

Transcript of OH-00214

Jennie Elizabeth Bowie

Interviewed by
John Wearmouth

on
March 15, 1980

Accession #: 2006.105; OH-00214

Transcribed by Shannon Neal on December 9, 2020

Southern Maryland Studies Center

College of Southern Maryland
8730 Mitchell Road, P.O. Box 910
La Plata, MD 20646

Phone: (301) 934-7626
E-mail: SMSC@csmd.edu
Website: csmd.edu/smsc

The Stories of Southern Maryland Oral History Transcription Project has been made possible in part by a major grant from the National Endowment for the Humanities (NEH): Stories of Southern Maryland. <https://www.neh.gov/>



**NATIONAL
ENDOWMENT
FOR THE
HUMANITIES**

Any views, findings, conclusions, or recommendations expressed in this transcription, do not necessarily represent those of the National Endowment for the Humanities.

Format

Interview available as MP3 file or WAV: ssoh00214 (1:31:59)

Content Disclaimer

The Southern Maryland Studies Center offers public access to transcripts of oral histories and other archival materials that provide historical evidence and are products of their particular times. These may contain offensive language, negative stereotypes or graphic descriptions of past events that do not represent the opinions of the College of Southern Maryland or the Southern Maryland Studies Center.

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
Climatic changes
Influenza Epidemic, 1918-1919
Rural Conditions
Medicine, Rural

Tags

Food preservation
Pisgah (Md.)

Transcript

John Wearmouth [J]: This is John Wearmouth interviewing Jennie Elizabeth Bowie of Pisgah as part of the Charles Community College Oral History Program. The date is March 15th, 1980. We are at Pisgah in the house of Sydney and May Bowie. The house is located on state Route 425 about half a mile from downtown Pisgah. Mrs. Bowie you have lived in this community all of your life now?

Jennie Elizabeth Bowie [E]: Yes.

J: And you are now just a matter of a few 100 feet from where you were born?

E: Yes—no, no it's way down the road here.

J: That would be about what a couple of miles?

E: Couple of miles yes.

J: About a couple of miles.

E: 18 you said 18?

J: 1894?

E: Yeah.

J: Alright and you were one of how many children?

E: Seven.

J: Of Theodore Clinton Rees and Fannie Agnes Rees?

E: Yes.

J: What was your mother's maiden name?

E: Roberts.

J: And they came both of them from Pennsylvania?

E: Pennsylvania.

J: To Pisgah?

E: No they come to Virginia first.

J: They hit Virginia first?

E: Yes.

J: What made them take such a long move? In those days that was a big decision.

E: I wouldn't be able to tell you that to save my life I wouldn't. They had two children in Pennsylvania, two in Virginia, and the other of us were born down here.

J: And that was a total of how many children?

E: Seven.

J: Seven children.

E: Yes.

J: And how many are living today?

E: None. I'm the last one.

J: You are the last of that family.

E: I am the last. I'm left all alone.

J: All alone.

E: No brothers, no sisters, no aunts, no uncles.

J: To what do you owe this longevity? To a good clean Christian life?

E: To God I guess.

J: To God and good clean healthy country air and lots of good friends and a good supporting family.

E: I've lived a clean life. I haven't drank, I haven't smoked. I haven't done any of these things.

J: Well that's got to mean something. What are some of your earliest memories of life on the farm? It was a farm where you were born and raised right?

E: Yes my mother farmed it and I helped her work it.

J: How far back can you go as a little girl? What things stand out in your mind that?

E: Oh I remember cutting corn and shucking corn. Plowing, I plowed, I covered in this very area here all day long with the horse and cultivator. Planting corn and reaping the stuff for my mother.

J: So your mother and dad didn't consider you too delicate to—

E: No my father died when I was three years old.

J: Oh so there was no question about everybody had to get out there and work.

E: Yes my mother was a widow and she had to work hard to make a living for us.

J: And she never married again?

E: No, no.

J: How old were you in relation to the other children? Were you about the middle of the group?

E: I'm the baby.

J: You're the baby.

E: I'm the baby out of us twins. We were twins. My twin died when he was three years old. We were born a girl and I was the baby of them all.

J: So one big thing that you remember is a lot of hard work?

E: Oh yes I sure do that.

J: What were you using with the plow? Mule, horse oxen?

E: Two horses, two horses.

J: A team of horses?

E: Yes.

J: Were some of the neighbors at that time still using teams of oxen?

E: Oh yes—no, no, none of them.

J: Most of them were using horses?

E: All my neighbors had horses.

J: How many acres were you working in those days?

E: Oh I'd say about 25 acres I guess.

J: What was the money crop?

E: Well she had cows and she sold butter and cream and milk. Raised sheep and calves and sold them for our living.

J: They were sold live [weight]? You did no butchering at all?

E: Yeah no, no.

J: And what about the dairy products? Did you have a route that you had to—

E: No people come there far and near and bought butter from my mother.

J: And his would be right up through World War I roughly?

E: No she died before then.

J: Do you remember how old you were when your mother passed on?

E: I was 35.

J: So how many girls were there?

E: Three girls.

J: Three girls and the girls had to get out and work just as hard as the boys?

E: Well one did. One got married and one died early in our life. The other one was left she got married and [inaudible phrase]. Well she did too. She was a hairdresser. She worked to make a living.

J: How uncomfortable was life for you when you were a very young girl? There was always enough food to eat do you remember?

E: Yes, yes we always had plenty to eat. Life was pleasant and everything was joyful. I can't say a thing that I could regret at all in my young life. Not a thing.

J: That's marvelous that you can feel that way. So you didn't feel that you were any worse off really than most of the other people around here?

E: No I didn't.

J: Didn't feel that the good lord was being especially hard on you?

E: No I didn't no. Everything was very nice, comfortable. We had a comfortable home and right across the road was my home. When my father died he was building this home and then my Momma's brothers, my father's brothers finished it for her. We lived in were raised and married and all right over across the road here in that big house over there.

J: It must give you a lot of pleasure just to think that you've been in this one [neighborhood home and here] and you've seen all these families, developments, you've watched young people grow up and go to middle age and have children and—

E: Yes. I sure have. I was superintendent of the Sunday school down here for 15 years I think it was. I've seen all the young folks grow up and get married and leave. Go and make their own homes.

J: This is the Pisgah map of this church?

E: Yes, yes.

J: About what years were you Sunday School Superintendent? 20's or 30's?

E: Oh in the 20's.

J: Some of those young people are still living in the Pisgah area now?

E: No, no [they're not in Pisgah]. All married and gone away.

J: Your brothers and sisters how many of them lived out their lives here in the Pisgah area?

E: Only my two brothers. One lived in the homeplace and the other one lived right across up there. The other one died when he was a young man.

J: And those that remained here did they farm?

E: Yes they farmed and then they worked at Indian Head too.

J: Well did you, your brothers and sisters, and your mother have any other income other than the farm?

E: No we didn't.

J: None whatsoever. So you did [have—didn't have to pay]. Did they grow any tobacco ever?

E: No.

J: In all this acreage?

E: No.

J: Corn mostly?

E: Corn.

J: Any wheat ever?

E: Oh no, no they didn't. Corn was mostly the crops that they raised.

J: And what was done with it? Was it sold or used for the livestock?

E: We used for the livestock.

J: So the end product was the dairy products?

E: Yes.

J: So the only income you got then was for the livestock?

E: Yes that's right.

J: Eggs and dairy products?

E: Yes that's right.

J: Do you recall at all how much that might have amounted to in a years' time?

E: No.

J: 3-400 dollars at most?

E: I guess it's about [inaudible] not much more than that. Yet we had comfortable living. Everything was [adorable] and happy.

J: How about—we're just getting over to winter weather now, how about some of the winters? Do you recall some especially bad winters when you couldn't get outdoors very much? Really bitter cold?

E: Well I'll tell you I can recall some of the snow used to go cover the fence posts, fences so we could go sleigh riding right on top of the snow right down on the hills. My neighbor, Mr. Able lived across from us the next farm joining. He had some great big hills. We used to go over there with our sleighs and sleigh ride on them hills. Right on top of the snow.

J: I've heard some other people about your age say that they snows in the early years of this century that we haven't seen since then.

E: Yes.

J: Is this about right?

E: That's right.

J: Not only the snow but the bitter cold?

E: Well I can't think of it being bitter cold. No I don't know that but I know we had it must have been cold to freeze the snow over like that. It would cover over fences. We could just walk right on the top of fences and things and sleigh ride right on down the hills right on top of the snow. Oh it was grand sleigh riding on them.

J: Any horse drawn sleighs at all?

E: Oh yes. We had a horse drawn sleigh.

J: How did you keep warm in the house?

E: Wood stoves.

J: One, two, three, any upstairs?

E: No, none upstairs.

J: Sleeping rooms just weren't heated?

E: Yes it wasn't heated.

J: Just another blanket?

E: Yes.

J: And get up fast and get dressed fast and [inaudible] fast.

E: And run downstairs to the fireplace—fire fast.

J: A fire place you said?

E: No.

J: So these were all steel or iron wood burning stoves?

E: Iron wood stoves, ranges.

J: No coal?

E: No.

J: So chopping wood had to be another chore?

E: Yes.

J: And did you help chop wood, split kindling?

E: Yes I have. Yes I have.

J: Use a bucksaw?

E: No.

J: A hand axe?

E: Hand axe generally. Split wood carried it in [inaudible].

J: You had to learn to sharpen the axe I suppose too?

E: Yes.

J: Couldn't run into La Plata and get that sharpened.

E: No we had our own grindstone.

J: A hand turned grindstone?

E: Yeah, yes to grind things.

J: Treadle? Treadle type?

E: No just a hand grinder.

J: Just a hand. Did a good job of it?

E: Oh yes.

J: How did your mother preserve food? I'm sure you worked with her in the summer and fall to get things put up for the winter. What were some of the things you had to go through to get your garden produce in cans?

E: We dried a lot of stuff.

J: You dried it?

E: Yes. We put it on the porch roof and dried it. Dried peaches and apples and things like that. Have them dried and ate them a lot.

J: So this was probably your cheapest way you could preserve food?

E: Yeah.

J: If you wanted to cold pack or hot pack you had to buy glasses and jars and things—

E: Well we never knew any of them things. We didn't know nothing about [them things then]. But you preserved in cans and [things].

J: What kind of cans?

E: Just the regular quart jar.

J: The mason type jar or glass jar?

E: Yes Mason type jars.

J: How about meats?

E: Well my Momma raised her own meat. Had a [witching] time and had our own meats to eat. She had given [different] pigs that she killed and run up through the years.

J: Mostly pork? Any beef butchered?

E: No we never had any butchered.

J: What was your favorite ham type recipe? Was there any way that your mother fixed pork that you remember that was especially good?

E: No.

J: It was just all good?

E: All good yes.

J: Bacon?

E: Oh yes.

J: Did she smoke cure anything?

E: Oh yes she had our smoke house where she smoked our hams and our bacons and things [smoked ham smoke]. And we smoked that with hickory wood. That had to be hickory wood that smoked them things with.

J: Green hickory [type] of wood?

E: Yes, yes.

J: And you know how to go out and find that yourself and bring it up? You know how to find it?

E: Oh yes, oh yes.

J: Not much around anymore.

E: No.

J: What food products did you have to buy from the store?

E: Oh sugar and tea and coffee, flour and things like that. That's about what we had to buy.

J: Where did you go to buy that?

E: A little country store right down the road here. Right down the road here.

J: In Pisgah?

E: Right here in Pisgah, yes sir.

J: Right here in Pisgah. Who ran the store do you remember?

E: Mr. Carpenter. Mr. Charlie Carpenter.

J: Charlie Carpenter. This was a general store? He sold a little bit of everything?

E: General store. Everything yes he did.

J: Including clothes?

E: No he didn't sell clothes. He just sold food.

J: [Somewhat] only food. Kerosene I suppose?

E: Yes kerosene for the lamps.

J: That's another thing. Who trimmed the wicks and cleaned the chimneys? With all the [inaudible] you had a little bit left—

E: Well I'm going to tell you a trick. [Inaudible] that was my next to my youngest brother and I used to take a cedar tree and put it in the chimney and threw it up and down the chimney to clean the chimneys out. One day we put it in the wrong way, went and we couldn't get it back up. I had an old uncle that Momma's brother lived with us and he had to pull that down and saw a piece off every time to get that out of the chimney. Yeah, that's the way you [got to crawl] the chimney for.

J: Well anyway you kept on cleaning it that way?

E: Oh yeah.

J: Did you put it in the chimney and turn it to get the soot out?

E: And put it up and down. [Inaudible] cedar tree and we got it in the wrong way and it went down and wouldn't come back up for us.

J: For you using kerosene for light that was something you did up until fairly recent years wasn't it?

E: Oh yes. Yes it was.

J: Until about 1930?

E: I guess it was.

J: 32. Did you keep any of these kerosene lamps for emergency use.

E: I had one when I was down in a trailer. I don't know what the folks did with it. I had a kerosene lamp, yes I did. My mother gave it to me. I think the last Christmas present—she gave it to me for a Christmas present.

J: About what year might that be?

E: I guess it's early 30's. Somewhere in the 30's.

J: How old was she when she passed on?

E: She was 72.

J: Did she live on the farm until her last year?

E: Yes but our son come over here and took over the farm. She didn't have anything to do with the farm. She just lived with him.

J: Well okay. How often did you have to go into a larger town such as Indian Head or La Plata to get clothing or hardware?

E: Oh I guess we went in there three or four times a year. We'd go to La Plata. Drive a horse and buggy over to La Plata.

J: That would be pretty much an all-day affair wouldn't it be?

E: No, no.

J: A couple of hours? Three hours?

E: A couple hours yes and she'd shop a little there and get what she wanted. [It was all that you need over in] La Plata.

J: How many miles would that have been?

E: About 12 miles [I think]. About 12 or 13 miles.

J: And this was with the horses?

E: Horse and buggy that's right.

J: And you could handle a team?

E: Oh yes.

J: All the children could?

E: Oh yeah many [inaudible phrase] and rigged. Cut hay and cut the grass and [cleaned] the floor for the horses.

J: A sickle [inaudible phrase].

E: Yes [inaudible phrase].

J: Were you pretty much able to feed your own livestock with what the land produced?

E: Oh yes.

J: You didn't have to buy hay or straw or any other kind of feed for them.

E: No, no, no she raised most of that stuff on the farm.

J: It's remarkable that 25 acres could a family like that going.

E: I would say that it wasn't much more than 25 acres. Had a big field [sit down in there]—

Sydney Bowie [S]: [Inaudible due to distance from recording device].

E: It was all we had and worked on it.

J: Well that's incredible. It really leads you to believe that on a cash income of oh three to five hundred dollars a year people were able to keep a family, a good size family, together. Keep their equipment in decent repair, keep their team of horses and have a buggy. It gives you an idea of what you had to pay for produce that we could buy only in the larger towns. Were you children given any kind of an allowance? How did you get little bits of cash? You must have wanted a dime or a quarter now and again?

E: Well Momma would give it to us if she had it.

J: As the need arose and if she had it?

E: Yes.

J: But it wasn't a regular thing that you knew you had coming?

E: No.

J: What ways did you and your brothers and sisters have of earning a little cash money? Did you have a chance to go out—

E: I'm going to tell you another thing. My brother and I cut back over in this place back there cord wood. Him and I cut cord wood and split that cord wood and haul it to an old mill down the road here a little ways. On the La Plata road there was an old mill, old man Millard. He bought our cord wood from us and we had money come in sometimes from him selling us cord wood. And we'd go down Wells' Hill. I would drive and he would get on the back my brother would and pull the break to hold the wagon of cord wood going down the hill.

J: That's quite a hill.

E: Yes it was a hill then.

J: How much wood do you think you were able to haul? A third of a cord? A quarter of a cord?

E: About a half a cord of wood that was in the wagon.

J: So you're talking about half a ton. And this was in a four wheel wagon?

E: Yes, two horses. No I don't remember how much we got. About [inaudible phrase].

J: That was pretty good money [for then].

E: Oh yeah.

J: But that meant you probably had worked for about 10 to 15 cents an hour....

E: Yes I've even split cord wood, cut some cord wood and split it. [Not] much in the days.

J: Well how old were you when you left home, got married?

E: I was 18 when I got married.

J: And your husband's given name was?

E: Alleson.

J: Alleson?

E: Hamilton Bowie.

J: Alleson Hamilton Bowie. The two of you had how many children? What were their names?

E: We had [inaudible phrase] three of them. I can't remember [inaudible phrase] three...You want their names? Harry was one. I guess you know Harry was the oldest, Milly and Sydney.

J: So we know your whole family?

E: [Inaudible].

J: Okay and when was the first one born do you remember about 1918 or 19?

E: He was born on Christmas day but I don't remember the day that he was born. He was born on Christmas day, Harry was. Oh yes that's right [1912?].

J: Alright tell me this did your three children have to work as hard as you did?

E: [Not so].

J: [They didn't?]

E: [Not so].

J: Why? What were the changes in that one generation? What were the big differences?

E: Their father gave them whatever they wanted. He worked at Indian Head made a good living for us and whenever they wanted anything he give it to them. You have an allowance [Syd] I don't remember you all even having an allowance. But whatever they wanted they got it.

J: How did you feel about that? Did it make you happy to think that your children had a little better life than you had? But you never felt sorry for yourself?

E: Well I—no, no, no I never I thought my Momma done a good job of raising us.

J: Remarkable.

E: She kept us all together.

J: [She didn't ask] for help from anyone either?

E: No, no she didn't. Course her husband's brothers was awful good for her because they helped her a lot. They done for her. She had two brothers that was awful good to my mother and to us too.

J: What were the names of these two brothers?

E: Bernard Rees and [Inaudible].

J: He's over here [inaudible]?

E: Yeah [inaudible].

J: He lived in the Pisgah area [inaudible phrase]?

E: No they were in Washington.

J: They were in Washington?

E: Yes. They finished building the house over here for Momma. They really helped her a lot. I guess if it hadn't been for her she would never have been as well off if hadn't been for them helping her out so much.

J: Well anyway the family took care of itself.

E: Yes.

J: Do you remember some of the families in the neighborhood that you were close to that your brothers and sisters thought were good friends and neighbors?

E: Oh yes. Mr. Carpenter the store people had some girls and boys that were all running around [with us] yes indeed.

J: They include the Mrs. Carpenter?

E: Yes, the store keeper. No...

J: What did the young people do for entertainment? They must have had some good times even if—

E: We used to have the old [sham-sham-aloos?] is what they were called then. I don't know if you've ever heard of that or not?

J: No.

E: Well it was an old couple lived down the road in the woods a little ways down the road. We would get up a party and the postmistress down here was Katy Carpenter and she would say let's have a party. She'd put a note in the post office for each one that she would want invite us of all our neighbors and folks you know and we'd collect down there on the evening and down to Mr. Robey's we would go. The old man's name was Robey. We'd take cookies and candies and drinks and things and down there to have to eat. We'd have our [sham-sham-aloos] down there till one o'clock and then we'd come home.

J: Sounds like fun. Was dancing involved?

E: Well it was I guess you'd call it—we'd sing you know. Go up and down and there's the road and sing and swing each other's partners.

J: Country dance, rounds [inaudible phrase].

E: Yeah something like the old round dance. Something like it but we'd sing. Music, you see, was our singing. We didn't have any music we sung.

J: No musical instruments at all?

E: No, no, no none at all.

J: What kind of a building was this in? Was it someone's parlor, a barn?

E: No well it was a great big old building and we had it in his family room where we would dance. He had a great big room there and we'd have a great big hot stove in there and we'd play in there. They would sit back in the kitchen and listen to us and fix our refreshments for us and have a good time. That's the way we enjoyed ourselves.

J: And were these get togethers usually in the winter months?

E: Anytime we took a notion. Summer winter either one didn't make any difference to us if we wanted to have fun.

J: I'm sure nobody ever had more fun no matter what they did or what they had to pay for it. about how large a group might you have? 15, 20?

E: Oh about 15 or 20 of us.

J: And this would go on till midnight?

E: Yes about midnight and then we'd all come home.

J: And usually you could walk there?

E: Oh yes we always walked down through the woods with our lanterns.

J: No fear of the dark?

E: No, no indeed. Laughing and jolly having a good time. We really enjoyed ourselves.

J: Now where did you go to school?

E: Right up the road here at the little old log school house. Right up the road a little ways.

J: About half a mile or so?

E: About a mile.

J: About a mile up the road or two miles? Is it gone now?

E: Yes. Colored people tore it down.

J: And how many years of school did you complete?

E: I went there for seven years.

J: That was completing? That was everything?

E: That was all I went to school and the one teacher Mr. Medley was the only teacher I ever had.

J: How many children were there in the average class then?

E: Wasn't much more than six or seven I guess.

J: And these were of all ages?

E: Yes. My neighbors the Robey's down the road and the Carpenter's and...people [with] children [made] up the school.

J: Do you remember when you got out of school? Was it rather early in May?

E: I had to quit school when I was in the seventh grade. My mother's farm got so she couldn't hire anybody to work for her anymore and I had to quit school to help do the farm work.

J: And this meant everything? Planting, cultivating, harvesting?

E: Yes that's right.

J: Whatever had to be done. Where did you and your husband meet?

E: He was, he was a little boy that—he used to push me around in the baby carriage. My sister used to go from the old farmhouse was back on the road and the main road was out here and a lot of her pals and things would come out there and meet in the evenings and play and have good times. My husband was a little fellow and he used to push me in the baby carriage. My sister had me out in the baby carriage. He used to push me up and down the road in the baby carriage.

J: Sounds like an early courtship.

E: And then he married me.

J: He brought you up the way he wanted you.

E: Yeah [laughs].

J: How many years were you married?

E: 43 years I think it was.

J: He's been gone a few years now?

E: Yes he's been gone 20 years.

J: Have you ever had any desire to leave the Pisgah area?

E: No, no I never did.

J: All your life?

E: I want to stay right here.

J: What were the happiest years for you of your life?

E: I don't know. I don't know any.

J: Well I think that's remarkable that it was all so pleasant, so satisfying, that no one part of it stands out as being any better than the rest. So you wouldn't mind doing it all over again would you? Just the way it happened.

E: No I wouldn't.

J: So money isn't everything?

E: No.

J: And tobacco isn't everything and liquor isn't everything?

E: No, no.

J: Church has been a very big thing hasn't it?

E: Yes it has.

J: Throughout your life.

E: My Momma took me when I just could run my feet on the seats. Dangle my feet on the seats.

J: And you've always gone to the Pisgah Methodist Church?

E: Always to the Pisgah Methodist Church right down here.

J: Who were some of the ministers that you can remember?

E: Mr. [Hoyt] was one. Mr. [Hoyt] and Mr. Brown, Mr. Burr.

J: Remember one named Nevitt? That goes back.

E: Yes old Mr. Nevitt used to get me—there was a family that lived back over in here off the road a good ways—he used to come by here to pick me up to take me over there to show him where these people lived. I remember that so well.

J: So you must have been a very young girl then?

E: Yes I was just a little girl but I didn't like that old preacher for nothing.

J: Weren't impressed with the old man?

E: Yes. Oh I'd hate to see him coming to get me to take me over there to see that family of people. But he was a nice old fellow, nice old man.

J: There was a Mr. Wood.

E: Yes Mr. Wood.

J: Mr. McDonald not too long ago [45 years ago].

E: Yes Mr. McDonald. Yes sir.

J: But you remember Nevitt that is something.

E: Oh yes Mr. Nevitt.

J: How were the roads? Dusty? Either mud or dust?

E: Yes. Mud holes and big deep mud holes in them. Yes this old road right down here now it was an old country road.

J: So when you were going to the little school, the log school down here, you were then living across the road?

E: [Right] across the road.

J: You walked most of the time?

E: Walked to school, yes sir.

J: All kinds of weather?

E: All kinds of weather.

J: Nobody ever picked you up?

E: Nope. No.

J: Did you ever save your school books?

E: No, no never saved them.

J: Did your brothers and sisters go to the same school?

E: Yes well my brothers did. Two brothers. One was dead. My sister why I guess she went there too but she went to Washington when she was quite young. After my father died she went to Washington and went to work so.

J: [Inaudible phrase].

E: Yeah so she didn't go to school for most of her life.

J: She never came back here?

E: No.

J: How did Pisgah look about World War I? Were there more buildings here then? Was it about the same size that it is now?

E: Yes it's about the same size. Not much difference.

J: Who lived in the house near the corner that is no longer there you can see a cement sidewalk going up, a couple outbuildings, and one in back a garage?

E: Well I don't know.

J: Did Mr. Purdue near [Begonia] house.

E: Oh yes [Begonia] and Dan [Bill Begonia].

J: That's right so he was a prominent citizen.

E: Yeah, store keeper too. He kept store yes.

J: And the church looks pretty much the same now doesn't it? Except for the [inaudible].

E: Yes.

J: Who were some of the better known wealthy families in the neighborhood that people might have envied?

E: Well the Rose was wealthy. [Begonia's] sort of, they had money I guess. The Carpenter's, not the most well-known folks.

J: And who was the doctor that people knew best when you were—

E: Mitchell.

J: Mitchell?

E: Mitchell.

J: And where was his office?

E: Down there way down in the country or somewhere. I don't know exactly where his office was but that was Momma's doctor, Mitchell. He brought us into the world. I don't know whether it was—I don't know where he lived to tell you the truth. But he lived down here in the country a little ways down through here.

J: Do you remember any home prepared medicines that your mother would make?

E: Ginger tea for colds. Sage tea for colds. When we had colds Momma would make them things for colds yes indeed.

J: How about poultices? What were her favorites?

E: Oh yes mustard poultices, mustard poultices. We had a deep cold she'd put a mustard poultice on my chest and draw it out.

J: Any of the children have any serious illnesses?

E: The little boy died of diphtheria.

J: Did any of the rest of you have anything as serious as typhoid, malaria, diphtheria?

E: No it was five of us had diphtheria at the same time. The little boy died.

J: Scarlet Fever?

E: No.

J: Was mumps a common thing? Measles? Whooping Cough?

E: Yes, mumps, whooping cough was great. I had the Whooping Cough terrible bad.

J: Typhoid wasn't a serious thing around here.

E: Yes it was but there wasn't so much of it in my days. My husband had it when he was young. He had it terrible but he pulled through it.

J: In other parts of the county it was more serious. I mean low Port Tobacco River area malaria and typhoid areas.

E: I guess it was.

J: How does the land look now compared to what it used to be? On the coverage of wood was there just as much wood coverage when you were young as there is now? Was more of the land cleared when you were growing up?

E: No, no, more woodland. That's where we cut our wood off for our cord wood my brother and I right behind us. Has this house up here. No it was more woodland.

J: More then than there is now?

E: Yeah.

J: What sort of furnishings did your mother have in the house now where you were living when your father passed on? How many years did you live there before moving into the house across the road here?

E: I don't know. I don't know how long Momma [were in] Double Trouble before we were born. I couldn't tell you.

J: Double Trouble was the name of the house down the road?

E: Yes and the place was called Double Trouble.

J: Was that a good name for it?

E: I guess so it was named after [Inaudible].

J: Roughly how old were you when you moved up here to the new house?

E: Well my father died when I was three years old. Oh I guess a couple years because I was about five when I moved up here.

J: So that would make it just before 1900? What kind of furnishings do you remember that were in the house when you made the move? What kind of floor coverings if any?

E: We had rugs, carpets, and things on the floor. Rugs and carpets yes we had carpets on the floor too.

J: Overstuffed furniture?

E: No, no, no.

J: In the house across the road which was new when you moved in was there a separate dining room?

E: Yes.

J: So you did not have to eat in the kitchen?

E: No.

J: Was the kitchen large enough so you could?

E: Yes we eat in the kitchen but she had a nice big living room dining room and a nice big living room.

J: How many bedrooms?

E: Three bedrooms.

J: And were they upstairs?

E: Upstairs.

J: All upstairs?

E: Upstairs and a big hallway into it.

J: This was a frame house, wood siding?

E: Yes.

J: Was it a rather attractive looking house?

E: Yes it was.

J: And this was one built by your uncle?

E: Yes my uncles built it for her.

J: Was he a builder?

E: No the one was a steam fitter and I don't know what the other uncle was really. I guess he helped his brother out a lot mostly. Drove his horses and things around hauling this furniture stuff that we had to use.

J: And all the light was kerosene?

E: Oh yes.

J: Were candles ever used?

E: No.

J: Or were they considered well too expensive to waste?

E: I think we were afraid of them more than anything else.

J: Kerosene was dangerous too.

E: Yeah but we never used candles.

J: Did you ever have any problems with fire?

E: No.

J: Nothing ever burned?

E: No.

J: But I suppose some of the neighbors had fire losses while you were growing up?

E: I don't remember any of them.

J: You never saw any fire protection out here of any kind?

E: Nope.

J: Fires had to be put out locally as best they could.

E: I'll tell you another thing my mother lived on was raise sweet potatoes. She used to raise sweet potatoes and she sold them by the bushel through the winter. She had a big bin in the kitchen that she put her sweet potatoes in. She sold them by the bushel through the winter. She was a great sweet potato raiser.

J: What else any turnips? [Inaudible].

E: No we didn't raise no turnips.

J: But no Irish potatoes?

E: No just sweet potatoes.

J: Were Irish potatoes as popular 60 or 70 years as they are now?

E: I don't think so.

J: I don't think so either. People don't realize that. Sweet potatoes were every bit as popular as the Irish potato. What other things were you able to grow in the garden just for the table that grew well? Peas?

E: Peas and cabbage—

J: Root crops?

E: Yes.

J: Beets?

E: Beets yeah [also]—

J: What was the soil like? Do you recall how heavy it was?

E: It was sandy. Momma's soil over there was sandy. It was sandy soil.

J: So you could grow good potatoes—

E: She raised sweet potato plants too so, sweet potato plants. She used to have a great big, sweet potato bed and [inaudible] sweet potato plants and so on.

J: How about fish? Was the family fond of either salted or fresh?

E: No.

J: No alright.

E: My mother was alright and her brother. They eat the fish but I never eat it.

J: Did Mr. Carpenter generally have salted fish available in that kind of store?

E: Oh yes.

J: How did he keep it, in a barrel?

E: Yes tub or something of that sort.

J: Just in [excite] [inaudible phrase].

E: No.

J: How about the sort of things that children like to buy in a store? When you had a few pennies and you could spend it on yourself—

E: Stick candy.

J: Stick candy?

E: Stick candy.

J: How about licorice?

E: No I don't think we ever had any licorice. It was stick candy.

J: Was bubble gum available?

E: No, no but chewing gum was.

J: A hard stick candy what about six inches long?

E: Yes strong sticks of candy, peppermint candy. That's what we would buy.

J: And that was about it?

E: Momma would send me to the store with eggs to buy sugar and if there was any pennies left well I got sticks of candy.

J: About a penny a stick?

E: Yes. About a penny a stick.

J: That was a real treat?

E: Yes oh it was that stick candy was delicious.

J: Did you eat it up fast before you got home?

E: No, no I kept some of it.

J: Because with the six others a stick of candy wouldn't go very far. So you were all pretty healthy apparently.

E: Yes we were.

J: The diet was good or you wouldn't have been.

E: Yes. We got plenty of milk and butter and things like that to eat and eggs and things that you have to eat. We plenty of them, plenty of it.

J: How often was meat on the table? Two or three times a week? Very little? More of a treat?

E: No we had meat most every day I guess. She used to be her own baker you know. She'd bake twice a week great big loaves of bread and we'd have our nice little slice of bread to eat. Done our own baking.

J: Think of the money that people pay out today to eat the way you ate when you were a child.

E: Just a simple loaf of bread nowadays...

J: Do you remember how much kerosene was a gallon?

E: Five or 100 cents a gallon.

J: About how much would you use? A couple quarts a week or more than that?

E: No I guess not much. The lamps were burning that's all we used in lamps.

J: Nobody stayed up late in the evening?

E: No.

J: Nothing to watch.

E: My Momma used to sit there in the dark by the window and watch out the window at nights but she didn't have a light burning or anything.

J: What on earth could you see out the window this close to Pisgah?

E: Well she just sit there and look and I had an uncle that would deal with us that drank a lot and there's a bar room right down the road there and he'd go down there and get drunk and he'd come

back up the road and he'd get all hung up in the wire fence. I was the only one that he would let do anything for him. My brother wouldn't touch him. He wouldn't let him touch him. But he'd get up the road and get hung in the wire fence and he'd holler, "Jen come get me. Jen!"

J: And you'd go get him? Did you go get him.

E: Well my Momma would be sitting there at the window I guess she'd ask what she was waiting for so she hollered, "Jen go get your uncle down the road." I'd put on my coat and go down and get him. Bring him up. One night there was a little snow on the ground and I—there was a little hill ran up to the house. If I didn't have one awful time getting that old man up that little hill to get him into the house but I finally got him there.

J: You had to practically carry him?

E: Well I drug him along with his arms you know. He'd hold onto me and I'd slip and slide and finally I got him up the hill.

J: How old were you then in your teens?

E: Yes I was in my teens.

J: About 15, 16?

E: About 15, 14.

J: Then you must have been a pretty sturdy girl.

E: Yes.

J: How large a man was he?

E: Oh he was a great big old man. Great big old man yes he was.

J: And he was staying with you at the—

E: Yes he was living with my mother. His family died in Pennsylvania and he moved down here with mine.

J: He was a Rees?

E: No he was a Roberts.

J: A Roberts. Your mother was a good cook would you say?

E: Oh yes my mother's cooking was known around all—when we had big—

J: Did she sell any of it ever?

E: No. We'd have festivals. My lord people would come for miles to get Momma's cooking. They'd come they'd want Mrs. Rees's cooking, Mrs. Rees's fried chicken. Mrs. Roe and Momma was great cooks down here at the church. Mrs. Roe and Momma's eats was—

J: Clara's mother in law?

E: Yes. They were great cooks. They were really noticed for their cooking at the festivals that they had.

J: Did your mother make a special effort to see that her girls new how to cook?

E: Yes she—

[Tape Interruption]

J: ...for you or other young people the annual church festivals.

E: Yes.

J: Could you give us a description of what these were like? Some of those really great ones that you'll always remember, some of the better ones.

E: Down near the church was a great big oak tree and they put up a shop of course to the church and on down and they had these great big freezers of ice cream setting in there. On the shelf was all kinds of things to buy. Trinkets of all sorts and things and people would buy them. People would come in and buy them. We'd eat ice cream and cake, the kids.

J: What day of the week would this start now?

E: Well we'd only have it one day and that would be about Wednesday or Thursday of a week you know. One day a week is all we ever had a festival.

J: In the summer?

E: In this summer yes a good hot day. So that would be our very great time I'm telling you it was that annual supper festival. Huh?

J: Did they have contests or games or some sort?

E: No we never had that. We had the big dinner eating.

J: Where did you eat? Outdoors?

E: Outdoors right outside the church.

J: Under the trees there at the Pisgah church?

E: Yes. Right there under the trees.

J: Was this a money making thing?

E: Yes, yes sure was.

S: [Inaudible sentence].

E: Huh?

J: There were annual charge picnics?

S: [Inaudible sentence].

J: Right when all seven churches were involved?

E: Yes we had them too. Had them down in Chapel Point a lot of times. All the churches were into them.

J: So what churches would these be? You start way down at Bethel?

E: Bethel and Shiloh.

J: Shiloh.

E: That was up this way.

J: La Plata?

E: Chicamuxen, La Plata, Pisgah, and Dentsville.

J: Dentsville.

E: Then what was it—

S: [Inaudible sentence]

E: No Indian Head wasn't with us then.

J: And who were some of those early ministers that you can remember? How far back can you go with the—

E: Mr. Brown I believe is the farthest I can go back, Mr. Brown.

J: And that takes us back to about 1908 or 10 doesn't it?

E: I guess it does I don't know.

J: And then Nevitt.

E: Well Nevitt was before—no, no that's right. Mr. Nevitt and then Mr. Burr. You remember Mr. Burr? [Or have you not hear of him], Mr. Burr? I think [inaudible] of that they used to stay here five or six years you know at a time. They didn't leave here—I mean one year and leave—they stayed five or six years. Mr. Wood yes, Mr. Atkins, Mr. Hugh yeah, Mr. McDonald yeah you mentioned him a while ago. Oh yes Mr. [Hart], last old man that I remember.

J: How about the size of the congregation of the Pisgah church? We know what it is now. Maybe an average of about 35 to 50 people on a Sunday morning there. How does this compare to the attendance of 50 to 75 years ago?

E: I guess there wasn't that many there then. Of course they used to drive the horse and buggies you know and it wasn't very many that drove the horse and buggies to church to tell you the truth.

S: [Inaudible sentence].

E: Mr. Morrogh used to get up there and beg for money [for] the preacher, my lord yes.

J: Cash?

E: Yes. Yes he used to.

S: [Inaudible sentence].

J: Cash and food?

E: Yeah.

J: And where was the parsonage most of the time?

E: Old La Plata.

J: Old La Plata right we know where it was.

E: Yeah I don't know whether it's still there or not.

J: The building is still there. So the church as far as membership goes really hasn't gone down?

E: No.

J: It's just holding its own would you say?

E: I think it's just about holding its own. I think so.

J: Pretty much the same families going to church there now that went to church there half a century ago?

E: Yes [some of their own folks].

J: The same names? You look at the names on the tombstones and come inside and you look at the faces Sunday morning and there are children, grandchildren, great-grandchildren of those...

E: Yes that's right.

J: Once in a while strangers from down the road?

E: Yes.

J: How about the quality of life today? Do any of your friends call you Aunt Jennie?

E: Oh my lord I'm known by Aunt Jennie all the time.

J: Aunt Jennie, well you don't mind I'd like to call you Aunt Jennie?

E: Okay it's alright with me, Aunt Jennie—

J: Known you and your family for some time.

E: When I was superintendent of the Sunday school my lord it was, "Aunt Jennie this and Aunt Jennie that," by ones that wasn't even my relatives that called me Aunt Jennie.

J: What were the names of some of those young people?

E: What the first name?

J: That were in your Sunday school class?

E: I can't even remember the names of them. I can't even remember.

J: Any of the Roe's with Mary in it?

E: No, no, no. Edgar, Edgar would've been in one and his brother. What was his name? [Hamel]. And what who were the girls what were their names? Ag and Clara [Inaudible]...I can't remember a lot of the names. They're all married and moved away. All kind of—Edgar died. Alice Carpenter, and Ruby Carpenter, and Charles Carpenter, and Clarence Carpenter, brothers and sisters.

J: Here's something I've never asked anyone in these talks on the subject of morality. You've been closely involved in church work in the same community all your life. Are there any big differences today in standards of morality compared with those you knew as a young person? In other words have people gotten less respectful of each other, of religion, what do you think?

E: I think so. I think they've forgotten—I think the old folks or something I think there's a lot of difference in that. I could see my Momma put on a white apron with her crocheted lace on the bottom of it. She was dressed up when she put on her white apron. Go to her neighbor's house and stay all day long, visit all day long. You don't see that nowadays. They don't go around visiting anybody at all. I think there's a lot of difference in that.

J: What about the ties between children and their parents and their grandparents? Have you noticed any difference there with respect to the feeling between the generations?

E: Yes. I think I do. I think I see a whole lot of difference in that.

J: Why do you think?

E: I think the times are so—I don't know what you'd call it—that they don't have enough respect for the parents anymore to think enough of them to love them or something anymore like they

did in times when we only had the horse and buggy to go in. We didn't have any time to think about other things I think.

S: [Inaudible sentence].

E: Yes there's such things as that.

J: The times probably place a lot of pressures on the younger people.

E: Yes. I think so.

J: That may be it. Essentially they are the same human beings that their parents and grandparents were.

E: Yes.

J: Unfortunate that we have no control over them perhaps.

E: No.

J: But when you were growing up people needed each other more than they need each other now.

E: Yes indeed.

J: They had to depend on each other it was a matter of survival.

E: Yes.

J: You could talk about shelter and food and clothing and help in time of need. If you didn't have friends or relatives that you could call on you were in desperate conditions.

E: Yes, yes you was.

J: So I think we have to realize that that was important as a tie that bound people to each other.

E: Yes that's right.

J: In order simply to get by day to day they had to help each other.

E: No, no, yeah it was an old lady lived down the road Momma used to go to see so much. Of course she had an afflicted boy that couldn't talk. She thought she needed help and she would go to her a lot of times to see whether there was something she could do for her. She raised sweet potatoes like Momma did and raised them to sell. She was a widow woman too. They come from Pennsylvania. So she would often go down to see her and talk with her and try to help her.

J: Had they known the Rees family in Pennsylvania at all?

E: No, no they didn't know them until they come here.

J: So your mother probably did the usual normal thing that is good respectable people expected this way of life. They expected to be called upon and they in turn expected people to give them a lending hand when they needed help.

E: Yes, yes they sure did.

J: If you had illness in the family and you simply did not pick up a telephone you didn't get in the car and go somewhere but you had a neighbor down the road that knew how to treat a particular type of illness. That neighbor helped.

E: Yes that's right. That's right, it certainly is right.

J: So there again you have examples of the sort of things that made—

E: Life worthwhile living I guess it was.

J: I think that's—we miss that today.

E: I think so too.

J: It's just not there and I think the small neighborhood churches such as this one here at Pisgah are one of the last outposts of tight community concern.

E: Yes, yes.

S: [Inaudible sentence].

E: I don't know. I just don't know.

S: [Inaudible phrase].

J: It may be Aunt Jennie that you have lived through one of the best periods of life that this nation has ever known.

E: I think so. I think so.

J: I'm glad you feel that way, the way life looks to us today.

E: I think so. I wouldn't take a thing in the world for the life that I have lived. No I wouldn't take a thing in the world.

J: Are there any other reasons you can think of for times being so different?

E: No.

J: People have maybe a little bit too much or have had too much.

E: Well they have ways to go nowadays if they don't stop to think of people that would like to have their company or something I guess. Get in the car and they go and they just don't consider I don't guess.

J: There's a thought. Can you remember ways in which life began to change in the country areas around Pisgah when the automobile became a part of family life? Let's say in the 1920's as each year went by and family after family would find its way to getting an automobile. How did the automobile by 1930 change life for everyone out in this part of the county? Think about that, you're going to have to chew on that one a little bit.

S: [Inaudible sentences].

E: Yes.

J: If there's any one thing that changed life for all of us I think it was the automobile.

E: Oh yes.

S: [Inaudible sentence].

E: They walked to work—the men folks had to walk to work. Walk across a great big bridge, go to work at Indian Head.

J: They would cross the Mattawoman Creek on a footbridge?

E: Creek yeah, a little bridge, foot bridge.

J: And by the time they got home at night—

E: Then they would get—they would have to get in a boat and finish their crossing on across to the grounds. They'd have to get in a boat after they got off the bridge and go in. So they had to do that every day.

J: They would walk from Pisgah to the bridge and over to the old powder factory. How many miles are we talking about?

S: Five miles at least.

J: Each way?

S: Yeah.

E: Yeah.

J: So that when a man got home at night he wasn't about to sit up and watch television if there had been television.

S: Well no but during the summer he worked [his crop and inaudible].

J: There were other things.

E: Yes he did other things when he got home in the evenings when he did all of that.

J: And this would have started probably about World War I?

E: Yes I guess so.

J: This was the time when the powder plant developed quite a bit to meet the demands of the war.

S: [Inaudible sentence].

J: So the automobile among other things freed people from the land.

E: Yes.

J: For the first time young people were able to travel as far as Washington, DC to find work, to work?

E: Yes.

J: Which was probably just as well because if you had a half a dozen sons to divide up a farm and they couldn't find work elsewhere you would have had some very serious economic and social problems. How about the effect the automobile had with respect to let's say courting? Did you find new blood coming into the county? Girls being courted elsewhere and then being brought home to live? Boys coming into the neighborhood from places miles away eventually settling down here. Didn't it cause a new mix of families and names?

E: Yes.

S: [Girls were able] to move away for jobs. Didn't get [too many] coming in to stay. [Inaudible sentence]. Girls [moved up].

J: So would you say that World War II really caused the biggest change in life in the Pisgah area?

E: I guess it would be War II, yes it would.

J: Do you recall back during the days of World War I when son Harry was a baby, Syd wasn't even quite here yet, what changes were caused by that first great war? Do you recall?

E: No.

J: Any particular impact on the community? How about the flu epidemic do you remember that?

E: Oh yes, yes.

J: Serious here? Were many families—

E: Yes my brother and his wife right across from me both was in bed and I waited on them and I took their little baby girl home with me and kept her all day long. Would take her back at night. The girls would take care of them but I helped do with their sickness and I felt the flu. I was in the midst of it day in, every day.

J: Dr. Mitchell was—

E: No Dr. Bicknell was here.

J: He was here as a fairly young man.

E: Yes, yes he was here. He'd taken care of them. So I worked with him and took care of their little girl. Learned and taught her how to walk. That little child loved me more than she did her Momma. It used to make her Momma so mad because she would come to me and run to me to hold her and take her and hold her.

J: So we're talking about 1918, 1919?

E: I guess yes back then.

J: Somewhere in there your son Syd was an infant himself?

E: Yes he was little then too.

J: No hospitals in this part of Maryland at all?

E: No, no, no. Yes they had the flu too.

J: Serious illness couldn't be treated locally they would have to go how far to find a hospital?

E: Up to Washington. Washington would be the closest hospital. Then my brother's wife took some kind of a pneumonia or something and she had to be operated on her lungs and I took care of her little girl again. Kept her the whole day long and all through the years till she got well.

J: Do you remember your first trip to Washington?

E: No I don't. Then my sister got sick and I stayed with her for weeks at a time. Left my husband and my daughter stayed there with him and kept house for him and I stayed with my sister, take care of her and—

J: And where did she live now?

E: Where was it Syd?

S: Chevy Chase.

E: Chevy Chase. I marketed for her and cooked for her. She had two roomers and I cooked the dinners for her and cooked her a dinner....

J: Before you were married what was the longest trip you ever took from home?

E: Washington.

J: To Washington?

E: That is the longest I ever took.

J: How did you get there?

E: Horse and buggy.

J: Horse and buggy, not by river?

E: No.

J: By horse and buggy. Do you remember how long roughly?

E: About three hours it would take us to drive up there.

J: You made it one day there and back in one day?

E: Yes oh yes.

J: And what did you do? What was the purpose of going?

E: To buy some dresses, some flows or some sort maybe, get some children's things or something.

J: Who went with you do you remember?

E: My mother would go. Her and I would drive and take our buggy and go up there. My mother when she was living.

J: Do you remember the road, the route you took?

E: Yes. [Old country road] state road goes up there now it was an old country road.

J: Livingston Road part way?

E: Yes.

J: From here to Glymont?

E: Yes and to Marshall Hall. There was a boat if you wanted to take a boat a lot of times you'd go to Marshall Hall and take a boat and go up. My husband had an uncle that come down here one time and I had to drive him around in my automobile if he wanted to go anywhere so he had to take the boat to go to Washington. That's where he lived then. I had to take him to Marshall Hall. My sister was down here visiting at the time, her and her husband. We had put him out at Marshall Hall and was starting back home and an awful thunderstorm came up and on the great big old hill goes down and off towards Marshall Hall and it was just a county road then and we were coming up that old road in the automobile and the stones were washing down. Great big stones were washing right down the hill. My sister got so scared she said, "My Lord Jen, push over pull over on the side of the road and stop." She says, "I'm scared of these stones rolling down there." So I pulled over on the side of the road and stopped until the storm was over. We went up the hill and got up the top of the hill we had a flat tire.

J: When did you learn how to drive an automobile?

E: In—

J: After you got married?

E: Oh yes, yes after I got married. My husband taught me how to drive and then I drove a normal [vehicle]—

J: Touring car?

E: Yes.

J: Fold back roof, side curtains possibly?

E: Yes indeed. Put the children in the back and away we'd go.

J: What kinds of cars? Do you remember those early ones?

E: Oh Fords and Chevrolets and Dodges.

J: No Toyotas—

E: No, no.

S: Oh not them.

E: Fords and Chevy's.

J: Did you learn how to change a tire?

E: No.

J: I'll bet you could have if you had to.

E: No I don't think I ever did learn.

J: Just changed the tire in the rough.

E: There was a big store right up the top of the hill and we run in there. I run in the store and ask somebody would they come change a tire for me. There were some men in there. They come out and change my tire for me. I paid them [with some coin] started on our way home.

J: You got home alright?

E: We got home alright and my sister's husband was walking the floor because he got so scared. He didn't know what was going to happen to us.

J: No way to find out.

E: No wasn't no way to find out.

J: No telephones, couldn't call the sheriff, no two way radios.

E: No, no, no.

J: There's a thing that we forget. Communication was very, very difficult.

E: Oh yes.

S: [It's crazy] [inaudible phrase].

E: Oh yes that's all we could have done but there was men in the store and they come out and changed it for me.

J: Do you remember when you got your first radio in the house and what it meant to you?

E: No I don't remember.

J: Was it something that people looked forward to getting—

E: I do remember the first it was the one with the earphones on. I do remember that—

J: Battery? Battery operated?

E: Yes. Because Harry was a little fellow then and he used to sit with those earphones on him and listen at the radio and he had a cat that loved him so. That cat—

J: Who was Hallie?

E: Harry.

J: Harry I see okay.

E: And that cat would go bring mice, put them in his bed. I would make the bed up and there would be mice in the bed. She would get anything she could find and bring it to that boy and he was sitting there listening to the radio one day and I heard her. She would call when she got something for him, "Mew, mew." I looked and I heard her and I said to Harry, I looked under his chair and she had a lizard right in the middle of it and it was kicking on both ends. I hollered to Harry, I said, "Harry get the cat out of here she's got a lizard in her mouth." So he jumped up and put him outdoors. But she brought everything she had that she wanted to catch she brought into Harry.

J: Harry encouraged all this of course?

E: Oh yeah he loved her.

J: What sort of things did your children get involved in? Young people's activities at the church?

E: Yes.

J: Were any of them in 4H?

E: We used to have an [inaudible] league.

J: [Inaudible] league.

E: Do you remember that [inaudible phrase] or was that before you come along? I guess that was when I come along. Oh yes little things at the church is what they were involved in.

J: Now your children until they were in their early teens didn't have much more to do in the community really than you had when you were in your teens.

E: No they didn't.

J: For entertainment and excitement there really wasn't anything more in a rural community here between let's say 1900 and 1940.

E: No.

J: Where did your children go to school now?

E: Well they went up here—did you? No they went down to the little school house down the road here. There was a little school house and they went down there.

J: And then to high school?

E: Yes and I used to take them to high school in our little open car and my brother's wife, her son went too. We would take one week and the next week she would take a week and we'd take them to school. I [do recall it] to high school. That's the way they got to high school first and then the buses started to run and then of course they got on the buses, but at first we had to take them to school.

J: Well your children were some of the first to be able to go all the way through high school in Charles County weren't they?

E: Yes.

J: What year did Harry graduate? Your oldest. About 1932 possibly?

E: I guess it was. I don't know.

J: And Syd graduated from high school about what year?

E: What was yours Syd?

J: 1934. So they were getting the benefits of high school education in Charles County about the first group really.

S: [Inaudible sentence].

E: Yeah.

J: As I understand it the first high school in the county opened about 1927 or 28 after the McDonough Institute. That's got to be...So they got that big advantage you couldn't possibly have had.

E: Yeah.

J: How did you feel about education? Did you have some strong feelings about it for your own children?

E: Oh yes I was glad that they—

J: Happy that they were able to go through 12 years of school?

E: Yes, yes indeed I was very happy for them.

J: And how did your mother feel about it? If she had had the money would she have sent her children beyond?

E: No, no I don't think so.

J: She felt that seven or eight years was a fair number?

E: Yes I guess so. Yes I think she did. I think so.

J: How many years of school did your mother have do you recall? Did she ever mention it?

E: No, no I don't remember.

J: And had she gone to school in Pennsylvania?

E: Oh yes.

J: Did she ever mention to you any desire to leave Charles County to you?

E: No.

J: Was she perfectly contented here?

E: No she never said a word about leaving no.

J: She didn't mind the heat of the summer?

E: No, no.

J: Didn't feel that times were too hard for her?

E: No, no she never complained of anything.

J: Was she well most of her life?

E: Yes.

J: Do you recall any periods when your mother was ill in bed for an extended period of time?

E: No I don't.

J: Well that must have been a blessing.

E: Yes it was.

J: I'm sure there were quite a few families where illness was a rather regular and disastrous thing.

S: [Inaudible] [brother] [inaudible].

E: Yes, that's why I was telling him that I took care of our children so much.

J: And you have been quite healthy all of your life until just recently?

E: Well I had a serious operation in 1920. Other than that I have been very well.

J: But you recovered completely?

E: Oh yes completely yes [inaudible] well afterwards.

J: After you were married Aunt Jennie did you ever again do the kind of heavy work in the field that you had done as a girl?

E: No.

J: Never had to?

E: No.

J: Did you always have a little garden?

E: Oh yes.

J: Living in the house across the road here.

E: Yes we had a garden.

J: Was your husband interested in it or was that considered—he did like it?

E: Yes he liked to work in the garden.

J: So the two of you worked together.

E: Yes we raised a nice little garden and had plenty to eat. Plenty of our own stuff to live on.

J: And did you do some canning every year?

E: Oh yes, yes indeed.

J: What were your favorite recipes? Anything in particular with respect to pickling?

E: No but I loved to can tomatoes. We used to love canned tomatoes.

J: You canned tomatoes? Whole or did you break them up?

E: Break them and cut them all up and can them that way.

J: Any particular pickling recipes that you considered your own little specialty?

E: No, no. Oh I—

J: Applesauce ever?

E: Chow chow we used to make a pickle for us, a chow chow. My mother was a great chow chow [inaudible]. So I used to make a lot of that.

J: How would you do it? How did you use chow chow?

E: Use it with meats and things like that.

J: It was a meat dressing on the side of the plate?

E: Yes.

J: Any horseradish was that?

E: No we didn't have much horseradish no.

J: Sweet potatoes still?

E: Yes.

J: You still had small livestock? Chickens?

E: Yes I raised chickens when I got married.

J: What else?

E: I didn't have anything else but chickens.

S: Turkey.

J: Turkeys?

E: Oh yes I did raise turkeys a couple years.

S: [Pigs].

E: No—yes, yes I did too. Yes we did raise first when we first got married we had pigs a couple of times. But my husband got so he hated to see them butchered so he wouldn't raise them anymore.

J: Did that ever bother you?

E: I wouldn't see them when they did it so no it didn't bother me.

J: Okay. Was hunting a big thing here? Did the young boys enjoy it? Did they look forward to hunting season? Was your husband interested in hunting at all?

E: Oh yes he was a great hunter. He liked squirrels. He loved squirrels. He liked to hunt and fish.

J: Rabbits?

E: He liked fishing a lot more than anything else. He was a fisherman.

J: Deer were not so plentiful until recent years. A lot of people don't realize that. [It wasn't] [inaudible phrase].

E: No. No there wasn't plenty of deer around.

J: When did electricity come into this part of the county? 1932?

S: [Inaudible sentences].

J: You had a gasoline engine with generator?

S: [Inaudible sentence].

J: Probably in the late 20's or so. So Aunt Jennie your children knew what it was to use kerosene light and clean the lamps and trim the wicks and bring some wood in for the fire?

E: Oh yes. Yes they did. Oh yeah. Yes sir.

J: All a part of country life in a rural community in a pretty unsettled part of the country even though we're pretty close to the nation's capital Charles County was really in the country until a couple of decades ago.

E: Yes it was.

J: So youngsters who were born and raised here I would say at any time up till 1930 knew what it was to do a lot of the things that you had to do to survive when you were young.

E: Yes. Yeah night time was their job of getting in the wood for the night. In a big old wood box we'd have behind the stove.

J: How did you handle washing the dishes? Taking turns?

E: No.

J: While you were still at home?

E: Yes I guess I'd get almost all the washing the dishes and cooking.

J: Did your mother ever make her own soap?

E: Yes, yes she did.

J: Most of the time as long as she was able to do that sort of thing?

E: Yes. When she killed hogs she made a bunch of soap too [from the skins]—

J: What all went into the mix? What did she need to make the soap?

E: Well she used the pig skins and lye. She used lye, put lye into the soap.

J: And these were put together in a kettle?

E: Yes and boiled down.

J: Outdoors when possible?

E: Yes outdoors. She used to have a great big old iron pot that she used to cook her lard in and all the things that she needed to boil down and cook. She used to use that outside.

J: About how much soap would she make at one time? Enough to last for a month or two months?

E: Oh two or four months is all she ever made. She didn't make much.

J: So what are we talking about? 15, 25 pounds of soap at a time?

E: Yes about that.

J: Did she cut it up, measure it, and divide it equally in little bars?

E: Yes.

J: What color was it?

E: Kind of a yellowish.

J: Yellowish like [inaudible phrase]. Like [inaudible phrase].

E: Something like this, something like this. It would be something like that.

J: Did she ever try to perfume it a little? Give it a pleasant scent?

E: No she never did that, no.

J: So the only way you could smell pretty was to clean good.

E: Yeah.

J: I guess this might not be considered important but I think it is. We made such a big thing out of scents and deodorants and perfumes and all of this fancy stuff. Wasn't too long ago when lye soap was it. The beginning and the end of hygiene and the general [inaudible].

E: Yes that's right.

J: A young man would go out on a date just hoping he didn't smell at all.

E: Smell right [laughs]. Yes sir.

J: Well I think this is a very important part of life. One that we have forgotten about. Scents and odors. They say that in the colonial days that if you visited one of the great cities, walked down some of the best known boulevards the thing that was most evident, and first evident was the stench, the stench. The big cities and probably less in the small towns. But this was not a problem out in the country like this where you had so much fresh air and so few people relatively few animals. How about fertilizer for the gardens. What did your mother have to do to fertilize the 25 acres? Did she have to buy commercial fertilizer?

E: Yes. She bought that—

J: What kind do you recall?

E: No. But then she used her horse's horse manure in a lot of it you see. She had two horses and she had a lot of sheep and she had pigs and chickens so that manure was a fertilizer that she used a lot. Course for corn she bought fertilizer for the corn. She didn't use the horse manure or anything for that. She used that on her gardens and things like that.

J: So this manure was a very valuable commodity?

E: Oh yes.

J: And it was well managed and the manure pile was kept neat and in one place? None of this was wasted.

E: Yes it had to be kept burned over because if it didn't then it would catch on fire and burn. Horse manure would. It gotta be turned and taken care of just the same as anything else.

J: So this is one reason it was kept away from buildings?

E: Yes it was outside.

J: Did the girls also play a role in doing this sort of thing? Cleaning the animal pens and stables?

E: There wasn't a girl but me. My sister moved to town and the other one got married.

J: That's right only you.

E: Yes it was only me left.

J: You probably did all of those things.

E: Did all of that. Yes I did all of that.

J: Never without any thought that I can't do this? That this is something girls didn't do, that never occurred to you?

E: No, no I don't think it never did.

J: Well I think one reason is that you had seen your mother manage the household and do all of the—take all of the man's responsibilities as well as the wives'. She must have set the example quite.

E: Yes she did. She was a great Momma.

J: So those were good days? [Inaudible phrase].

E: Yes it was happy days.

J: How important was the church to the community looking at it from your point of view and the way [inaudible].

E: I think it was a great thing. I think it was a great thing.

J: It wasn't something you just went to on Sunday morning?

E: No I don't think so.

J: You think it's as important today or maybe not quite?

E: Yes I think it's important today. I think it is. I wish I was able to go every Sunday.

J: Was it more important when you were a girl because of the social aspect of it? Was it important partly because this was where people saw each other maybe only once a week? Have a chance to talk and get caught up on family news? You think this was an attraction that helped keep the church together?

E: I think so. I think it was [more than] [inaudible]. We used to have an [inaudible] league and that was for the young folks when I was coming along. We enjoyed that and had good times with it. I associated with things like that. It was a comfort to us I think to know that we had a place to go and a nice church to attend. I think it did us good.

J: You felt dependent on the church more than a lot of people do now?

E: Yes, yes.

J: You would think now with the population in the Pisgah area being perhaps at least five times what it was 40, 50 years ago that the church attendance would increase accordingly but it hasn't and I think we all agree that the main reason is that times are so different that people no longer feel they need the church as they used to need the church.

E: I think so too. I think that's it.

J: So I don't foresee any time in the future when the church will play as big a role in our lives as it did before World War II.

E: I don't think so either.

J: Unless there are things in the future that will make life more difficult for us and will make the church more appealing and more necessary. What do you think of the role of the young people in church? Does it make you feel a little bit sad that so few are attending and so few are coming along to play the roles of the church?

E: Oh yes I think so. That don't take any interest in any of the church work at all anymore. There's so few that want to do that. They don't want to take that responsibility or something of church work. I don't know but it seems to me there are very few that want to do that anymore. Of course I'm not active down here much anymore. I don't know that they—or when I hear them talk that very few want to take any interest in it anymore. Seems they're drifting away awful fast, awful fast, for some reason. I don't know why.

J: Is there anything you think we should talk about Aunt Jennie? Anything you would like to say for the record? Now don't forget that what we're doing here is a very important thing. This is probably to my way of thinking the most important part of history. What people think and what they say. Any feelings you have that you would like to get down for the record now is a good time. We're all here together, we know each other, and anything that you feel should be said that will be of interest to say your grandchildren and your great-grandchildren because they're going to be able to hear your voice and listen to what you say some years from now. Think of that.

E: Yeah.

J: Wouldn't you like to be able to hear your mother's voice now?

E: Oh yes.

J: And talk to your uncles and your brothers.

E: Yes I would.

J: This is one reason we're doing this. Not only to find out how you think but to get your voice on the record. How you say things is important as well as what you say. Maybe your son Syd could answer. What haven't we covered Syd that you think your mother would be able to say to make a good contribution to this discussion?

S: [Inaudible from 1:30:40 to 1:30:54] [the whole Marbury to Pisgah area to go to high school. Matter of fact the [inaudible] community in Pisgah community [are the only ones in its name] [inaudible phrase] [started building] [inaudible phrase] really one big community Marbury [had too until the automobile] [inaudible] [got sort of separated]. [Inaudible phrase] but we had [inaudible phrase] [Dad and me] [inaudible phrase]. Before you go and play baseball its [inaudible] call in a [team working. You better be working] [inaudible phrase].

[End of Tape]