Transcript of OH-00176

Lena Rebecca Welch

Interviewed by

John Wearmouth

on

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Typographic Note

- [Inaudible] is used when a word cannot be understood.
- Brackets are used when the transcriber is not sure about a word or part of a word, to add a note indicating a non-verbal sound and to add clarifying information.
- Em Dash — is used to indicate an interruption or false start.
- Ellipses … is used to indicate a natural extended pause in speech

Subjects

Agriculture
Rural conditions
Rural schools
Single-parent families
Transportation

Tags

Food preservation

Transcript

John Wearmouth [J]: This is John Wearmouth interviewing Mrs. Lena Rebecca Welch at her home in Morgantown on South View Road right on the Potomac River. This is November 14, 1986. Mrs. Welch was Lena Rebecca Arnold and she was born at Malabar, Florida January 16th, 1892. She taught school in Brevard County, Florida before coming to Charles County, Maryland in 1916 after having married Mr. Welch. You came up here as a bride?

Lena Rebecca Welch [L]: Yes on my honeymoon.

J: On your honeymoon. It's been a long honeymoon hasn't it? Okay this interview is part of the Charles County Community College Oral History Program. We'll talk to Mrs. Welch about living on a farm in Charles County primarily near Welcome where she raised a family. You now have how many surviving children?

L: Six.

J: And where are they living?

L: One's in California, one in South Dakota—

J: Name them as you go along. I think that would be nice to put their names down on the record.

L: Mary Virginia is in South Dakota. Ruth Juanita is in California, Los Angeles. Morty I mean Mortimer Welch my son is in Welcome. Faith is in Pomfret—no White Plains. And [Nile] is in La Plata. Marianne's in Temple Hills, Maryland I guess it is.

J: And all of these people went to school here in Charles County? This is their home?

L: Yes.

J: So you've already left a mark on Southern Maryland with a family like that. I understand that where and when your family lived near Malabar, that part of Florida on the east coast near Cape Canaveral was still a frontier type community?

L: Yes it was—wasn't anything there when Dad come down looking.

J: And he came from near Syracuse, New York? Waterville?

L: Waterville.

J: Waterville, New York, central New York State pretty much, with his brothers and then went back home and married the girl that he had known there and then came back.

L: Yeah.

J: Did he live the rest of his life there in that community?

L: Yes.

J: The house was right on the Indian River?

L: Yeah.

J: What was the climate like in those days? What are your impression of it after having moved here for oh 70 years? Do you remember anything particularly inviting about it or uncomfortable?

L: It was beautiful. Such a long summer. I mean such a short winter. We really enjoyed the cool weather because the summer was so long. Altogether it was good.

J: Were there any so called tourist seasons there then?

L: Yes.

J: Were there a few from the north coming down that early to get away from the cold?

L: Yes. Henry Flagler built a railroad. I remember when the railroad was put through. That was what brought the tourists before then there was no way for them to get down there.

J: About what year did he complete that road?

L: I was about...I was about six years old when I remember seeing them working on the railroad. So it must have been about 18—

J: Spanish—American War period.

L: Yeah that was in 1898. I remember that too seeing the troop trains go through carrying the soldiers down to Key West. We used to go out and meet the trains and throw the men oranges and flowers and help them on the way.

J: And you had four sisters and two brothers?

L: Yes.

J: And were all the girls out there throwing oranges and greeting?

L: Well just once in a while.

J: Did the train make a stop there near the Indian River?

L: Yeah because locomotives burned wood in those days. At the station they had wood and water they took on. That's the reason they had to stop.

J: And that was Malabar? Malabar Station.

L: Yeah.

J: Okay.

L: Locomotives burned out [a pat of] pine wood. Made a lot of smoke.

J: Could you smell it? Did it smell like pine burning?

L: Yeah.

J: Were there sparks coming out of the stack on the end?

L: More or less I guess.

J: How old were you when you were able to take your first ride on that track?

L: That's the only way we had after a sailboat was a first and only way to get around but after the railroad went through that's the only way we had to travel to get any place. Our mother took us back to New York several times by train. That's the first I remember.

J: About what times were the roads good enough so that your father could get an automobile?

L: In Florida?

J: In Florida.

L: The first time I saw one was when I was in high school. I was about 15 I guess then, 15 or 16. Just had the shell roads. There was no paved roads.

J: Where did you go to high school?

L: Cocoa.

J: Cocoa was that far from Malabar?

L: Yeah we had—my sister taught school and I and my younger sister went to high school there. So we rented rooms and lived there during the week.

J: How did you get back and forth?

L: By train.

J: By train. Okay is Cocoa on the beach, on the ocean?

L: Yes.

J: What is that called today?

L: It's Cocoa.

J: Still Cocoa.

L: Yeah and then Cocoa Beach is across the river.

J: How did most of the people earn their living there? Was your father farming? Was he in agriculture?

L: He had an orange grove and nursery. Then he was county commissioner and on the school board and mayor of the town a little later on. Then he did real estate too got quite a bit of land.

J: Did he ever meet Mr. Flagler?

L: No.

J: Okay so do you recall how your father moved his crops to market?

L: By train. Dad used to grow string beans quite a bit too. At the homeplace and then there's lots of pineapple fields across on the peninsula. They were shipped by train. Of course, oranges. He did a little bit of everything.

J: Were those oranges ripe when he shipped them? Were they orange?

L: Mostly yes had to be really to eat. I remember we used to help him pack the oranges. Over in the orange packing house.

J: Were they shipped as you got them or were they partly refrigerated in those days? Were they packed in any kind of ice?

L: Weren't any refrigeration. And the string beans all of us kids used to pick them for 25 cents a crate. We thought that was making good money.

J: How many [pounds] would that be? A crate of string beans.

L: I guess [inaudible] between 30 and 50 pounds maybe. They weren't too heavy.

J: That's a lot of beans. So when did you decide that you wanted to be a teacher?

L: Well that was the only thing to do. Girls couldn't do anything but be nurses or teachers in those days.

J: So even then your horizons were on being a housewife and nothing else?

L: Yes.

J: What was the attitude of your mother and father towards daughters who wanted to take advantage of their intellects and drive?

L: He helped us all they could and sent us to the [teacher night] a teacher's college so we passed examination.

J: Did either of your brothers get as much education as you did?

L: No I don't think so. My younger brother he was—that was during World War I—he wanted to join the army and Dad didn't care too much about it but he finally signed for him. He wasn't but 16 so he spent most of the war in the Navy Yard there in Washington. So when the next war broke out and it was 40 years later, World War II, he joined again to see some action he said. So he joined the [CV's] that time and just about killed him.

J: How old a man was he then?

L: He was in his 40's when World War II started. He died from that—he didn't die during the war but he died from injuries.

J: Where did you go to teacher's college?

L: That would be in Stetson University.

J: Was that a two year or four year course of study?

L: Well the full college was a four year course but you could take one year if you're a teacher.

J: And get a certificate?

L: Yes. Teacher's didn't make but 40 dollars a month. To even imagine...

J: Did the State of Florida give you an examination before they issued a certificate?

L: Yes.

J: Where did you get your first teaching job? in what community?

L: [Micco], that was 10 miles, 12 miles [south of home]. And the next year I taught in [Grant] and that was six miles south of home. I rode horseback for six months. Lived at home and rode horseback every day.

J: Were you pretty good at that? Were you a good horse woman?

L: Yes.

Roberta Wearmouth [R]: What was the school year? What was the school year what months?

L: Six months.

R: Which months?

L: Well it was six months. I think we started about the first of September and then we'd get out early in the spring. Because most of the children had to help out at home among the groves or something.

J: What influence did the heat of the summer have in those years on a farm on agriculture? Did things slow down a little bit during the June through August period?

L: Yes it weren't...our growing season started in the fall just opposite of what it is here. Planted all the crops in the fall. Then when the hot weather come there was nothing except oranges of course. All the produce was grown in the winter time.

J: So the climate really had a very broad serious influence on your life?

L: Yes.

J: But you learned to tolerate and get along with this type of life?

L: Yes.

J: And work with mother nature instead of fighting her. What were some of the experiences you had during hurricane seasons? How old were you—how far back can you remember having to live through a hurricane?

L: We were always hoping we'd have one. We heard about it but I never did live through one. We used to have kind of bad wind storms but there was nothing like what you'd call a bad storm.

J: Well you know in about 23 or 4 years living down there on the coast you never experienced a severe hurricane?

L: No just strong winds and high surf but didn't do any damage or anything.

J: So I'm looking at your old family home here. It looks like it was pretty substantial and might have weathered something pretty tough. Anyway your father built this house himself did he after he arrived?

L: Yes.

J: And were you born in that house on the Indian River?

L: Yes.

J: So some very pleasant memories there?

L: Surely yeah.

J: How did you meet your husband Mr. Welch from Charles County and what took him down to Brevard County, Florida?

L: That's another story.

J: I'll bet it is and that's how we get launched into the real part of this local history.

L: Well I always liked to garden and we kept boarders there after all the others married and left, our oldest sister and I. I always like to have a garden and the *Southern [Muralist],* was a paper from Georgia, had a contest and wanted people to write about their gardens you know. So I wrote about mine and won second prize from the *Southern [Muralist].* My husband happened to see the letter and he took that paper out here. They published your address and name and everything. I heard something about a dozen different people all over the country. So he kept writing, we kept writing back and forth.

J: So you were what we would call pen pals today in the beginning.

L: That's right.

J: Where did he live exactly? Do you know where his home was here in Charles County?

L: Welcome.

J: In the Welcome area.

L: That's where he was born.

J: Before I forget what were the names of his mother and father do you recall?

L: His mother was Clara Mattingly. His father was Richard Vernon Welch.

J: Marvelous that you know right off the top of your head. Are any of your sisters or brothers living today?

L: No I'm the last one.

J: The last leaf.

R: Were you the youngest?

L: Youngest lived the longest.

J: Has your health been pretty good most of your life?

L: I thank the Lord for good health every day.

J: No serious disabilities at all. That's marvelous. Well anyways back to the meeting. When did this meeting take place and where between you and Mr. Welch?

L: Oh he came down after we'd been writing about a year. I was going with someone else then so I didn't pay much attention to him. So he went back and come back home then. We started writing again and next time he come down we got married.

J: He was very serious about it wasn't he?

L: The other fellow went back to Montana and I didn't see him anymore.

J: Well just think you could have spent your life in [Inaudible] Montana. So how long did you live down there together before coming back up to Maryland?

L: Oh we just stayed the week before we got married. Then we took the train to Jacksonville and then boat to Baltimore and took the horse and buggy on back down to the farm.

J: Where did you get off the train, in La Plata?

L: No, no we took a boat to Maryland here at Mason Springs. Got off at—we took the boat to Baltimore so we didn't take a train after that.

J: Okay so then at Baltimore you got on another boat?

L: Steam yeah.

J: Steam and it came back down and up the Potomac.

L: Somewhere near Indian Head.

R: Glymont?

L: Glymont I guess it was.

J: Quite possible. Well were there any surprises in Southern Maryland? What were some of the culture or history shocks that hit you during the first few years?

L: Yes I'd seen—I pioneered in Florida and when I come up here things were just as bad so I was almost a pioneer again.

R: What year was that? What year did you come here?

L: It was 1916.

J: And where was your very first home here?

L: At Welcome.

J: Right on [Fire Tower] Road?

L: Yes.

J: Near your husband's family?

L: [Inaudible] picture on the middle there is my home [inaudible]. Yeah my husband sawed out the timber and built and picked up the rocks and he built the house himself.

R: Is it still there?

L: Yes.

R: Does it look like that?

L: Yes.

R: Oh I think I know where it is then.

J: Well that was a nice substantial modern home typical of—when was it completed roughly?

L: Let's see it's been oh 60 years ago. 60 or 70 years ago I guess. Quite a while.

J: Did he do a lot of the work himself?

L: Yeah he just did it with farm labor.

J: Looks like a well-designed and well-constructed house. Stone walls around the porch.

L: He put all that stone workings there. The stone chimneys and....

J: What were some of the specific things that you had to deal with during the first few years that were a bit strange to you?

L: Being away from my family was the hardest part. I'd never lived on a farm before. So much work.

J: Were you given any idea by Mr. Welch about what kind of chores you would be faced with as a housewife up here?

L: Yes more or less but I thought farming would be a lot more fun than it was. It was more work than it was.

J: A lot of plain drudgery. What were some of the more unpleasant jobs on the farm that you faced during the first 10 years or so?

L: Well the children had to get up and milk the cows before they went to school in the morning. Then they had to walk a mile to catch the school bus and it seemed like it was...seemed like all the work of course no electricity, no modern conveniences.

J: Where did your children go to elementary school?

L: Well that was in about 1920 the little old one room schools was all they had in the county. A little one room school out near Hill Top. They had to walk through the woods to get to the school and La Plata just had one two room school until the hurricane—not hurricane—tornado tore it down.

J: When was your first child born Mrs. Welch?

L: 1917.

J: 1917.

L: That's my oldest son.

J: So he probably started school about what 1922?

L: Yeah about six years old.

J: And that was the elementary school at Hill Top?

L: Yes.

J: Is that building standing now do you know?

L: I doubt it. All colored people live around there. I don't know whether it is now or not.

J: Do you remember the names of some of the teachers of your children during the 20's at that school? You probably had one child at least in that school during most of the 20's.

L: Yeah there was three, three oldest went to that school and then the high school was built in La Plata so then they started going to elementary and high school out there.

J: How did they get into La Plata?

L: Had a school bus.

J: There were school buses during the late 20's.

R: Did they have to walk to Route 6 to get the bus?

L: Had to walk a mile over to Welcome to catch the bus.

J: What sort of a community was Welcome during the first 10 or so years of your life there with respect to the business there, the stores? Can you recall what these establishments were and who their owners were?

L: Otis Watson had a little country store. That was the only store there. That's all there was at Welcome besides the post office.

J: Were they together in the same building?

L: Yes.

J: Was that the building on the right as you turn into Fire Tower Road after having come from say Port Tobacco? Heading westward across the county through Welcome. Then when we hit Fire Tower Road and turn right is that the store on the right corner?

R: The present post office.

L: No, no it was across the road from there. That other little building.

J: I see.... What were you able to grow on the farm to keep the house groing in way of food?

L: We grew everything. Even our flour. Had the wheat carried it up to Millard's Mill there up near—

J: Mason Springs.

L: Mason Springs. Ground our wheat for flour and our corn for cornmeal. Then we raised our chickens and pork and beef. Had our milk, vegetables, eggs, some of the [inaudible]. Our grocery bill one year was 80 dollars for the whole year.

J: Well that was unique even for those days for a farm family to be that close to being self-supporting in food.

L: Yes.

R: Today they spend that in one week.

J: For very little.

L: I know it. I spend that much on myself.

J: What—now how many years did you live there in Fire Tower? You and the children?

L: Let's see 20 years ago was when I moved down here.

J: Okay you left there in 66?

L: Yeah. But my son he stayed. He still worked on the farm.

J: Okay so you were there 50 years on Fire Tower Road? You've been in Charles County about 70.

L: Yes.

J: 50 there, 20 here. That really accounts for all your time in Charles County. How many acres were there on the farm? How many acres altogether?

L: 152.

J: Okay was there enough wood on the farm to take care of your fuel needs?

L: Yes plenty of wood.

J: Did you ever have to buy coal? Did you ever use coal?

L: No we never used coal.

J: Kerosene at all for heating or cooking?

L: Oh just in our lamps. Didn't have those oil lamps for lighting.

J: But for cooking it was wood 100 percent?

L: Yeah.

J: How did that go over with you when it was 100 degrees in the summer here?

L: Well—

J: Just didn't do it on those days?

L: We had wood stoves in Florida and this summer wasn't any big difference.

J: So that much you didn't like perhaps but you were not surprised by it. What chores did the girls—now how many daughters did you have?

L: I had six.

J: Six and what chores did they get involved in at home growing up?

L: Well the boys did more work than the girls. Girls worked there at the house and we made our own clothes on the sewing machine, and they did their own ironing and washing, and milked the cows, and helped feed the chickens and get the eggs.

J: Girls milked the cows too?

L: Yes.

J: Often usually before going to school?

L: Twice a day, morning and evening.

J: Five milk cows?

L: Yes. And had beef cattle too. Had sheep and pigs.

J: Were you able to grow enough fodder for most of the animals?

L: Yes. Never had to buy feed.

J: About what portion of the beef and pork were you able to sell?

L: All except what we needed to eat.

J: So you were able to sell what half of it or three quarters?

L: I guess that's right.

J: So when you say that in terms of today's diet and nutrition the Welch family was pretty well fed?

L: Yes.

J: A balanced diet?

L: Yes they had real home grown food.

J: At that time what was the financial condition of some of your neighbors and did they eat as well as you? In terms of managing a household yours must have been above average.

L: Well everybody worked hard. My neighbors they didn't have it as hard as we did but everybody worked hard. Everybody farmed.

J: Coming along Fire Tower Road from Route 6 who were your neighbors on that road and what side of the road were they on? Let's start on your side of the road which is the...north side?

L: East side I think it is.

J: East side okay alright yes you're right. East side.

L: Well the [Griggs] family was the first neighbors. That was Mr. [Dow's] daughter and her family.

J: How old was Mrs. [Griggs] when you met her?

L: Her children were in school. I guess she must have been in her 40's or 50's maybe.

J: William [Dow's] was her father?

L: Yes. The Watson's lived on the other side. Otis Watson. His wife was one of the [Dow's] girls too.

J: Who at that time lived at Rosemary [Lawn]?

L: Watson, Otis Watson.

J: A Watson okay his wife was a [Dow's] girl. What was her first name?

L: I can't remember.

J: Was it a fairly prosperous well managed farm when you were living nearby? Rosemary [Lawn]?

L: Yes. He rented out some acres. Tobacco was a big crop then, cash crop.

J: About how many acres of tobacco did your husband produce on the average?

L: I'd say between six and eight acres.

J: A lot of labor involved in that?

L: Yes he had to hire a lot of help to harvest that crop.

J: Did the girls ever help out with the tobacco?

L: Sometimes they helped strip it but they didn't help as much as the boys did. I helped more—I let them do the housework and I helped my husband.

J: In the heat of the summer out in the fields?

L: Yes all the time.

J: Cutting, harvesting, bringing it in, hanging?

L: Yeah.

J: The girls did help with the stripping and during the cool and damp season?

L: I did most. They helped me with the stripping.

J: What was a good year of production for that kind of acreage in pounds do you remember roughly? What did he consider a good yield per acre?

L: I really couldn't say [inaudible].

J: How did he package it for market?

L: At first we packed it in hogsheads there at the farm. Each type in a different hogshead and ship it to Baltimore. Then the loose leaf market opened...there's one in La Plata, the nearest. So then everyone took their tobacco out there and hadn't packed it. Just sold it on the loose leaf market.

J: Was that a labor saving system for you?

L: Yes.

J: To go from the hogsheads which you had to prize?

L: Yes. And some of it was shipped from boat down there at Brentland before the railroad went through. I mean before the railroad took it.

J: So you were able to ship either by water or by rail?

L: Yes.

J: What was the easiest and the most convenient for you?

L: Wasn't much difference. To La Plata was 10 miles and down to Brentland was about eight I guess.

J: What was the last year that your husband was able to farm?

L: Two years before he died. He died in the sanitorium up at Sabillasville. He was up there two years with TB.

J: How long had he had that?

L: Well we didn't know until he went up there. Doctor's wouldn't tell you much in those days.

J: Who was your family doctor?

L: Doctor Owens.

J: La Plata.

L: In La Plata.

J: Did you ever meet his daughters?

L: No I just knew his son worked in A&P, run the A&P, but I never met his daughters.

J: They're still living in La Plata.

L: Yes I guess.

J: Did he make house calls? He must have.

L: Yes.

J: How did you let the doctor know that you needed him in an emergency of any kind.

L: You'd have a flag out by the road. Put on white flags when you needed him.

J: Did he make daily trips?

L: Doctor Bicknell at Pisgah he was more of a house call than Doctor Owens. This Doctor Bicknell drove a horse and buggy everyday practically. He's the one that took care of my husband.

J: So he passed on when, 1930?

L: 33.

J: 33 and this left you with how many children?

L: Eight children under 16.

J: Eight children under 16.

L: And that was just when that depression was starting. Everything the bottom dropped out of everything. Banks closed and what little money we had. What you had to sell brought nothing you might say.

J: How did you manage to divide up the work responsibilities? Who did what? With father now gone there were greater responsibilities placed on you and the children.

L: Well I helped the boys doing the farm work all I could. And the girls did most of the chores at the house. Of course we all helped in the garden. Everybody did all they could I guess. Everybody worked.

J: But you maintained your home? You didn't lose it. Kept it. That's a remarkable achievement. When did you move from horse powered equipment into machines? Do you remember the first tractor?

L: My son was in the Navy, oldest son, during the second world war and when he come out he bought a new tractor then to farm.

J: So you were using horse power?

L: Yeah mostly till then.

J: All that time?

L: Yes. We had six horses and cut the hay and baled it by...let's see had a hay baler. Now they do it all in one operation.

J: What kinds of horse drawn equipment did you have on the farm during the 30's? A hay baler.

L: A wheat thresher, thresh wheat. Of course plows and [lisps]....

J: Rake?

L: Rake.

J: Harrowers?

L: [Inaudible] wagons and trucks.

J: What was the first power driven vehicle truck? About what year did you get that? That was before the tractor was it?

L: No...yes I guess it was. The car was the worst. We bought a Model T Ford. It was the first vehicle we bought. Paid 500 dollars for it.

J: New?

L: Yes.

J: Where did you buy it?

L: From the Ford dealer wherever it was.

J: La Plata.

L Mathew Howard I guess.

J: That's right. Okay and that was mid 20's sometime in there?

L: I guess so. A long time ago.

J: How did that change your life? What new dimension did that bring?

L: A whole lot easier to—we had cousins in Washington and we got up to see them oftener. Of course my folks in Florida would come up every summer and we had a way to take them around. Made life more pleasant.

J: What about the condition of the roads during the 20's? How much of a struggle was it to get from Fire Tower Road into La Plata in the winter?

L: It was all dirt. Didn't have any—only hard surface road was US 1 to Washington. All others were just clay and everybody jacked their cars up in the winter time and used the horse and buggies. I used to drive to La Plata to groceries with the horse and buggy.

J: In the winter?

L: Yeah.

J: As late as what year roughly?

L I can't remember when the hard surface road was...while back I guess.

J: What are your impressions now of the town of La Plata? As you look back on it going down the main street? The condition of the road, were there sidewalks, what were some of the buildings, who were some of the merchants that you dealt with?

L: Well the town itself hasn't changed too much. Only there's more building on the outskirts of La Plata. Farrell's store was...had groceries and clothing and everything. Of course Bowling's store was small at that time. A&P was the only chain store for groceries.

J: Where was the A&P located relative to the buildings there today?

L: I thought it was in the same place.

R: I think it was where Bowling's...Bowling's expanded into them.

L: Oh, oh yes. Yeah that's right. Yes it's up next to Bowling's store.

R: And then there was the county trust I think next to—

L: The bank. Bowling's bought them out and merged their store.

J: Was the road paved in downtown La Plata in the 20's when you first went into La Plata?

L: More or less I guess. I can't remember too much.

J: I suppose you first drove through La Plata during 1916 or 17.

L: Well drove a horse and buggy yes.

J: Do you remember some of the merchants that you dealt with during the first two or three years say during the World War I period?

L: Well T. R. Farrell was where we got our dry goods. Course our grocery store there in Welcome, that was Watson.

J: Of Rosemary Lawn?

L: Yes. And they had an old theater there in a wooden building just across the street. We used to go to the movies.

J: Was that near the railroad tracks?

L: Yes. Used to take the tour and see all of the Shirley Temple movies.

J: Shirley Temple.

L: Then Bowling's Hotel that was next to the railroad tracks. People used to come down in the train had a place to stay.

J: Was that Victor Bowling?

L: Victor Bowling yes.

J: Did you ever go anywhere out of La Plata on the train with the children?

L: No.

J: No train trip. To what extent were you able to make the clothes for your family before World War II during the 30's, 20's and 30's? How talented a seamstress were you?

L: I don't know about talent but it was a necessity. We'd buy the material and look at one they'd like to have and then I'd come home and make it or try to make it.

J: Were there pattern books available?

L: Yes.

J: The girls in particular could look at?

L: Yeah.

J: Who had the best section of yard goods in La Plata during the 20's and 30's?

L: Bowling's store.

J: Right on the....

L: Then of course we went to the Washington [on the]...7th Street was where most of the main store then.

J: Which ones? Do you remember? I suppose [can].

L: Cans and Lansburgh's and Goldenberg's and...

J: Lansburgh's.

L: Lansburgh's yes. And the [Higg] Company.

J: Yeah they were all clustered there in that area. Now you went in by automobile then?

L: Yes.

J: You [forded in]. What road did you generally take to get into Washington? There were two ways of getting there from [inaudible phrase].

L: Well mostly US 1 through La Plata.

J: Okay. Old [Martha] Washington Street up through Clinton.

L: Yes.

J: [On the south part of Route 5 and on] Branch Avenue.

L: Usually stopped at [7 and V].

J: 7th and V?

L: Street yeah.

J: Did you drive yourself?

L: Never learned to drive.

J: You never learned to drive?

L: No.

J: Okay did your husband teach the older children to drive as soon as he thought they were ready?

L: No they were so young when he died. I guess he taught my oldest son but the others—

J: he would have been what 16?

L: Yeah but the others taught themselves I guess.

J: What responsibilities were settled on the shoulders of that oldest boy? Did he have to grow up pretty fast?

L: He certainly did. He didn't have any time for pleasure.

J: And what is his name again?

L: Mortimer.

J: Mortimer.

L: We'd call him Morty.

J: Okay and he's still in Charles County farming?

L: Yes, no we sold the farm last year. Fred Herbert has a store up...hardware store I guess it is up near White Plains. I don't know whether you know it or not. Quite a business. He bought the farm.

[Tape Interruption]

J: When you were in Florida you were teaching and you had in your day especially for a young lady a pretty good education. What were your special intellectual interests? Did you major in any particular area at all in college?

L: Just teaching.

J: Okay so in those days emphasis was placed on what studies?

L: Well they were more practical than they are nowadays. There was no technical education practically everything was something you needed, everyday needs.

J: The three R's plus any similar necessary.

L: Yeah.

J: So when you came up here to Charles County that was the end of your teaching career was it not?

L: Yeah.

J: And for good reason. You had a family of eight and all the work on the farm that you could handle. Did you miss that stimulation? The books, the studies, the teaching, being with people.

L: Yes more or less but I joined the PTA and always went out to their meetings. Then of course I helped my own children there at home with their lessons. It was a little different.

J: Were you able to help them with math?

L: Except Morty when he got into the trigonometry. That was over my head. I couldn't.

J: Where was he going to school when he was taking trigonometry?

L: La Plata.

J: La Plata High School.

L: Yes.

J: Did you feel that your children were well educated in the public schools of Charles County?

L: Yes. The ones that were educated always got good jobs. I mean all of mine did as soon as they got out of it. They got a good government job, all the girls did.

J: Do you feel that the edge they got at home because of your coaching stood them in pretty good stead?

L: Well it helped but the education at the school....

J: In your involvement with PTA did the teachers of your children encourage you to push their studies at home? Did you as a parent receive encouragement from the teachers to give the kids as much help as you could because the teachers knew what your background was I'm sure?

L: Yes. Jane Grey she was such a good teacher. She married Wheeler. She took special interest in the children and then encouraged me to help them all I could.

J: Who were some of the other teachers that you ran into through your PTA involvement? All the way through school.

L: Well Ms. Thompson. I don't remember her first name. Her parents lived next on the arm next to us. I can't names, getting where I can't remember names.

J: You're doing great.

L: [The very impressive] Sommers was one of the best friends of ours. He was principal for years. Ms. Stone, she wasn't Ms. Stone.

[R: Inaudible sentence].

L: Yes, yes.

J: She taught at La Plata?

L: Yes.

J: Were any of your children in the school in La Plata when the tornado hit it?

L: No that was before.

J: They were still going to school out in the country?

L: Yeah in the woods.

J: What was your husband's feeling towards education for his children?

L: He wanted them to have all they could get. He didn't want Morty to quit when he did to work on the farm but we had—I mean there was nothing else to do. I've got one of his letters he wrote. Said to please keep Morty in school and not let him quit but somebody had to do the work.

J: So how many of your children did eventually graduate from high school?

L: All six girls.

J: All the girls and how many of them went on beyond high school?

L: They all got work. Government jobs after they got out or got married. Two of them got married.

J: I suppose most of them are retired now and you have grandchildren out there in the career field.

L: Yes.

J: Did any member of the family work at Indian Head for the Navy?

L: Well my two sons and myself. I worked over there during the Korean War. Yeah the boys got tired of running the grocery bill. They said they were going to work at Indian Head to have some cash coming in so they farmed in between when they come back home and before the winter work.

J: Did you ever know Mrs. Carlson?

L: No.

J: Frieda Carlson, I guess maybe she worked over there even later than that. They farmed over near Friendship Landing and I guess she came into Charles County as a young lady from Germany about 1920. So you've been here longer than she has.

L: Yeah I remember then during the war you know we had the German prisoners work on the farms and when they worked for us I'd take their lunch out to them. They stayed out by the truck but when they come to Carlson's he'd invite them to sit down at the table with him you know. Government got after him about it. Said the prisoners could not eat with the civilians.

J: Well I understand they had kind of a hard time there for a while because of that feeling. That's understandable.

L: Well he was being kind to them. I'd take them out a whole gallon of milk and dinner and what vegetables we had. I mean they were just boys like our own. The guards used to go out and walk home with Ruth when she'd come from work and I asked them aren't you afraid they'd run away and he said, "They're not going anywhere. They [don't know where they are]." So he'd leave them down in the field working.

J: How many were working there on the average?

L: You had to take six at a time and then pay them little nothing very much.

J: Were they good workers would you say?

L: Some of them were and very good farm workers. They were very good skilled in other things. They weren't used to hard labor like that.

J: Where did they live? Where was their barrack?

L: Down there in Nanjemoy they had the prisoner of war camp down there. They were the lucky ones. Yes Mary Bowie and my neighbors the one she had one was wanting to get married after the war and everything was so bad off in Germany his girl couldn't even afford a new dress to get married in. So Mary Bowie, I mean he wrote and told Mary Bowie about it. So Mary Bowie picked out a real nice material and made a nice dress and sent it to him for them to get married.

R: Was this Ben Bowie's mother?

L: Yeah, yeah she was a really good hearted person.

J: Who are some of your favorite people during that part of your life? During the 20's and 30's when life was so hard. Who were some of the people that meant most to you and your family?

L: Well Mary Bowie and her family were one and—

J: Where did they live?

L: They lived down near [Ironsides].

R: [Inaudible phrase] at Brentland [down on] [Inaudible].

L: Yeah they bought that later. I don't know just people around Welcome there. Tell the truth we didn't have much time to visit. Everybody was working, didn't have...

J: When the kids were getting in to their teens what sort of entertainment or diversion was there available?

L: They had to make their own. We had sleigh riding and parties, barbecues, and then ball games, and sliding down the hill in snowy weather. They'd go down [the runs and grapevine swings]. Didn't have to worry about them not getting into bad company. I knew who they were with and never had any trouble in that.

J: Were there any embarrassing or uncomfortable times caused by friction between black and white people? I don't know what your background was in Florida. Did you find any differences between Florida and Southern Maryland with respect to black, white relationships?

L: Not much difference. That old couple we had there at home, Eddie Mathews and Emma. Two of the best old colored people you'd want to meet anywhere. We treated them just like I mean...when we were...Morty and Eddie would be planting tobacco and Emma and I would [inaudible phrase] then after we got through we'd make a freezer of ice cream. Homemade ice cream and sit down and eat it. Sit down with them just like we did with white people. [That's the] only difference. Some of our best neighbors were colored people.

J: By best you mean that these were people that you could depend on and they could depend on you to do neighborly things and help?

L: Yeah that's right. And after my husband died they helped me out a lot. Didn't charge me for things you know.

J: Who were some of the black families in your neighborhood that you look back on as having been truly good neighbors?

L: Eddie Mathews and his wife and then Willy Smith. They lived right back a home there. Willy Smith and his daughters used to help me there at the house. Raymond Riley was another [girl of color] used to help on the farm and do different things. All of them are gone.

J: So what did you do? What were you able to do to get a little relaxation and pleasure out of life in those days? Was there anything that you could look forward to with any great anticipation?

L: Well we'd go on picnics every weekend. I had too many children to go to somebody's house so we'd go on picnics. We'd go to the river or mountains or where it was so that I could turn the kids loose and it wouldn't bother anybody.

J: Right so what was—can you think of two or three of the nicer trips that you took that you really look back on?

L: Well to Florida was one of the trips. We drove down there nearly every winter. Visited my relatives and they'd come up and spend part of the summer with us on the farm. That made it real pleasant.

J: How old were the children roughly in range when you made that first trip to Florida?

L: Well my sister's children were about the same age as mine. About from six years old up to 16 I guess. They were just all school kids.

J: And you would go in one automobile?

L: In a truck. We used to use the truck to go sightseeing then and on picnics.

J: So some of children sat in the back of the truck or most of them sat in the back of the truck?

L: Most of them.

J: Was this a wood body, a [state] body truck, flatbed?

L: Yes just a regular.

J: Did you fix up any seat back there for them?

L: Yeah boards to sit on.

J: Okay sort of like a small army truck.

L: Used to take them up to the zoo and Smithsonian and other places of interest.

J: Was that a bit unusual in that neighborhood? Did many other families do as you were doing for your children?

L: I guess everybody did the same things.

J: How long a trip was it to Florida by automobile in 30's or late 20's?

L: Well the first trip we took down there took us six days.

J: Six days on the road?

L: The roads were so bad and we had so much trouble. Car broke down.

J: Was this the Ford?

L: No this was [Oakland] we had that broke down that time. Big old [Oakland]. It's a wonder we didn't give up. One time this tent fell off the truck and drug in the mud that old [Georgia] clay.

J: That red orange clay?

L: But those days they didn't have any motels. You stayed all night at these little houses with a wood stove in. They charged you about a dollar a night.

J: With a pump? Water.

L: Yeah.

J: And the outdoor conveniences?

L: Yeah. They didn't charge but a dollar but you didn't get much for your dollar.

J: So you would drive only during the day. Every night you had to stop and set up your tent?

L: Or stay in those little houses, little motels, cabins they called them yeah.

J: Well I suppose you were one of the few families in that part of Charles County that took long trips like that in those years. That was quite an undertaking with that many children in particular.

L: Yeah.

J: Took a lot of courage. What did you do for food? Did you take some with you from home?

L: Yeah we packed some things and then bought some things for lunch. Couldn't afford to go to a lunch room.

J: You bought groceries in a grocery store and then perhaps made sandwiches?

L: Our car broke down one time down in South Carolina and this fellow told us that he'd take us to his place. It was getting kind of late. His mother put us up that night. It was five of us. Gave us supper and breakfast and the whole night for a dollar.

J: Oh my, a real bed and breakfast.

L: Can you imagine how good people were in those days?

J: Well what year was that? Did you have all the children with you?

L: No I think I had about five at that point.

J: Who stayed home the older or the younger?

L: Well didn't have anybody home. I mean just had the five older of us. I mean had five all together at that time.

J: And they were all with you?

L: Yeah.

J: So that would have been in the 20's.

L: Must have been way back there.

J: What an experience. Were you able to travel most of the way on a hard surface road?

L: Through Georgia it was the worst state. They had the worst roads but after you got in Florida it was pretty good. It was just in parts of the country that it was so bad. But after the Dixie Highway was put through, that was like 95 is now—

J: Which route number did that have? Was that given a route number?

L: US 1 I think. They used to call it the Dixie Highway. Just went straight to Florida. That was pretty good. But if you got off of that you were in bad shape.

J: Was your husband able to leave the farm and go with you?

L: We always had another man there to take care of feeding the stock while we were gone. That's the only time he took any rest. When he got away from the farm.

J: How long were these trips normally when you went to Florida?

L: Stayed about a month.

J: Okay and this was during the winter normally?

L: Yeah.

J: I suppose that your children still remember it?

L: Yes they talk about it now.

J: That's great. What did you folks have to go through now at home by way of food preservation? The whole thing. Let's start with vegetables. How did you preserve produce from the garden to get you through the winter?

L: Had to can everything.

J: Cold or hot?

L: Oh can it hot. Yeah boil it and can it. Didn't have any refrigeration to freeze it in. Used to can all the vegetables and fruit. We had plenty of fruit and vegetables. Used to even can the pork chops and steaks sometimes.

J: What sort of jars would you put meat up in? Mason jars?

L: Just regular mason jars.

J: The half two quart size?

L: Yeah and had a lot of half a gallon jars too. Put the pork chops and meat in and salt it. Used to even can that. Put lard over it to keep it.

J: And that would be enough of a sealer for it?

L: Yeah it'd keep just through the winter. See what I've canned [inaudible] down there. I've still got the ham.

R: We have to [look like apple butter] down there.

L: Kids get after me for canning so much. Say, "Mom you're not ever gonna use all that stuff." I told them maybe the electricity will go out sometime and have to fall back on it.

R: You just can't see things going to waste.

L: I know it.

J: What sort of fruit trees did you have there on Fire Tower Road?

L: We had everything. Plums, apples, peaches, pears.

J: What kind of apple do you remember? Was there a name for it?

L: That was old, good kind Jonathan and I don't know what the name but anyway they were—

Unidentified Voice [U]: Macintosh?

L: Yeah, they were good, flavored apples.

J: Did you have any green apple or yellow apple?

L: Yeah June apples we called them. Get ripe in June.

J: What color were they, the June apples?

L: They never got red. They were yellow apples. Of course we had plenty of blackberries and huckleberries. The children would help me pick them. We'd pick the big old five gallon buckets for huckleberries and we'd can them.

J: What was the preservative used with the berries?

L: Just sugar.

J: Just sugar. You didn't go to the store and buy these [certo] type things?

R: Pectin.

L: Didn't have it then I don't think.

J: You remember about how many quarts and pints you might put up for an average winter when the kids were say about half grown and still eating well?

L: Altogether it was at least a hundred. I've got it down in a book there somewhere. One year's what I canned. Can't remember where it is.

J: That's interesting.

L: But the children they didn't eat any [trashy]. They'd come home from school and open a big jar of tomatoes and eat that instead of snacks.

J: I'll bet their children wouldn't do it. Your grandchildren wouldn't do it.

L: No, no [they wouldn't think that was good food].

J: How about juices? Did you make any cider at home?

L: Yes that's something else good. We had a cider press. Yeah we'd make enough cider. It didn't get good until it got a little kick to it.

J: Needs a little sting to it, a little sting.

L: But that was really and then if it was left it would turn to vinegar. We had our own vinegar.

J: How long could you keep the cider fresh and pleasant to drink? Did you cool it anyway at all?

L: No except yeah we had from the ice plant we had an ice box. You put the milk and the things in that. But cider doesn't keep long. It keeps getting stronger all the time.

J: Okay now as the years went by on the farm a few conveniences became available. What was the first item that came along let's say telephone, pump, electric lights. First of all was the automobile really.

L: Yes.

J: Then what next did you remember that made your life more bearable, more rewarding?

L: Telephone I guess about almost the same time. Getting contact with other people.

J: About what year were you given telephone service?

L: I can't remember when.

J: Early Depression years would you say?

L: I guess but later because didn't have much during the Depression at all. My...washing. Always had a gasoline motor for different boats and different things so I had a washing machine with a gasoline motor on that. That was a help but you had to breathe those fumes. Had it in the basement so that wasn't too good.

J: That was a danger wasn't it?

L: Yeah it was.

J: When did you first hear that you might get electricity?

L: I can't remember what year that was.

J: Who did you talk to in the late 30's that discussed this possibility with you? Do you remember anyone who was pushing the idea?

L: This Mrs. Wallace Miller. She came around getting people to sign up for the—

J: Mrs. Wallace Miller?

L: Yeah she lived down in Nanjemoy. I was trying to think of that real-estate man up on 301.

J: Snyder?

L: Snyder. Wouldn't let it come through his place. We thought that was one of the worst [laughs] as much of a, much of a help that was—

J: Leonard Snyder.

L: Yeah. He held—

J: Where was he living then? Still off 301?

L: Up there on 301.

J: Okay not far from La Plata.

L: everybody signed up but he wouldn't let the line go through his place. I think the court rules against him so that held it up for quite a while.

J: Do you remember the year that they finally got the line attached to your house?

L: I can't remember that either.

J: Just before World War II would you say?

L: I guess so. I know we didn't get a radio until my husband was in the sanitorium. I know they had one up there and he wrote and said he wished that we could have one at home. So we borrowed the money and bought one Sears and Roebuck, one of those little battery.

J: Oh yes battery right, right.

L: A big box affair. That was sure a big help. Of course television didn't come till quite a while later after that.

J: What were some of the new appliances that you were able to buy once you had wiring in the house? What did you most want?

L: A washing machine was first and then of course the toaster, coffee percolator.

J: What about the water supply?

L: Yeah yes that was [demand here] water—

J: That was a big item.

L: Yeah water pump in the well.

J: Do you remember roughly when you put in a modern bathroom?

L: Not till I went to work at Indian Head. Didn't have the money before because we had to lay the lines and everything.

J: What was your first year working at Indian Head?

L: During the Korean War.

J: So 1950, 51.

L: It must have been.

J: So you were without modern bathroom facilities until then?

L: Until then. But my son did all the work. Did the pipes and put the thing in the well. Before that we had a plant just for electric lights but that's all it was on it. It was convenient to have those lights.

J: With its own little motor?

L: Yes.

J: Was it a Delco?

L: Delco system. Some batteries with it.

J: And that was for light bulbs only?

L: Yeah just for lights only.

J: What are some of your recollections about using kerosene lamps? How did you feel about that?

L: I was always afraid there'd be a fire. Children would have to go upstairs and carry those lamps. You know upstairs and—

J: Almost as dangerous as gasoline.

L: I know it.

J: Did you ever have an Aladdin type kerosene lamp?

L: Yes that's what we had as far as in the study.

J: Was that a pretty decent light?

L: Yeah that gave a good light.

J: With the mantle?

L: Yes.

J: [Inaudible] kerosene.

L: Yeah that was the best kind.

J: What did you have to pay do you remember for a good new Aladdin?

L: I don't think it was more than 10 dollars [inaudible phrase].

J: 10 dollars was very good money in the early 30's.

L: Sure it was.

J: Half a week's wage. Did you ever have any near disasters because of fire?

L: Yeah I don't like to admit it but I used to [inaudible phrase] getting kerosene lamps sometimes I'd leave them lighted while I was filling it. That was a dangerous thing to do, anyways—

J: Did the children know that?

L: Well the children were gone one of the neighbors you know for a party. I only had the two little ones at home. So [I had this] kerosene lamp on the kitchen table and must have spilt a little oil or something. Well anyway the lamp caught fire and then [I was afraid the] five gallon can on the floor would catch fire too. So I burnt my arms. Spilled on my arms and burnt that and threw the lamp outside and come back and smothered the can to keep that from going to. That's the only trouble that was ever—but that was scary enough. Think about the children could have burnt them and me too.

J: About what year was this? Were they still tiny tots?

L: Yeah, yeah they were about four and six.

J: Still probably in the 20's. Not even a fire department in La Plata yet. So you people living way out in the country like that were—you had a right to be afraid of fire.

J: Did you keep any sand buckets handy? What preventive devices did you have around the house to take care of this sort of thing?

L: Nothing more than water. Buckets of water.

J: Did you ever have any chimney fire?

L: No. Chimney's caught on fire but it didn't cause any trouble.

J: That's the way they got cleaned out sometimes?

L: Yes.

J: Did your husband or his family ever intentionally set a chimney on fire just to clean it out?

L: No I can't remember of it. Used to get up on the roof with a long pole and clean the chimney out that way.

J: What was put on the end of the pole?

L: Something to scrape it I don't remember. Anyway they scraped the sides of the chimney.

J: Was this maybe a once a year operation?

L: Yes.

J: How comfortable were you able to keep that house in the winter? You were living in a very modern house compared to most of your neighbors weren't you?

L: Well a little newer than theirs I guess.

J: Must have been looking at it now. You had a fireplace?

L: Yes.

J: And that chimney was made of what stone?

L: Yes and concrete.

J: Okay so you were really very fortunate because there were people living in houses over there 100 years older than this with chimneys that must have been on their last leg.

L: We used the fireplace in the spring and summer but we used the stove in the cold weather.

J: So you cut nearly all of your own firewood right on the farm?

L: Yes we had plenty of firewood and we used corn cobs too. They made a [hot] fire.

J: Did they? Were they good kindling when they were dry? A good way to start it?

L: Yes.

J: So that house was that fairly comfortable in the winter during cold weather? You were able to heat most of it?

L: Not until we got the furnace after they put in the oil furnace. Before it was just the wood stoves the bedrooms were always cold. We had plenty of thick quilts. It [wasn't always]—it seemed like the kitchen was the only warm place in the house.

J: Everybody would get together out there? I suppose the kids often did their homework out there did they?

L: Yeah around the kitchen table. Yeah we had those big feather ticks we'd sleep in. Kept warm enough at night.

J: Were you able to make clothes for the boys? Was that more difficult than for the girls?

L: No I didn't make theirs. We had to buy theirs.

J: What sort of trousers—what kind of material when they were youngsters in their early teens did they have any strong feelings about what kind of clothes they wore?

L: Yes they wanted to be like the other kids but you know boys wore short pants then till they got about 14 before they wore a pair of long pants.

J: That was one of the big majors of whether or not you were getting grown up.

L: Yes. I remember they wore short pants [a very long time].

J: And knee length socks just below the knee?

L: Yes.

J: And galoshes? Rubberized galoshes. What sort of over coat type things did the boys wear during the 30's? Something that had to be purchased at the store?

L: Yeah we had to buy all those things. Tried to go to go to bargain basement.

J: Did you find the boys were as vain as the girls as far as clothing? Were they hard to please?

L: No none of them were very hard. I mean they...were very easy to please.

J: How about in the 30's and your husband was gone what did you do about Christmas? What did this mean to the whole family in the way of extra work, preparation, making plans, and getting ready to observe the holidays? What did this mean for you as the only parent in the household?

L: Well I always had to borrow money at Christmas for one thing. They wouldn't have anything if...always had to borrow some money from the bank but I would make sure that they had some presents and things.

J: So it was just as important to them then as it is to your great grandchildren today?

L: Yes and then I used to make a big fruitcake. That would last during the Christmas season.

J: What all went into the fruitcake do you remember? Did you have your own recipe?

L: Had it was black walnuts from the farm and of course raisins and figs and spices and eggs. Had plenty of eggs and butter. We had good things to cook with.

J: Did you have recipes or were you just flying blind with experience?

L: Well both. We used to have home recipes we used all the time.

J: So there was plenty of good milk, cream, and butter?

L: Yes.

J: Basic ingredients [inaudible]. The sugar had to be purchased?

L: Yes.

J: This was the white or the brown?

L: Well both for cooking. We...I say we shipped the cream and have the skimmed milk to feed the pigs. Of course we had plenty of real cream to use and then a whole butter. Never had to buy margarine.

J: What sort of Christmas presents did you try to get for the youngsters who were say in grade school or middle school? Those children that were below say 13 or 14?

L: To tell the truth I never got further than the dime store. That's where we did all our Christmas shopping.

J: In the county?

L: No up in town.

J: Okay you're talking about the Woolworth's, the Kresge type of dime store?

L: Yes.

J: Did any of the children want things like books and games? Did you have some real book readers among the group?

L: Yes more or less. Tried to get them something worthwhile. I'd get them each so much to spend and that was gone and that was it.

J: Do they today really appreciate what you had to go through to get Christmas ready?

L: I think they do because they're all conservative. None of them are spendthrifts, the girls. My daughter, oldest daughter, she had a good lesson in gambling. She had these chance things that they have at the parties you know and she'd spend all her lunch money gambling and then she had to go hungry. She didn't have any lunch to eat. That was the last time she ever gambled.

J: How old was she then?

L: She was about 12 so that was a good lesson.

J: Good time to learn. What was your personal attitude towards the slot machines coming into Charles County? You can remember the day when they weren't here and then they came in. What did the Welch's think of that?

L: Never liked it at all. I hated to sit down in the lunchroom and hear those things banging. I never put a nickel in one while they were here. I don't think any—some of the children might have.

J: But the kids never were seriously taken up with this thing? The one armed....

L: [No they were one armed bandits.] And then people would spend their money that couldn't afford to.

J: Before we leave this subject because we're into the season, what would have been a typical Christmas dinner at the Welch's during the years just before World War II? Say from 1935 to 1941, 42.

L: Well we had roast turkey or chicken, and mashed potatoes, candied sweet potatoes, coleslaw, cranberry salad. I think we had string beans and always apple salad and homemade rolls. Of course fruitcake. We never lacked for plenty to eat.

J: And nearly all of this meal produced there on the farm?

L: Yeah.

J: How large a fruit cake did you normally make in weight?

L: [Like these] big dish pans this big around.

J: Oh my so you're talking about what, Roberta?

R: 15 pounds.

J: 15 pounds. Would that last a month or so?

L: Yeah [till they ate it up].

J: Till they ate it up. That kept pretty well?

L: Yes.

J: Did you put any alcoholic beverage in it at all like a touch of brandy? Was that a custom?

L: No not that I remember at all. Didn't even put any cider in it.

J: What sorts of cookies did you enjoy making, you and the girls? Were there any special cookies that everybody liked?

L: Oatmeal cookies were their favorites.

J: Oatmeal. How large a cookie are we talking about?

L: Just medium size.

J: Three, two and a half, three inches?

L: Yeah.

J: And a little thick and soft?

L: Yeah.

J: Anything else put into the cookies other than the oatmeal?

L: Raisins.

J: Raisins. And that was a favorite of—

L: But I'd have to get up early enough to make them in the morning for their school lunch. If I made them the night before they'd eat them all up. Wouldn't have any left for the morning.

J: What sort of lunches did you pack for them normally?

L: They packed their own usually after they got big enough. Peanut butter sandwich, peanut butter and jelly.

J: You remember the old A&P sultana peanut butter? Big two pound jar? [Inaudible].

L: Yes we used to get that big jar.

J: [Inaudible sentence].

L: Of course we had our own ham and chicken.

J: How did you preserve the ham?

L: We put it down in brine. Had this solution of salt and brown sugar and all that. Put it down in a barrel. I think how many weeks it had to stay and then we'd hang them up and smoke them in the smoke house. That was really good, real good meat.

J: That's good. Nobody does that anymore. And bacon?

L: Yeah and bacon the same way.

J: That's sort of semi sugar cured and semi smoke cured?

L: Yes. [Inaudible phrase] cured the meat.

J: Did you do any drying of fruits, for example?

L: Sometimes we'd dry apples. Never had too much luck with the drying things.

J: So in vegetable preservation canning of vegetables, fruits, and meat sugar. Sugar and smoke curing of meat. Just a wee bit of drying. How about salting by itself? Did you ever salt any fish?

L: We used to have those herring. Used to have a barrel of them salted down but I didn't care much for them. I liked fresh fish.

J: Did the children like the salted herring?

L: They didn't. The hired men liked them.

J: That was a real country staple wasn't it in Southern Maryland? That herring, salted herring.

L: Everybody had that barrel of salted herring.

J: Did you have more milk for your children than a lot of the families? Were they fond of it? Did the family consume a lot of fresh milk?

L: No I'm sorry to say after they stopped having the bottle with milk they wouldn't drink it out of a glass. So I put milk in nearly everything I made so they'd get it one way or another. Very few of them really drank milk regular.

J: What were the popular hot drinks at the Welch house for yourself, your husband, and your children? I'm thinking coffee, tea, cocoa.

L: Well the children all liked cocoa. That's how I got milk down them. Put plenty of milk in the cocoa. Course we just drank coffee and tea.

J: Now are those children today most of them are they coffee or tea drinkers?

L: Well one of my daughters still don't drink hot tea. She likes iced tea but she never drinks hot tea. I think they all like coffee.

J: Well how do you feel now looking back at the job you did raising eight children?

[End of Tape]