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## Interview with Nellie Hall Regarding Her Life (FA 154)

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**Folklife Archvies Project 154 – A Generation Remembers, 1900-1949**

Interview with Nellie Hall (CT 14)

TAPE1, SIDE1

GARY NETZLEY: Okay, uh, this is uh, Nellie Hall. Uh, we are at 45 Woodford Avenue. I am Gary Netzley interviewing and this is uh, July 30<sup>th</sup>. About 11 o'clock. Um, let's see what else we need to do.

NELLIE HALL: I heard my mother tellin' about how, how she was livin' when I was born.

GN: Uh huh. When were you born?

NH: 19 hundred and 5.

GN: Okay.

NH: And she said she was livin' with her mother. And they lived, let's see, I believe they said they lived in an old house boat. It had been pulled up and converted into a dwelling house.

GN: Uh huh.

NH: I had uh, let me see, I had three brothers and a sister older than I was. Now, ?? the older boys and ?? I imagine he lived, let's see, I believe she said they lived in ?? when my oldest brother was born.

GN: Mm hm. What year was that? When your oldest brother was born?

NH: Let me see. 18'n99, I believe.

GN: Okay.

NH: And uh, I don't remember much about that. I just remember and her father, my mother, my grandfather on my mother's side was on the police force.

GN: He lived here in Owensboro or in the?

NH: They lived in Tennessee, I believe.

GN: Uh huh.

NH: Yeah. And, then he, I don't know how come they to move, they moved to Habit first, and then they moved to Owensboro. My grandfather on my mother's side was Constable here in Owensboro.

GN: Yeah, I, I think I read that.

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NH: Constable Cole, William Jasper Cole.

GN: William Jasper Cole. Okay. Do you remember what year he became Constable?

NH: No, that was back before I was

GN: Oh, before you were born, or before you could remember?

NH: Before I could I remember.

GN: Uh huh.

NH: I was just a baby then.

GN: Okay. Let me get some other things. Uh, uh, now you said that you, you grew up in Owensboro, right?

NH: I was born here and raised here right around, never lived in town much. We all, my daddy was always a farmer,

GN: Uh huh.

NH: A sharecropper and he, he never did live in town.

GN: Okay.

NH: He lived in, and uh, they lived here, let's see, I think they lived here when they were married.

GN: Mm hm.

NH: My mother and my daddy was married.

GN: Uh, what did you do, what did you do for uh, for a living? Did you every work? Outside the home?

NH: Well, not, not before our marriage.

GN: Uh huh.

NH: I always lived at home, and we worked. We had to work in the field.

GN: Uh huh.

NH: Like the boys did.

GN: Yeah.

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NH: And I know one time I ran off {Chuckles}

GN: You did?

NH: Oh, I was tired of working. {Chuckles}

GN: How old were you when you ran off?

NH: I was about 15 or 16 years old.

GN: Uh huh.

NH: And, and I had some kind of spell, we went to get some roasting ears in, my sister and I, just passed out, just seemed, and they brought me back then and took me up to the, our landlord's house, and I was sittin' on the porch when I come to. They asked me what was the matter. I said "I don't know." I said I just got overheated, I guess.

GN: Uh huh.

NH: And they had to have a doctor look at me, and he said "Well," said "don't," said she's not to work, be out in the hot sun anymore. And I didn't have to work in the field any more. I had to work harder, at home

GN: Uh huh.

NH: Well, see we had a big family and we had to all of our washing. We had to wash on washboard.

GN: Mm hm.

NH: I had to do that. Most of that by myself., 'cause my mother wouldn't, so. And, when we lived in the country all the time. I never did, I never knew what the city of Owensboro looked like

GN: Mm hm.

NH: Until I married.

GN: Mm hm. When, when did you get married?

NH: 1924.

GN: Uh huh.

NH: And

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GN: Uh huh. And uh, and that was Mr. Hall?

NH: Yes. Fred H. Hall.

GN: Tell me about, tell me about your wedding and, and uh, your marriage.

NH: Well, we went to Rockport and got married. That's, that's where I made my biggest mistake. {Chuckles} Getting married.

GN: Really.

NH: And, we moved in with his mother for a while, and found out that I couldn't get along with her.

GN: Uh huh.

NH: And I left him. I told him that I, if he didn't get me a house where we could live by ourselves, why, if he'd rather live with his mother then live with me, why, he could go ahead and live with her.

GN: Uh huh.

NH: I didn't want to live with her, and then we finally moved away and was living by ourselves, and I went down there. She had epilepsy.

GN: Uh huh.

NH: And I went down to her house one day, and, and she had fell. She had taken a pan of beans off the stove, scalding hot, and she fell with them in her hand.

GN: Then she burnt herself?

NH: Well, she scalded herself.

GN: Yeah.

NH: ?? pretty bad. And then I felt sorry for her, ??, and so I told him, I said, you tell her if she will give us two rooms of the house so that I can have my own kitchen, we can have our own bedroom,

GN: Uh huh.

NH: We'll move down there with her, and I'll take the best care of her that I know how. I felt sorry for her.

GN: Mm hm.

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NH: ?? “Cause she was in the shape that she was in. So we moved down there for a while, and I was always a great hand. I loved pets.

GN: Mm hm.

NH: And I had some little kittens, two little kittens was my pets. She let us have two rooms, but she looked in one time and seen those kittens in there, kittens in there in their own basket, said “I won’t have them cats in my house.” Said, “I don’t want cats in my house.” I told him, I said, well, I told her, I said “Well, now these cats are not bothering you. They’re in their basket here.” And I tried to reason with her, but she just flew off. She wasn’t goin’ have those cats in her house.

GN: Mm hm.

NH: And I told him, I said “Well, now if she put, if you put my cats out,” I said, “You might as well say you’re putting me out.” And I said “You got no business here by yourself.” Next morning, though I found my kittens laying out at the doorstep frozen to death. And we, I got up and we left. We didn’t move down there any more. He was always worrying about his mother. His mammy.

GN: Mm hm.

NH: And I said, “Well, what about me?” I said, “Don’t I deserve a little consideration? And uh, he worked at the time at Owensboro Sewer Pipe Company. Him and his brother did, and I, there was an old woman that would come over and see his mother, and she liked her. They got along fine. {Someone on loud speaker} And I ?? {Someone on loud speaker} Somebody making as much money as you are, said why can’t you all, you put in a dollar and a half and him put in a dollar and a half and pay this ?? and she’ll stay there with your mother and take care of her. I said that she’s got no business there by herself. But his mother said, “No, I won’t have it.” Said, “If my own children can’t take care of me, I’ll just stay by myself.” And that killed all the pity I had for her, and I said, “Well,” I said, “You stay by yourself then if you want to.”

GN: Mm hm. Mm hm.

NH: And, but they finally got the old woman anyway, I guess, and she stayed with her until her daughter come home. She had a daughter, they had a daughter that was older than the boys, and she lived in

GN: Uh huh.

NH: In Illinois some where.

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GN: Uh huh.

NH: She came home and stayed there with there with mother, and then

GN: How old were you when this was all happening?

NH: I was 19 years old when I married.

GN: Okay.

NH: He was 27. He had been married before.

GN: Uh huh.

NH: And I hadn't. I didn't know what it was all about. {Chuckles}

GN: How did you meet him?

NH: Went out there to stay with his mother. I was staying with her.

GN: Uh huh.

NH: And, he wasn't there at the time. He was, he was working, he working some where out in the country some where, and then he come back and was working for Frank Pardon?? Was staying at home then. I was staying there with her one night when he asked me. Would I go to the movie with him. Would I go to the movies with him.

GN: Uh huh.

NH: And that's how it all started.

GN: That's how it all. What do you remember, what that first movie that you saw was?

NH: No, I don't remember what it was.

GN: Uh huh.

NH: But we got along just fine for ten, twelve years, we got along just fine. You couldn't find a better husband, a better father than any better than he was.

GN: Uh huh.

NH: And he worked for Frank Pardon?? Always working for him, and uh, that's when most everybody lived in Pardon's houses then, and he just lived in old shacks. They either bootlegged, sold whiskey or something, and him taking a drink here and there. Got so that he couldn't do without drinking.

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GN: Oh, your husband?

NH: Yeah, and that's what broke our marriage up. That's what killed him.

GN: Oh, it did.

NH: Him drinking.

GN: When did you, did you just, did you divorce or did you just separate?

NH: No, I stuck to him 'til he died.

GN: And what, what year did he die?

NH: Well, let's see. We weren't married 25 years. We didn't get to 25 years, 26 years. We married in 1924 and I, I don't know, I'm not very good at arithmetic,

GN: Uh huh.

NH: But anyway, he kept drinkin' and so I had been to the grocery store one time.

GN: Mm hm.

NH: Come back and the children said "Momma," said "Daddy fell in that ditch up there. Mr. ?? and them pulled him out and brought him home. But", said "He cain't," said, "He's soakin' wet," and I, and I went in and looked at him. He was still, he didn't like he didn't know what he was doin' so I told the boys, I said, "You boys, get," I had done quit letting him sleep in my bedroom, my

GN: Uh huh.

NH: Kept the door locked when he'd come in. I'd lock the door on him. {Chuckles} ?? let him sleep alone, back in room. I had a cot in there. And that's where he slept then. And, honey, and he was still soakin' wet and I told the boys, I said, "You all better get his wet clothes off of him." And they laid him on his cot, and they got the clothes off of him and put him on, put his pajamas on him and put him on his cot, and I, I woke up some time about 6, 5 or 6 o'clock that morning and I heard something thump, thump, thumping on the floor, and I thought that it was the dog, and I kept hollerin' for the dog to get out, and I never did hear the dog go out, and I don't know what, he was laying on the floor, and he was just a jerkin'. His heels and his elbows beatin' a tattoo on the floor. And I said, "You boys get,

GN : Mm hm.

NH: "Your daddy's fell off the cot, and he's cold. He's havin' a chill. You boys get up and put him back up on, on the cot." They went and put him back on the cot, and, but he still,

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and I tried, he had a half, a half pint of whiskey and I know'd, I'd heard men say every time that they had been on a drunk, they had to have a drink to sober up on.

GN: Uh huh.

NH: And I tried to pour some of that down him, but he wouldn't take it. Then I tried to get, feed him some breakfast, and he got a piece of bread in his hand, but he just couldn't get his hand to his mouth. He was shakin' that way.

GN: Uh huh.

NH: And his left side was paralyzed. He couldn't use his left hand, and I called the, the doctor and the doctor said to take him to the hospital, and I took him to the hospital and they couldn't take him in there, so

GN: Which hospital was that?

NH: Owensboro ?? Then I took him to the Kentucky Convalescent Home. Did you ever hear where that was?

GN: No, I don't.

NH: That was up on West Second Street.

GN: Mm hm.

NH: And I took him up there and he laid up there and I tried feeding. He wouldn't take it. He couldn't get nothing to his mouth ??, and the doctor come and examined him and he said he had what's called whiskey paralysis. And he asked me, he said, "Has he," said, "Do you know where he bought his last whiskey?", and I said, "No, I don't have any idea." I said, "He, so many places he went and bought whiskey." I said, "He just, I don't have any idee." Then he said, "Well, he's got a hold of some whiskey that had some wood alcohol in it, 'cause his tongue, his mouth is just eaten up."

GN: Uh huh.

NH: And he asked me did I know if he'd had a hard blow on the back of the head. I said, "Well, I don't know." I said, "He could have done it." I said, "The places he went to, it's a wonder that he hadn't been killed." And he last, lived about the sixth day. And I, an old woman that was running the Convalescent Home ??, oh what was her name. {Voice on loudspeaker} I, I know what her name is, but I can't think, I can't speak it. I'll think of it after.

GN: Okay.

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NH: Anyway, they told her, Mrs. Randolph, and she called me, said “Mrs. Hall,” said, “I’m just taking your money for anything ‘cause,” said, “You can do him, I’d been waitin’ on him mostly myself. When, I have run up there, people up thar, have to feed him up thar, and she, and she said, “Mr. Hall is not so, he hasn’t got a chance.” She said, “You can, been waitin’ on him anyway.” Said, “I hate to take any more of your money.” Said, “If you can get him a bed to lay on, hospital bed for, he’d be easy to take care of.” Said “It’d be better if he, you take him back home, and it wouldn’t cost you nothing.”

GN: Mm hm.

NH: And I went home, was looking, was looking for him a hospital bed when they called me again, called me again and said, “Mrs. Randolph said, you need to get in touch with us.” Said, “Daddy was dying.” And I went there and he was drawing his last breath, breath. {Makes hard breathing noises.} And so ?? {Makes hard breathing noises.} And it was just like he was just

GN: Mm hm.

NH: In misery. And I sat thar with him fer, ‘til midnight and, and at midnight, while he drawed his last breath.

GN: Did he uh, was he working for somebody who was doing, who had a still?

NH: He was a carpenter.

GN: Oh, he was a carpenter.

NH: He could do anything. He was a good carpenter. He could lay brick. He could hang paper. He could do anything.

GN: Uh huh.

NH: There wasn’t anything he couldn’t do. If he, except left whiskey alone.

GN: Yeah. Did he work, did he work for?

NH: He worked for himself for a while.

GN: Uh huh.

NH: And then he, been workin’, he was workin’ for Frank Pardon?? when we married.

GN: Mm hm.

NH: And then

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GN: What was he doing for Frank Pardon??

NH: Guess carpenter work.

GN: I see.

NH: Brick work.

GN: Uh huh.

NH: Maintaining his houses, taking care of his houses.

GN: Mm hm.

NH: And

GN: And, during that time then, did you, you uh like took care of the house and?

NH: Yeah. I always stayed home. I took care of my house.

GN: Cooked and cleaned and that kind of?

NH: Cooked and cleaned and I done anything I could do washing on the board all the time.

GN: Uh huh. Can you tell me uh, about your first uh, first days when you were in school?

NH: Well, I was eight years old, when I first started to school. And then we had to walk. Oh, we had to walk. I don't know.

GN: Mm hm.

NH: Well, I imagine a mile and, and oh we had to walk, walk over, over a mile and I was. No, I was easy to take cold.

GN: Mm hm.

NH: But I, we went to Rosehill school. Now, I don't know if you remember her or what road it was on.

GN: Mm hm.

NH: But Johnny O'Graham. He finally, he got to be county superintendent.

GN: Mm hm.

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NH: But he was my first teacher. {Someone over speaker}

GN: Can you hang, hang on for a second please?

NH: Yes, and

GN: I'll go see ??

NH: And then uh, we moved. We was living on Pleasant Road at the time on ?? 's place. And then uh, I remember we had a school fair, and the girls had to uh, show what they could do. Whether they could sew or whatever they could sew and I, I worked some button holes in ?? {Chuckles} ?? and the boys showed the corn they could raise and

GN: Mm hm.

NH: Stuff like that. It's a school fair.

GN: Did you win anything at the school fair?

NH: Well, we won the prize. The school did. When we come back, everybody was hollerin' an' whoopin' an' yellin' in the school. ?? our teacher. He was hollerin' "Hooray, Hooray for Rosehill, Rosehill, Rosehill." Hollerin' her name. 'Cause Rosehill had won prize. And I don't know what road it was on. It was a beautiful place up there, you know. I can still remember

GN: Do you remember how many students, other students there were?

NH: Well, there was not, I don't know, there was about fifty and we didn't have but one teacher though. And uh, and it was just a one room school house.

GN: Mm hm.

NH: And then we moved from there on to Joe Alexander's place.

GN: Mm hm.

NH: And that was out [at] Legion Park. They lived in ??, in a little log house. Our first house we lived in was just uh, main part of it was log and then they had two rooms. Framed and just built on to it.

GN: And that was with your, your, still your family, your mom?

NH: Yes, still with my mother and my daddy. And that's where my first brother died. I had a brother named Frank. He was just uh, two years or three years older than I was.

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GN: Uh huh.

NH: And that's where he died at.

GN: What did he die of?

NH: Tuberculos {sic} of the brain.

GN: Uh huh.

NH: We ate, generally when we moved onto ??'s place, why, we had to go out into the field. Go out across the pasture to carry water, and my daddy built uh, some steps over the fence so we wouldn't have to go way around by the road and go through the gate, and, and, we was going one day to get water, and my brother fell. He fell from the top of the steps and he hit his shin on the, the edge of the steps.

GN: Uh huh.

NH: And, and it didn't leave a bruise and it didn't break, the, the, scrape a little of the dead skin on the edge of the shins. Never thought about it hurtin' so bad. Went on and got our water, but he began to cry, that leg hurtin' him all the time. And my mother begged my daddy to take him to the doctor an' he says, "Oh," says, "he's just running and romping around." And then in the night, that leg started him ?? , but it wasn't long before the leg turned green and bluish and it broke open then and made a runnin' sore out of it. And, and then, I don't know how long, it lasted for two or three months that ways, and then one day he called mother. Said, "Mother, come in here and see what's wrong with my leg." Said, "There's something stickin' in here." And she went, and there was a piece of bone was workin' out of his leg. And when she come down, showed it to my daddy and said "Now will you take him to the doctor?" And he took him to the doctor, said "Well," said, "He cracked a bone in, he shattered a bone in that leg when he fell." Said, "If I had known it at the time, well, I could of put that bone back together, and put a bandage around it, and it would have healed up, but," said, "Now," said, "there ain't no chance of." But his, his leg, and it wudn't long, he said, "Another piece of bone goin' work out right there." But after that piece of bone worked out, then it healed up and it left him with scars on his leg, and he had an awful, ugly lookin' leg, but he could walk on it. ?? And then he went to school. He was smart. Oh, he was smart.

GN: How did he uh, how did he get tuberculosis?

NH: Huh?

GN: How did he, how did he?

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NH: Well, he fell out of the barn. We lived on Mr. Alexander's place and he raised a lot of cattle.

GN: Uh huh.

NH: And he had a straw barn, a hay barn, and then they had another barn where the cattle went in, when it was rainin', where they went it to eat. Great long barn and they had, had a trough built there and 'ranged themselves on each side of that, and they had a kind of a, he, they liked to play in the barn, and he fell out of that barn. Hit the back of his head on a piece of two-by-four and it kind of stunned him. Knocked him out for awhile. They didn't tell my mother about it, through, 'til after he had died. And uh, and they said that what caused him to have tuberculos {sic} of the brain. The leg

GN: Mm hm.

NH: The doctor looked at his leg, and he said, "I see that he's got an awful bad leg there." And she told him how he got that and he said, "Well, that hasn't helped him any." And that's my, that was the first dead person that I'd ever seen.

GN: Mm hm. Were you pretty close with your brother?

NH: Yes, we always was close. We didn't go and have any other children to play with. We played together all the time.

GN: How many, how many kids in your family?

NH: Well, we had eleven altogether.

GN: Eleven kids.

NH: Eleven.

GN: How many girls and how many boys?

NH: Well, there was four girls. Let's see. There was myself, Jessamine and Isabelle and they we had a little sister born before I was born and died before I was born.

GN: Mm hm.

NH: But we had Jessamine, myself, Isabelle, and Pauline, Just ?? and myself.

GN: Mm hm.

NH: And Pauline. There were five girls and ?? Charlie. Frank and uh, and, and Jim and Claude and Robert and Thomas. There was six of us.

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GN: Six uh

NH: The boys.

GN: Mm hm. Six boys.

NH: There was a big family of us and I had ten.

GN: Mm hm.

NH: ?? Had five girls and five boys.

GN: Mm hm. Uh, how often did you have the chance to go into town?

NH: Well, it wudn't very often. My dad used to go when we were children. We would stay at home. Once every year, the circus would come to town.

GN: Uh huh.

NH: And then, then is when they had the old courthouse ?? You probably don't remember the old courthouse, but I can still remember it. I can still see it ?? And uh, they would have a parade. It would be on Saturday after, and we would work in the field and my daddy would tell us on Friday night, "You kids ??, get the piece of tobacco hoed up, and then on tomorrow we will go to the parade." Well, we worked liked sixty hoein' the tobacco.

GN: I bet. Yeah.

NH: And then uh, the next morning, why, he'd hitch a team to a wagon.

GN: Uh huh.

NH: ?? to a wagon. He'd put hay in the bottom of the wagon. Put a tarpolien {sic} over it. We'd sit on that and we'd go to the parade. And that was red-letter day for us.

GN: Yeah.

NH: We didn't, we didn't get to go to town very often. Until we grew up, and only time we ever had to get any decent clothes to wear was, when we sold blackberries was ripe. We picked blackberries and sold 'em. ?? a quarter a gallon, and we bought ourselves, we bought ourselves a new pair of shoes, new dresses and things.

GN: Did you ever make uh, make your clothes or?

NH: After I got married, I had to, 'cause my mother wasn't there, you know. Uh, I know one time I took a dress down there for her to make, and she cut out some patterns for me, said,

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“I’m goin’ cut out these patterns out for you.” And said, “Well,” my sister-in-law, for a while, she wasn’t makin’ clothes, and finally she said, “Why you aren’t learnin’ anything, and me makin’ clothes for ye,” so she cut some patterns there. My mother did. Cut some patterns for her, and all I learned to cut patterns and uh, I made the boys’ clothes. Shirts for them to wear to school. Start two, three months before school comes. Start makin’ them, clothes for ‘em. ??

GN: Um, do you remember uh, when you saw the first uh, car, automobile?

NH: Mm hm.

GN: Where, where we you?

NH: We was livin’ on Pleasant Mill Road at Mr. Field’s place.

GN: Uh huh.

NH: I don’t know who it was that owned the car. Strangers. And they stopped in front of our house and, and what was it they was doin’? Oh, they was pickin’ some ??

END TAPE1, SIDE1

TAPE1, SIDE2

GN: Did you ever think about uh, leaving uh, this area and going somewhere else?

NH: No, I never did. I was born and raised right here around Owensboro. I never thought about goin’ anywhere else.

GN: Uh huh. Do you remember um, there was, I think, a big flood, uh ?

NH: It was 1937.

GN: Mm hm.

NH: Yes, I remember that, but I was pregnant, and I didn’t get close to it. That water come to, we was livin’ down on Eighth Street and that water come to, within these walls from here to that uh, couch over there, to our house.

GN: Uh huh. About oh, about uh, eight or ten feet from your house, huh?

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NH: Yeah.

GN: Did you have friends that had lost their houses or, or you know, lost?

NH: Yeah. I had some, there were some houses over on First Street that water got up in. And then one time some of the sewers in Owensboro give way, caved in. I remember a big bungalow house that went down in one of the sewers.

GN: Mm hm.

NH: Now you could just see the top of it.

GN: Yeah. Do you remember what year that was?

NH: Uh, it was the next year after the flood.

GN: So, 1938?

NH: About '38, about '38, '39. Somewhere along in there.

GN: Uh huh.

NH: But after the flood, after the water had went down.

GN: Uh huh.

NH: {Pause} I remember the ?? boys, run a packin' house down there on Lancaster Avenue, right across the ditch from where our house was. That's the ditch between our house and the packin' house, where they run their pack, their slaughterhouse.

GN: Mm hm. Did you ever get in, did you ever work in a factory or anything like that?

NH: No, I never did work in factory in my life.

GN: What did you do during

NH: Well, after, after I, my father died, the fall after my father died, I got job at the cigar factory. And I worked at the All American Cigar Factory and that's up on East Ninth Street.

GN: Uh huh.

NH: I don't know, I forget how long I worked there, but

GN: What, what year did your father die, or did you get that job right after?

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NH: It was right after he died. He died in June. I forget what year it was he died. And then uh,

GN: Was this before you were married?

NH: Yes, it was before I was married. And he was buried in Sorgho. And we come back home. My daddy, when he die, died, he, he had had, my sister had typhoid fever and then he had had typhoid fever and he drank a whole lot, too, and the doctor said his stomach was just like a raw sore. Said his stomach

GN: Yeah.

NH: And I was so, I got mad at him. He was so mean to my mother, and he slapped her around and beat her around and I told her, I said, “There’s no man ever do me that way,” and I said, I told her, before he died, and before he got sick, I told her, I said, “I hate him.” I said, “I wouldn’t care if he died.” Sure enough he did.

GN: How did you feel about that?

NH: Well, it made me feel kind of bad. I felt like, then I thought, no, I didn’t have anything to do with his dying. He was just, brought that on hisself, with drinkin’ so much. And I made my mind up right then, no, there was no man that was going to slap me around and beat me around that way. Way he did her. And

GN: Did your uh, what did your father do for a living?

NH: He was a farmer. A sharecropper.

GN: Sharecropper, and you, so your mom worked the farm? Your momma worked the farm with him?

NH: Well, she didn’t do much work outside on the farm ‘cause she always had a baby to tend to or one on the way.

GN: Mm hm.

NH: And, but she had to take care of them. She done all the warshin’. Made all of her clothes. She worked just about as hard as he did.

GN: Yeah.

NH: And my husband, he never did slap me but once.

GN: And

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NH: And he paid up for it.

GN: He did, huh?

NH: Yeah. We was standing by the side of the house, and the ground was slick and I slid and fell down. He didn't hit me hard enough to hurt to me but just the thought that he had slapped me, and when I got up, I, the children had a little iron train ?? that they had been playing with 'bout this size cast iron, and ?? I had got that in my hand, I'd let him have it up side of the head. He never did hit me any more. I said, "Don't your never lay the weight of your hand on me again." I said, "My daddy slapped my mother around, and she'd sit down and, and cry about it, but," I said, "I'm cast in a different mold, and anyone that hits me, and ??, I'm goin' hit them back."

GN: Uh huh.

NH: And he never did hit me again.

GN: ?? What uh, when uh, when was that? Do you remember what year that was?

NH: Well, it was in the '30s, I know.

GN: Uh huh.

NH: That was

GN: Was that uh?

NH: That was after the flood, I believe.

GN: Mm hm.

NH: And we went ahead and lived with him, we got along, he drank a whole lot, but he never did hit me any more. I had him arrested several times for drunkenness and non-support. He'd draw his money an' he'd want to take it and spend it for whiskey. And I had him arrested several times. Saturday come and his money'd be all gone. I'd have him arrested. Have him locked up, and that killed his {Chuckles} ?? and to be locked up in jail.

GN: Was the, the sheriff uh, or the constable pretty uh, sympathetic to you, when, when he would?

NH: Well, yes, they were pretty sympathetic but I, I always had, I always hated to have to ask for anything.

GN: Yeah.

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NH: I felt like I ought to be independent, and after the boys begin to get up, get big enough to work, well, they always, they helped me out.

GN: Mm hm. What did you, what did you do during uh, uh, World War I? Do you, do you remember what it was like here in Owensboro during World War I?

NH: Yes. That's 'fore I married. He was a ???. There in the country. And my oldest brother had joined the army. He joined once, and he wudn't old enough to, he wudn't eighteen years old yet, so they sent him back. And then after he was eighteen years old, why, he re-enlisted again and they, he uh, went to France.

GN: He did.

NH: Sent him over seas. First, and

GN: Did he ever send you any letters from there?

NH: Yeah, he wrote to us and we wrote to him.

GH: Yeah.

NH: And uh, and he, and he bought a Liberty Bond and he sent it home to our daddy, and our dad put it in the bank and it, it increased, and, when he come home, why he give him, he had give him back his money. Most of it. And Bill, my brother told him, said, "Why, I sent that home for you, and you take that and use it." And he really, he could really use it, too, 'cause tobacco wudn't bringin' anything.

GN: Yeah.

NH: He wudn't, now, he went to sell his tobacco, and the time he got through paying his debts, why, it was, why, he wudn't more 'n be ready to start another crop 'til have to start borrowing money again. Tobacco didn't bring nothing at all. I know one time he gave us children, uh, he had a half acre of tobacco. He said, "This is for you girls, now, for anything, you can spend it for anything you want." Uh, and it tickled us to death. We thought maybe we's gettin' up old enough to think about boys, and we wanted to fix us up a front room to enter our boyfriend.

GN: Uh huh.

NH: And when he sold tobacco, brought enough to get all of us a pair of shoes. I said, "Well, that settles it." I said, "Anytime I have to work year round for a pair of shoes, I'm in the wrong business. I, that's for, last, my last day of working in a tobacco patch." And he died that summer, and my brother had made trade with a man living in Indiana, and uh, and uh, we moved

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over there, but we didn't, I didn't work in a tobacco patch. We moved over there. And we hadn't more than moved over there until people was wanting girls to work in, for housework. Work in their house.

GN: Uh huh.

NH: And I went over there and worked in a house. Worked in a house with 'em.

GN: How old were you then?

NH: I was about sixteen years old.

GN: Mm hm. Okay. Um, did, do you remember uh, you said, you said you were born in 1905, do you remember a flood, um in 1913?

NH: Yes. I remember that. My aunt come over and stayed at our house. They lived in Indiana and the water got up in their yard and she had to come to stay at our house.

GN: Uh huh.

NH: Until the water down.

GN: Did it um, affect you in any other way, besides that?

NH: No.

GN: Okay.

NH: My daddy al', he always raised his own hogs.

GN: Mm hm.

NH: Had his own hogs.

GN: Did you lose any of your brothers uh, in World War I or World War II or anything or sons?

NH: No. No, they, I had two brothers in, in the war. In World War II they was in the Navy.

GN: Mm hm.

NH: And uh, their ship was stationed in Pearl Harbor when it was bombed. My brother, the youngest brother, my baby brother, he was down in the hull of the ship asleep and he didn't even know that they'd been bombed, when he ?? and come up on deck, and said "What's

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happened?” Said, “What’s the matter, man? What’s the matter?” He said, “We’ve been bombed.” And that’s what, when World War II started.

GN: And that was, that was your baby brother, huh?

NH: Yeah, Tom. He lives at Beaver Dam now. I haven’t seen him, well, it’s been fifteen or sixteen years now. And he, and he stayed in the Navy for thirty years and he retired on a pension. Tom come home. I know when he was a baby, Tommy was a baby, I remember the year he was born. He was born in 1918, and we thought he was one of the most wonderful things, was uh, he was a pretty baby. He had blue eyes.

GN: Mm hm.

NH: He had ?? headed, and we thought he oughtn’t to be whipped for nothin’ he done. He ought to have everything.

GN: Uh huh. He was a little spoiled then, huh?

NH: Yeah. Well, if he took spoilin’ like a lot of kids took, he wouldn’t be fit to live with, but he didn’t take spoilin’ like so many kids did. I know that when he was little, he found a little ol’ bottle and way playin’ with it. My Daddy told him, said, “Now, don’t you let me catch you with water in that bottle. You start drinkin’ out of it and you don’t know what’s been in that bottle.” Well, he went and got the bottle full of water, and Daddy saw him, and he took the water, bottle away from him and throwed, poured the water out and throwed the bottle away, and he was goin’ hunt for it again. And Dad got him a little switch to whip him, and my sister ?? next to me, saw that he got the switch and was goin’ whip him, and she grabbed him up and ran with him. {Chuckles} And Daddy told her after that, said, “The next time you run with that kid when he needs a whippin’,” said, “I’m goin’ give you whippin’ in place of him.” We all thought that well, Tommy doesn’t need whipped. He was just

GN: Too cute of uh

NH: Mm hm. Mm hm.

GN: Okay. Well, um, before you were married, before you met your husband, what did you, what did you do for fun? Like on uh, you know, on Friday or Saturday or so?

NH: Well, we played. We played. Most time we played, we’d hide and seek.

GN: Uh huh.

NH: And my oldest brother. I never will forget. My mother would always save her syrup pails to can tomatoes in, and she had a lot of ‘em hung up on the kitchen wall, and uh, and

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I was running to beat, to beat my brother to base and we both hit the side, hit the side of the wall was the base and we both hit the side of the wall, and the papers fell, the buckets all fell {Chuckles} and it made the awfulest clatter you ever heard.

GN: Yeah, I bet.

NH: But, and then after, we had a big ol'dog and we'd play with him. Romp with him. He was, he was a good ol' dog. He was a big ol', a cross between a collie and a Newfound.

GN: Uh huh.

NH: Dog, and he ??

GN: Uh huh.

NH: And we thought that he was greatest thing in the world. He was a member of the family.

GN: Uh huh.

NH: Never saw us kids anywhere playin' without the dog was with us.

GN: Um, were there, do you ever remember any racial problems when you were, you know, other, later on when you were married or?

NH: No. There's a colored family lived on a farm joined Mr. Alexander's farm that, this little girl and a little boy, a little colored boy, and they would go over to our house and play with us. That was the only kids we knew.

GN: Uh huh.

NH: And they'd play with us. We would have more fun playin' with 'em ??

GN: You uh, um, I think that there some where mentioned that you, either knew someone or knew something about the sinking Titanic? Do you remember that?

NH: Yes, I remember. I was just about six, five or six years old. I can remember hearing my daddy and 'em. They read about it in the paper.

GN: Mm hm.

NH: And dad said, "Well, that John Jacob ??." Said, "They ought to took him off and throwed 'em in the ocean." Said that a man that would leave his wife and go with another woman, take off with another woman, him and the woman he was with wasn't married.

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GN: Mm.

NH: And dad said that they ought to took him and throwed him into the ocean. {Chuckles} I can remember hearing ‘em talk about it. Uh, we lived on the Pleasant Valley Road and the road was, the road was right down in front of our house, and we had our mail box down there, and we got, we was takin’ the paper then.

GN: Uh huh.

NH: *The Messenger*. It was. Yeah. We took the paper and we, dad would read about the paper. Read about, get the news in the paper. And they was two papers then. There was a, we got, *The Messenger* come out in the morning.

GN: Mm hm.

NH: And that is when we started taking the paper again. *The Messenger* come out in the morning and *The Inquirer* come out at of an evening.

GN: Mm hm.

NH: And we moved to town just before my brother was born. We was livin’ on Ford Avenue when my brother was born. We’s livin’ there, there in the old house, we had lived in the log, log house caught fire and burnt pretty bad, and dad said, “Well, uh,” said, “You cain’t stay here.” Said, “You and the baby both would freeze to death.” Well, then we had to move down there until he could find another house.

GN: Mm hm.

NH: And

GN: Do you remember any really cold winters?

NH: Oh, yes. I remember one year the river froze over.

GN: What year was that?

NH: Let’s see. Well it was after I married, and uh ’26, ’27. Somewhere along there. But it was really cold that year ?? There was a family of people. Woman had come to town, seein’ if she could get some help. They lived over on an island, and the river froze over and some man had to drive a light spring wagon over there and get her, her and the kids, and bring ‘em to town.

GN: What do you remember about uh, when Prohibition started? Do you remember that, during that time?

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NH: Yeah. I remember that.

GN: Did you help uh, with that at all or not?

NH: Well, we, we uh, I went around collectin', getting' votes. And uh, I said uh, and some of us voted wet and some of us voted dry, but I said I'll always vote for the dry. And my mother always told Daddy that. Said, "That if they ever get to where they woman vote," said, "I'll go right in behind you and kill your vote, 'cause I'm, 'cause he was always a, vote for the Republicans, and my mother voted Democratic ticket.

UNKNOWN: ??

GN: Yeah.

UNKNOWN: Thank ye.

GN: Sure.

NH: I'll go right in behind you and kill your vote. ??

GN: Was your, was your husband a Republican too?

NH: Mm hm.

GN: And then did you vote Democratic?

NH: Yes, and I'm right every time.

GN: Uh huh. Did uh, did any one of the Presidents uh, ever come, uh, do you ever remember seeing a President?

NH: Nh nh. No I didn't, I never did come to town but my brother said he come to town one time when he was, before he was elected, and he was there and he made a speech.

GN: Which President was that?

NH: That was uh, let's see that was, that was Woodrow Wilson and, and Theodore Roosevelt when they was

GN: Uh huh.

NH: And Woodrow Wilson won.

GN: Yeah.

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NH: ?? I never did see him. {Pause} Oh, there's a lot of things that happened that I forgot about.

GN: Mm hm.

NH: Forgotten a whole lot. I remember hearing my mother and my daddy talk about things that happened before I, before I got old enough to remember.

GN: Yeah. Do you remember the Suffragette Movement where uh, women got the right to vote?

NH: Mm hm. I voted in that. {Chuckles.}

GN: You did, huh?

NH: Yeah.

GN: What did you, what did you think? Did you think that uh, women should have the right to vote?

NH: Well, I think they should. I think sometimes that they use better judgment than men do. {Chuckles}

GN: Um,

NH: I remember the first year that they, that women had the right to vote.

GN: Did you, have you voted every year since you've had the right vote?

NH: Well, a whole lot of times I don't vote. I don't, well, I, it's a, always so far from where to, where I vote ?? down here at Lee Manor?? I voted down there. One time. That's the only time.

GN: Uh huh. {Pause} Do you remember uh, was there a time in your life that was uh, more prosperous, where you had enough money, and you had, you know, you had uh, good times?

NH: Well, I know one time my son while he was in the army, he sent me his, his bonds, but my sister-in-law, she was so money-graspin' and everything, she went and told him that I was givin' his money to his daddy and lettin' him buy whiskey with it. And she got, got him to send his money to her. Send her his money to him.

GN: Uh huh.

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NH: I said, “Well,” I said, “If he wants to do that, that’s his . . . I’m not responsible. He’s not responsible for me, and if he wants to do that, he can do it. I said, “And he can also send insurance made to you, if he wants, too, and then you can get down on your knees and pray every night for him to get killed so you can get his insurance money.” I told her that.  
{ Chuckles }

GN: This is during World War II?

NH: Yeah. In, and so he wrote. I done took a whole lot of his bonds and was, had, was putting them in the bank for him.

GN: Mm hm. Do you remember uh, Frank ??’s airplane factory?

NH: Yeah.

GN: You do. Do you remember

NH: I remember when his airplane fell.

GN: Yeah, it crashed in

NH: On Frederica Street, it was.

GN: Did you go over, were you, did you go over there and look at it when it crashed?

NH: No, I didn’t go over there an’ look at it. You know, I remember seein’ a train wreck. A freight train, uh, passenger train, a four o’clock passenger train struck a car, and killed two men that was in it.

GN: When uh, when was that?

NH: That was in 19 an’, 1925.

GN: Mm hm.

NH: When my first baby was born. We went up, went there on the railroad

?? Speaks

GN: Okay.

NH: I intended to go up there and see ‘em and my husband wouldn’t let me go up there and see ‘em. Said that man with his, had one of his legs had been tore off and laying way off away from him. Said he was just

GN: ??

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NH: In little pieces an' all, and said, "You better not go up there an' look at that."

GN: Did you um, do you ever, did you ever see any bank robberies or hear about any uh, robberies in town?

NH: No, I never did hear about, but I read about it.

GN: Mm hm.

NH: Things, I read about it. My son, he uh, one of my boys, he was, used to deliver telegrams for the Western Union.

GN: Mm hm.

NH: And he carried, he said, he carried sometime, had, I don't know how many thousands of dollars on him. Said, they were sending my wire.

GN: Mm hm.

NH: But said he, said that he never let anyone, let on like

GN: That he had any money.

NH: That he had any money. Mm hm. And then uh, Western Union went out of business.

GN: Um, did you ever have any experience with the Ku Klux Klan?

NH: Nh nh.

GN: Did you ever like watch a rally or ?

NH: No, I seen 'em crosses and burnin'.

GN: Mm hm.

NH: That's when they, ever so many members they had, they would burn a cross. Now I'd seen them crosses way off from the house. Seen them burn. ?? First time I saw one of 'em burnin', I wondered what it was.

GN: When was that?

NH: That was before I married. Boy, they...I remember seein' those crosses burnin'.

GN: Mm hm.

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NH: They looked kinda scary. I said I wouldn't want to go down there. Where they had that rally, that rally must a been.

GN: Did they ever, or did you ever read about any um, Klan activities or?

NH: No, I don't remember ever readin' about any Klan activities. I, I didn't really know what they was for was.

GN: Uh huh.

NH: Yeah. They stood for or nothing like that.

GN: Mm hm. Do you know now?

NH: No, I don't really know now. I hadn't paid any attention to them after that.

GN: Do you remember a company called KenRad?

NH: Yeah. That was right down at, just a half square below the cigar factory.

GN: Mm hm.

NH: You called it uh, well, it's a GE now.

GN: Uh huh.

NH: But it was KenRad then.

GN: I see. Did any of your sons or your brothers or sisters work there?

NH: No. Did never any of them work there. They's, my brother, they worked in tobacco patch, worked in the field, they was farmers just like my daddy was, and

GN: Mm hm.

NH: Then they worked in the tobacco factory in the winter time.

GN: What kind of things did they do in the tobacco factory?

NH: Well, they separate tobacco, the, the sticks, and then, I don't know. I never did

GN: Mm hm.

NH: Really work in the tobacco factory, like they

GN: Mm hm. What did you do in the cigarette factory? What was your job?

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NH: Rolled cigars.

GN: Oh, you rolled cigars.

NH: Yeah, I put them wrappers out and then laid, made bunches that rolled the wrappers around.

GN: Uh huh.

NH: And I rolled 'em 'til they was in perfect shape and then I lay them in the wrapper and roll the cigars up.

GN: You pretty at it, pretty good at it?

NH: Yeah, I was always pretty good at it.

GN: Yeah.

NH: That was one thing I could do with my left hand, and never much good with my right. Roll cigars.

GN: Uh huh.

NH: Now I got, they paid me six dollars and a half a week when I first started, and then after I learned how to roll 'em good, well, got fifty cents a hundred fer, and I made pretty good.

GN: Fifty cents a hundred. How many uh, how many would you make, how many would you roll?

NH: I got so that I rolled two hundred every day, every day, that wasn't two dollars a day.

GN: Yeah. How long did you work there?

NH: Worked there for about a year and a half.

GN: Year and a half.

NH: And then

END TAPE1, SIDE2