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Interview with Otis & Essie Stevens Regarding Their Lives (FA 154)

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Folklife Archives Project 154 – A Generation Remembers, 1900-1949

Interview with Otis & Essie Stevens (CT 41&42)

TAPE1, SIDE1

CHARLOTTE POSTLEWAITE: Testing one, two, three. {Tape stops} This is Charlotte Postlewaite and it is July the 28th, 1986 and I am going to interview Otis Stevens and his wife in Dundee, Kentucky. {Tape stops} Okay?

ESSIE STEVENS: Essie Stevens. Born, December 21st, 18n90.

CP: What's your earliest memory, Miss Stevens?

ES: {Pause} Oh, I don't know as a child.

CP: Well, it don't have to be a child. I guess we, we'll just, one of the earliest things you can remember stand out in your mind.

ES: I, I remember, my little brother that died, and uh,

CP: How old were you?

ES: Oh, I guess I was, five or, four or five,

CP: Mm hm.

ES: And I remember our old home place.

CP: Where was that?

ES: Between uh, Olaton and Horse Branch.

CP: Olaton, that's where, Mr. Oller's from, isn't it?

ES: Yeah. {Chuckles}

CP: Let me uh, but why don't you tell me, Miss Stevens, about your, your child, your father's home in Olaton. Can you describe it, 'n tell me what life was like there?

ES: It was a log house.

CP: Did your dad built it?

ES: Don't remember.

CP: Mm, well, that's okay. Uh, what was your childhood like, Miss Stevens? You said your little brother died, what, now how did he die? We were wondering about medical problems, and things.

ES: Pneumonia.

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CP: Pneumonia. How did, how did y'all treat, sickness like that when you were a child, do you remember?

ES: No, I don't remember.

CP: Well. What do you remember about your early childhood, Mr. Stevens?

OTIS STEVENS: {Chuckles} Oh, I don't know.

CP: Well, what did you all do for fun?

ES: Oh, this'll tell ya.

CP: Is that right? Well, let me take a look at that. Were there any games that kids played?

ES: Oh, yes.

CP: Can you think of the names of some of 'em, or, or how you played?

ES: Hide-n-seek, and,

OS: {chuckles} I think I remember about my second or third year of school, oh, had a few?? and some kind of a game, called it "Black Snake".

CP: What, what was "Black Snake"?

OS: Well, we, we lined up in a great long line, tail sticks out in the wood, real hard, then turn back quick, whipped the tail around, and I's on the end, well, ?? I remember ?? one day, and some, girl that hid from me, and I turned around and turned me loose ?? {Chuckles} hold of me ??

CP: That's, that's a pretty dirty trick. {Chuckles}

OS: That's been.

CP: You say the school is right down here?

OS: Right around the, corner out here, back off the road in that bed where that, house is, back up in there's, a one of those big high hill over there.

CP: Yeah. Did you live right here Mr. Stevens, or somewhere near here?

OS: Yeah, I lived, right up Cherry Creek here, up here on a bluff born and raised up here. I was born in, about four mile east of Hartford.

CP: Yeah.

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OS: And lived that until I was a year old, a little older than that, came up here, and, lived up here ever since.

CP: What do you remember about your uh, mom and dad and livin' over here {Clears throat} when you were a little boy? Now, you told me about school. How old were you there at that school when that little girl did that to you?

OS: {Chuckles} ?? here, {Clears throat} and I liked school and Miss, the first year I went to school, I remember that, Miss Patty, Patty, It was Dean then. Her last school, I think. She'd stop up here and lead me to the schoolhouse.

CP: She did?

OS: Out to the schoolhouse. {Chuckles}

CP: You all walked to school?

OS: Oh, oh, yes, walked to school, you know, up there.

CP: Did she live up here close by the school?

OS: She lived in Dundee.

ES: I see.

OS: And, uh, and then, another, thing, that school, house back in the, up on the hill, my schoolhouse, we all went up there one day, comin' down the hill, and I just, I guess, I guess, six, seven or eight years old, and uh, a lot of those bigger boys and girls coupled up and comin' in that way, Bertie Frank, as he was then, and come right by us, we're walkin' down this hill. {Chuckles}

CP: Wow. {Both chuckle}

OS: And she's still there, and she's the only one that I know, that's livin' that went to school right there with, with me on that hill.

CP: About how many children were in your school?

OS: Oh, anywhere from fifty to seventy-five, I guess was it.

CP: Is that right? That's a big school.

OS: Whole, the whole country went in here.

CP: Sure.

OS: It was, Sulphur Springs 'n, back over this way, is here now.

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CP: Uh huh.

OS: Dundee school, one of the schools at Dundee, then it was the only school we had.

CP: Did you live around here, Miss Stevens? Where were you from?

ES: I, 'course I said, my home was between, we moved from that, that house and my father built a new house, bought a farm and built a new house, and uh, uh, in the same neighborhood.

CP: Uh huh.

ES: But it was a little farther, and,

CP: Where did you go to school?

ES: I went in, Grayson County.

CP: Oh.

ES: We lived on the line.

CP: Yeah.

ES: For a while, 'til I was eleven and then they built a new school in the edge of Ohio County, and I came to Ohio County to school.

CP: I see. What was school like at that new school?

ES: {Chuckles} It, it was pretty tough at first. We didn't have any seats, and my father made us a little bench for my sister and I to sit on.

CP: Why didn't they have any seats where you could--? (Both chuckle)

ES: They hadn't gotten it completed.

CP: Did y'all have a big pot-bellied stove to heat that place?

ES: Yes.

CP: What do you all remember about, did, did the kids take turns startin' the fire or did the teacher always have to do that?

ES: Well, the, the teacher.

OS: Where we first started, the teacher hired some, one of the boys to build the fire.

CP: Was it coal or wood?

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OS: Coal.

ES: No, no, wood.

OS: I don't believe we ever burned any wood.

ES: We had wood.

CP: You had wood. Did, you say the teacher started your, your, think that she started it, or did the kids have to do that?

ES: I uh, remember, I, I imagine the teacher did.

CP: Uh huh.

ES: I was thinkin' that it was now, I don't remember.

CP: How long did kids go to school, when you all were little?

ES: {Chuckles}

CP: Too long? {All chuckle}

OS: Seven, seven, how many months you mean?

CP: Uh huh.

OS: Six months and then they went up to seven, one, later on after I got grown up, seven, six months back then when I was, growin' up.

CP: Were you in school, like from, what time in the morning until what time at night?

OS: Eight o'clock 'til four.

CP: Eight to four. Did you get off for lunch, did you go home or eat at school?

OS: Had an hour off for dinner.

CP: You did.

ES: Eat at school.

CP: Did ya', carry your lunch?

ES: We did.

OS: Get out on the hillside and sit around there and all eat lunch together.

CP: What kind of meal did your mom pack for ya?

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ES: Pineapple pies. {Chuckles}

CP: Oh, my mamaw used to make those. That's pretty good eatin'.

ES: Bowl o' beans. {Both chuckle}

CP: A little bit a cornbread or white bread?

ES: A little bit of cornbread. {Chuckles}

CP: Can't beat that. {Chuckles}

ES: No. {Both chuckle}

CP: What kind of chores did you have to do when you were little?

ES: {Pause} Well, we did uh, regular housework like uh, helpin' with the cookin' 'n washin' dishes, makin' beds.

CP: Uh huh. What'd you do Mr. Stevens?

OS: Little, chores around the house, and, and carryin' the wood of a night, left the light? for the next mornin'.

CP: About how old were you when you first started having to do that?

OS: Oh, just as soon as I got big enough to do it, I reckon.

CP: My little boys think that they're too, they're too, heavy for light work and too light for heavy work. {All chuckle}

OS: No we, I uh, uh, soon as I was big enough to carry a stick of wood, I guess. {Chuckles}

CP: I guess so.

OS: And then uh, 'course the older I got, the, they depend on me, to get it all, except the, we had big logs put on the fires of a night, uh, that big around and put 'em on to burn all night long, and we'd have to roll them in the house.

CP: Uh, how did you cut firewood? Did you use a big 'ol axe or what?

OS: Use the axe and a crosscut saw.

CP: A crosscut saw. Did y'all put in a lot of time cuttin' fireword for the?

OS: Most, most, most of it, most of it was done by axe, lot 'o time.

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CP: Yeah. I bet you put in quite a bit of time getting' your firewood in for the winter, didn't you, without a chainsaw? {Both chuckle}

OS: That's right, and it took uh, and it took an unusual amount of wood, for it come a big storm, and we be out of wood, and have to go out, outside where the wood and cut some for the...

CP: I wondered about that. Well, do you all ever remember uh, when you all were younger, I was thinkin' about now, we were talkin' the other day down at the newspaper. You know my children ask me what that little scar was right there, my small pox, scar, they don' have that. They don't take that anymore.

ES: Oh, they don't?

CP: And I was wondering if you all got it when you were children?

OS: Yeah, I did.

ES: I did.

CP: You did? Mr. Stevens, do you remember when you got your small pox vaccination?

OS: I don't think I, I, don't

ES: When he was teachin'.

OS: I don't remember, I was teachin' school.

CP: You were?

OS: All the children had, had to take it.

CP: Uh huh. Did a doctor come around to the school? Or did you all have to go

OS: No, you had to go, I believe you had to go, had doctors scattered all over, over, at one time, we had, two doctors in Dundee.

ES: Had no doctors.

OS: And one or two, one at the Springs, sometimes two at the Springs. We had plenty of 'em.

CP: Uh huh. Uh, do you remember getting' polio vaccine? Now that was in the, that was later on when y'all where grown, I imagine, but I know I had a cousin

OS: That's, that's all, all I remember, all the, vaccinations for small pox, is all I

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CP: Is that right?

OS: ?? think about might have been, school days.

CP: Okay, now when did you all meet? Now, I'm gettin' into the interesting, the interesting, I want to know how you all met each other, if you lived clear over there?

ES: I came to Dundee, and uh

CP: How old were ya?

ES: I was twenty-two. And I worked in a store.

CP: Now...

ES: At that time they had a walkway, a plank walkway in front of the store on down past to the other store. And one day I saw a young man come walkin' down this walkway. I looked up and saw him, I thought, that's a pretty good-lookin' young man, where did he come from?

CP: {Chuckles}

ES: When he come, came back, he didn't go on by, he came in, and the woman in the store introduced us, so the, the revival was goin' on, at the church that night 'n, I went in, sat down by a girl I knew, and it wudn't long that this young man came in, sat down the other side of her. Well, I thought that now that's her, friend, but when we got up, {Clock chimes} to go out he walked out with me.

CP: You were lookin' at her, weren't cha? {Somebody chuckles}

ES: And when we got to the door, he asked if he could go up to the house, walk, with me up to the house. So that was the beginning.

CP: That was the beginning, and that was when you were about twenty-two?

ES: Yes.

CP: How long did y'all court?

ES: 'til next November.

CP: Was that, how long, about how long was that, six months or so?

ES: A year.

CP: A year. That's a good time to court, gettin' to know each other.

OS: A year and a little long.

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ES: A year.

CP: What did you all do for a date?

ES: We went to Sunday School, in the morning one church, and in the afternoon to the another church. {Somebody chuckles}

CP: Here in, here in Dundee?

ES: In Dundee.

CP: Uh huh.

ES: That's what we had when we were young mostly was church.

CP: Sure.

ES: We, didn't have what the young people have today. All the things.

CP: Uh huh.

ES: But

CP: Well, church is a good place to meet and get to know each other.

ES: It's a good place.

CP: Yeah. What do you remember about, first time you saw Ms. Stevens?

OS: I don't remember. {Chuckles}

CP: Listen to that, would ya? You must have been interested or you wudn't have gone into that store. What store was that Ms. Stevens?

ES: H. C. Atkins Store.

CP: Was Dundee a pretty good size little town, then?

ES: It was.

CP: What made it so busy?

ES: Well, we had um, a lot of things in, there that we don't have today.

CP: Uh huh.

ES: And um,

OS: We had

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ES: I have a list of all the things that Dundee used to have.

CP: Is that in here?

ES: No. I...

CP: Can you think of what, well, I tell you what I'd like to know about, it's that goat, up on top of that building. What do you all know about that goat?

ES: Well, 'course

OS: I don't remember when he put up, I 'member he, he, it, it was a, there when he built, my dad had built that.

CP: Now, what was that building?

OS: It was the, Masonic Hall, but when they built it, it was built by the whole neighborhood, and the Masons takin' the upper part, and the neighborhood takin' the lower part for, public, hall, for people, everybody could, been many times I been, ?? that people ??
{ Chuckles }

CP: Oh, is that right?

OS: ?? there for a week, ten days at a time. There'd be seventy-five, a hundred in there every night.

CP: And they, just different churches met in there, huh?

OS: No, any churches.

CP: Any church.

OS: It was open to all denominations, that wanted to hold up a protracted meeting.

CP: And your dad helped build that?

OS: My dad, yeah, furnished the timber, got the people to give along had a, saw mill at Dundee at that time out there on the creek, and a big flour mill, four-story, five-story high, I mean, made, made, flour, and the sawmill, down on the creek run by water power.

CP: Well.

OS: That water and saw logs, 'n, well they could do anything, cut up in logs and, dress it down smooth put on the house tracks, that's for a long length of time, put the, throw'd the big rafts come down the creek, with logs down there to saw up, and, 'n, tie 'em up on the fore side and then pulled 'em over toward the other side and they had water ?? hooked to 'em and drag

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‘em up a great big long platform that was up there, to where this building come, rolled ‘em off on the carriage, and then the, saw would saw ‘em up into lumber, and then, then we had, we had a big forebay, what’s called a forebay where the wheel was. They’d turn the, turn the water on and off, and the, turn, the power to that forebay, that forebay would turn that wheel, and run on this, and we had one of the men fall in it.

CP: Oh, my.

OS: Huntin’, for his daddy one day, went, he’s downstairs and he went up there and turned around and fell in that forebay but as it happened the mill wudn’t a’ runnin’, it just drowned him, it didn’t hurt him, you know, it just, it just, in there.

CP: And how old, did you say you were when your dad helped the Masonic Building, about?

OS: Oh, I wudn’t, oh, ten or twelve years old, I guess.

CP: And how old were you when that boy drowned?

OS: Well, it was sometime during, during, that time what was, along about in there, somewhere.

CP: Yeah.

OS: But I, I don’t remember exact what time it was.

CP: Well, did they get the goat after they built the building?

OS: Yeah, they

ES: Yes.

OS: Got the goat after, they put it up, that’s the building, they put it, the building up, and I reckon it and one more was all there was in the United States at that time, I think.

CP: Was that a symbol for the Masons?

OS: A symbol for the Masons. You see you had to ride a goat, to join them. That, that was a saying, you had to ride that goat, that was some of the, things, and the Masons you had to, you had to ride the goat, you know. {Chuckles}

CP: Did you become a Mason?

OS: No, I didn’t. {Chuckles}

CP: Didn’t like ridin’ goats?

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OS: No, I was afraid to ride it. {All chuckle}

CP: Mm, well, they've had the goat up there, my granddaddy said that he remembered that goat, he's from Ohio County, he's from Fordsville, he was. Uh, so I wondered if you remembered when they got it.

OS: No, I don't remember that, 'n, I had my own cousin would remember, remember about it, and I don't remember what, what he decided ?? He, he can tell you more about it. He's, he's daddy was a, was a Mason. He's old enough to, but I don't, I don't remember now, well, I, I imagine if you ever ?? Hartford, he could give you a date on that.

CP: Who is that?

OS: Hugh ?? at Hartford there.

CP: Oh, I might check back with him, you know, I

ES: Ask about that.

CP: Yeah.

ES: Why don't you do that?

OS: 'Cause there was uh, he was one among 'em here awhile back atryin' to chase the time down to, when it was uh, when it was put up there, nobody could get it, and then I think they ?? was uh, but he is dead and gone now, but uh, he, he got ?? anybody I know of.

CP: Okay. Uh, Miss Stevens, you say that you lived over there close to Grayson County, did you all go to Fordsville to shop, or did y'all go to, Leitchfield, or where did you all go when you went to town?

ES: Fordsville.

CP: Do you remember the general store there, the big uh, that big three-story building, Ollie Wilson ran the store there? I told you he was my great-granddad.

ES: My brains are bad. Fordsville a?? {Chuckles}

CP: Was the--

ES: We had uh, a railroad at that time through there from Horse Branch to Owensboro, and uh, when we wanted to go shoppin', they would ride the train to Fordsville, and uh, spend the day shoppin'

CP: Is that right?

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ES: Wait for the train to come back in time for 'em to get home that night.

CP: How often did people go to town to shop?

ES: Well, not too often.

CP: Well, when you went, did, did you just buy a big supply of flour 'n food 'n stuff, or did ya?

ES: Well, a lot of it, we raised on the farm.

CP: Mm hm. Did you do a lot of canning?

ES: Oh, yes, yes.

CP: How did you can then? Did you take it outside over a big water bath or in the kitchen?

ES: No, in the kitchen on the stove.

CP: Mm hm.

ES: Open kettle, and dryin'.

CP: Was that railroad uh, was it an open passenger car?

ES: I don't remember it.

CP: Nah.

ES: Why, it's been, in your time, you should remember it, they just did away with the, train on that Horse Branch line.

CP: They did? Why, I didn't know that.

ES: Well not too long ago.

CP: Did it used ta, was that the L&N or the IC?

ES: IC.

CP: IC.

OS: Branch, branch of the IC, for, from Horse Branch to Owensboro, that's the only way it run, just back and forth.

ES: Branch...

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OS: They ??, didn't it?

ES: I

CP: Did, did you all ever take the train to Owensboro?

ES: Yes.

CP: Did you all shop in Owensboro, or did you go to the movies there, or what?

ES: Went to the fair.

CP: The fair.

ES: Every fall we'd go to the fair in Owensboro. Oh, that was the young people's dream.

CP: Is that right, how old were you Ms. Stevens?

ES: Oh, I, seventeen or eighteen.

CP: What, what did you like about the fair?

ES: I don't remember the fair. I remember more about the boy that I'd go with.

CP: Ah ha, here we go Mr. Stevens. {Both chuckle} Well, okay, what was a date to Owensboro like? Did ya, just tell me, what it was like. You said that was a dream.

ES: I cain't remember, what the fair was like. I remember goin' one time and, we ate at the, ate our lunch at the Hotel and then we out to the fair grounds, and I don't remember what all we did. I forgot about the fair.

CP: I'm tryin' to think which hotel that would have been. You rolled into the train station there.

ES: I'm tryin to, tell ya, the name of it. Was too long ago.

CP: The Bell?

ES: It might have been.

CP: There was The Bell and The Rudd.

OS: The Bell Hotel was old enough, I mean, there you'd get, be there when they hauled tobacco, goin' through here to, to Owensboro, 'n load tobacco. I was here at one o'clock one mornin'. {Chuckles}

CP: I can't remember where The Bell Hotel is, was, but I remember

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ES: I, I

OS: ?? remember

CP: People talkin' about it.

ES: ?? it was. I, there was another one, and I cain't think of the name. I, it would have, in the paper not too long ago, uh, either they changed it into uh, something else or did away with, I don't remember that, but

CP: How late did you stay in Owensboro?

ES: 'Till the train went back that night.

CP: Was it late that the train went back?

ES: Well, no.

CP: No.

ES: Not too late.

CP: About how long did it take the train to get to Owensboro from Horse Branch, Fordsville?

OS: Uh, I, I, the first train ever I rode on was that Branch train and I rode from there to, to Horse Branch. My grandparents lived in Horse Branch 'n, we went up there one, weekend, and then we come back, the next day, I believe, the next day after that, but got up the next day and got up, it was rainin' and we lived across there, and, and creek, the water got up so high couldn't get across the, the ditch to the railroad, and had to stay home where, and had two open saloons in Horse Branch then, and they got out there druggin' 'n carryin', drug dealing across there to the ?? from the saloons back out to the old railroad ?? {Chuckles}

CP: Now, how old were you then? I thought Ohio County was dry.

ES: No, it wasn't.

OS: Oh, I was

ES: We had saloons.

OS: Ten or twelve years old.

CP: Well, I didn't know that. I thought Ohio County was always dry.

ES: No.

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OS: No, no.

ES: At one time we had saloons, in Ohio County.

OS: Come to think? the other day, I could remember?? probably tell about that. I was going to Hartford with my daddy, I, I, I don't know, I guess, seven or eight years old, and, had an old saloon, and he wanted, he usually kept, some whiskey set up high, He never did drink any but kept that, and he went in there and got it down and in there, took me in there with him. And he come back, and somebody what he meant, by taking me in, in there with him. "Why," he said, "I don't go any where where I won't take him." And said, "If I was to, if I'd have left him out here, he would let him, would have had people wonderin' what was wrong in the," say, "The way it is, see for your self." {Chuckles} He was a good.

CP: Sounded like your dad and you were pretty close.

OS: {Chuckles} He said that the, the, it, it, it was right, they'd always be awonderin' what was, and then said when one of 'em was big enough, I'd would go in and see for myself. {All chuckle}

CP: Did you look forward to goin' in town? Now, I guess this was considered town. You didn't live out in the middle of the country, did you really, right here, what, what was this way out in the country?

ES: Yes.

OS: No, there was buildings from here plum up to, uh, Dundee, I-

CP: There was. Did were you out in the country, Ms. Stevens?

ES: Yes.

CP: I guess you sort of looked forward to going to town?

ES: Yes.

CP: Did y'all, buy your dresses 'n clothes, or did you make 'em out of material?

ES: My mother made 'em.

CP: She did. Did you get to pick out your material?

ES: She picked it out.

CP: She did.

ES: She, she was a good seamstress, and our dresses were pretty.

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CP: Well, did she make her own patterns, or did she, did you all?

ES: You had no pattern.

CP: You're kiddin' me. How'd she make a dress without a pattern?

ES: I didn't have a pattern when I commenced uh, after I was married and commenced sewing for myself 'n, my baby, I didn't have no pattern.

CP: You didn't? Did you sew with a machine or did you sew it all by hand?

ES: Oh, I sewed with a machine, but, I had uh, {Chuckles} I don't remember how I did cut it out without a pattern. {Chuckles}

CP: I just can't imagine that. I wasn't too good with a pattern. {Both chuckle}

ES: Well, I

OS: I helped build this railroad through here.

CP: Well, now, tell me about that. How old were you, Mr. Stevens?

OS: Oh, I wudn't, I guess I don't guess I were, fifteen, sixteen years old when I, I big enough for a team, to drive uh, slip team of horses, mules, to a strip and hold the dirt and pile it up, and pile it up for the railroad.

CP: Is that what your job was?

OS: Yeah, I went out and did, did that while I was ?? on the wind up, and had ?? wheel scrapers, great big, uh, uh, cheap mules to pull it.

CP: Now, what's a wheel scraper?

OS: ?? oh, I guess that great big square bucket, you know, and, I, to build the where the depot sat at and on the ?? at the last one, you wound that up, I, I worked there from the time they commenced on to, work for a nigger, a nigger Steve, {Chuckles}

CP: Well, now what

OS: A nigger was, was, he was a big stuff, he's all about ?? those big scrapers, and I drove his team, go back down and get a load 'em, load 'em, with two, the two mules could load 'em, and had three mules to, to a dozen, take five of 'em, mules to lower 'em, and then when you'd get 'em loaded, and, wait, back on the, get off the wheels, and then you'd turn around and all the way back up there to that big nigger to dump.

CP: How many hours a day did you put in on that railroad?

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OS: Ten hours a day.

CP: Remember what you got paid?

OS: Dollar a day.

CP: {Both chuckle} Why, that's awful hard work for a dollar a day, Mr. Stevens.

OS: I rode a horse all day in the hay field for fifteen cents.

CP: {Chuckles} How old were you then?

OS: Oh, I guess, seven or eight years old, big enough ride a horse and turn around, turns around a hay shock and put more on it, stack it, where the stack...

CP: Is was loose?

OS: Had a big, great long rope. And, and, hook up to the, on the horses' hay, drag it, and then put it, drive it, you'd drive around that, hay, shuck out in the field, and they'd come around and pick it outta there, bring it then, ?? come it up there and hook it on a hook on ya horses', called ?? collar and you'd pull out it from that, hay stack.

ES: Tell what you got for teaching your first school.

CP: Yeah, I, you said you taught for thirteen years. Isn't that how long you told me you taught? How much did you get paid, Mr. Stevens?

OS: I started in at seven dollars.

CP: A what, a week?

OS: I, I, I rode seven miles, the first year, for thirty dollars a month.

CP: A month! {Chuckles}

OS: Two hundred and ten dollars for seven months, and rode seven, rode, then rode little over seven mile.

CP: Where did you teach, Mr. Stevens?

OS: Go out three mile east, east of Hartford.

ES: The school building is gone.

CP: It is?

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OS: Out there in the woods, out on top of a big high hill, and I taught there for three years, and I never wudn't but one morning, that there's at the top of the hill at eight o'clock during the whole three years.

CP: Good grief. How did you get into teaching?

OS: Huh?

CP: I say, how did you start, how did you get into teaching?

OS: I don't know it, just, went to school up there, and took a notion to go to Hartford to take an examination. I wished I'd had some of the questions, I'd bet to teach in Ohio County today, this could pass on it...

CP: Is that right? Was it a hard test?

OS: You, you didn't get in until you had to take that examination.

CP: Do you remember what kind of questions

END TAPE1, SIDE1

TAPE1, SIDE2

OS: So what we give 'em, got our rural route, mail come anyway.

CP: Uh huh.

OS: And at the last, I think I give a quarter, but then, then they got a, a, a mail route.

CP: So you been takin' the *Messenger-Inquirer* how many years? That's been uh, if it's ten cents uh, a week, that's pretty, pretty, long ago.

OS: I don't remember. Ever since we been married, haven't we?

ES: I don't know. {Chuckles}

CP: Now, how long have y'all, y'all've been married, now don't tell me, now, let me see now, if I can figure it out. You met him when you were twenty-two and you're ninety-five. You've all been married seventy, about seventy-two, seventy-three years?

ES: It will be seventy-one next November.

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CP: Seventy-one years.

ES: We celebrated our seventieth the last, November.

CP: Well, that's wonderful.

ES: {Chuckles}

CP: That's wonderful.

ES: And we've never moved. We built, uh, this house, they did right after, the summer after, we married in November, and they built this house the next summer. We moved into it in August.

CP: I bet you were awful proud of it.

ES: Oh,

CP: It's a pretty good size house.

ES: We been a buildin' on it ever since.

CP: Is that right?

ES: Addin' on.

CP: {Chuckles} Addin' on. How many children do y'all have?

ES: Two. Two girls.

CP: Girls have to have a lot of room, don't they?

ES: One lives in Lexington, and she's, never married. She worked in um, where the extension work, and the other one lives in Bowling Green and she married and, she works in the Superintendent's office.

CP: Oh, she does?

ES: In Warren County schools.

CP: I see. Did you teach before y'all had your children? Did you

ES: He, he was teachin' his third school when we married.

CP: Oh, I see, I see. Where was that? Where was your third school, Mr. Stevens?

ES: They were at the same place.

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OS: At the Victory School.

ES: He taught for three years at the same place.

OS: Victory School house.

CP: Victory School house.

OS: It's disappeared. You couldn't, you couldn't find it now, I don't guess.

CP: When did you quit teaching?

OS: {Chuckles} I quit teaching before the daughter commenced.

CP: Oh, is that right? Why'd you quit?

OS: Well, had to, had to go to school, and wanted getting' anything out of it, so I thought that

ES: You taught your last school, when our Lucille was born, in Nov-, um, um, November 15, um, 1924. He was teachin', he taught one school after that.

CP: 1924.

ES: 1925, he taught his last school at Halo?

OS: Halo.

CP: What'd you do after you quit teachin' school, Mr. Stevens?

ES: Farmed.

OS: Farmed.

CP: Now, you said you took your tobacco to Owensboro, what else did you raise?

OS: Well, that, that, that's all, about all we raised then, then, and uh,

CP: What'd you get for tobacco in 1925?

ES: Oh, I did.

OS: I don't remember now, I remember in 19n30 I got nuthin'.

CP: Nuthin'?

OS: I had, had twelve acres, I, I, didn't, got four hundred dollars out of it.

CP: That's probably

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OS: That's during the Depression. I, I, I...

ES: During the Depression, you know, they just took, they just gave it away.

CP: How did you all make it through the, the Depression?

ES: Pretty hard, not too easy. I tell, I, anyone that we always had plenty to eat, because we raised that on the farm. We didn't do like some people, go to the soup kitchen. But, we did without a lot of everything. And during the Depression we paid for our farm.

CP: You paid your farm?

ES: Had paid for farm.

CP: Instead of losing it, you paid for it.

ES: We paid for it.

Now, how did you do that, Ms. Stevens?

ES: I don't know.

OS: I bought a farm, and, it, it, if had uh bought the farm, if I'd a bought the year before, that's the Depression, I'd've paid for it the first year off my tobacco, {Chuckles} but that year, the, the tobacco wouldn't uh, didn't, wouldn't sell, any price atall. Some people had to borrow money to pay the florist, for instance.

CP: Well, and you say you didn't make anything off of it, did you just break even?

OS: I, I, I did never, I never kept no records then, but people didn't think about, uh, I, I, I don't, I don't guess I did and I only got half of that, and the tenant, time and paid all the fertilizer bills, and those expenses, no, I don't guess I, I don't guess I made anything myself off it.

CP: How in the world did you pay the farm off during the Depression? I just don't know how you did that.

ES: How did we? I don't know either.

OS: One thing though, we didn't, you know what, ain't nobody to blame today for these people losing their farms, is, is that they invested too much in machinery.

CP: Did you have any machinery then?

ES: No.

OS: Team of horses and a team of mules. I,

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CP: Is that right?

OS: I, I, I raised by myself, a colt, mule, raise horses, back then, people all depend on yourself for work, work horses, you know.

ES: At one time, we had thirteen milk cows, and we couldn't sell a one, and we had 'em just scattered out. People would come and get 'em to, milk, you know.

OS: During the Depression, yeah.

CP: Did you sell the milk or just give it away?

ES: No, they just, got 'em,

OS: They came and got 'em, for milk, for milk, you know.

ES: And we'd get the calves, when she'd have a calf.

OS: The feed just wasn't, just wasn't worth anything, they's feed em, pass 'em and... Sometime I took, maybe, somebody out a cow, and I'd forget where she's at. {Chuckles}

CP: Well, did you get them all back?

ES: Yes.

OS: Yes, finally got 'em all back. I, all I did was the calves, they'd have little calves, I'd sell, I'd sell them.

CP: Yeah.

ES: When our oldest girl was startin' into high school, Is there a fly around.

CP: Yeah, it's okay.

ES: Shoo it off.

CP: Well, I'll get rid of 'em. I want you to keep telling me about the Depression. {Chuckles}

ES: Our oldest girl was in the first year of high school, and the second girl was uh, beginning in grades. She's eight years younger than the older one.

CP: Mm hm. How did you all know when the Depression was over? When did you realize it?

OS: I don't know, if...

ES: I don't know whether it's ever over.

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CP: I guess that's the truth. {Chuckles}

OS: Well, the, I, I, I was tryin' to say people in this day and time, they, they've gone bankrupt, and, and bankrupt themselves, and, and machines is not the same as land

CP: Did, when did you get first tractor, Mr. Stevens? Did ya, did ya ever trade your mules in for a tractor?

OS: Yeah, I finally sold, I had, raised 'em, extry horses here and mules. I sold 'em, well, I, I still got, the only tractor I've owned my life.

CP: What is it?

OS: Cub tractor, it's, it's, I bought it, I've had that thing, I forget, thirty years, and I've got the same fluid in the, in the, same fluid and the tires in there that there was when I bought it.

CP: Well, I believe you took pretty good care of that little tractor.

OS: I can get more for it today,

CP: I bet so.

OS: Can get more for it today than I give for it.

CP: What'd you give for it, do you remember?

OS: I think I give a thousand and twenty-five dollars for it and all the machinery that went with it. I had, plows, mowing machines, and everything that come with it. It was the first year they had the power lift on it.

CP: Well, so even before you got that little Cub tractor, you farmed?

OS: With a team.

CP: With at team. How many years? You must have been uh, close to sixty then?

ES: Oh yes.

CP: Before you even got your tractor, and you raised tobacco?

OS: Yeah.

CP: Did you raise any corn?

OS: Yeah, raised corn enough to feed my stock on.

CP: How did you gather your corn, by hand?

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OS: Yeah, no, took a team out to the field with a wagon, pull it.

CP: I bet you came in tired a lot of nights, didn't he?

ES: Yes, he did.

CP: Did you milk the cows, Ms. Stevens?

ES: Oh, no.

CP: You didn't have to do any of that. You're pretty good to her.

ES: We kept,

OS: I taught school.

ES: We kept uh, uh

OS: I milked the, five or six cows, all during the time I taught school, but not in the mornin', boy, I'd, I'd get up and go in there, go to school. {Clock chimes}

CP: Well.

OS: Ninety-five dollars the most I ever got.

CP For teachin'?

OS: For teachin' a month. That's one year. Then they started back down, that's when I quit. It just kept goin' back down, 'n back down, in the forties or fifties, I think, when I quit.

CP: Well.

OS: Then it got worst, 'cause when Hannah started, she started, uh, I think on thirty, thirty-five or forty.

ES: I don't remember.

CP: Do you remember when the schools closed down during the Depression? Did they close? I heard that some of the school systems couldn't pay to keep the schools open. Did y'all have a school?

ES: No.

OS: Whenever did close down.

ES: You did.

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OS: Only place I, only, only place I ever went to school was up here to the, the, on the ol' schoolhouse on the hill to Dundee, grade, grade schools.

CP: I'm goin' get that fly.

ES: I hope.

OS: Yeah.

CP: Hold still, Mr. Stevens, I'll get him. {All chuckle} Well, uh.

OS: The, the, the one room school where, and the one teacher, it's all they had in it, as long as I went to school, 'n, and he had as high as, eighty and ninety every day.

CP: Well.

OS: Taught eight grades.

CP: How did one man teach that many kids?

ES: I don't know.

OS: He taught 'em.

CP: All in one room? I guess kids acted a little bit better then, than they do now 'cause I can't hardly control thirty of 'em.

OS: They, they did, they went together.

ES: Why, came in and teach 'em.

OS: You went in the house and the right hand side, the boys sat over there, and the, the girls sat on this side, and, and one got across there, he, he got back in a hurry her, he'd get something he didn't want. Sit on his own side of the house.

CP: Did he give pretty hard whippins? Did the kids get whippins in school then?

OS: Yes, ma'am, if they needed it.

ES: {Chuckles}

CP: What'd he use, uh, uh?

OS: I never did use it much.

CP: You didn't.

OS: I never did, whip but one or two, not to hurt 'em, just to

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CP: Well, did you have books, did you have textbooks? What were your textbooks like?

OS: {Chuckles} They, they, wudn't, wudn't much like what they are now.

CP: They're not. I'm, I'm tryin' to think what the names of 'em, the McGuffey Reader

ES: The McGuffey

OS: McGuffey, Yeah.

CP: Uh huh. Did you use a slate or use a notebook?

OS: Use, use slate.

CP: You did. I'm gonna let you have that. I can't chase it down. I'd hate to swat ya on top of the head.

OS: Wudn't it, wudn't it, 'n use it, I, uh, slate

CP: Uh huh.

OS: And we had blackboards, on the wall, oh, six or eight would each be on the wall, then, the chalkboard, math, mathematics is what we, work, go up there and work the problems, you know.

CP: Yeah. Did you all pay much attention when you were in school to politics, and what was goin' on,

OS: Mm. No.

CP: I guess you didn't have radio then, did ya? Radio wasn't until a lot later.

OS: No, I didn't, I don't remember anything about politics, thinkin'. {Chuckles}

CP: I guess probably everybody would have been better off not to. {Chuckles}

ES: I guess so.

OS: I went to school, up here, but, when we, when we went to school, though, we, we had to be there at eight o'clock of the morning and we stayed 'til four, and then when play time come, the, the best teacher ever I went to, everybody had to play, get out in, if it wudn't, if it's snowin', wasn't too bad and cold, had to get out there a little bit to get fresh air, and you'd get back in, and when you'd come back in the house, playin' was over, you'd got busy on your books. {Chuckles}

CP: I guess so. Get, got all that antsy stuff out of your system, and then you had to sit still for a while, didn't you?

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Interview with Otis & Essie Stevens (CT 41&42)

OS: {Chuckles} Oh, shoot.

ES: What grades do you teach?

CP: I teach ninth grade.

ES: Oh, you do.

CP: And I have newspaper, that's, that's why I'm workin' at *The Messenger-Inquirer* this summer, I teach the ju-, the journalism classes up there, too.

ES: Oh, you do.

CP: Uh huh. I like teachin'. I, I was wonderin' uh, if y'all remembered the first time you saw an airplane, Ms. Stevens?

OS: I remember, I can remember, when the first one come over and landed across the creek, but I don't remember,

CP: Was there an airfield over here?

OS: No, they just had a big ol' pasture field.

CP: And it landed in the pasture field. I bet you wondered, I'd have thought it had done crashed.

ES: I guess that's the first one we remember.

OS: That's the first that I remember.

CP: How old were you about?

ES: Oh, um,

OS: We

ES: Helen was uh,

OS: Helen was

ES: About grown

OS: Yeah.

CP: So, how old would that have made you all, probably? {Pause} About thirty or forty? What, how old were you when Helen was born?

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ES: Twenty-five. And, she was uh, big enough, old enough, she wanted to go, all the young people went, you know, and we were over on the other place settin' tobacco and she had to stay, to help with the tobacco,

CP: Uh huh.

ES: And she was mad.

CP: Oh.

ES: 'Course she wanted to see the airplane. I believe that's the first one I remember.

CP: I don't like to fly.

ES: You don't?

CP: No, ma'am. {Chuckles}

ES: Oh.

CP: Have you all ever flown?

ES: Noo. I'm not goin' to. {Both chuckle}

CP: You've managed to get along without it, haven't you?

ES: Yeah. So far I've lived without it.

CP: Did you all ever have time to take vacations or did you work?

ES: Oh no, no.

CP: Stay here on the farm and put out that tobacco.

ES: Stay here and take care of the cattle and the horses 'n.

CP: I guess milk cattle'll keep you close to home, won't they?

ES: Yes, stay with them.

OS: Yeah, you got to, you got to have a certain time to milk, and, and you milk, days one time, and tomorrow some other time, might, you might have no milk.

CP: Yeah.

OS: You got, you got to milk 'em like a clock ticks.

CP: Ms. Stevens, did you make butter?

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ES: Yes, oh yes.

CP: You did. I bet that was good, wasn't it?

OS: Sold cream. That's how we made a livin'.

CP: Is that, you sold cream?

OS: Sold cream.

ES: Yeah, we sold it.

OS: We'd sell a can or two a week.

CP: You did, what

ES: We had a cream separator

CP: You did.

ES: And milked, uh, Otis milked, four cows at one time, and his father died, and they had four cows, and he had to milk all eight of 'em.

CP: Did you take over his milk, part of his milk cattle after he died? Did you just take 'em in?

ES: No,

OS: No, I

ES: She'd taken care of it.

CP: Your mother?

ES: His mother'd taken care of it, but he had to milk because she couldn't milk.

CP: I see. Did she live right here close by you all?

ES: Yes. The house is torn down now.

CP: Well.

ES: But, old house was, right here close.

OS: But there were these big sugar trees, a little house up here, it's on my, well it was on the old home place where I was born, but, but uh, the old house I was born is, is, just right on the left hand side 'o that lane goes right up into this hill where this big sugar tree is.

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CP: Ah, I bet you have a lot of good memories, don't ya?

OS: Oh, the funniest thing was, the other day I was thinkin' of that sugar tree, I think that sugar tree's got a great big flat rock,

CP: {Snorts}

OS: Under the bottom of it. I remember my daddy saying that, couldn't get trees to live without them, a rock, you'd have lay on to hold moisture, and uh, and I've, I've, I've, I think that uh,

CP: Right there on the edge, right on the corner.

ES: Here? {Swats fly} I hope you got 'em. It's aggravatin'.

CP: Who put that big stone there, Mr. Stevens?

OS: I think a flat, I think it's got a flat stone rock under that, under the bottom of that tree and it lived.

CP: Well.

OS: {Chuckles}

CP: Did you take care of, did you take care of Ms. Stevens, after Mr. Stevens died and she got older, how'd y'all take care of her?

ES: Well, she stayed there, and come here at night.

CP: She did?

ES: As long as she was able, and, and her daughter lived in uh, Hammond, and when she got older, her daughter came after her, and she died after that.

CP: Hammond, Indiana? Hammond?

ES: Yes.

CP: Indiana?

ES: Yes.

CP: Okay. Let me stop just a minute. {Stops tape?}

ES: Oh, if she had to go through what we did, she just don't, she, she wouldn't know where to start, she wouldn't know where to start.

OS: People in this day and time don't know what a day's work is.

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CP: No, no, that's, that's true.

ES: She teaches retarded, children in Warren County, but, teachin' her darn children wouldn't be uh, well...

OS: She commence, and I told her she got more in the first month she taught than I got in the whole thirteen years that I taught put together. {Chuckles}

CP: Well, listen, when it, when uh, you were having to go up here and teach, or anytime I guess, did it, did it flood much? I was tryin' to decide if, if this area would have flooded back during 1913 or 1937, and I couldn't decide if this ground was low enough or it.

ES: Oh, no.

OS: No.

ES: No.

OS: The '37 flood, the flood got up on uh, up there on

ES: The railroad down, down there.

OS: Gettin' ready to come up on that, top, concrete walk there. You couldn't see down through there, and it just

ES: It come to the front of that bank.

CP: Did you all stay here?

ES: Oh, yes, there was no danger.

OS: Wouldn't get, wouldn't get here...

ES: it got in the lower corner of our barn.

OS: ?? got up where ??, got up where ??

ES: In the lower corner

OS: ?? the, the ??

ES: It was low, in the

OS: ?? way up on the horses' side, uh,

ES: Oh, that was all waters.

CP: How long did it take it to go down?

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OS: I don't remember that, that uh, the railroad, it got so high that it broke the railroad in two, right down below us, down here, and you could look like, look out, like that night back when we went to bed, the last time it rained so fast, it went up about four inches an hour.

ES: It was comin'

CP: Four inches, it came in fast, then, didn't it?

ES: Ohhh

OS: Oh, when it ?? down there, 'n,

ES: Yes, the railroad broke.

OS: When you first come in, you see a fence down there, see a fence post, ?? come in the house and turn around and go back, look like you couldn't find the pole.

CP: Well, how did it break the railroad?

OS: It got so high it just washed it off.

ES: Somewhere ??

OS: ?? track and all.

CP: Oh, my goodness. Well, is that the I&C Railroad out there?

OS: That, that, down there, MH&E, I believe they called it.

ES: MH&E.

CP: M-H-and-E.

OS: I believe that it, it run from uh, ?? to

ES: Hartford, uh,

OS: Madisonville.

ES: Madisonville, Hartford and Elmich??.

CP: Elmich?

ES: Elmich.

OS: Elmich.

ES: Up here, towards Elmich.

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CP: I see. Well, I heard about it washing bridges out. They say they used to put the railroad, the locomotives up on bridges to keep it from washing the bridges out.

ES: {Chuckles}

CP: But I never knew that it would wash the tracks right off the

ES: Oh, if that dam, Rough River Dam, ever breaks over

OS: If we put out ??

ES: Everything down here'll be flooded.

CP: Well, surely it won't. Those engineers...

ES: Oh, we can only hope.??

CP: To take care of.

OS: ??

ES: That whole country from, that dam down to, Hartford, would be flooded, wouldn't it?

CP: Yeah, it probably would.

OS: Helen uh, started school, and water, this deep out here, she killed her motor, somebody come along and pulled her out, take the car to the Springs, 'n parked it there and then, then somebody come, picked up, take her on to school. Had to go on foot to school, and called me the next morning to come out there and get her car, and it had done got up there where she had it parked in a garage, and I went out there and a feller, a feller with a team pulled it back up on the bank with...

ES: She was teachin' down between here and Hartford.

CP: I see. Did y'all have, did y'all use a boat to get out in this, back water any?

ES: No.

OS: Yeah, but you see...

ES: But they did run a boat up this highway.

OS: Yeah.

CP: They did?

OS: You could get in a boat up,

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ES: No we didn't have...

OS: right up here, the, the, right up here in front of my house, you, you could get in a boat there, and uh, and you could go, under the house go see the, had the springs a little dry spot, and then, then, over everything from out unto the hill down there.

CP: Good grief. I don't like flooding. That's a mess.

ES: Oh, I know, I know it is.

CP: Brings snakes up.

ES: Do you remember the '37 flood?

CP: No. No, I wasn't born until 1951,

ES: No.

CP: But my mamma remembers it. My mother was born in '24 and she remembers it real well.

ES: She's the age of Edna Lucille. She was born in 1924.

CP: Oh, is that right?

ES: She was born.

CP: Yeah. Uh, you know, you said you worked up here in uh, a store, you moved over here, where did you, did you board in Dundee, when you came over here to start workin'?

ES: Yes. I stayed, with, the man that owned the store was an only cousin to my dad.

CP: I see.

ES: And I stayed with he and his family.

CP: How much did you have to pay for board, do you remember?

ES: Nothing.

CP: Well, that's good. Do you remember how much your first pay check was?

ES: Yes, I do, but I'm not goin' tell you.

CP: You're not?

OS: She never did tell me.

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Interview with Otis & Essie Stevens (CT 41&42)

CP: Is that right?

ES: I don't know.

CP: I bet you were proud of it, though, weren't you?

ES: Oh, no, it wudn't enough.

CP: {Chuckles} Did you come to work over here right out of high school, or, what'd you?

ES: No.

CP: What'd you do?

ES: No, I, I never went to high school.

CP: How far did you get, Ms. Stevens?

ES: I went to the grade school 'til I was twenty.

CP: Well, you know, I guess that's right. Yeah, you got as much schoolin' though there as we get in high school today.

ES: I, I guess. I guess. Mm hm.

CP: Uh huh.

ES: And

CP: Do you remember, uh, some of the, now they were telling me over there at Hartford that you had play parties, do you remember those, Ms. Stevens, what they were like?

OS: {Chuckles}

CP: Did y'all go to any play parties?

ES: Well, you read what I wrote down.

CP: Well, let me a stop a minute, and take

{Tape stops}

CP: Did y'all have sheep, Ms. Stevens? You said here you all made, did you all have sheep, your own sheep?

ES: Yes.

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Interview with Otis & Essie Stevens (CT 41&42)

CP: You did?

OS: Some.

CP: Did you daddy shear the sheep?

ES: My mother sheared the sheep. My dad and brother held the sheep down, and she'd taken their wool, and cleaned it, washed it, and sent it to be carded, and it came back in rolls, and she spun it, and made thread, made all of our clothes.

CP: Did she teach you how to use that hand loom?

ES: She tried to.

CP: {Chuckles} Didn't take to it, huh? Boy, I bet that was good, warm clothing.

OS: Yes.

ES: And it was warm and she

OS: Walk that spinning wheel, she'd walk a mile a day.

CP: {Chuckles}

OS: Just spinnin'.

CP: How many sheep did y'all have?

ES: I don't remember, we probably had several, by the, amount of wool we'd get.

CP: Uh huh. Did you ever sell any of it?

ES: Not the wool. {Pause}

CP: What was the closest blacksmith shop? I, I guess if you'd,

OS: We had, had, two in Dundee when I was growin' up out there. Two blacksmith shops busy all the time.

CP: Who were they? Do you remember who the blacksmiths were?

OS: Well uh, Acton and Tipp run the, run the, main, biggest one that done more, more big heavy work, but then, I had a uncle run a blacksmith shop, ever since I can remember.

CP: My great-granddaddy Max, Max Smith, ran a, blacksmith shop. I guess over around Fordsville, but he died young.

OS: And then uh,

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CP: Did y'all, did you all make uh, your maple sugar yourself? How long did that take, all day long?

ES: We ran it off at night.

CP: Why'd you do it at night? I don't, I don't know a thing about how you make it.

ES: Well, we put it in kilns and boiled it down, and then uh, it would get dark, before we'd have it finished,

CP: I see.

ES: And then we'd finish it up on uh, fireplace. She, she'd put the kettle in there and finish it. You know it would be down low,

CP: Uh huh.

ES: And she'd finish it in there, and then we'd cake the sugar, in, muffin, pans.

CP: Oh, did it store pretty good, did it real hard, or?

ES: Well, it, yes, it would get hard. It

CP: What kind of kettles did you use? Big ol' brass ones or copper?

ES: Candles.

CP: Well-

ES: She never used candles.

CP: I said what kind of kettles.

ES: Oh.

CP: Big kettles, were they big?

ES: Yeah, yes. She started it in big kettles and then, when she'd get down lower, you know.

CP: Uh huh.

ES: She could put in a smaller kettle.

CP: Did you all cane, sugar cane?

ES: Yes.

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Interview with Otis & Essie Stevens (CT 41&42)

CP: Your, your daddy did?

ES: Yes.

CP: Did your dad raise it, Mr. Stevens? Did everybody make molasses then?

ES: Yes. Make enough to last 'em a year.

OS: People make, through the country, makin' molasses in, people'd have a mill, and then, then, move it from one, one, one neighbor's house to the other. Hook a horse to the mill and ran the cane.

CP: Did everybody help each other make molasses, or did they just move that?

OS: Yeah, yeah, they needed.

ES: You see you had enough in your family to,

CP: How many uh, children were in your family, Ms. Stevens?

ES: There was four of us girls, uh, three girls and a boy.

OS: When my, dad made molasses, he had a little bit of, a little bit of a barrel, he'd make that barrel full, and then after he got that made full, then he'd sell the rest, but we didn't have any, but that, that, was his to live on the next year.

CP: I tell you what, can't hardly find good molasses any more. We bought some

ES: It's hard.

CP: We bought some that was as thin as maple syrup.

OS: Oh.

CP: The, last I ever bought, 'cause I paid a lot for it, too.

ES: Well, I think...

OS: ??

ES: Our children stops after the at the mill where they're makin' it, between there and in Bowling Green, and keep us supplied now.

CP: They do?

OS: You, you can get molasses out, you can get real molasses over there.

ES: They get it at the mill right, where it's made.

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OS: We used to have a man, all cane won't...won't...would make good molasses.

ES: All ground won't make good uh, cane to form molasses.

CP: Is that right?

ES: You have to have a certain kind of, some of, some of your ground, you'd

OS: We used to have one nigger here, one nigger here that made molasses, and he'd make the first bunch, and he'd say it wudn't good, he wudn't make it for you.

CP: Mm.

OS: Lot of people would just go ahead and make 'em regardless the cane, but he'd make the first, if you make but I don't want none of it myself.

CP: {Starts to speak}

OS: It wasn't good molasses.

CP: Did you use it on, on biscuits and?

ES: Yes. {Chuckles}

CP: To make popcorn balls with, with it?

ES: Yes.

CP: I love molasses popcorn balls.

ES: I do, too.

CP: {Chuckles}

ES: We have 'em, every winter.

CP: You do? Did you raise popcorn back, when you's farmin', Mr. Stevens?

OS: Yes.

ES: Still do.

CP: Do you really?

OS: Oh, yes.

CP: Do you have a garden out there right now?

ES: Oh, we've got a garden.

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Interview with Otis & Essie Stevens (CT 41&42)

CP: Is that right? Do you do the cannin', Ms. Stevens?

ES: No, uh, I kinda let up.

CP: I was goin' to say, that's hard work.

ES: I've let up on that.

CP: Well, uh, you's talkin' here about laundry day. Boy, I complain about laundry every day, and I see here that it was a little bit harder than what I do.

ES: Mm. You oughta know how hard we had it. We had uh, big, at our old home place it was copperous water, and we couldn't wash anything in it. We had to take our clothes to somebody else's well, where they had soft enough water to wash.

CP: Was your copper water, did it stain everything?

ES: Yes.

CP: I've got that kind a water right now.

ES: You have?

CP: Sure do.

ES: Copperous water?

CP: I sure do. So, what did you do

ES: And you don't, you warsh in it?

CP: Not my white clothes.

ES: {Chuckles}

CP: But my dark ones, I do.

ES: You do?

CP: I have too have much laundry to carry to town. {Chuckles} Well, tell me how you did it then, did you just load all your laundry up and take it to your neighbors?

ES: Oh, uh, well, no, we'd go, we, our neighbor had a well down below our house, and we'd take our laundry down there 'til the well would get so low, we'd hafta, in the summer time, lot of times hafta let up, and uh, catch rain water.

CP: Yeah, that was good water, wudn't it?

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Interview with Otis & Essie Stevens (CT 41&42)

ES: Yes, I do think that that was.

CP: Uh huh. What kind of detergent did you use?

ES: Lye soap.

CP: Did you make it?

ES: Hand made it.

OS: You ever seen any lye soap?

ES: You would get there, get it in there.

CP: Yeah, well, I've seen it. Cuts grease pretty good, didn't it?

ES: Yes, it does.

CP: My, uh, I heard people say that's awful poisonous, that lye. Is that, is it?

ES: Oh, yes. You don't want no children to get ahold of it.

CP: No?

ES: Eat 'em, eat 'em up.

OS: Put that grease in there, though, it knock the poison down.

CP: Is that right? Did y'all, how long did it take to make your lye soap up then, all day long?

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

CP: What kind of blueing did you use?

ES: Oh, we had blueing.

CP: You did.

ES: I still got blueing

CP: You do?

ES: I use blueing.

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Interview with Otis & Essie Stevens (CT 41&42)

END TAPE1, SIDE2

TAPE2, SIDE1

CP: This is Charlotte Postlethwaite. It's July 28th, 1986 and I'm at Otis and Essie Stevens' house in Dundee and we're just getting to talk about doing laundry.

{Tape stops. Someone talking in background.}

CP: Do you have a washer and dryer now, Ms. Stevens?

ES: Yes.

CP: Makes it a little easier, dudn't it?

ES: Yes, it does.

CP: You know what I hate more than anything about doin' my laundry is ironin'?

ES: I don't iron. {Chuckles}

CP: I don't either if I don't have to.

ES: I've learned to, well, since I been sick, to, do my clothes without ironing.

CP: Well, I don't, well you know, most clothes today don't even have to hardly be ironed.

ES: No.

CP: With polyester in 'em.

ES: No.

CP: But I, I's readin' here about your cotton, you know, used cotton, everything used to be cotton, and I bet you used to have iron then, didn't ya?

ES: Yes, I have some cotton now that uh, really but sometimes I don't.

CP: Uh huh.

ES: Iron it.

CP: I remember, I remember grandmother starchin' all her sheets.

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Interview with Otis & Essie Stevens (CT 41&42)

ES: Oh, yes. Pillowcases.

CP: Putting them down, as I recall, she would heat up starch on the stove in a big kettle.

ES: Yes, and make it out of flour.

CP: Yeah, and dip all her white, and her sheets were just as, crisp and white. I bet you used to do them the same way, didn't ya?

ES: Yes.

CP: Well now, did you iron with one of these irons that used to have to heat up? Did you have ta?

ES: Oh, uh, I used different kinds of irons. I used that ol', what'd they call andirons, or, or what, you're sittin' 'em, sit 'em, in, on top of the stove, where, in front of a hot fire.

CP: Flat irons?

ES: I guess that's what you call 'em. That's what we used is uh, young people, back when I was a girl and then after I married I had uh, a different kind of iron, I'd heat the iron and put the, iron and put it inside of a case, inside an iron. It was different.

CP: How'd you keep from scorchin' everything?

ES: We did, sometimes. {Chuckles}

CP: You'd just scorch

ES: And black 'em, too, when you'd sit 'em in front of a fire to heat 'em.

CP: Did soot get 'em?

ES: And get on white dresses.

CP: Uh.

ES: Oh, we'd black 'em and have to wash 'em over.

CP: Boy, I bet that was aggravating.

ES: Oh, it was.

CP: It was

ES: It was a lot of aggravation in olden times.

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Interview with Otis & Essie Stevens (CT 41&42)

CP: I guess so. Did it teach you to be patient or did it teach ya, to have a temper?
{ Chuckles }

ES: Oh. { Chuckles }

CP: Did you all have a feather bed?

ES: Yes.

CP: You said here that you had feather beds were real important. Did you all set up housekeeping here with a feather bed?

ES: Yes. I still got featherbeds.

CP: You do? Y'all sleep on a featherbed now?

ES: No, no, but I've got a featherbed.

CP: I bet they were warm in the winter time.

ES: Yeah, and, we slept on year around.

CP: Is that right? I remember we had one that my mamaw made and have to, used to have to pull 'em outside and air 'em, and, what did that do to a featherbed?

ES: Well, it was uh, lighten up the feathers, the air, and uh, I don't know, it was just

OS: They would stick together.

CP: They do?

OS: Yeah, yeah, yeah, and they { Chuckles } You shook 'em out there and some of 'em used to, you know...

ES: I think I had

OS: Shake 'em up, turn, turn 'em over every night, every morning. Air 'em up.

ES: I think I had four at one time.

CP: Did you, did you all pluck the geese, get the down yourselves?

ES: Yes.

CP: Did you have to do that, Mr. Stevens?

ES: I, I, I raised geese after I married, and made a featherbed.

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Interview with Otis & Essie Stevens (CT 41&42)

CP: How many poor ol' geese did ya have to pluck to get? {All chuckle}

ES: You have to pluck 'em a long time. To get enough feathers for a featherbed, and uh, but they shed their feathers

CP: They do?

ES: At a certain, so it wasn't, painful to them. {Both chuckle} You'd just wait for...

CP: Did ya just?

ES: Because they's goin' to shed 'em anyway.

CP: I see. Well, what did you do, just go around in the yard and pick 'em up, or, did they?

ES: Well

CP: Did they have a certain place the roosted and shed 'em or what?

ES: We penned 'em up where we could

CP: I see.

ES: Get a hold of them.

CP: Yeah. {Clock chimes}

ES: And then um, hang uh, pillowcase or somethin' on the, back of a chair, and put the feathers down in that.

CP: I see. Well, there's nothing as soft as a good ol' featherbed. {All chuckle} I guess it helped keep you warm in the winter, how'd y'all heat, how'd y'all heat when you first got married?

OS: Had a

ES: Grate.

OS: Chimney.

ES: Uh, with coal.

OS: Had a grate right here

CP: Right here.

OS: That burned coal, and, it, and a grate in each uh, each three rooms.

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Interview with Otis & Essie Stevens (CT 41&42)

CP: Did ya shut off part of the house in the winter time or did ya heat it all?

ES: We

OS: Shut off part of it.

ES: Shut off part. We still do.

CP: Yeah, everybody just about has to out ‘n.

ES: Yeah. Rooms that you don’t use.

CP: Yeah.

ES: Shut ‘em off,

CP: Uh huh.

ES: We shut off, unless the girls comes home, we shut their

CP: Yeah.

ES: Bedroom off.

CP: Did you all use bed warmers for those feather, or did you just hop in and cover up with that big quilt, here, I was readin’ about your quilt.

ES: {Chuckles} Hop in and cover up.

CP: Well, why don’t you let me, I’ll just read this, here, and then I can, type it when I get back by listening to this, okay?

ES: Yeah.

CP: That’d be a good way to do it.

ES: Yeah.

CP: Uh, “Reminiscences of Essie Stevens.” “As we move further into our bicentennial year, we are reminded of the many changes that have been brought about throughout the years by inventions, scientific discoveries, and progress in general. We here recall some of these changes that have taken place within the lifetime of some of us. Earlier, houses and barns were made from logs cut from the trees of the nearby forests. Logs for the buildings were hewn and notched at the ends and fitted together with care to avoid the large spaces between logs. There were special days called “house raisings” or “barn raisings” when all the neighbors met to erect the building. The men put up the logs while the women prepared and served a big meal.” Did you ever do that Ms. Stevens? Do you remember doin’ that Mr. Stevens?

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Interview with Otis & Essie Stevens (CT 41&42)

OS: No, I don't remember, uh, buildin' any log houses.

CP: Do you remember as a little girl, going to a house raising, Ms. Stevens?

ES: We, we had a barn raising.

CP: A barn raising.

ES: My father did.

CP: Over on his farm?

ES: On his farm.

CP: I bet you had to do a lot of cookin' for everybody that was there.

ES: Oh, well, they all had a big meal.

OS: I remember we used to have log rollin's, but they tear the ground, you know, and they needed a barn, they'd have a big log rollin', and all the neighbors come in and clean up there. {Chuckles}

CP: {Chuckles} Well, how long did it take ya to, to raise a barn? One day?

ES: Yes.

CP: Is that all?

ES: Yes.

CP: Well, that's nice. "So much of our clothing, our blankets, and the cloth used in other ways in homes was made from wool, sheared from the sheep grown on farms. The wool was washed and dried, carded and spun into threads using spinning wheels. It was then woven into cloth on a hand loom. To add a bit of variety to the hand-woven cloth, different colors were obtained from the use of walnut hulls, sumac, oak bark, red oak, and other plants and berries to obtain dyes." Now, did you all dye your own wool? Did you go out and pick all those berries, 'n, 'n walnut hulls yourselves? What'd ya do, boil 'em?

ES: My mother did it. I never did. I never did color anything. She did with different things, and most of my things she colored red. I remember wearin' red.

CP: Was that your favorite color?

ES: Wool dresses.

CP: Oooh, that's nice. I like red. {Both chuckle}

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Interview with Otis & Essie Stevens (CT 41&42)

OS: I remember, light color that I, that I, had to have, some years ago, I bought a real light suit, in the summer time, and I remember the first suit of clothes that I ever bought was real light.

CP: {Snorts}

OS: It was uh, and, but this one was a real light suit, and I wore it all summer and my mother decided, didn't like it, thought it looked dirty went out and got some kind of bark, boiled it down and colored it fawn.

CP: Well.

OS: You couldn't tell, it was dirty just as, looked as real as it did, I mean the color looked like the real color.

CP: Yeah.

OS: But it was a different color.

CP: Well, that way it looked like you had a brand new set of clothes, didn't it? {Both chuckle} "The method of cooking over an open fire with kettles and pots hanging from kettle-hooks or placed directly over hot coals was modernized when the cook stove was invented." What kind of stove did you set up housekeeping here, Ms. Stevens? Was it a wood burner?

ES: Yes. But no, we burned coal.

CP: You did?

ES: Yes, but Ms. Stevens had one, they called it a step stove, it, there's uh, place down here to cook and then it raised up and a place up there to cook.

CP: Well.

ES: She burned wood.

CP: She did. Did, did it have an oven?

ES: The oven burned wood.

CP: Did it have an oven in it?

ES: Yes.

CP: Huh.

OS: Yeah, just like it cooked, it just, the old step stove was made out of iron, or steel, wasn't no tin about it.

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Interview with Otis & Essie Stevens (CT 41&42)

CP: Yeah. Did you ever get a porcelain, one of those little porcelain, uh, gas stoves, well, do you all have gas, here?

ES: No, we have electric.

CP: Electricity. You all are like us. Kind of expensive to heat with that electricity, isn't it?

ES: Yes, it is.

CP: "Farmers cleared fields with saws and axes, piling and burning the brush and other unused parts of trees and bushes. Fields thus cleared were called "new ground." Did you ever have a new ground hoe?

ES: Yes.

CP: My pap, my dad gave me a new ground hoe. Did ya have to sharpen those things? The one I have is pretty dull. {Chuckles}

ES: Yes, you have to sharpen 'em. {Chuckles}

CP: That's a hard way to break new ground. {Chuckles} Did you clear any fields, Mr. Stevens?

OS: I never did catch 'em, too much, only that, that, that, but my daddy, my daddy solid, solid, wood. I heard him say he went down there with a choppin' axe and chop all, all day long on one tree, it was so thick in there.

CP: Did he clear all this over here?

OS: My daddy cleaned it, cleared all of it except about six or seven acres up here.

CP: How many acres do you all have out here in farmland?

ES: Oh, we have about

OS: About fifty across the road.

ES: They divided, his father's farm, by Otis and his sister, and Otis got twenty-five acres.

OS: There's sixty-six acres.

ES: Then below that we own a farm, thirty-three and one-third acres that is, that uh, is ours.

CP: I see.

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Interview with Otis & Essie Stevens (CT 41&42)

ES: And we got two and a half acres in this lot with this house. I started to tell the girl about it this weekend. I said, “Honey, we’ve got all kinds of deeds.”

CP: {Chuckles}

ES: Deeds for everything, then we’ve got a farm about uh, mile over yonder, a hundred and twenty-six acres.

CP: Well, I bet you’re glad that someone else cleared all that. {Both chuckle}

OS: But my dad, cleared, cleared all this except uh, the hill right up there, toward the road, there’s uh, there’s uh, sixty acres on this part of, ?? on up here.

CP: And he cleared all that with a axe and a new ground hoe?

OS: A chopping axe.

CP: Mm. I don’t know if that hoe would fit in my hand. {Chuckles}

OS: And uh, the trees, the big trees on it, I remember him showin’ me, like I remember, that back down in there is a big stump, it, it didn’t rot. I guess it was four or five foot across. Said he sold it, cut the tree down and measured across the top of the stump, and many seen it across the top, that’s what you got for the tree. Got uh, for every foot, if, if it was seven foot across, it, it could bring a thousand dollars now. If it was seven foot across it, you got seven dollars, didn’t matter how high it was or high low.

CP: Gee.

OS: It just, ?? cut your stump down and measure your stump.

CP: Well, even if it was walnut or,

OS: Oak.

CP: Oak?

OS: Oak. Oak. There’s a lot of big oak on there.

CP: Well.

OS: ??

CP: And you got a dollar a foot across?

OS: That’s cuttin’ it, a dollar a foot, cuttin’ across, the just across the stump.

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Interview with Otis & Essie Stevens (CT 41&42)

CP: Okay. “Farm work was done by a team of horses or mules hitched to a plow or harrow. Long distance hauling required the use of two or more teams, especially during the seasons of rain or freezing and thawing when the dirt roads became a serious transportation problem.” Was this a dirt road out here when you all first came here?

ES: Oh, oh,

CP: Did it get, real, deep, ruts?

ES: Oh, they worked, they worked it.

OS: I hauled children to school with four horses on by here.

ES: They worked the road up fresh, and it got so deep, when the rains came, and the mud as Otis said, they had uh, they, they had a horse-drawn, things to haul the children at that time.

CP: Well, guess an automobile didn’t do people too much good on a dirt road.

ES: No, didn’t do a bit of good then. We couldn’t run it...

OS: No.

ES: on that road if you...

OS: That dirt road kept us, several years, that automobiles didn’t come, they just come in the summer time. Winter time, you’d probably have to put ‘em up.

CP: When do you remember seeing the first automobile around here? Do you know who had it?

ES: Oh, yes.

CP: Who was it?

ES: The doctors at, at Dundee. Dr. Duff and Dr. Stewart. Each had a, had a automobile, and that’s that only ones that was around here, when

CP: Is that right?

ES: When I came to Dundee.

CP: Well, I wonder if they ever got stuck goin’ out to make house calls.

ES: I imagine.

CP: {Chuckles}

ES: I imagine.

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Interview with Otis & Essie Stevens (CT 41&42)

CP: They probably had to call someone with a team of horses

ES: I imagine they knew where they's goin' and they rode their horses.

CP: Yeah, I guess...

ES: Horseback.

OS: And the mud was so deep, in the winter time, I had to wake up, of nights, and hear them I knew, I knew the doctor's horse, I could tell by his, his clopping in that mud, well, I said, goin' by there, I'd hear 'em, I'd hear 'em goin by there and maybe midnight, and so slow, in mud that deep clop big 'ol horse that Dr. Duff rode out there. {Chuckles}

CP: Was that when you were a boy?

ES: No. ??

OS: Well, that was after I had been married.

CP: Now you told me over there about fallin' over that fence and breakin' your arm.

OS: {Chuckles}

CP: Who was the doctor then?

OS: That's when we lived up here. {Chuckles}

CP: Who was that doctor that set your arm, Mr. Stevens?

OS: I don't remember, less it was Bean, the Dr. Bean that, at, he was way, way back there when I was born. I, I

ES: How about Dr. McDowell, was he there then?

OS: Huh?

ES: Dr. McDowell?

OS: What?

ES: Did he ever doctor you?

OS: No, no, Dr. McDowell never, come up here 'til after I's, way up there.

CP: Well, I'll finish reading this. "Farming was modernized greatly by the invention of the tractor and by the use of trucks for hauling when road conditions would allow. Rails were split by hand from tree trunks using an iron wedge, a froe, and gluts made from dogwood. These rails were made into fences. Other fences were made of slats, hewn from shorter cuts of wood,

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and woven into strands of wire, stapled to posts, set for that purpose, a few inches from the top of the post and about the same distance from the bottom. Fields of wheat and oats were cut by means of a hands-

ES: Scythe.

CP: “Scythe, called a cradle.” I didn’t know

OS: They were cradles.

CP: Did you use that, Mr. Stevens?

OS: A cradle, they had, made of, just like a mowin’, mowin’ cradle, they had uh, had uh a blade and then they had uh a frame and you cut it off here, and the wheat and oats would fall back in that, over in that, and if a fellow knew how to, he’d, he’d make a pretty good swath across the field, and be just like a mowin’ machine.

CP: Is that right?

OS: That’s somethin’ I never could do, I never could use a cradle.

CP: Could your dad, did your dad use

OS: Oh, he could clear, clear across the field and, and look at the wheat be so high. I never could swing a cradle.

CP: Did your daddy use that, Ms. Stevens?

ES: Yes.

CP: What was your maiden name?

ES: Crawford.

CP: Crawford, and he farmed?

ES: Yes.

CP: “And were thrashed by machine using a steam boiler for power. The local blacksmith shop with its anvil, forge and bellows was invaluable as a place for the farmers’ horses and mules to be shod, and for the farm implements to be sharpened. Water mills were used for grinding grain. The power for such mills was derived from water, spilling over a dam made in a stream.” Did you all ever go up to Falls of Rough to that mill, Ms., Ms. Stevens? Did your dad, or was there a mill closer by home?

ES: There was one closer home.

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CP: There was.

OS: We had a farm mill out here, but see, the Falls of Rough, it didn't last as long, it, it, it never did, entirely close down, I reckon, they still, were they still grind, ??

CP: No, it's fallin' down. The people that own that don't even take care of it.

OS: Because we had a mill out here, well, we'd go to, go to mills, had

ES: A plow like a mill.

OS: It was just like going in and swapping eggs...

ES: A big three story building.

CP: Huh.

ES: It was a big building.

CP: Do you remember who ran it?

ES: Yes. Who was the first one?

OS: Ren-, Renfrow and Dean.

CP: You, you all

ES: Squire Dean, called Renfrow.

CP: And you all took your mill and traded it at the grocery for eggs? Did people used to do that?

ES: No, no.

OS: No, it, it, it, if you want, want, wanted any meal, you had to go in the store and get, get ya, shell a bunch of white corn, pack the bushel, throw it on the horse's back, and get up and ride it out to the mill, take it off, take it in there, 'n about four, five, six minutes, it, bring the meal back and put it up on my horse. I'd ride it back out.

CP: Did they grind, wheat for flour, down there?

ES: Yes, yes.

CP: Well, I bet that was good.

OS: They's two, they's two grades of flour, ? and snowball.

CP: Well, did you ever shell any corn or, or wheat up there at the mill?

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OS: Oh, yes, that was, that was where we carried it, weren't no place to find as long as the mill run, farmers raised their own wheat.

CP: How much did they get for wheat?

OS: Oh, a million dollar a bushel.

CP: {Chuckles} Did you raise it, Mr. Stevens?

OS: I never did raise

ES: No, we didn't raise any.

OS: Enough to sell, because you'd have to

CP: Yeah.

OS: Didn't have no combine then. You had to use that cradle, you see.

CP: And you never could use that real well?

OS: And, and, uh, don't nobody else but the old, older people would use 'em.

CP: Uh huh.

OS: So, and they finally, this place played out and Beaver Dam, they raised a lot of wheat at Beaver Dam, and they had a mill over there, and uh, but uh, they finally, it just quit out.

CP: How, when did this one down here play out? About what year, do you remember?

OS: I, I don't remember to tell you the truth.

CP: How old were ya?

OS: It just kept,

ES: Well, it hadn't been,

OS: It hadn't been over,

ES: Carl Renfrow, you know so...

OS: Renfrow

ES: After, not long after we was married.

OS: When it was cold, was the last time that, that the flour mill run, wudn't it? I just don't remember.

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CP: Well, “For many years, the tobacco grown was exclusively dark tobacco. The production of burley became important later. Meat for the family was mainly pork, beef and chicken grown on the farm. The hogs and cattle were slaughtered by the men of the family, often with the help of neighbors. Hogs were scalded and then scraped to remove the hair. Cattle were skinned and the hides were tanned and used to make leather.” Did you do that?

OS: No, I didn’t do that.

CP: Did you all ever raise hogs?

OS: Oh, I raised hogs,

ES: Oh, yes, yes. Oh, yes.

OS: Raised not too many, well, two years, two years back, got sold out. What the meat, you could raise now, I don’t know what the chickens bring.

CP: Ah, did you all smoke your own ham and sausage? Oh, boy.

OS: The last hog we got, I bought that, that a’way, we kept it out in the last ham we threwed it away, did it, did it spoil.

CP: Oh. Boy, that’s a shame.

ES: I know it. It’s the feed, I reckon,

CP: Well.

ES: And we just quit buyin’ ‘em.

CP: Did you make your own sacks to stuff your sausage?

ES: Yeah.

CP: What’d ya make ‘em out of?

ES: Oh,

OS: Worn out sheets.

ES: Yes, old worn out sheets. {Chuckles}

CP: Well, did you get a lot of sage in your sausage?

ES: Yes, I put quite a bit. {Chuckles}

CP: Now, did you have your own recipe? I’ve heard people talk about they wouldn’t eat someone else’s sausage. {Chuckles}

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ES: I have my own. I just put in 'til it tasted right. {Chuckles}

CP: Yeah.

ES: Fry a little bit off the, stove and see if it tasted right. {Chuckles}

CP: How did you uh, what kind of refrigerator,

ES: Uh

CP: Did you have an icebox or?

ES: We did, we did, you know, I've studied about that. Up until um, we got the refrigerator, how did we keep things?

OS: Well, I, I, when I was growin' up, I was home, at a big old meat house out there.

ES: Oh, we kept the meat out there. Yes,

OS: And,

ES: But how did we keep, what we keep in the refrigerator now?

OS: I don't know. The, the sausage, you know, didn't think nothing of it, now you cain't keep, get it from the store, you cain't keep it twenty-four hours,

ES: I know it.

OS: And we used to uh, take it up here to the, meat shed, and, and divide it up. She'd take it up the meat out, and sometimes I'd smoke part of it. I don't know it'd hang up there, well, well, 'til spring, and it...

CP: And it didn't spoil?

OS: And you had to eat it then. I asked then, I asked then why it never did spoil.

ES: Where did we put our, leftovers in there?

CP: That's what I was wonderin'. 'Cause you didn't have air conditioning either, did ya?

ES: No.

CP: Uh, did you ever cook your sausage up ahead of time and store it

ES: Yes.

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CP: Now, now, I've heard my husband's grandmother say they poured grease over it, and put it in a jar.

ES: Put, put it in a jar and pour grease over it, covered it in grease.

CP: And that would keep it from spoilin'? Isn't that somthin'? Now, I would've ever thought that would have been, but

ES: It did though.

CP: You're right about sausage today, it doesn't hardly keep in the refrigerator.

ES: No. Not what we buy.

CP: No.

OS: Well, did you, did you know that back when I was a boy, growin' up, people didn't kill hogs, real young, like they do now. They had to, they used to keep the old ones over uh, when they raised, they raised, keep big and make big meat out of her they'd take her and keep all the other young ones in the place, and that, that weigh two, three, four, five hundred pounds.

CP: Yeah.

OS: And then, they kill 'em at six, seven months old, and we never thought about, my dad never thought about killin' a hog that was uh, was uh, year and a half, two years old.

CP: Yeah.

OS: And that was the first question to ask when you were killin', how many gallons of lard d'ya make? Now, you, you cain't even sell lard.

CP: No.

OS: Lard don't sell.

CP: I guess not.

OS: No.

CP: When you killed your cattle, when people killed cattle and used the hide to make leather, did they have shoes, made out of that leather, what'd you do with that leather?

ES: I don't remember.

OS: I never did do that.

ES: We never did use any leather

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OS: We didn't tan leather, but that was before I's, born, over, right over the Dundee hill, where they was a tanning yard, so I reckon that

CP: Well, well I'll go on then. "Fruits and vegetables were also grown on the farms, since there were no supermarkets or similar places where they could be obtained. Home preservation of food was mainly by drying, canning, or pickling." Did you do much of that? How did you dry, how did you dry your fruit, and everything?

ES: We would cut it up and put it out on uh, something in the sun.

CP: How long did you have to leave it out there? {Car goes by}

ES: We'd have to leave it there overnight.

CP: Well, I would have thought that would have just, rotted it.

ES: No.

CP: Rotted it. Did you have to sprinkle anything on it?

ES: No.

CP: Huh.

OS: Just peel apples.

ES: Yeah.

OS: The inside was, {Car goes by?} A lot of people did, it on the roof. That'll ruin, that'll ruin.

CP: Yeah. "Wood ashes stored in an ash hopper provided a source for lye, for soap making. The lye was combined with surplus meat scraps and fats to produce the soap." I don't know what an ash hopper is.

ES: You, you never did see?

CP: No, ma'am.

ES: {Chuckles}

OS: Well, it's just uh, uh, uh, a building made out, in that shape, with a cover, always had a slope.

CP: In a "V" shape?

OS: It was on a slope.

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ES: And then down here, it'd have a trough,

OS: They'd have a trough.

ES: On it, and it filled this with ashes. And they

OS: And you see, and they, they

ES: And they'd cover it over 'til they got ready, to, get the lye, and when they got ready for the lye, they pour water on these ashes, and when it run through them ashes down through that hole and out came the lye.

OS: It was lye.

ES: That's the way they made lye.

CP: Huh. And then it said you combined it with surplus meat scraps and fat.

ES: Yeah.

OS: Yeah.

CP: Well, what'd you do, boil it? Did

ES: Yes.

CP: Yeah?

ES: And that lye would eat those scraps up. You would have uh,

OS: That's right, the lye would eat the scraps up.

CP: Well.

OS: Get the grease out of 'em.

CP: Huh. Good grief. Did it hurt, burn your hands, did you ever get it on your hands?

ES: Yes, it would burn.

CP: Would it? "Maple sugar and syrup were made by taking the sap from maple trees. Cane from making sorghum was grown on the farms. The juice was extracted from the plants by a mill operated by horse or mule power. The juice was then placed in vats, and cooked over a hot fire until the desired thickness was obtained. For laundry purposes, a tub and washboard were used. White clothes were always boiled."

ES: Yes, indeed.

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CP: Did that make ‘em come out real, did the stain, did you ever, have any trouble with stains?

ES: I, don’t remember that I did. I

CP: Always came out white?

ES: Came out white. {Chuckles}

CP: “For ironing, flat irons were heated by placing them before a hot fire or on a hot stove. Feather beds were of great importance in homes. Geese were grown on the farms, and at the correct time, the feathers were plucked from the fowls. The feathers were enclosed in a special feather ticking of the size needed for the bed. Straw mattresses were also in use. Straw was stuffed into a ticking of the size needed and flattened into a comfortable mattress. Quilts for the beds were made from cloth scraps, using either patchwork or crazy quilt designs. The completed quilt was padded with cotton grown on the farm. The cotton often had been seeded and carded by hand. Then a quilting bee was held, and all the neighbors met together and quilted the quilt.” Did you ever have a quilting bee? You or your mamma?

ES: There was always enough in our family, that we always quilted the quilt.

CP: I see.

ES: Without having the neighbors.

CP: What were some of your favorite patterns? Do you remember uh, some of the names?

ES: Mine were just crazy quilt. Just, pick up a scrap and, {Chuckles} I piece on paper. Cut out my squares, and just make my, pieces come out, you know?

CP: Yeah.

ES: And then trim ‘em off. That was my method. {Chuckles}

CP: Well. “Rugs and carpets were made from used clothing torn into strips, dyed with homemade dyes for color, and woven on looms.” I guess you made a lot of wool rugs, didn’t ya?

ES: Yes, they made, out of old clothes, and all, you know.

CP: Uh huh. “Railroad ties were handmade. Trees were felled and cut into correct lengths, then were hewn by using a special axe with a very broad blade, a broad axe. Recreation consisted of country dances, play parties, box suppers, pie suppers, debating teams, spelling bees and school entertainment. Horse back riding was also popular with girls using side saddles.” Did you ever fall off of a side saddle?

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ES: {Chuckles} Yeah.

CP: I think that would be a hard, a hard saddle to stay on.

ES: I remember one time, I was uh, ridin'

END TAPE2, SIDE1

TAPE2, SIDE2

ES: ?? when I was ??

CP: What'd your brother and his wife do? {Both chuckle}

ES: They was expectin' it. They weren't able to go to bed.

CP: They didn't?

ES: When this happened. Turn off the light and sit there

OS: People didn't expect that.

CP: They didn't?

OS: It was way in the night when everybody, when people'd be goin' to bed, goin' to sleep, wake everybody up.

CP: Did it, did it

OS: It would make a racket. You could hear it for miles.

CP: Did they invite 'em in or did they?

ES: Yes, they invited

OS: If you didn't invite 'em in then, they'd go in and take you and ride you out on a pole.

CP: Oh, no, did they really? How hard did they ride him? {All chuckle}

ES: They did.

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OS: It was hard all right, he said, said it was, it

CP: I think you all had a pretty good time when you all were young. {All chuckle}
They didn't do that to the bride, did they?

ES: Never a dull moment.

CP: Well, I'll be dogged, that's pretty funny, that's pretty funny. Did they, did they feed everybody, I don't know if I'd want to invite anyone in, but I'd be afraid they'd ride 'em on a pole.

ES: I, they were suppose, to feed them but I, but I don't remember it at our house. I don't think they did.

OS: I don't think they did. Maybe they did.

CP: Maybe they didn't expect it.

OS: They didn't, they didn't, because sometimes it'd be the first night and then, then they'd be off somewhere and they wait to come back home, they'd go where they went, they just uh, {Chuckles}

CP: Oh.

OS: It was their the first night at home.

CP: I'd be, I believe I'd be nervous as a cat my first night, anyhow, much less if a bunch of people were gonna come over and raise cane. {All chuckle} "Weddings were performed in the home or the minister's home." Where did y'all get married?

ES: At my home.

CP: At your home. Did you have very many, guests, or was it just the family?

ES: Yes, we had some guests, of the neighbors, and, we had a minister from Owensboro. Came up on that branch railroad.

CP: Ah.

ES: And road the train up there, and someone met him, and he came out and married us, and went back on the train.

CP: Did you

ES: He married Otis' father and mother.

CP: Oh, uh huh.

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ES: That was the reason Otis insisted on him.

CP: Well, that's nice.

ES: It was

CP: What was his name?

ES: Preacher Harper, C. W. Harper.

CP: Well,

OS: He was the first person that, that the preacher ever married.

CP: Well, that, that's special.

ES: {Chuckles}

CP: That's nice y'all did that.

ES: I know. I told, Otis that we should just go to Owensboro and get married. At, {Chuckles} at the preacher's house, and he wouldn't agree to it, and, we married at my home.

CP: Did y'all stay there that night or did y'all come over here?

ES: No we went to his home.

CP: To your mom and dad's home?

ES: Yes.

CP: And then y'all built this home?

ES: Yes.

CP: How long {Clock chimes} did you all stay up there before you got this house built?

ES: We stayed up there from November 'til the next August.

CP: Well, that's not bad.

ES: 'Til they got it built.

OS: I built down here.

CP: Yeah. But y'all didn't get chivareed, huh?

ES: No, we didn't get chivareed.

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OS: No, we didn't get that.

CP: { Chuckles }

OS: It'd begin to get played out by that time. It wasn't done.

ES: I don't think it was as customary down here, as it was, other places { Chuckles } in the first place.

CP: How did y'all get down here?

OS: Buggy.

CP: Did you take horse and buggy or was there a train started in.

ES: OH, horse and buggy.

OS: Way back then, back then was in it for fun, you know, everybody didn't make no difference, everybody later on get the chivarees down here, the, the, get a little rough maybe. Get into trouble.

CP: Un huh.

OS: But it played out. I don't, I don't remember when the last was, maybe.

CP: Huh. Well, I, I, I imagine a lot, of new couples were glad that stopped. { Chuckles }

ES: Yeah,

OS: Yeah.

ES: I imagine, I imagine. Me, for one.

CP: { Chuckles } "As there were no hospitals or clinics, the sick were cared for by the community doctor and by the neighbors who would sit in with the patient, taking turns both day and night." Uh, do you all remember the Flu Epidemic of 1918?

ES: Oh, do I. I thought I was a dyin'.

CP: Did you have it, Ms. Stevens?

ES: Oh, Otis and I both. Helen had it first. She's about two or three years old, and she had it, and his mother and I had taken care of her, through the flu and then, I'd taken it, and she, and, his mother'd taken it.

CP: Oh, my.

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ES: So Mr. Stevens had her up there with the flu. Otis, we had two beds in here. I was in one bed, and Otis in one bed with the flu, and I thought I was dyin'. Well, I come near,
{ Chuckles }

OS: But I just had a good time.

CP: { Snorts }

OS: I had just killed hogs, the week before, and uh, both boys up there and they was as good at cooking as you ever saw come by here and stayed a week.

ES: They took care of us.

CP: Mighty good hearted of her.

ES: I do take him over even in that rest home at Hartford in the awfulest shape.

CP: Well.

ES: And I, think about all that he did for us, takin' care of me just like, a woman would.

CP: And what was his name?

ES: Leland Crume.

CP: Well.

OS: And I'll never forget he cooked up enough food for two or three people. { Chuckles }

CP: I was goin' a say, I bet you didn't have an appetite, did ya?

ES: I went a week without eatin', nothin' but a bite or two of cracker.

CP: Did you have the intestinal flu or

ES: Oh

CP: Respiratory flu, or all of it?

ES: All of it. I just don't know.

CP: Did you have bad headaches?

ES: Oh, yes. I really had that ol', 1918 flu.

CP: Hoo, a lot of people with that flu.

ES: And they died with it.

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CP: Did y'all know anybody around here who died of it?

ES: Yes, plenty people died with it.

CP: Well.

ES: No one on this farm.

CP: Oh.

ES: I was a long time gettin' over it.

CP: How did you treat a fever then? Remember, did they ice you down, or use, did you just tough it out?

ES: I imagine, just tough it down. Take aspirin.

CP: "Death, or deaths, were taken care of by neighbors who both cared for the body and supervised the burial." Were the funerals or the wakes, here at homes, or at church, or where?

ES: At home.

CP: At home.

ES: We had no funeral homes, and no undertakers.

CP: Is that right?

ES: Why, we didn't have none,, the man in our neighborhood that, ran a little store over there, would uh, represented um, firm in Caneyville that sold caskets, and we'd go to him, and he would order the casket.

CP: Wooden caskets or metal caskets?

ES: Well, it,

OS: Wood.

ES: He had different kinds.

OS: Different kinds, most of em was wood.

CP: Yeah. How long, I guess uh, that was then, they didn't embalm bodies then, did they?

ES: No.

CP: So I don't guess that you had a very long wake?

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ES: No.

CP: Did everybody sit up all night?

ES: Yes, yeah, the neighbors come in, and sit up, with the corpse, as long as is was in the home.

CP: Well, did that scare you when you was little girl?

ES: Yes, I imagine. I remember, {Chuckles} one woman dying in our neighborhood, and, I couldn't sleep, I never slept a wink. I couldn't for ever so long. I imagined she was under my bed.

CP: Well, why did you imagine that?

ES: I was just a little kid.

CP: Did you have to go over to the house and see her?

ES: I saw her when they brought her to the graveyard, I think. No, I didn't go to the house.

CP: But you dreamed of

ES: They came in our neighborhood and buried her, then I saw her.

CP: Well, where'd you get your tombstones? Did someone carve 'em, or did you have wooden crosses, or how did people mark graves then?

ES: Just with a rock.

CP: Just a rock?

OS: With

ES: Marked their graves.

OS: You drove a stake down and get a, limestone rock or a big granite, and put that, that tombstone in the ground if they ever did get one.

CP: Well,

OS: Mm hm, only marker that some people got was a peg.

CP: Yeah.

OS: You didn't, we didn't, drive a peg down 'n,

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CP: Huh.

OS: One in the foot and one at the head that was it.

CP: Well.

OS: They's say, a lot of graves ain't got no markers on the heads.

CP: I bet so.

OS: These old, these old graveyardss, there're a lot of 'em, we just common rocks marking graves.

CP: Yeah.

OS: Use as markers.

CP: Well, I bet a lot of families then don't know where a lot of their, kinfolk, are buried, do they?

ES: No, I don't know where my little brother, the baby in our family died when it was a baby, and I wouldn't, I don't know where it's grave is.

CP: Well.

ES: My mother and my brother went to try to see if they could find it, but they never did, locate it.

CP: Well. You say here, "Births were cared for by the country doctor and by neighbor woman acting as a midwife."

ES: My mother acted as a midwife for alllll the neighborhood.

CP: She did?

ES: All the children in that neighborhood, she was the midwife.

CP: Well, what was you mother's name?

ES: Mariah Elizabeth.

CP: Mariah, that's a pretty name.

ES: Mariah.

CP: Mariah Elizabeth Crawford.

ES: You don't hear a "Mariah" very often.

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CP: No, but I've heard that name, that is a pretty name.

ES: I think it's pretty.

CP: I bet she stayed busy as a midwife.

ES: Ohhh, Lord, I'd have to get up and get breakfast next morning, and go milk the old cow, 'n

CP: {Snorts}

ES: I hated for every woman to have a baby,

CP: {Chuckles}

ES: with her. I had all that work {Chuckles}

CP: Oh, my, goodness. I guess she would be just like a doctor today. She'd be up all hours of the night sometimes, wouldn't she?

ES: Oh, yes, yes.

CP: Did they pay her to be a midwife?

ES: No.

CP: She did it out of the goodness of her heart

ES: No, it was our neighborly deed, neighbor in need,

CP: Well.

ES: The neighbors, takin' care of each other. {Chuckles}

CP: I guess that everybody had their babies at home, 'til

ES: Oh, yes.

CP: Clear up

ES: Didn't have no place to have 'em.

CP: No.

ES: Wasn't there no where, uh, I can remember when, Owensboro Hospital.

CP: It wudn't much, was it?

ES: At, at first, no,

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CP: Mm hm.

ES: But I can remember it well, that we thought what a wonderful thing to have a hospital.

CP: Was that the first one around here?

ES: Yes.

CP: How long ago was that? My mom said it was just a little ol' white building when she first remembers it in the 1930s.

ES: I don't remember where it looked like, and, but that, was the first hospital

OS: Didn't, didn't have then, the, the Hartford Hospital, up last, last week, or so, that, we, we go there for babies to be born, otherwise we had to go to Owensboro.

CP: Yeah. Well, I tell you what, if you's in a wagon, it wudn't a done you any good try to get to Owensboro.

ES: Oh yes.

CP: Would have probably jarred your... {Snorts}

ES: Wouldn't be no need to have it

CP: No, that'd be a hard trip, if you's in labor to begin with, wouldn't it?

ES: {Chuckles} I think so.

CP: I believe I'd call Mariah Crawford and just tell her to come over to my house quick.

ES: Oh, oh, I know I would. I know.

CP: {Chuckles} Come to think of it, when did you get your first telephone?

ES: Well, we've had a telephone ever since we moved down here.

CP: What kind was it? that, crank?

ES: Yes, up on the wall.

OS: Grape vine.

CP: {Snorts}

OS: We called it a "grape vine" then it just, people...

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Interview with Otis & Essie Stevens (CT 41&42)

ES: Hanging up on the wall, and you went and rang it.

CP: Well.

ES: And had an operator.

CP: You did? What was your number, do you remember? Did you have a number?

OS: Didn't have any number, just, wudn't it so many rings, I think, I don't remember.

CP: Is that right?

OS: And some time.

ES: I don't remember.

OS: And sometimes it'd be half a dozen on one line.

CP: {Chuckles} I guess everybody could get on there and talk at the same time.

ES: Oh, yes. {Chuckles} It was

OS: Yes. A lot of times...

ES: They monitored the line.

OS: you'd would be talkin' and you wudn't get, {Chuckles}

ES: {Chuckles}

CP: they'd be a bunch of women talkin' on the phone. {All chuckle}

ES: ...word. {All chuckle}

OS: That was a while back.

ES: They never get tired of talking.

CP: When'd you get your first radio? Do you remember, what was on, what the programs were, or, listening to the news?

ES: Oh, we didn't, didn't have a radio 'til, Helen was right smart sized girl. I don't know, but we used to have Red Skelton and Ed Sullivan and, all those old timers, you know.

CP: On the radio or TV?

ES: Oh, we had them on TV, didn't we?

CP: Yeah.

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Interview with Otis & Essie Stevens (CT 41&42)

ES: I remember.

CP: I remember them.

ES: On the radio. At first.

CP: Did you ever listen to the Grand Ol' Opry?

ES: Yes.

CP: Out of Nashville?

ES: Yes.

CP: And you, now

ES: Oh

CP: Soaps, now soaps used to be on radio.

ES: I like that, we listened to that uh, Berea, oh, what is it? Burt Lair.

OS: And the

ES: And the old

OS: I remember.

CP: Jack Benny?

ES: Huh?

CP: Jack Benny or Milton Berle?

ES: No.

CP: I guess before people had radios and TVs, the world was still a pretty big place, wudn't it?

ES: Yes.

CP: You didn't hear about what all was goin' everywhere.

ES: Oh, no, didn't know all this, meanness is happening.

CP: Yeah, probably, you were just as well off, weren't ya?

ES: Yes, all this terrorist.

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CP: Yeah. You finish this up and you said, “Today, those of us who have never experienced life as it was earlier have much for which to be grateful. Yet, we must realize that we have missed a lot of that which makes really worthwhile living.”

ES: {Chuckles}

CP: “It is great to have been allowed to be a part of both the former years and the modern years of life in America. Information submitted by Mrs. Otis Stevens, Essie, and Mrs. Ida St. Clair, charter members of Dundee Homemakers Club, written by Grace Westerfield.” You all did this for the bicentennial? It says on here, “as we move further into our bicentennial year,” so this much of been, uh, 1976?

ES: Yeah, about

CP: Ten years ago.

ES: Yeah, about that long.

CP: Well, that’s real interesting. I know you, that’s real important to you to give to your grandchildren.

ES: Oh.

CP: I appreciate you letting me read that on here.

ES: Well, I, glad, I had it. Uh, Helen told us, way back yonder said, “Now, Momma, all those old things that happened years ago is passing,” and said, “These young people are never goin’ know about it, unless you older people uh, write it down, and leave it for ‘em, to know,” says, “Now, Carolyn Ann and, and uh her generation will never know all these things that happened,” and I wrote it down for my granddaughter.

CP: Well, that’s

ES: So she’ll know, just, oh, Lord, she couldn’t do nothing like,

CP: Well, I hope maybe these newspaper articles will be something you can save for her, too. I just really appreciate your help. You all don’t how important it is to get information from you all.

ES: Oh,

CP: We really appreciate it.

ES: It’s, it’s nice that we have our memory,

CP: Yes.

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Interview with Otis & Essie Stevens (CT 41&42)

ES: That we can, talk about these old times.

CP: Yeah.

ES: And you've been very nice.

CP: Oh, I know I've made you tired, but I just found you so interesting

ES: {Chuckles}

CP: You know, my grandmother told me yesterday that as you get older, the sad things don't seem as sad, and the happy memories seem happier.

ES: {Chuckles}

CP: That's good, isn't it?

ES: How old is she?

CP: She's eighty-four.

ES: Oh, sure enough.

CP: My, yeah, my other, my mamaw would have been about, let's see, she would have been, 107, if she was still alive. Why, they got off the train over here at Beaver Dam, in 1918. They moved here from West Virginia. It was Frank Cornell. He was in the oil business, he was a driller, and uh, my, my husband's, grandfather, Benny Postlewaite, was a gauger over here in Dundee for some years, but I don't know when that was, so

ES: Oh, uh huh.

CP: He gauged, the oil tanks.

ES: Oh, yes.

CP: I don't know what that is.

ES: Yeah, well, I know what it is. Um, Dr. ??, my heart doctor says that, I'm goin' to live to a hundred, and he said, "Now, when you're a hundred, and they celebrate in your honor, I want you to tell me, I want to come, I want a piece of your birthday cake." I told the girls, I said, "I won't have no memory when I'm..." {Chuckles}

CP: I bet you do.

ES: Not when I'm that old, but you all remember him.

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Interview with Otis & Essie Stevens (CT 41&42)

CP: Well, I tell you what, when I walked in here, well, when I saw Mr. Stevens, I couldn't believe he was ninety-four, when I walked in here today, Ms. Stevens, I can't believe that you're ninety-five, you all are both, you look about twenty years younger, at least.

ES: Well, oh, my lands, you don't know how I feel. {Chuckles}

CP: Well, well, I think, I just hope I can live to be ninety-five and be as healthy and sharp as you all are.

ES: Oh, pacemaker don't help make you feel any better.

CP: Well. Well, I just, I just, am so honored that you invited me into your home.

ES: Well, you're welcome.

CP: And I'm gonna,

ES: Glad to have ya.

CP: I think what I need you to do, Ms. Stevens, I need you to, sign a permission thing that it's okay for us to use that information, if that's okay. I'll fill it all out and, and make

ES: Okay.

CP: Okay. Let me see if I have one here. Here I go again, losin' everything. Is there anything else you all can think of that we haven't touched on. I hate to walk out of here today.

ES: I, I don't think of, anything. {Chuckles}

CP: Have I just, played you out on everything?

ES: Well, I'll think of things after {Chuckles} I get to studyin' it.

CP: That's what everybody says.

ES: About it, I, I, maybe think of a lot of things.

CP: I tell you what a lot of people have told us was one of the best things they ever got was indoor plumbing.

ES: Well, yes.

CP: Said it was the finest thing to happen to 'em.

ES: I wouldn't give my refrigerator and indoor plumbing for all the rest of the things.

CP: Is that right?

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Interview with Otis & Essie Stevens (CT 41&42)

ES: Well, now the stove, and the washer, now, wait a minute, {Chuckles} they are a great help. I couldn't wash on the washboard. I gave up, I don't try to do much washin' with a machine.

CP: Well, I can't get over that you all are ninety-five years old and you're raisin' some garden and you still do your laundry, 'n

ES: Oh

CP: Still so independent.

ES: Oh, he's got the prettiest tomatoes, big tomatoes you ever saw.

CP: Well.

ES: And

OS: ??

ES: And

OS: ?? farmers growin' it for about a week or ten days ?? sprinkle a little every day, you know, well, I think it's too wet to to get the corn, and I, well, I wait 'til the next day, well, the next day it rained again, and before it got, got ?? before ?? on, got to go on that, and it looks like ??

ES: We have gardens full.

OS: It ought to be good, it's on good pasture. {Both chuckle}

CP: Yeah.

ES: We froze corn.

CP: Oh.

ES: Cabbage.

CP: What's your favorite kind of corn?

ES: Well, Hickory Cane.

CP: Is that right? I've heard a lot of people say they really like that Hickory Cane. Do you fry it in butter?

ES: Syrup?? {Chuckles} I put 'em up the cob. I can't stand, over the stove and heat it, and, Otis does most of it.

Folklife Archives Project 154 – A Generation Remembers, 1900-1949

Interview with Otis & Essie Stevens (CT 41&42)

CP: Well, uh, Ms. Stevens, when's your, can you tell me your birthdate, and I'll write that in here?

ES: My birthdate?

CP: Uh huh.

ES: December 21st.

CP: Pretty close to Christmas, wudn't it?

ES: Yeah.

CP: And you said 19-, uh, 18-

ES: 'n90.

CP: 1890 and what's this address out here? Is, do you all have a number or is it just uh?

ES: Well, uh, we just put Dundee, Kentucky.

OS: Put it there.

ES: We're on the route, there.

OS: It's got a number on the box.

ES: Narrows, uh

CP: You're on the Narrows route?

OS: ??

ES: Dundee, Kentucky, will do just as well.

CP: Okay, and you're telephone number, I've gotten it written down out there somewhere. I've got your number down. I'll copy it off of yours, Mr. Stevens.

OS: That's it, 6-2, I think, my number, on the box.

ES: 5-0-5-1.

CP: Yeah. That's it.

ES: 5-0-5

CP: Okay. 2-7-uh

OS: 2-7-6.

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Interview with Otis & Essie Stevens (CT 41&42)

CP: Yeah, 2-7-6.

ES: 2-7-6.

CP: Ours is 2-7-4. That's how close we are. Our first three numbers 2-7-4.

ES: And you're over in?

CP: We're over in the Pleasant Ridge area?

ES: Uh huh.

CP: Of Ohio. Uh, and then you lived over, you said the only other neighborhood you lived in was over, in, near Grayson County line?

ES: Yes.

CP: What was the name of that community? Did it have a name?

ES: No.

OS: Didn't you called it Dan Station with the postal, the railroad depot.

ES: The depot.

OS: The depot was Dan Station.

ES: When they had a train, was Dan...

CP: Dan?

ES: Dan Station.

CP: Dan Station. Okay.

ES: Or Friedland, the post office was named Friedland.

CP: F-R-I-E-D?

ES: L-A-N-D.

CP: Okay. All right. Okay. Can you, will you sign this, Ms. Stevens? Let's see, I guess this is hard enough to write on. I don't know if it is or not. Right here. You need something a little harder?

ES: No, this all right. {Pause}

OS: And all the ??

Folklife Archives Project 154 – A Generation Remembers, 1900-1949

Interview with Otis & Essie Stevens (CT 41&42)

ES: I haven't got good use of my hand.

CP: You write better than I do.

ES: Oh

OS: Look.

CP: Look at my writing. Isn't that terrible? And I, I'm a teacher, but don't tell anybody how terrible my handwriting is, okay?

ES: Oh, I, I'll tell everybody I know.

OS: ?? she's got, she's had all the new things in, like the deep freezer and the refrigerators, and washing machines, and I've done all my farming the ol' fashioned way.

CP: I don't know how you did it.

OS: All on that, on that little ol' Cub tractor I've got, a little, I've still got a ??

ES: Oh, you've got a ridin' mower.

OS: I know.

CP: Well, it's a good thing. I'm, I'm glad you don't have a push one.

OS: I haven't even done all for my farming, though, I've done it, practically, with uh, team, team is the way, of course the last, year, if you've been come here, but most of the time, I,

CP: With your team.

OS: ?? my money in something, that wouldn't wear out.

CP: Well, I tell you what, you've got an awful pretty place, and it's,

ES: Oh.

CP: I just enjoyed the drive down through here so much. I wouldn't live in town for anything. I like living out in the country, too.

ES: {Chuckles} Well, I do, too. I wouldn't like to live in town, and uh, we enjoy it, as long as we can, have help to keep it cared of.

CP: Well, it's awful pretty.

ES: Oh

CP: Everything's just as pretty as it could be.

Folklife Archives Project 154 – A Generation Remembers, 1900-1949

Interview with Otis & Essie Stevens (CT 41&42)

ES: Well, we love our home, and, gonna stay as long as we can.

CP: I don't blame you. I doubt that there is any place in the world as sweet as home, is there?

ES: Yes.

OS: Well, I've been lucky, never been to the hospital, for a regular sickness in my like, don't reckon.

CP: Well, you are fortunate.

OS: Oh, I broke my ankle. {Chuckles}

CP: Ah

OS: I went and made a mess of it, and never has felt well.

CP: Is that right? And you say you've got a pacemaker?

ES: I had a heart attack.

CP: You did?

ES: A ma-, mini-stroke.

CP: Huh?

ES: My records said a mini-stroke.

CP: Well, well, you look just, look awful fine to me.

ES: {Chuckles}

CP: I tell you, you really do.

ES: Oh, I just, like everything,

CP: I think you, she's just a good-lookin' woman, Mr. Stevens, I see why you came in the store that day.

OS: {Chuckles}

ES: {Chuckles}

CP: You're a good-lookin' man, too.

ES: I think so.

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Interview with Otis & Essie Stevens (CT 41&42)

CP: Well, I do, too.

ES: {Chuckles}

CP: My husband and I will be married fifteen years this Thursday.

ES: Fifteen years.

CP: I asked him, when I told him I's comin' over here, I asked him if he needed anything from the Dundee Mall, and then I asked him if he thought he and I would, still be together in uh, in uh, sixty more years.

ES: Oh {Chuckles}

CP: He thought, he said he didn't know if he could put up with me or not, but we were goin' to try to. {Chuckles}

ES: {Chuckles} It won't be hard. It won't be hard.

CP: Well, there's nothing else I don't guess we need to cover. Can you think of anything?

ES: Uh, no. {Chuckles}

CP: Well, I think I just about worn you out, Ms. Stevens, I'm goin' turn it off.

END TAPE, SIDE2