the area around . . .

A: He bought the meat in the area. And I'm sure it wasn't inspected or anything else at that time.

Q: No, no. Did the clothes come out of New York like the furniture or did they come . . .

A: I think they came from St. Louis because . . . later on my grandmother had her son-in-law to come in, the oldest one.

Q: Yes.

A: And she made him a partner with her.

Q: Yes.

A: It was called Walker and Alben Store. And I know later on in life they took me to St. Louis when I was fifteen--that's the farthest I've ever been away from home--when I was fifteen years old they had the son, my cousin, that was up at Upper Alton at military school . . .

Q: Oh, was that Western Military School?

A: Yes. Yes, they took me with them to see him graduate. And then my Uncle George and Aunt Addie, we went over to St. Louis and went to an opera which I'd never seen, you know, before. I'd never been into an opera house. And we visited Uncle George's sister and they had an electric car.

Q: Oh my!

A: Like an automobile.

Q: Yes.

A: And they took us in that to the opera. And I'd never been in a car before.

Q: Oh, how exciting!

A: Yes. It was exciting.

Q: Well, you went by train to St. Louis.

A: We went by train to St. Louis.

Q: And that train left from De Soto.

A: Well, it didn't originate there.

Q: But, you picked it up in De Soto.

A: But we picked it up in De Soto. Every passenger train then stopped there and . . .

Q: What railroad was that?

A: Illinois Central. And then we was in St. Louis and we went to the wholesale houses and, oh, I thought I was something else. When I got back home I just could tell them yards of things, that those kids that I run around with just didn't know, you know.

Q: (laughter) That's right!

A: I made them think I'd been some place! If you'd have heard me talk about it, you'd have thought I'd been to Paris, you know.

Q: Well, I suspect it was just about as exciting.

A: Well it was. It was just as exciting and then we stayed at the Statler Hotel and I thought that was great. And that's the first time I ever ate, oh, different foods you know, that I didn't know existed. For instance, lobster, for one thing. I didn't know how to eat it. And I know Uncle George and Aunt Abbie saw that they had a son the same age as me—we was just a week apart in our age. That was exciting for Arthur to see me because he was graduating too. They had two boys. Oh, in fact, they had three boys. But the young one, he was little, much younger than—well, he was seven years younger than me.

Q: And this was up at Alton, Illinois.

A: That was Alton, Illinois, Upper Alton.

Q: Upper Alton.

A: Yes, at military school. And the oldest boy got to be the president

of the First National Bank at Carbondale later on. Then the other boy took over the store and helped Grandma and his dad in the store the rest of his life. And then when they died he took the store over.

Q: I see.

A: Yes. It was just one . . .

Q: Generation after another.

A: Yes, one generation after another. And . . .

Q: How did your grandfather start this store? Do you know—do you have any knowledge of that? I mean . . .

A: No I don't. I don't know anything because, see . . .

Q: You don't know where his funds came from or . . .

A: No. I don't know anything about it. But that was a settlement there of people from the East.

Q: From Pennsylvania?

A: From Pennsylvania. They were Pennsylvania Dutch. And all of them Lutherans. And my grandfather, they said, bought the first organ for the Lutheran Church after they got it built. And now Frank, my husband, his grandfather was a carpenter and my grandfather had enough training—he built a lot of furniture, you know, in their own home. He made a bedroom suite and the corner cabinets in my grandmother's kitchen he made. And he made that little stool there. See, he was dead before I ever come on the scene.

Q: I just thought maybe you might remember, did they say what he did in Pennsylvania before he moved?

A: No. I don't know that.

Q: I was wondering if he might not have been a cabinet maker of some sort or a furniture maker.

A: He could have been because a lot of them had learned that.

Q: They were—that was one of their fortes . . .

A: Yes, that's right.

Q: . . . the Pennsylvania Dutch people.

A: Yes. My grandmother came from Somerset too.

Q: You mentioned something . . .

A: But they wasn't married then. But they—they migrated, the people did. They come down, Grandpa and Grandma didn't come at the same time. I think Grandma was there before Grandpa ever came. And they came down the Ohio River and instead of going on to Cairo they stopped—they went on the Wabash down and got off at some landing.

Q: You mean Wabash River.

A: Yes.

Q: You don't know what kind of a boat they came, what the boat was like?

A: Well, they called it a flatboat. I don't . . .

Q: Called it a flatboat.

A: Yes. That's what Grandma used to tell us.

Q: You mentioned one time to me that the Pennsylvania Dutch were a breed unto themselves.

A: Yes.

Q: Why do you say that?

A: Well, they're different. They stick together. Maybe when they'd migrate from Europe, maybe they did that to protect themselves, I don't know. Far back, you know, farther back than my grandparents.

Q: That's good reasoning.

A: Yes. It could have been that. And they all stuck to the Lutheran church. And they—when they could congregate for anything, even though other churches had it, they stuck to themselves. They seemed like they enjoyed each other's company more than they did anybody else's. And that made them seem to me like they were—of course my grandmother when I went to live with her, my grandmother on my father's side, she was a Methodist. And I went to the Methodist church with her some.

Q: Yes.

A: But I was baptized in the Lutheran Church because my parents—well my father wasn't, but my mother was baptized in the Lutheran church and always went there. And I know one thing about my grandmother South. She had rheumatism real bad. Or that's what they called it. Now I guess they'd call it arthritis. We'd go to church and most everybody that could got down on their knees whenever they prayed.

Q: Yes.

A: Well, Grandma couldn't have got up if she have got down. I can see now that if she'd have got down on her knees she couldn't have got up. Somebody would have had to have lifted her up. So she'd just lean her head down like that on the front seat, you know, in front of her. And I was worried about it. I thought she wouldn't go to heaven.

Q: Oh dear!

A: And one time the preacher—she invited the preacher to come home and eat dinner with us and I told the preacher about it, and he just laughed about it and he said, "Well, if your grandma don't go to heaven, there won't be anybody there." (laughter) But I was so worried because I thought Grandma wouldn't go to heaven because she couldn't get down on her knees. I got down on my knees.

Q: Yes. You were going to be sure to go to heaven.

A: (chuckles) Yes. Yes, I was sure going to be there.

Q: You indicated that your grandfather had another business other than the furniture store.

A: Well the . . .

Q: All of the businesses in this one building.

A: Yes, all but the furniture and it was off in a big warehouse they always called it.

Q: Well, who had the flour mill?

A: After my grandfather died my grandmother bought a mill, a flour mill.

Q: And where was that located?

A: Well it was south of town with a little pond. And other businesses were not close to it. It was way down on the same street, on the main street through town—you know, it was a little town about seven hundred people.

Q: Yes.

A: And they'd come to Grandma and ask her if they could baptize people in that. And of course she always let them. The Lutherans just sprinkled you know. And she'd let them baptize there and sometimes they'd have a big meeting at some of the other churches in the winter and they'd cut the ice and well, it just—they'd dip them under the—and nobody ever had pneumonia afterwards.

Q: They were dressed in some sort of white sheet or . . .

A: No, no, no.

Q: Just everyday . . .

A: Everyday clothes it looked like.

Q: What denominations were these, Marie, that . . .

A: Methodists and Baptists. There was just three churches there at one time, or at the beginning, you know. There was a Baptist and a Methodist. Later on there was another Methodist and just one Baptist. Then there was—after that there was a Presbyterian as the town grew and more people was there.

Q: Yes. That baptizing—I've never seen that done personally. That's interesting.

A: Well this was out in the open, you know, in a just a little—they called it a pond, not a lake. It was about twice as big as this room you know. That's water they had to use for steam to run the mill. And they had a great big silk roller, silk goods, cloth. And, oh, it was big around. And it would run that way and then they'd rewind it and roll it again and the flour went through that, it sifted it.

Q: I see.

A: And they had two brands of flour. And they made cornmeal too. And she hired a miller, you know, and other men to work. And I don't know how she come to buy it or what caused her to want a mill. But maybe to keep the mill there and bring in grain from the country all around and as far as Elkville, that was another little town close, they'd bring their grain to drop it to grind. You know, there, even though if they wanted their own cornmeal or whatever they wanted out of their wheat, she'd grind it for a price, you know.

Q: Did she run the mill herself?

A: She didn't run it. She hired a . . .

Q: Manager.

A: Yes. He was a miller. And when that would get frayed at the sides, the silk, then they'd have to buy a new roll of silk and there was other grandchildren at that time. And she'd let us have dresses made out of that silk. And of course the silk was all white. And our mothers would dye the goods pink or light blue or any color that . . .

Q: What did they use for dyes?

A: Well, I don't know what they used. I don't know what they used for dye but . . .

Q: I would think they would be natural dyes of some sort.

A: Oh, I imagine it was natural dyes . . .

Q: Berries and things like that.

A: . . . because I don't—I know they used to do that. And I know my grandmother—I've heard her tell how they dyed with berries and then they'd have to let it set a long time with vinegar to set it, you know. And they even made—they raised their own wool, their sheep and sheared them you know. And then they would make that wool into cloth. And they called it linsey cloth. L-I-N-S-E-Y, linsy cloth. And they always had to dye it because it was kind of a grayish color. And it was wool and that's the kind of clothes they—and she said her father made her shoes.

Q: He did?

A: Yes.

Q: How did he—he was obviously a cobbler, but . . .

A: Well, he made their shoes that they wore to school and they didn't wear shoes through the summer at all. They waited till it was real cool weather and each one of them had a pair of shoes through the winter. And I imagine he made them maybe more in the summer and had them ready for them because they had nine children. And I was at my great grandmother and grandfather's golden wedding. I can remember it. They lived on a farm north of De Soto.

Q: What was their farm like?

A: Well it was just 160 acres and they raised wheat and corn and maybe some rye. I don't know for sure. And they had a fireplace for the heat in the living room and that was supposed to heat the whole house and they had a cookstove which was unusual they thought. They was pretty proud of that cookstove because not all people had one. And my grandmother that I lived with smoked a clay pipe.

Q: Oh, she did?

A: Yes. But she was very particular about letting anybody know that she smoked. And of course I was embarrassed a lot of times because she smoked. And when we'd go to church she'd put a clove in her mouth, you know, just a . . .

Q: Kitchen clove.

A: . . . kitchen clove. So her breath wouldn't smell like smoke. And the way she learned to smoke, she and her sister, their father would come in tired and sit down to rest, you know, of an evening. And he'd have the girls go to the fireplace and get a hot coal and put it in on top of the pipe of the cigarette stuff.

Q: The tobacco.

A: Yes, tobacco. And just that little tiny piece in there—I don't know how they picked it up, but they put it in on top. Then from the fireplace to his chair they'd smoke, they'd puff on it to keep it lit, you know.

Q: Yes.

A: And then they'd give it to him to smoke the pipe. And they kept it lighted you know so he, it would be all right for him. And they learned how to smoke.

Q: That was pretty good service, wasn't it?

A: Yes, it was good service! Yes.

Q: He couldn't do it for himself.

A: No. Well, he was tired and I guess had been working hard you know.

Q: Do you remember anything else about that farm that your great-grandparents lived on?

A: Nothing, only they had a lot of grandchildren. And they had a well that had a curb on it. And they had a fence around the curbing of the well and a gate to go into where the well was. And I often wondered what was wrong, you know, why they had to have a fence around the well. And they'd always say, "Well, that was the way to keep the children from falling in the well." They'd try to run the pulley, you know, that pulled the bucket of water up and down and maybe get overbalanced and fall in. And so, had that gate there so they couldn't get in, they couldn't open it, the little ones couldn't.

Q: How far out from De Soto was this farm?

A: A mile and a half.

Q: A mile and a half.

A: Yes.

Q: Did they grow most of the things on their . . .

A: Everything, yes, and Grandma says that they used to buy their coffee, not shelled. The coffee bean—you've seen it where it's been shelled and not ground, haven't you?

Q: Yes.

A: Well, there's two of those grains. That's just a half a grain, you see, and it was a grain that was in a shell besides that two halves. And one time she said that she and her brother were playing with a half a bushel of coffee in that shell. And they had it over their shoulder and they was playing like they was a horse. And all at once a string came off of the top and they spilled all of that coffee in the, where they was playing. And it was all dusty, just thick dust you know. And all that coffee they thought was wasted. And the parents had a piece of screening wire and they made them dip all of that up and shake it through that screening wire over and over and over until they got the—and still it was in the shell and then after they got it shelled out of course—I don't know if they washed it then or not. But she said they sure was in deep trouble with their parents.

Q: They would be.

A: Because it was expensive you know.

Q: Sure, sure.

A: Talking about wells, my grandmother had a well and a cistern. The cistern was soft water, you know. We caught it and run it in down . . .

Q: In a gutter and into barrels?

A: No, into the cistern.

Q: I see.

A: We had lead troughs that went down into the cistern, to the cistern. And when it rained it poured in. Well, along in summer that cistern sometimes would go dry. But Grandma put me down in the cistern and it was twelve feet deep. She put a ladder down there, and of course she's too heavy and old, you know, to go down. She put me down there and we had to—it wasn't a pump. It was with a curve and then a bucket way up at the top on a pulley.

Q: Did it have a crank and a pulley?

A: No, it was just on a rope and a pulley.

Q: I see.

A: And I'd crawl down in that well and I would be just frightened to death.

Q: I would think so.

A: Yes. Twelve feet deep and I was a little girl. And she would send that bucket of clean water down and on the other side—see, there's two buckets on it to balance it. And on the other side—I'd put the dirty water in that other side. And there was a kind of a little concrete platform inside of it. It was just about . . .

Q: Inside the well now?

A: Yes, inside the well at the bottom, kind of like a little platform. It must have been about, oh, maybe four or five inches tall, that little platform. And I'd set the clean water there. And then take a cloth and wipe all around the bottom and get any dirt or anything out of it. And I'd make her stand there and talk to me from the top the whole time because I was afraid. And . . .

Q: Was this done every summer when the well . . .

A: When the well went dry I had to go down and I dreaded it.

Q: What did they do for water after the well went dry?

A: Well, we had a well.

Q: Oh, this is the cistern now that you're talking about?

A: This is the cistern I'm talking about.

Q: That would be very frightening I think . . .

A: It was, it was. I don't think then they realized it was to children, you know, because I couldn't have been more than ten years old. I went there when I was eight you know. And I loved to live with her. And she just meant everything to me. It was wonderful to live with her.

Q: Yes. Getting back to the mill, do you know anything more about the mill and its operation and how it worked?

A: Well, I don't know much more than that because as I grew older I think maybe milling was more profitable in a larger city and maybe she—I don't know if she sold it to somebody else after that or not. I don't remember. But it could have been and then later on it was—it didn't pay or something there because it was a little mill. But it gathered in the wheat and rye and stuff like that, the different grains, and corn. And it helped the neighborhood. And then they'd take due bills and buy their grocery things from Grandma's store. And it could have been that that's the reason why she bought it, was to make it profitable for the store too.

Q: Yes.

A: And you know that she couldn't read and write in English at all. But she had been to school, to the Dutch school in Pennsylvania in Somerset County. And you couldn't cheat her. And she taught all of us how to count and the ABC's in German.

Q: There must have been quite a German settlement.

A: In Somerset?

Q: Yes.

A: I think it was all German. They didn't call them German. They called them Dutch.

Q: They called them Dutch.

A: And Dutch and German are quite different. But now I don't know anything about the background of the people, how they come over, only they come from Holland. I know that our folks first came from Holland.

Q: Came from Holland.

A: Yes. And Holland and Germany are quite different.

Q: Right.

A: The language is similar.

Q: Similar but they're . . .

A: But still they're different.

Q: . . . very different. De Soto, Illinois, is in southern Illinois. And this is an area known as Little Egypt. How did this name come about?

A: Well, in 1850 here in the central part of Illinois there was a famine that year and people didn't have any grain here at all. And they formed up a caravan of farmers with covered wagons and they all came down to

Illinois, down in southern Illinois, around De Soto and Du Quoin and Pinckneyville and those towns down in there and bought up all the grain that they could buy, all that—the southern Illinois people, we had a good crop then. Of course, that's what I hear. I wasn't there at the time. And they bought all of the crop that they could, what they could spare from down in there. And they camped along the way and cooked out, you know, on an open fire. And it was so similar to the Egyptians selling their crops in the Bible—the story is told there—that they called it Little Egypt. And then there was a town down in southern Illinois, right at the tip end on the Mississippi and the Ohio River that they called Cairo. Of course we just called it Cairo, but in Egypt they called it Cairo and still do. But still everybody calls Cairo, they call it Cairo in southern Illinois. They might say, Cairo, but they don't call it Cairo. And that's why it's called Little Egypt and it still is. Most everything that can have a name like Egypt tacked onto it, it's called that.

Q: And that covers about the southern third of Illinois.

A: Yes, about—I'd say the third. Anything south of Centralia . . .

Q: Would be part of Little Egypt.

A: Yes, would be part of Little Egypt. Williamson County, Jackson and all of those counties, Massac, on the way down to Cairo.

Q: How do you spell Massac County?

A: M–A–S–S–A–C.

Q: I never saw that, I didn't realize. . . . Is that an Indian name, Massac?

A: I imagine it is. My grandmother said after they got the Illinois Central Railroad built through by their farm you know, she said they saw a lot of Indians walking on the railroad and, you know, there wasn't too many Indians here, but still there were some.

Q: There were some back in the countryside.

A: Yes.

Q: Living in the countryside.

A: And whenever the railroad got built there, why, they would maybe go to some other part of the United States and they used that to walk on. I don't know where they would go but maybe because there was Indians down in Tennessee and Oklahoma and down in those countries even after, well, you know, even after the Civil War there was a lot of them.

Q: Certainly, certainly.

A: And nearly all of the men in my family way back, my relatives way back—they was all on the Union side. And my mom, my mother and grandma used to tell about—of course Mom didn't go because she wasn't born until 1869.

Q: Yes.

A: Grandma Walker's brothers was all in the army on the, well, they was on the North side. And I think they were all stationed right down at Cairo. And they used to get in their wagon, their covered wagon and cook up a lot of stuff and a whole lot of them would go down to see all of the boys, the brothers and everything. And Grandma said she went twice when her brothers were down there. And it was interesting to hear them tell it. And then one of my uncles, great-uncles—I just knew two of Grandma's brothers, my Uncle Jake and Uncle Moses. And they both had been in the army. And Uncle Jake had lost his eyesight, not at the time that he was in the army but in his older days. And of course he didn't know very much to talk about, only about his war experience and about the South, you know, being down there. And I used to go there a lot of times to just sit and hear him tell about what they ate and how they did and . . .

Q: Tell me some of that. That would be interesting to know.

A: Well, he'd tell about how they saw the men killed, you know, and they hated to kill them. They didn't want to do it.

Q: Yes. Where did these particular battles take place? In what state?

A: Well, I just don't remember about what ones they were but they were more down in Tennessee and Frank's, my husband's grandfather—I used to hear him tell it. He was very badly crippled and the bone decayed and worked out. Even in later years the bone would decay and there would be splinters of bone come out of his leg. He lay on the battlefield after

a battle, he and another fellow that was in his company. And they laid on the battlefield with that shot in his leg, you know. The bone came out. And at that time they didn't know how to—well, they didn't pick them up for twelve days.

Q: My heavens! What did they do for food?

A: Well, they crawled to a wheat field. They couldn't walk, either one of them, neither one of the fellows.

End of Side One, Tape One

Q: When that side of the tape ended, Marie, you started to tell me about Frank's grandfather.

A: Yes.

Q: And trying to get food when they were wounded during the Civil War. And they were crawling through a wheat field and a little stream.

A: It was just a little kind of a ditch but there was water in it. And they kept boiling wheat that they'd gathered as they crawled along. They found a can. They put it in this can and they built a fire and that's all they had for twelve days, boiled wheat, but it kept them alive. And later on, in his later years the doctors told Grandpa Milhous—that was his name, Milhous—that what saved his leg, that he didn't have blood poisoning in it was that maggots got in his leg. Sounds terrible to tell it but maggots got in his leg and they ate the dead flesh, you know, maggots did.

Q: You'd think they'd cause infection.

A: They didn't. And later on, a long time ago—I don't know if they do now or not, more than likely they don't—but they put maggots in sores, things like that, to eat it up. Sounds pretty bad to drink a Pepsi-Cola at the same time I'm telling it.

Q: That's all right.

A: Maybe it will clear it out.

Q: It's far enough away in time, though, I guess it doesn't bother us too much.

A: No. And he was a cabinetmaker. And he was from Somerset County, Pennsylvania. And the blacksmith in De Soto was from the same place. And his wife. And they all seemed like to be very prosperous people and very dignified and all Lutherans. Isn't that strange?

Q: They're considered to be very thrifty people too.

A: Well they are thrifty. And still I make potatoe soup and a lot of things like my grandmother cooked. And we always say, "Well, that's Grandma Walker's recipe," you know. Her recipe for ice cream and all kinds of things. When they butchered she always made so many things out of the meat, you know, and made sausage and all kinds of things that . . .

Q: Did you ever see them butchering?

A: Oh yes.

Q: What was that like?

A: Well terrible. I didn't like to see it at all. I didn't like to see the blood. One thing that Grandma did that she always would let me go with her, and I thought that was fun when she asked me to go. She had a smokehouse and in that smokehouse where they kept the meat, underneath was a basement, you'd call it now, but they called it a cellar. And she kept all of her canned fruit down there and canned vegetables and everything. And she'd let me, because she couldn't write, only in German, and I guess she wanted it all in English and she'd have me to write on all of the cans what each one was and she pasted the little label on it, you know.

Q: And she knew what it was in English.

A: She knew what it was in English. And she used to tell us that she could read the paper but we always doubted it because she wouldn't get it just in that language, you know, when she'd tell you what it was. But I suppose she absorbed it, you know. And then another thing, she made kraut. She'd shred the kraut and put it down in a big stone jar. And then it took vinegar and water and, I don't know, all kinds of spices and stuff she put in. And then on the top she'd put a small plate that would fit down over the top and fit down in on it and then

put a brick on it wrapped in a white cloth. That was to hold it down so it would sour I imagine. And then she'd take a pan of water and wash that brick and that cloth off, you know, each time she went down there, every so many days she'd do that. And I'd . . .

Q: I wonder why she did that? I wonder why she felt she had to do that, I wonder?

A: Well, I guess.

Q: It collected dirt, I suppose, from the air maybe.

A: Well, I don't know if it—no, I think maybe it might be mold. It might have been a mold that formed because it smelled bad. And every so many days she'd go down. If I'd happen to be down to her house she'd always let me go and I felt that was quite a privilege to go with Grandma down there.

Q: Yes.

A: Although I always felt closer to my grandma I lived with because we lived together and I knew she took care of me and I knew she made my clothes and she always was particular about how I walked and . . .

Q: Well the person who had the farm was your grandmother or your great-grandmother?

A: That owned a farm?

Q: Yes, that you were talking about who made the kraut and . . .

A: No, that's my grandmother. That was Grandmother Walker.

Q: Grandmother Walker, okay.

A: Grandma Walker. She's the one who owned the mill and the store. And the lumberyard.

Q: Okay. Grandmother Walker owned the farm and the mill and the lumberyard?

A: Yes, and twelve houses.

Q: And twelve houses. When she took you down into her cellar what else did she have down there?

A: Well, just all canned stuff and she . . .

Q: Did she have fresh things?

A: Oh no, nothing, only milk and butter and cottage cheese. She called it smearcase.

Q: I've heard my aunt say that.

A: Yes. And she'd hand it out on the line in a clean bag like a flour mill bag, you know, that kind.

Q: How do you spell smearcase, Marie?

A: I don't know for sure, S-M-E-A-R-C-A-S-E, I think.

Q: That's what I thought too.

A: I'm not just sure but she called it smearcase.

Q: Well after your grandfather died she had the farm.

A: Yes.

Q: She had the mill.

A: Yes.

Q: She had the lumberyard. She had twelve houses.

A: Yes.

Q: And what else did she have?

A: She left each one of those girls and boys, those six, two houses apiece when she died. My mother had two houses that Grandma gave her.

Q: Oh, she had the furniture store.

A: Yes. She had the furniture store.

Q: That was a lot for a woman to manage.

A: She had managers. She had people that worked for her.

Q: But that was unusual for a woman at that time to . . .

A: My land, she fed half of the people in De Soto. If there was anybody that went to her, she'd give them a sack of flour. If they—she raised half of the kids in De Soto. She'd give everybody anything and anytime anybody would come to her house like, oh, Thanksgiving or Christmas or any of the holidays or Decoration Day or anything like that, they could all come to her house to eat and she'd have enough for them to eat. And if anybody had a death in the family she was the first one to send them something to eat, you know. She did a wonderful job.

Q: She certainly did. And she managed all of this and she . . .

A: . . . took care of it and nobody never . . .

Q: And she couldn't read and write English.

A: No. She couldn't read and write English. She always told us she could read the newspaper but we wondered if she could. But she'd get some of it, enough to tell you—I imagine that she did know some of the words, you know. She went to school, like, I don't know how many years she went to school. But she knew things like that. And she could write her own name. And maybe she could—in her own way she could write in German what she wanted to keep down because in her figures she always had that right.

Q: I would suspect then some of the people who managed for her could interpret.

A: Yes. They would always come to the store where she was and check in with her, you know. And . . .

Q: Was she still managing all of this at her desk?

A: No. She sold everything but the store. And her son-in-law managed that. The oldest girl that had the children that I went to Alton with, Aunt Abbey, and Uncle George Alben and he managed the store when she got, you know, ailing and older, too old to. . . . But my mother worked in the store. And my Aunt Abbey, Uncle George's wife, worked in the store. And then as the children came up, big enough, old enough, why then they went in the store. But she rented all of those and she collected that rent on all of those houses. And she had her son, one of her sons live on that farm that she owned. I used to love to go there. It was out in the country about a mile and a half and I loved to go out there. And my grandma had brothers. Now, when she owned the butcher shop, her brother, Uncle Jake, my great-uncle, he run the butcher shop for her. And his boys and him did the butchering, you know, and they made sausage and all the things, you know, that you have when you run a butchershop.

Q: What kind of help did she have on that 160 acres?

A: I always said they just—people that didn't have a job, she'd hire them. She was good like that to give people that didn't have a job, they could go to Grandma's house or to the store, wherever she was and tell her a sad story and she'd hire them. And then if they didn't work out, why, she'd get somebody else in their place. She was a smart woman.

Q: She was a one-woman community.

A: Yes, she was, she really was. They called her Aunt Becky, everybody called her Aunt Becky.

Q: Did she live on the farm until her death?

A: No, never lived on the farm. She lived in town in a great big nine-room house.

Q: Even when your grandfather was living, didn't she live out on the farm?

A: No. They never lived on the farm, he didn't live on the farm.

Q: They always had a tenant.

A: They had a tenant.

Q: And she'd just take you out there to visit.

A: Then later on her son moved to the farm. And he run the farm then. Grandma had a stroke. She wouldn't admit it that she had a stroke, she said the wind blew her over. She was out in the yard and the wind wasn't blowing hard that day. And she broke her arm. She fell and broke her arm but the doctor said she had a light stroke. And in about six weeks she took down with the flu. And then that . . .

Q: Got pneumonia and . . .

A: Yes, she did.

Q: Do you have any memories of the lumber yard?

A: Not much. I remember being there. But I didn't know much about it.

Q: Did they cut the wood from the woods right there?

A: No. No, that lumber must have been sent in because it was smooth finished lumber. It was a lumber yard, not a lumber yard, but a lumber mill that sawed rough boards, you know, and it would have the—they would take a big log and not trim it even. The outside of the tree would still be on it. It was big slabs, as wide as the sides of, the piece of lumber they were sawing off and it would have the bark on either side.

Q: Yes.

A: Well, they used that for barns and things like that, around through the country.

Q: Well I would suspect the lumber mill did quite a business too.

A: Yes it did. And then a time or two I can remember when they made sorghum molasses.

Q: Oh really?

A: Yes.

Q: How did they do that?

A: Well, they . . .

Q: I've seen it growing but I've never known how . . .

A: Yes, run the sugar cane through the mill and got the juice and then they boiled it down.

Q: Was that done at the lumber mill?

A: No. That was done right there on the corner of one of the streets right up in town.

Q: I see.

A: Yes. They had a big kettle. We used to make apple butter too and stir it all day, you know, with the stirrer. And paddle. It had holes in it and they'd put marbles down in the bottom to keep it from sticking. And they'd have a bunch of the neighbors come in and peel the apples and core them and take the core out and the seeds and everything and start it and then the neighbors would all come in and take their turns and stir and then they'd get so much of the apples, you know.

Q: Yes. Why were the holes in the paddles?

A: Well, to let the apple juice to go through it. First you got like apple sauce.

Q: I see.

A: And then you'd have to keep—sometimes they'd put apple cider in it to start it.

Q: To add the flavor . . .

A: And the color.

Q: Yes.

A: And sometimes they let some of the core—not the core, the—well, now they never used yellow apples to make apple butter. They had to use the . . .

Q: Dark red.

A: . . . dark red to make. And sometimes they'd leave the skin on some of it, you know, to give it . . .

Q: More of a flavor.

A: Yes. And you had to keep stirring all of the time so they could go through those holes. There was holes about that big, about the size of a quarter in the paddle, you know.

Q: Yes.

A: And they all, all the neighbors worked together you know, a bunch of neighbors where somebody had the—it had to be a copper kettle.

Q: Right.

A: And then after they got their apple butter done, that owned the copper kettle, they'd charge fifty cents a day for somebody to use their kettle. Somebody else then could make at some other place you know.

Q: Well, apple butter like that is awfully good, don't you think?

A: Yes, homemade.

Q: They'd have to strain it too, when they got through if the skins were in it, wouldn't they?

A: Yes. Well sometimes they'd take some of that off and then just cook that one batch with that on. Then mix it again. Then stir it down and boil it more . . .

Q: I see.

A: . . . till it got thicker.

Q: Was there anything else that they cooked outside like that that you remember?

A: Oh, we always washed clothes and boiled, in the summer, boiled them, boiled the white. Do you ever know that they boiled clothes?

Q: Yes, I remember that.

A: Boiled the white clothes. And you punched them down with a stick, you know, down. And we made soap.

Q: Made your own soap?

A: Made your own soap.

Q: Even though you had the store in town.

A: Oh yes.

Q: You still made your own soap.

A: Oh yes.

Q: How did you make the soap?

A: Boiled down fat.

Q: What kind of fat?

A: Hog fat.

Q: Yes.

A: And skim it. It wasn't too hard to make. I know of some people out here in the country now makes soap.

Q: Make their own soap?

A: Yes, they make their own soap.

Q: Could you buy soap in your store in town?

A: Oh yes. Yes, they had soap.

Q: But that was more for face that you bought.

A: Oh yes. More face than—most everybody made laundry soap. You used lye along with it.

Q: And those are ashes from . . .

A: Yes, ashes from the—well, that's lye that they, from burning a certain kind of wood but I don't remember what kind it was.

Q: Was there any other grocery store? Your store must have been what they used to call a country general store.

A: It was a general store.

Q: Did you have things like crackers in barrels?

A: Oh yes, crackers in barrels and sugar. My store, Frank's and my

store here, we got one hundred pounds of sugar and had a jar that we dumped it in and then we would dish up whatever they wanted. If they wanted five pounds or if they wanted two pounds, we sold two pounds. And we always had a bunch of bananas up in the window there hung up in the front window and we would cut it off with the banana knife you know. And, you know, then down there way back when I was a little girl we didn't have oranges and lemons and things like all of the time, just around Christmas and I guess when they'd come in from the south. And that wasn't all of the time. And if we got an orange for Christmas in our sock we thought we was doing well. And orange and a little bit of candy and nuts, that was a Christmas.

Q: That's why I asked if your grandmother had any fresh fruit or anything stored in her cellar?

A: No, she didn't. No, there wasn't no fresh—she buried apples and turnips and, let's see, potatoes I guess in a big mound. Did you ever see it out?

Q: No. I've never seen a mound.

A: They'd dig up a great big mound of dirt and let it rain on it and let it settle and let it settle and then they'd dig a hole back in this big mound and you'd put an old piece of carpet or an old blind or anything that was kind of, well, it would keep it from being too dirty, you know. And put your potatoes and everything—you kept them separate though, so that they wouldn't absorb the taste or the smell from the other . . .

Q: One from the other.

A: . . . vegetable, yes. Then cover that hole back up with a lot of old pieces of carpet or something like that so it wouldn't freeze. And then we generally put more dirt back over that and just had a little place where you could reach in and get what you wanted you know.

Q: That mound must have been pretty close to the house.

A: Yes. Yes, right up. And then in the spring whenever you got rid of the frost and everything you could leave that hole open, you know, till you used everything up. Then to have your yard nice and smooth you'd put that all back, you know. Generally your garden would just run right up to your house you know.

Q: I suppose they saved seeds from one year to the next to . . .

A: Oh yes. Yes.

Q: . . . to plant each spring.

A: Yes. And the farmers used to not have these seed companies, you know, all of these seed companies. And they'd trade seed with each other.

Q: I see.

A: You know. One farmer wouldn't want to raise the same kind of seed and he'd go over to his neighbor or one maybe three or four miles away you know, and trade with him. And then they'd have different seed and it would mature better on the same ground you know.

Q: Yes. That's interesting.

A: Yes. Well, let me tell you as much as I can today.

Q: You're doing well. What other industry did they have in De Soto?

A: Coal mine.

Q: When did they start mining coal there?

A: Now I don't know what . . .

Q: Do you have any idea?

A: Well long before I was born. And in the 1900's it was, oh, it was good. There was mines just all around. But there was mines there before that time. And railroading. You know, the railroads were busy all of the time then. And I remember my first automobile and first airplane, you know, that I saw. And we had—my grandma's—she had a horse that had been in the circus. And she drove that—after Grandpa died she drove the horse and buggy, not a surrey—we didn't have a surrey, we just had for two people to ride. And Old Jim, he'd stand up on his hind feet. And you'd give him a bucket and he'd carry it around in his mouth, you know, all around the lot where he stayed, you know.

And it had a little pond in it. And that's where we kept our cow and our horse. And then I took the cow up just about, oh, a half a mile up the road back onto a farm for a bigger pasture. This was just like a lot, as big as a lot is, where the horse and the cow stayed. But the cow, you couldn't drive her. Lots of people drove their cows. I mean, walked behind them, you know, and didn't have them on a rope. But our cow wouldn't do that. I don't know . . .

Q: (chuckles) Stubborn.

A: Stubborn, I guess. And we'd get her into the pasture and then I'd go back after her in the evening. And Grandma would milk her and we had a cellar where we kept the milk and then I'd take the milk to the restaurants downtown and to some neighbors that bought milk from us and that bought us some extra money. And Grandma would make butter every once in a while and sell the butter. She got a little pension from Grandpa. The first one she got was eight dollars a month. Then she got twelve dollars, then fifteen, then twenty-five. Then after that, after I was married, she got—oh, it got up where she got seventy-five dollars.

Q: My heavens.

A: Fifty—she'd get fifty and then for a while after that. Then she'd get a little more you know. (taping stopped)

Q: We were talking about at one point in time, Marie, about the flour mill and your general store and items that you had in barrels. How did they keep bugs and things out of the grains and the flour?

A: They didn't. They didn't. If they was there too long, they got buggy because I know one time since Betty Lou mentioned the popcorn, I know one time it got—not popped you know, just on the, not shelled even. They sold it in the cob you know because it was bought right there. And they sold butter and some people made butter that didn't know how or something. And it would be strong. And they'd have to ship it someplace to make—I guess they made—well, what would they make? I don't remember what they made out of that butter, but they shipped certain people butter that wasn't—but they had to buy it because if you'd have told them their butter wasn't good they wouldn't trade with you.

Q: Well, was there any place else to trade, for them to trade in the town?

A: Yes.

Q: There was another general store or another store that . . .

A: Well, little stores, you know, up and down, up and down. But theirs was the big one because it had everything. And if they didn't have what you wanted then they'd order it for you.

Q: I see.

A: So that made them popular. And it still was popular till, well, since we moved up here. I used to bank down there at my grandmother's store. Of course she was gone but I still wanted to trade at their bank. Later on that bank was made a state bank under the state supervision or under the national supervision. You see, when it was just a local, there was no inspection or anything. And then whenever they—I went to, and Frank did to, went with Mike and his wife to buy the upgrade stuff for the bank that's according to law, that you have to have you know. We went to St. Louis and bought it. And that was kind of another big thing for us to go to, you know.

Q: Sure. Then the only bank was in your store.

A: Yes. And of course now it's all closed. When Mike died they went out of business. And there's not really a good grocery store there now.

Q: Is that building still standing there? Or parts of it or . . .

A: Well, part of it. See, part of it burned down and blowed down in the tornado.

Q: That's right, that's right.

A: The lumber yard blew down. The mill was already down. And, let's see, Uncle George—he stepped into the vault and whenever the tornado was over he stepped out and was just in open air.

Q: Oh my gosh.

A: That's the way it was. Betty Lou remembers the tornado.

Q: Oh, that was something.

A: Yes.

Q: What other industry besides mining and . . .

A: Farming.

Q: . . . farming.

A: And the mill.

Q: Yes.

A: Railroading and of course the mining was the big thing. And it is still yet. And then the university and things down from Carbondale. The people have moved up to De Soto because the houses are cheaper, you know, and the lots are cheaper and all that. And half of the De Soto now are people that work down at Carbondale in the university.

Q: But the population really hasn't changed that much.

A: Yes, quite a bit. I'd say when . . .

Q: You said seven hundred.

A: Seven hundred when I lived there and now it's, oh, it's fifteen hundred.

Q: It's gone from from seven hundred to fifteen hundred.

A: It's doubled.

Q: Did you have wagon and wheelmakers when you were growing up in De Soto?

A: No. Not in my time. They had a blacksmith's shop. And he committed suicide. His wife and him—his first wife died and he married some

frivolous old lady and she was going to get a divorce from him and the day before she was going to get the divorce he killed himself. And I've got a book that he gave me.

Q: What was the makeup of the population, economically and ethnically?

A: Never a black person ever allowed in the town and all was just common ordinary people.

Q: Yes. Were the Dutch the immingrants that mostly worked in the mines?

A: Yes, they worked in the mines.

Q: Anybody worked in the mines but . . .

A: Yes.

Q: . . . around that time a lot of immigrants came over just for that purpose, to work in the mines.

A: Yes. A lot of people came in from surrounding towns. Something I was going to tell you then about—well, the blacks. Of course in Carterville I saw a load of them, seven of them killed and throwed into a wagon. They had come in to break the strike, you know. They were going to put those blacks to work.

Q: Who had come in?

A: Those blacks from southern, down in Tennessee and so on, down in there.

Q: Management came in to break the strike.

A: Yes. Well, they were blacks that they hired. And the union men met them on the south side of town and killed seven of them and put them in a wagon and just throwed them in a wagon on top of each other and took them out to Dewmaine, a little town that was nothing but blacks that worked there. And just throwed them out on the street. And I happened to be uptown after school, after I had taught school, had gone up to Bick's to get a Coke, a bunch of us, and just stepped out on the street and saw them drive by with the—what I was going to tell you though, my

mother worked in the store and the girl, the drygoods part—there was a black that came in, they let one family come in. Birdsong's was their name. And I guess they took that name from the southern—he had been a slave. And he was an older man. They lived on a farm out north of town. And they're the only people they let come into De Soto.

Q: Why did they let them come in and not the rest?

A: I don't know. I guess because they liked them or they was better people or something, I don't know what. And Mom took—she was working in the drygoods department and she took the little baby to hold, the little black baby and I liked to cried my eyes out. I just cried and cried and cried and I never told them until a long time afterwards what made me cry. And it was because I thought she would turn black if she held that black baby. That's how much I knew about the blacks.

Q: The black people. What was the police department like in De Soto?

A: (chuckles) My uncle was the policeman. And he held them down to—you remember that, don't you, Betty Lou? Well, that's all right. There was a little, they called it a calaboose, calaboose. And it stood for a long, long time. It was wood. But later on they had a little concrete building and had a stove in it and they'd put people in jail in that. He'd slap them in and he'd been in there before himself.

Q: Was he the only policeman?

A: Yes, the only one. And they were scared to death of . . . well there was a fellow before he was the police, but just one fellow. He was the druggist's son. And I was kind of afraid of him. You know, he was older and bigger and everything. And he had a sister that I always ran around with, she just died not long ago. And he was the police and there would be a tent show come into town, you know, just a one-night stand maybe or maybe they . . .

Q: Was that like a circus or a medicine show or . . .

A: Yes, medicine show generally. And he got to go in free and anybody he took in got to go free. And Iniss would stand on one side of him, his sister, and hold his hand. And I'd stand on the other. And we'd walk in, you know, like we was his children or, you know, related. Get in free and we'd just shake him as quick as we stepped inside and got in free we wouldn't let on like we ever knew him. (laughter) Go over and find us a good place to sit you know.

Betty Lou: He took you into the movie too, didn't he?

A: Yes.

Betty Lou: He'd get you in free to the movie.

A: Yes, he took us in free to the movies. Uncle Sammy could do that too after they got a movie there. But that was later in life.

Q: What was the medicine show like?

A: Oh they had good shows, "East Lynn" and all of the shows like that, you know.

Q: What was "East Lynn" now?

A: Oh, a stage play.

Q: Is that two words?

A: And "Little Eva". You know, they showed "Uncle Tom's Cabin" and "East Lynn." No, it was—"East Lynn" was a—some girl had wandered off in St. Louis or some big city, you know, and she was dying with T.B. [tuberculosis] and I always thought it was funny where they had a cot there and they had it kind of sunk down so she wouldn't look so fat, you know, when she was dying. (laughter) So . . .

Q: Well, "Uncle Tom's Cabin" didn't seem to have any effect on the population there?

A: Oh no. No, that was just a show.

Q: That was just a show, no relationship to what was going on.

A: Now in Carterville—as far as I know, there's not any blacks there.

Q: Yes.

A: There's a town called Colp out north of Carterville about a mile.

Q: C-U-L-P?

A: C-O-L-P, Colp. And the people that live out there—well, I think there's some whites now. But I know when we lived there they had a doctor there that was black because most all the people that worked in that mine was black.

Q: Yes.

A: And they had a black doctor.

Q: You don't remember anything about him?

A: I used to have him come in Carterville. He tried to claim he was part Indian. But you couldn't see any Indian about him. But he was a very likable man and a very smart man.

Q: What was his name?

A: What was his name, Betty Lou?

Betty Lou: Spring.

A: Yes. Doctor Spring. And he had a little building. It was kind of like a hospital you know. He did operating, everything. And he was supposed to be for the mines, you know, free.

Betty Lou: But he collected Indian artifacts.

A: And I used to have him come in to my history class and bring all of those things in. And he did. His wife—I think she was part Indian. And I think through her, maybe, he got a lot of that. But he was really good. He was smart and he did a very good job. And they let him in the drugstores.

Q: Where did he get his training?

A: I don't know.

Q: And he had to live in Colp, this town that was black?

A: Oh yes. And one time I took my basketball team, my girls' basketball team out there and one or two of the other teachers went with me to take another car, you know, to get them all there. And we talked and talked and they mustn't fight and they must get along and be nice, you know, when they went out there to play because they had a school there and had a gym. And was just as nice, they were, all just going to be just lovely, and the minute they stepped out on the ground, those black girls and our white girls just . . .

End of Side Two, Tape One

A: We'd go to church at night. They'd have big meetings. And Grandma and I would go and I took my spelling book with me. And all the time that they preached, I wasn't too interested in that, you know. And I studied my spelling. Then when they commenced to shout I'd sit on my red book, you know, and listen at them shout, you know.

Q: I didn't realize that that was a Methodist means of worship.

A: Well, it was then. I don't think they do now.

Q: Yes.

A: Up here I don't think anybody ever shouted. The Pentecostal people do. The Holy Rollers used to set up a tent in De Soto and put straw down and they rolled.

Q: Literally rolled?

A: They literally rolled in that straw. Instead of shouting, you know, and putting your arms up like that, why, they rolled. They called them Holy Rollers and they'd be down rolling and kicking in that straw you know. And they'd shout while they was rolling you know. But in this old red brick Methodist church the men sit on one side—they sit on the left side—and the women sit on the right side. They didn't sit together.

Q: Was that only in the Methodist Church that they did that?

A: Well, that's the only way in that church. Yes, they had two doors, two front doors in this red brick church. And there was one old minister—what I wanted to tell you but you don't need to put it in the book.

Q: Yes. (taping stopped)

A: That was funny.

Q: What other churches did they have in De Soto?

A: They had two Baptists. One they called it a Freewill, and the other one was a Missionary. And they had a Lutheran. And that's the one I went to because my mother was a Lutheran and that's the one I was christened in the Lutheran Church. And then I taught a Sunday School class there. And when I got married the Lutheran Church gave me a shower. And that was unusual . . .

Q: That is very unusual.

A: . . . then, you know. And the church gave me a shower. I guess—I was teaching school there when I got married, I mean in De Soto. And they gave me a shower and I was so happy and thrilled.

Q: Oh, sure. What was the difference between the Freewill and the Missionary Baptist Church?

A: Well, there was difference in the baptism. One of the, just the Freewill—they would sprinkle or dip you under. And the Missionary, they wouldn't. You just had to be dipped under. They wouldn't sprinkle. And the Lutheran Church just sprinkles, you know, in the baptism.

Q: I see, I see.

A: Well, there might have been some other too. I don't know. But I know those two things was different with the two Baptists.

Q: Did they have a Catholic Church there?

A: No.

Q: No Catholic Church.

A: No. And they didn't have any Lutheran Church in Carterville when I went there.

Q: I see.

A: So I joined the Methodist Church with Frank because his folks were all Methodists. And that was strange because they were from the Lutheran Church in Pennsylvania, you know, their forefathers were. But some way or other they drifted off to something else you know, the Methodists. So I belonged to the Methodists. There wasn't any Lutheran Church there.

Q: When you were growing up in De Soto, Marie, what was the physical appearance of most of the buildings in De Soto?

A: Oh, mostly it was just plain lumber, you know.

Q: Frame buildings.

A: Yes, frame buildings. But the saloon was out of concrete blocks.

Q: Yes.

A: And they called it the stone wall building.

Q: Oh.

A: Stone wall. That was the later one because the other one, the wooden one, I think in the picture that I had, I think it burned down. I know it burned down but . . .

Q: Were these individual fires? Or was there ever one big fire in De Soto that maybe burned a lot of . . .

A: No. Only when the tornado hit. And then there was another building, there was a couple of brick buildings. My grandmother's store was a brick building and Red's building was brick. And then there was another that was out of yellow, it looked like tile. I don't know if it was a tile building but they always called it tile. And it was bricks, about that wide and about that long. And the drugstore was in that.

Q: I see.

A: Now that's the only buildings that was other than frame, you know.

Q: How big was the business district at that time?

A: Just like it is now, one street straight through town to Carbondale, five miles to Carbondale. And, oh, there was a livery stable. Let's see, what else, shoe shop where they half-soled shoes, you know, and repaired shoes. And a couple of little restaurants, you know, just in little wooden buildings. They didn't serve real meals, just sandwiches or maybe fried bacon and eggs or something like that, you know. It wasn't just a real, sit-down meal though. And right now one of my cousins—she's been there for years—she works, she and her husband, well in fact her husband is a cousin of mine on my father's side and she's a cousin to me on my mother's side. You know, they intermarry, you know, one side—nobody married their, that was relation, you know, to each other. That was a no-no then. Nobody married that was cousins or anything like that. But, now, Frank—half of Frank's people married some of my people so that made us both double cousins or double relation in different ways, you know.

Q: I see. What were your newspapers like? Did you have a newspaper in De Soto?

A: No. Murphysboro was the county seat. And it was a weekly paper. And somebody would write an item about the news in De Soto and send it down and it would be printed, you know. And I just now got, I don't know what day it was, but a few days ago they. (taping stopped)

Q: What were the streets like in De Soto when you were living there?

A: Just dirt.

Q: Just dirt.

A: Just dirt streets and dusty. I remember the first few cars that ever went through De Soto. We'd hear them come from Du Quoin. Somebody in Du Quoin had some cars, you know, two or three cars. And when we'd hear them way up the road we'd run to the road that went through town to see the cars, the first cars, that came through. And of course that was something else, you know, a car.

Q: They were driving through to go to Carbondale?

A: Carbondale or someplace or Murphysboro. But they would be on the main street that went through town. Later on there would be a plane that would come through. And, you know, we'd nearly be afraid to be under it, you know. You had an idea maybe that—and one of our neighbors north of us, they had a car. And it didn't have a top on it, you know, a cover on the top. It was just an open, and no doors on the side, just a rounded place where you stepped into the car. And . . . (taping stopped)

Q: You were telling me about that car with the open doors.

A: Yes. Of course I was just a little girl then and that was quite a thing to sit in that car.

Q: But you wouldn't ride in it.

A: Well, nobody took me a riding. I'd just go and sit in it.

Q: I see.

A: And one time the lady that lived there, she gave me four little ducks. And I was going to raise them and sell them and then buy goods to make me a dress. And Grandma was digging around in the backyard, digging worms, you know, and she stepped on one.

Q: Oh dear.

A: And of course killed it.

Q: Sure.

A: And Mrs. McElry heard me cry so loud that she run down to our house

to find out what was wrong. And of course I was just killed about the duck, you know, the little fellow. And she ran right back home and brought me another one to replace it, you know.

Q: That was nice.

A: I was so killed about it. Well, did I tell you one time—I believe I did—about Grandma couldn't get down to pray?

Q: Yes, you told me all about that.

A: I told you about that.

Q: I was going to ask you about getting vegetables and things like that in town. Did they have those at the grocery store or did anybody come by with a wagon and . . .

A: No. Everybody had their own cow and pig and chickens and raised their own vegetables.

Q: And raised their own vegetables.

A: Yes. We had three lots where Grandma lived. And the house was on the middle lot. Well, one was the yard then on the side and the other lot on the north was the garden. And my grandfather—I didn't know too much about him because he died before I lived there.

Q: This is with Grandmother South you're talking about?

A: Yes. And he evidently didn't raise too much garden. It was mostly flowers. He had an awfully lot of flowers in the garden. But then Grandma didn't—after he was gone she just planted potatoes and corn and radishes and lettuce and everything else, you know, all the vegetables, mostly. We raised all of our vegetables. And then we had the cellar, they called it an up ground cellar. It was dug down part of the way and had a concrete floor in it and then brick walls and you had to go down about three steps. But the top then was shingled, you know, and in between the shingles and the ceiling was sawdust. They had—she had sawdust there—well, I guess other people did too, you know, sawdust to keep it cool and . . .

Q: It was insulation.

A: Yes, it was insulation, was what it was. And we let two of our neighbors have shelves. They didn't have any up ground cellar, didn't have any, didn't have a basement, you know, even. Grandma would let them have a shelf to put their canned fruit and keep, and one lady, we let them have a bin to put their potatoes. We had three bins. And we kept potatoes and onions and things like that that ordinarily a lot of people, if they had room, they dug a hole down in the ground and put them in that with dirt over the top. But in this upground cellar you just walked down about three steps to go down and we kept the milk and the butter in the summer and if you cooked something at noon and wanted to keep it cool you put it down in the cellar, you know, and she used to pour water down on the floor and have it damp so that—and it would be cool and nice down there and then on Sunday we always bought a ten-cent piece of ice. Maybe we'd make ice cream. Or it was a treat to even drink ice water.

Q: Well, they had an ice house in De Soto.

A: Yes, they had a little ice house back of one of the restaurants.

Q: Ice that they cut from the river and then would store.

A: Yes, that's right. It wasn't too clean but . . .

Q: It was ice.

A: . . . it was ice. And they had it in the ice house. They cut it in the winter and buried it in sawdust and whenever you got it it was all sawdust over the top, you know, and you had to wash it off.

Q: How big a piece did you get for ten cents?

A: Oh, a great big piece. And we had tongs that, you know, opened like that and then you went down there and carried it home.

Q: Do you know anything about how your parents met, Marie?

A: No, I wouldn't know how they met. But they lived in the same town. And my father was a—after he was grown, he was a railroad man you know.

Q: Yes. Was he a conductor?

A: Yes. And wore a blue suit. I know I used to see him put that suit on and a blue cap.

Q: Would he be gone for several days at a time and . . .

A: Yes—well, about one day and one night. See, he run on the Illinois Central and he'd go to Centralia. He'd catch—they called it deadheading, you know, when they'd go to their job. He'd get on the train that was going to go through De Soto and go to Centralia to catch his train and wanted to go to Cairo.

Q: Yes.

A: Back and forth that way.

Q: I see.

A: But I imagine they grew up in the same town and maybe went to school together.

Q: Yes.

A: Just like Frank and I. They lived in the country the first three years, no the first two years that he went to school. He went to a country school. But then they moved into town after that. And his father worked in the mines. And his mother, Mrs. Williams, Clara, she took boarders in. And then she baked bread, lots of bread, and sold it to help out, you know, make a living. And then Frank started to school in the third grade, you know, after they moved to town.

Q: Were there many people in De Soto who did things from their homes, you know, like a cottage industry, made things and sold them in the town?

A: Well, yes, there was a lot of people wove carpet.

Q: They did?

A: Yes, they had—what did they call them?

Q: Loom?

A: Loom—big old wooden looms. They were ugly big old things that took up an awful lot of room but they had them in their house.

Q: More than one person did that?

A: Oh, yes, there was two or three people that I can remember that—some of them wove carpet. In fact, I've got a rug that was made out of one of my father's blankets that he had used on the road. They had a big heavy—this was a big heavy red blanket and after he was killed my mother used that on her bed. I remember it being on her bed. But later on when she came to live with me we took it back to De Soto and they were still weaving rugs, the lady was, and she made my brother a rug and me a rug to keep just mostly for our own selves to have something that he had had, you know. We didn't have much left. He had an encyclopedia. He was studying law in Carbondale on his days off from when he was on the road. And then he studied under a lawyer. That's the way they learned then. Even the doctors at the time. There was a doctor in De Soto that traveled three years with a doctor in Kentucky. And learned everything that doctor knew, you know, but he never went to a medical school.

Q: He didn't have to take any exam?

A: He didn't have to take any examination. That was the law then, if you traveled with a doctor three years. But he could reduce a lot of sicknesses. Some people had him for certain diseases, you know, that he was good with. He could set an arm, or set a leg or pull a tooth. The doctors—that was something—the doctors pulled your teeth then.

Q: Was there more than one doctor in De Soto?

A: Yes, there was three. And how they all made a living I don't know.

Q: You wonder. Well, they must have gone out throughout the countryside and . . .

A: Oh, miles. They drove with a horse and buggy through the snow and rain and sleet and everything else.

Q: Getting back to these people who did the weaving of rugs, did they sell their rugs just to the townspeople or did they sell them to stores?

A: Anybody that came along. A lot of times, through the summer they'd put a stand out and sell tomatoes and green beans and cantalopes and everything, you know, and take them out on the road, on the main road. That road went from Cairo to Chicago.

Q: Yes.

A: It followed the Illinois Central Railroad. My grandmother in 1849 or 1850, she saw the first rails laid on the Illinois Central Railroad.

Q: She saw the first rails put down.

A: Yes, she saw the first railroad. And she always told about some of their relatives from down at Harrisburg, where there wasn't any railroad, came up. They drove up there. It took them two or three days to come up there in a wagon to see a train. They'd never seen a train. And they drove up there and camped along the way, you know, brought their food along and stopped and cooked along the way up to De Soto. It would be, oh, it would be maybe seventy-five miles, you know, from Harrisburg to De Soto. And my grandmother's father's and mother's farm was just out of De Soto, just about a mile. And they come up and watched the train.

Q: To watch the trains.

A: Yes. Well, just kind of like we did, run to see a car, an automobile go through or an airplane, you know. That was just progress to us. We was the head of the railroad. The trains wasn't too much of an excitement to us at that time. We had seen so many trains.

Q: Sure.

A: But as cars and airplanes came along we was very excited.

Q: When you were eight years old your father died in an accident.

A: Yes.

Q: You told me once about that accident. Do you want to describe it again, what happened?

A: Well, there was a fire. It was his days off—I don't know how many days he had then. But, you know, they would work so many days and then they would have so many days off at home. And there was a barn that was burning out in the country, a big barn, and he just went to the livery stable and got one of those Texas ponies that they brought in. They hadn't hardly been broke, you know, to ride. And he wasn't used to riding. And he put the saddle on and started to the fire and he was riding fast and the saddle band broke and let the saddle fall and threw him against a telephone post. And it must have hurt something inwardly besides breaking his leg because a broken leg wouldn't have killed him.

Q: Wouldn't have killed him, no. And it was at that time that you went and lived with your grandmother.

A: Yes.

Q: Your Grandmother South.

A: Yes. Because Grandpa had died in February and my dad died in July.

Q: And your baby brother went with your mother.

A: He was thirteen months old. He went back to her folks. Mom went to work in the store. And . . .

Q: This was in Grandma Walker's store?

A: Yes. And see, two of Mom's sisters hadn't gotten married yet. And they took care of Ben while she worked. And I'd gone to Grandma's because Grandpa had died. And she didn't have anybody to stay with her. So I stayed with her. And really loved her more than I did my mother. That's bad to say I guess.

Q: Well, she raised you.

A: She raised me. She was the one that took care of me when I was sick and I never had lived with my mother till after Betty Lou was born. My brother got married and the lady that he married didn't want to keep Mom. And Grandma Walker had died and Mom come to, because I had to hire

what we called then a hired girl. She did the work at home while I taught school. So I let her go and Mom come over and she lived with us until after we come up here. She came with us and helped us and I learned to like her a lot. And she seemed more like a girl friend to me, not my mother. It seemed like she was just some girl that I knew, you know, and I had married. And it didn't feel like she had had me, you know.

Q: What was the difference in age between you and Ben?

A: Seven years.

Q: Well, with that in mind, you must have been very aware of trying to take care of a tiny baby in that era with the long dresses. What did they do about diapers and feeding a baby and . . .

A: You washed your diapers.

Q: They must have been homemade?

A: Well, yes, they was homemade. You bought it by the yard and hemmed them, you know.

Q: And everything, the food that you would have to feed a young child, you'd . . .

A: When I raised Betty Lou I kept a pan of oatmeal on the back of the stove all of the time. You know, there wasn't any canned baby food then.

Q: Nothing. Everything was done from scratch.

A: Yes. And you fed them mashed potatoes and gravy and Betty Lou nursed the bottle, not me. I had an abscessed breast right away. I guess I took cold. And talk about crude, we didn't have a car then. We had had a car but I had sold it one time when Frank was at work. Well it was during the World War, you know, and you got a big amount of money for it. And I sold it while he was at work. And we all often laughed. The man who came from St. Louis and bought up as many cars as he could—he told me he had a certified check. Well, I didn't know any more what a certified check was for nothing in the world. And I wouldn't accept it until we went down to the bank and had the bank say it was all right. I didn't believe him, you know, and I saw that it was certified. But I

didn't take his word for it. And I went down there and they cashed the check. And the man went with me. I wouldn't let him have the car until after that.

Q: Until after you saw that.

A: We've always laughed about it later.

Q: Sure. In this packet of pictures you gave me is a very charming house.

A: Yes, that's the house I lived in.

Q: And that's the house you were raised in, your Grandmother South's house.

A: Yes.

Q: Describe that house for me.

A: Well, it was frame. And she always wanted it painted white. But one time somebody talked her into having it light green. She ought to change the color. And I tell you, she was the most dissatisfied person you ever saw because she had it painted light green. And she just waited until she got enough money together and she painted it white. Grandpa was sick a long, long time. I'm sure he had—they called it Bright's Disease then. But that's a kidney ailment. And he went up into Michigan, Battle Creek, Michigan, and went into a hospital up there. And they never operated on him. But he thought that they could help him or cure him, you know, but they couldn't. And that cost an awful lot of money and ended up when Grandpa passed away, there wasn't much money left. So Grandma got a pension then. He was a Civil War veteran then and eight dollars a month. Well, then to help out with the money Grandma sold milk and butter and eggs and her grandfather's farm. They were dead then, the grandma and the grandpa, and they sold their farm for coal land. Well, Grandma got quite a bit of money then for her share. I don't remember how much it was. But then we did pretty good.

Q: Well tell me about the rest of the house.

A: Well it had kind of a little front porch, just a kind of a portico. But it had bannisters around it and it added to the looks of the front real well. And a great big living room, about the size of that one in

there. And there was four windows in it, two on one side and two on another. And we had an ingrain carpet.

Q: What's an ingrain carpet?

A: Well, I don't know. It was a flowered carpet but it was called ingrained carpet. And we had straw under it. The floor was wide, heavy planks. Real planks. And then people didn't put paper under them. They had carpet over the straw. But it gradually wore down. But when it was first put down, it would be puffy, you know, kind of like that. And that was a new carpet she had about that time. We had an organ that I took music lessons on. A lady came in from Du Quoin on the train and would stay all day and give music lessons for twenty-five cents an hour.

Q: My heavens.

A: That's how I learned to play the organ. And you pumped it, you know. And had a little stool that turned around, screwed around, you know, to make it higher or lower. And we had a real pretty—and I wish I had it—set of parlor, it was called parlor suites. It was a parlor suite. It was a red, two-seated settee and then there was a blue, oh, about like that, not as big as this, but it was . . .

Q: About a yard long?

A: About a yard, yes. It was blue but two people could sit on it. And then it had three other chairs. One was a rocker on a platform.

Q: A platform rocker.

A: Yes. And then the others were straight-legged. But they was all velvet. They was just beautiful, I thought.

Q: What kind of draperies did she have at the windows?

A: Lace curtains.

Q: Lace curtains.

A: Lace curtains that laid on the floor. They would be long and spread out on the floor, you know.

Q: To wash those, did she have to put them on stretchers?

A: She put them on—I've put that, and put carpet—they had a carpet stretcher.

Q: A carpet stretcher? Now I've never heard of a carpet stretcher.

A: Well, there's a carpet stretcher. You put it down on the floor and stretch the carpet to make it tight and then you tacked all along the wall, tacked the carpet down.

Q: Then you would scrub it after that?

A: No. We'd take it up and we would beat it every spring and put it back on. But you had to have the carpet stretcher to make it fit tight.

Q: I see. Then the stretcher was there all of the time in other words.

A: Well, we took it up and put it away.

Q: Yes. Well the stretcher was—after you beat it you put it on the stretcher, was that it?

A: No. After you beat it—it was just a little stretcher about like that. And it had a handle on it and you'd press it down and put your foot on it, or put your knee on it, something to hold it and work that handle to stretch it back up to the wall and then hurry and tack it down.

Q: Oh I see.

A: Yes.

Q: After you beat it, then that's the way you laid it.

A: Yes.

Q: I see.

A: Yes, you had a carpet beater, and put it on the line.

Q: I see. Did you have to beat the carpet?

A: Yes. And the dust would just fly.

Q: How often? Once a year?

A: Once a year in the spring. Took all of the beds down every year, took them out and washed the springs and the slats and just washed all of the windows. There was twenty-one windows in the house. Then we had the dining room. And we had a Brussels carpet on the dining room. And Grandma varnished everything in that dining room, the table, the sideboards and that little table that was in the dining room that I showed you that we had the lamps on. Every spring she varnished all of the chairs. And for a week after you got them varnished you couldn't sit down on them. And Frank took the varnish off of that little table.

Q: They had a new coat of varnish every spring.

A: Every spring. Everything—we had a sideboard and it was full of dishes and on the top she had big dishes. Well, I'll show you what . . . taping stopped)

Q: Oh dear.

A: And she had two children after that and they're both dead.

Q: Oh dear.

A: And the doctor always said that it did something internally to her, that something wasn't right after that.

Q: The tornado did?

A: Yes, the tornado.

Q: You had a dining room table in your dining room. Was it a . . .

A: A dining room table with big legs, big fat legs. And six dining room chairs and that little table in there for the lamp and a sideboard. The sideboard was like that and had dishes down underneath. And a big mirror in it, you know. And then a shelf across the top.

Q: A sideboard about five feet long maybe.

A: Yes. And then we'd set in there a lot. We had a stove in there.

Q: Oh you had a stove in the dining room.

A: In the dining room, a stove in the living room. In the kitchen we had a kitchen stove.

Q: What did you use for fuel in all of those stoves?

A: Coal. Yes, we used coal. See, coal was dug right there.

Q: What was your kitchen like? What was the . . .

A: Well, we had a cookstove that had a reservoir for hot water. And we had a corner cabinet in one of the corners. We had a safe in there with glass doors. You've seen safes?

Q: Yes.

A: And that's where we kept our eating dishes, you know.

Q: Where did you keep your flour and cornmeal and things like that?

A: Down in the bottom. And then we had a cabinet that we kept with sugar and the cornmeal in in a bin. Did you ever see a . . .

Q: Yes.

A: You've seen a bin where you pull the drawer out and it drops down.

Q: Yes.

A: Well we had a bin there. On one side we kept tea and coffee and I don't know, salt, and things like that.

Q: The flour and cornmeal and things like that you just bought in bulk then, big bags.

A: Oh yes. They wasn't in sacks, only just the sacks they put it in. They dipped it up, you know.

Q: What kind of fuel did you use in your stove?

A: Well sometimes we used corncobs in the summer. Then we had a coal oil, not coal oil, gasoline stove for summer mostly.

Q: That must have been later though, right?

A: Yes. Later on. Grandma bought it—I don't know where she bought it but it was a—well, it had burners on top, kind of like electric now, you know.

Q: Yes.

A: And Frank and I had that too, whenever we—we was married in the spring and then we bought a gasoline stove when we went to Carterville.

Q: What kind of lighting did you have in your house?

A: Coal oil. But when we went to Carterville they had electric.

Q: What? Just regular coal oil lamps with a chimney, glass chimney on them?

A: Yes. Yes, just like—I've got one now that's the coal oil. Well they don't call it coal oil now. When you buy it, it's colored.

Q: I see.

A: Fuel oil they call it.

Q: And those lamps must have been hard to clean.

A: Oh I had to clean them, cleaned them with paper, you know. You didn't wash them. You wiped them. You wadded the paper up, you know, and you just wiped them out all of the time, kept them shiny and you could shine them good.

Q: Because of the oil stuff and you didn't have to wash.

A: No, you didn't wash them.

End of Side One, Tape Two

A: During our dinner or breakfast or whatever we'd talk about people, where they lived and, you know, I miss that because I don't have a chance to relive all of that. And . . .

Q: You were telling me about clipping the wicks on the coal oil lamps.

A: Yes. Well, you had to make them straight because if they was peaked a little bit it smoked the chimney, you know, if you didn't have them exactly straight. And I trimmed them every morning and wiped them clean and that's a little hard to do if you don't wash anything, you know, to get over every bit. Just like you'd try to clean a dish, not wash it, just wipe it.

Q: Just wipe it.

A:.Yes. It's a little hard to do. And I dreaded that smell of gasoline.

Q: What other chores did you have to do around the house, Marie?

A: Cut kindling for the—if I wanted to go someplace, like skate that evening after school I'd run home right quick and get busy and cut the

kindling so Grandma would let me go, you know. I'd get that done right quick, what I was supposed to do. And burn extra papers or anything that you had. And then later on when I got a little older I had to deliver milk, you know.

Q: You told me about that once, but just in a bucket?

A: Yes.

Q: You delivered it and then would they take out so much with . . .

A: I would pour it out. I had a measurer.

Q: I see.

A: I carried the measurer with me. And had a bigger bucket, you know, with the bulk of it in. And then if they needed a half gallon or a quart or a pint—some people just bought a pint. And then sometimes I would sell too much, maybe some extra person would want some and I'd sell that. Then I'd have to go back and get more milk.

Q: The bucket must have been pretty heavy to . . .

A: Yes, it was heavy for little me. Yes, I was a little girl. And Grandma would get me dressed to go to Sunday School. And she'd stand at the front door and watch me leave and she'd always say, "Now, walk tall, Marie, walk tall." She meant she wanted me to throw my shoulders back and walk like I was a Queen Elizabeth.

Q: My grandmother used to say the same thing to me.

A: Did she?

Q: That's right.

A: She'd say, "Walk tall," so I knew to put my head back and walk straight, you know.

Q: What did you charge for the milk?

A: I don't know.

Q: You don't remember.

A: I don't remember how much we charged.

Q: And this was done every day because you had to milk the cows every day.

A: Yes. Yes, sometimes we'd have two cows. If the business got, Grandma would buy another cow. And then when she'd sell them to the beef, where they butchered them, you know, then I'd cry.

Q: That's understandable.

A: I did always. And then I wouldn't eat any meat that would come from the butcher shop for a long time.

Q: Would she sell to the butcher shop at Grandmother Walker's store or just any butcher shop?

A: Yes. Well, there mostly. And sometimes there would be an extra butcher shop. Wherever paid us the most money.

Q: Paid the most money.

A: Yes. And when they'd get too old, I don't think they made very good beef but you didn't have much choice then. You ate what they had to sell.

Q: Was your only refrigeration your up ground cellar?

A: Yes.

Q: So, if you bought meat you had to buy it every day?

A: Oh, you'd just run to the butcher store or shop and buy just what you was going to eat that day. No, you couldn't keep—now bacon, you kept bacon and bought it in the slab, you know.

Q: You didn't have a smokehouse?

A: Yes, we had a smokehouse. We butchered some. Grandma would always raise one pig anyhow for us. And my uncle lived—when she got her money from the farm from the coal, she built him a house on the lot that she owned back of us. And he always raised a pig for his pork. And then beef, every once in a while some neighbor would butcher a beef that lived maybe out in the country and we'd buy a chunk of beef and smoke it, smoke the beef.

Q: So you smoked both beef and pork.

A: And pork, yes. Our smokehouse didn't have any floor in it. I mean it was wood or dirt. No, wood.

Q: Was the smokehouse brick or what?

A: No, it was wood. And it had things hanging, hooks, kind of like that, you know, hanging where you hung the stuff and then you smoked it from building a fire down on the floor.

Q: Wasn't that kind of dangerous in a wooden . . .

A: Yes. It was dangerous but it wasn't next to anything.

Q: Yes, it was out by itself.

A: Yes. It's out by itself. And then when we gather the onions and potatoes we'd spread them out in there and let them dry before we'd put them in the cellar, you know.

Q: Oh? So they'd last longer.

A: Yes. Didn't smoke them or anything but just spread them out to let them . . .

Q: To get the moisture out of them.

A: Yes.

Q: Of course you didn't have any plumbing.

A: Oh no. No, we had an outdoor toilet.

Q: So how did you have the toilet?

A: And the day we washed we scrubbed the floor and the seats and washed on the back porch. I never did tell you about the bedrooms. We had three bedrooms. And off of the dining room was a small bedroom. And that's the one Grandma and I slept in. Then we had two other bedrooms for company or some of the folks that would come to stay overnight or . . .

Q: Did they have stoves in them?

A: No, the living room stove would heat them. They was off of the living room.

Q: This was all on one floor then?

A: Yes, it was all on one floor. And Grandpa intended, why he ever intended at that late date—there was room for three or four rooms upstairs. If he'd have lived, he would have finished that up upstairs.

Q: So you did have an attic then?

A: Oh yes, a big attic. Over the whole house. And great big windows up in all of those parts. I told you about crawling under the house, didn't I, getting the eggs?

Q: No.

A: Well, some of the chickens would get out of the pen and steal their nests out underneath the house and maybe there would be four or five eggs in them before we'd discover that she had got out, you know, and got under the house. Well, Grandma would put an old apron on me, one of her big aprons that she had, tied around me, and it would cover me head to foot. And I'd have to crawl under the house and get the eggs out of—and that was the most frightening thing I did—only going down once

a year and washing out the cistern, you know. But, I'd make her stand right there and talk to me every minute while I was under the house. I guess I thought the house would fall on me. I don't know.

Q: Well, it was dark and buggy and . . .

A: Dark, and there could have been snakes or something.

Q: Yes.

A: I never did see one but now a lot of times she killed them in the garden.

Q: You mentioned washing clothes on the back porch. How did you wash your clothes?

A: Rub them on a board. And then out in the yard she had a, later on when it was summer she had a long kettle, about that long. It was black on the outside and it was white, it looked like whitewash on the inside. Of course it wasn't whitewash. But it was white in there. And it stood up on two bricks and we'd build a fire under it and boiled the water and boiled the sheets and the pillow cases and the towels. I guess that made them cleaner, I don't know.

Q: What did you do in the wintertime for washing clothes?

A: Had that kettle and take the two front lids off of the stove and that middle piece that went through from one . . .

Q: This is the cook stove that you're talking about in the kitchen?

A: Yes. And take the two lids off and then that middle piece and set that boiler on that. It just fit right there and boiled them.

Q: And where did you hang them up then in the wintertime?

A: Out in the smokehouse.

Q: You hung them in the smokehouse?

A: Yes.

Q: Didn't they get awfully smokey?

A: Well no. It wasn't used.

Q: It wasn't working.

A: It wasn't working in the smoke then.

Q: And it was big enough to hang . . .

A: Hang the clothes.

Q: How big was the smokehouse?

A: Well, it was long. I don't know why . . .

Q: Maybe twenty feet long?

A: Maybe so.

Q: And then how wide?

A: Well, it was not as wide as this room. It wasn't that shape. It was more long, maybe about half . . .

Q: About ten by twenty feet maybe?

A: Something like that.

Q: Well, then it would be a good place to dry clothes sure.

A: We had rope lines and every once in a while we'd have to take the rope lines down and wash them. Grandma would put them in the boiler, you know, and wash them then. You had a stick that you poked them down, you know.

Q: Yes. And you'd use soap that you'd made yourself?

A: Yes. Homemade soap. Later on we got so, after we didn't make so much soap we'd use Lenox Soap. I don't know if there's any—I don't hear of Lenox anymore.

Q: Is that a brand name?

A: That's a brand name. And we used Four X coffee. But I didn't never drink coffee. I never drank a cup. Grandma made tea for me.

Q: Was that a canned coffee or in packages or . . .

A: In packages, yes. It was Four X. And there was a coupon come with it and you could send and get tableclothes and curtains and all kinds of things that you saved.

Q: Oh really?

A: Yes. Send them away and get things.

Q: How did you take baths?

A: Behind the dining room stove or the kitchen stove, bring in a number two tub and take a bath in it.

Q: Yes. Boil the water on the stove and . . .

A: Yes. It had a reservoir on the end of the stove.

Q: Yes.

A: You'd heat water there.

Q: How big was the reservoir, Marie?

A: I don't know how many gallons . . .

Q: It held more than one gallon.

A: Oh yes. It was as long as the back of the stove which was about like that. And then it would be about that wide.

Q: Maybe four feet by two feet, something like that?

A: Something like that. Yes, that—and the lid opened up, you know, all the way. And then you could lean that up there with something that held it up, you know, kind of a lever or something. And, you know, always warmed water to wash dishes and everything, you know. But we had to pull the—we didn't have a pump. We had a bucket on a pulley.

Q: You didn't have a pump anyplace in your . . .

A: No. No, there was no pump in the well or the cistern.

Q: Was that a common thing, not to have pumps? Or when did pumps . . .

A: Yes. People didn't have them.

Q: They just didn't have them.

A: They just didn't have them.

Q: That came at a later time.

A: Later time.

Q: Later time.

A: Yes, later time. And we never had—at that house, the cyclone, after it went through the Red Cross built Grandma a house. See, they furnished the house.

Q: Your grandmother apparently was both your mother and father.

A: Yes.

Q: How was she as a disciplinarian?

A: Strict as could be.

Q: For instance if you were naughty, what was her . . .

A: Oh, she never whipped me or did anything like that, scold me mostly. And I guess I was pretty good. I didn't ever get whipped or anything, you know.

Q: Well you did tell me one time about Mr. Miller's . . .

A: Yes, well she took me back there and made me take the cantalope.

Q: What did you do? You took a melon out of his field?

A: He had them all pulled and he always would give me one if it was soft or if there was something wrong with it, just a little something that we could cut out. And one evening he wasn't there when I went to get the cow. So I'd always been used to getting a cantalope while they was getting ripe, you know, so I just took one home with me because I knew he'd give me one if he had been there. So I took it home and Grandma made me—she said, "Did Mr. Miller give it to you?" And I said, "No, he wasn't there. But I just took it." Well, she took me back. And I cried all of the way back.

Q: And made you return it.

A: And made me return it. And he wanted to give it to me, let me take it. She wouldn't let me have it.

Q: Did he raise quite a few melons on his farm?

A: He sold them.

Q: Yes. Did he raise both watermelons . . .

A: Watermelons and cantalopes. And had them in his yard. And he was right on the country road where people came into town and went out of town.

Q: Was that all he raised on his farm?

A: No. Everything.

Q: He raised . . .

A: Corn and beans and wheat. He had a big farm. He made a lot of money.

Q: He lived right behind you.

A: Yes. It was about a mile out.

Q: Yes.

A: But it was north of me. And these people that had the threshing machine that had the car, they lived on about five or six lots before Mr. Miller north of us.

Q: You also told me about making doll clothes on the forbidden sewing machine.

A: Yes. That was funny. Grandma would go to town with her basket to carry her things home, what she bought you know. And when the pension come in, she laid in everything that she had to buy, you know. And she'd go to the store and the minute she left I had in mind what I was going to sew, doll clothes. And she never would let me touch the machine. And I can see now why she wouldn't because there was a man that come through maybe once every three or four months that sold needles and thread and, well, all kinds of things, you know. He'd come and unfold all of—he was a Jew. He'd unfold everything and lay it out on the floor or a table and you'd pick out what you wanted.

Q: What? Patterns or material?

A: Material mostly. And he never had any patterns. And sometimes Grandma—the things that he had that she wanted, she'd cook dinner for him, and then while she was getting dinner ready he'd go someplace else and sell, you know, and then come back and eat dinner. And then he'd give her a tablecloth or maybe a curtain or two or, you know, just whatever she wanted, what she would pick out.

Q: So he had ready-made goods as well as yards?

A: Oh yes. He had things like that, and things that the store didn't carry, you know.

Q: Did he carry his wares in a wagon?

A: No. It was kind of like a buggy, a horse, and then it had a back end to it.

Q: Did he go from town to town?

A: Yes. He come from Du Quoin.

Q: Were there many itinerant peddlers like that?

A: Yes, quite a few. And then we had a fellow that come in a long ways that stayed in town, oh, lots of times and trimmed the grapevines and trimmed trees. My grandfather sold a lot of trees and things like that, you know. And we had pear trees and plum and peach. Well, they needed some—I don't know if they sprayed them then, I imagine they did. But I can't remember them spraying them things. And this fellow would come in and take care of all of those trees and the grapevine, not only just ours, but other people. And we didn't pay him much. Seemed like fifty cents, but I guess he made his living naturally.

Q: Sure. What other kinds of peddlers did you have that would come in by wagon and sell things directly to the house?

A: Glasses, eye glasses.

Q: Oh, eye glasses.

A: He had a piece of velvet, spread it down and then you'd just pick out

a pair of glasses and try them. (taping stopped)

A: Now you know that wasn't too good.

Q: These were just magnifying type glasses.

A: Yes. No, they had little second vision.

Q: Oh they did?

A: Yes.

Q: Things for . . .

A: Yes.

Q: . . . that would act as bifocals.

A: Yes. They would act as bifocals. And you'd just keep trying them on and trying them on. And you was the judge, what you could read. Grandma would get—and you know she had upper teeth, artificial, false teeth. And it would just scare me to death when she'd take them out. I'd just be so frightened when—I'd shut my eyes. You know, I didn't want to see.

Q: Didn't want to see her without her teeth.

A: I didn't want to see her without those in her mouth. Her mouth sunk in, you know.

Q: Right. It changed her appearance of course.

A: It changed her appearance. She wasn't Grandma, you know.

Q: Something we haven't talked about with your grandmother. When you got sick what kind of medical treatment did she give you?

A: Well, if I was real sick, which I was once. . . .

Q: What was that?

A: They called it remittent fever, but I'm sure it was pneumonia. And I think that's what caused my lung to be bad because after I was married a time or two I'd have spells where it would take me a long time to get over and well, she'd call the doctor. Mom's cousin married a doctor and he was a very good doctor I thought, Dr. Grizzell. And it seemed as though since I was some relation to his wife he was very anxious to stay with me and get me better, you know.

Q: Yes.

A: And I know when I was real sick one time—I guess I must have been about ten years old, another girl and I got out—and she just died not long ago. She was older than me. And we got out and waded the water around and it was early in the spring. And picked greens. And I never ate a green in my life. I didn't like—I didn't think I'd like them. I didn't never eat anything, only what I wanted to eat. That was one nice thing Grandma did. And I think that, what they called remittent fever was pneumonia, was what I had because we both got our feet wet. She had a bad cold but I was worse.

Q: How did they treat it?

A: Well I know I took medicine because I wouldn't take it for Grandma and my mother came then and stayed a couple of weeks while I was in bed. I was in bed about three weeks. And I wouldn't take it from her either. And one of the neighbors, this girl's mother, I wanted water out of her well and I wanted her to give me the medicine, tablets. And the way she gave it, she would bury it in a spoonful of jelly and give me that mouthful of jelly and some of her water out of her well. Why I wanted her water, I don't know, but that's the way it was. And never drank any water, only what was out of her well because Inez, her daughter, carried it. Her husband, Mrs. Davis' husband, was the druggist. That might have had something to me, maybe I thought that would help.

Q: Did you ever have any treatment for ear aches or colds or . . .

A: I never had earache. And for colds every Saturday night she gave me a physic. I don't know why. I always wondered, Syrup of Pepsin. She'd give me, not a very big, but I'd be up on the slop jar through the night from taking that. And I guess it was just habit, maybe she thought I needed it. I don't know what else.