

8-13-1986

Interview with Oda Shouse, Sr. and Clara Shouse Regarding Their Lives (FA 154)

Manuscripts & Folklife Archives
Western Kentucky University, mssfa@wku.edu

Follow this and additional works at: http://digitalcommons.wku.edu/dlsc_fa_oral_hist

 Part of the [American Material Culture Commons](#), [American Popular Culture Commons](#), [Folklore Commons](#), and the [United States History Commons](#)

Recommended Citation

Folklife Archives, Manuscripts &, "Interview with Oda Shouse, Sr. and Clara Shouse Regarding Their Lives (FA 154)" (1986). *FA Oral Histories*. Paper 41.
http://digitalcommons.wku.edu/dlsc_fa_oral_hist/41

This Transcription is brought to you for free and open access by TopSCHOLAR®. It has been accepted for inclusion in FA Oral Histories by an authorized administrator of TopSCHOLAR®. For more information, please contact topscholar@wku.edu.

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

Interview with Oda Shouse, Sr. and Clara Shouse (CT 56)

TAPE1, SIDE1

KEITH SMITH: Oral history interview. Oda Shouse, Sr. Keith Smith. August 13th, 1986. On Robb's Super Scope Tape recorder. {Tape shut off} ?? what people did for fun, that kind of thing, and I got some questions here that I can ask you.

ODA SHOUSE: The truth of the matter is that we didn't have a whole lot of fun. We didn't have time to have any fun. It was all work.

KS: Mm.

CLARA SHOUSE: Because we raised tobacco, ??

KS: Now, now, what's your name ma'am. I, I didn't, ?? caught your?

CS: Clara.

KS: Clara, Shouse?

CS: Mm hm.

KS: Okay, uh, how long you all been married?

OS: Uh, we married in '29.

KS: Married in '29.

OS: Well.

KS: Uh. Okay. Well,

CS: About fifty-six, I guess, fifty-seven years. {Chuckles}

OS: Something like that. I lost track. {Both chuckles}

CS: Been so long.

KS: Pull this up here so I can get this thing up off the ground a little bit. {Moves tape recorder.} Well, I'll uh, will interview both of you then. Here, if you want uh, answer some questions, too, just, just hop right in there.

CS: {Chuckles} ?? answer 'em.

KS: Now uh, I'll start with you.

OS: You, you said something about the '37 Flood, I believe, uh, and I guess I can tell you about as much about that as anything else. In 19n36, uh, we had an awful drought. I started the farm that year, and uh, me and my dad lived on the same farm,

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

Interview with Oda Shouse, Sr. and Clara Shouse (CT 56)

KS: {Coughs}

OS: So uh, it got so bad and stuff burned up so bad, why, I gave my crop to my dad. I went to Evansville, and uh, hauled logs that summer out of uh, Hovey's?? Lake, in below Mt. Vernon. And uh, I came back that fall, and they was all, some tobacco plants had three to four leaves on it, but it had just burnt up, clear up to the top, and, the corn, the tassels was burned out of it, it was uh, then uh, then at that fall, winter set in, and uh, long time before we uh, had to get out, why we was already trapped in, and uh, we kept waitin', and waitin' for the water to go down. Instead of goin' down, ever, ever time we got the word of it, it was comin' up.

KS: Where, where were you, you were livin'?

OS: Across uh, Highway 60 over next to the river. Uh.

KS: Around Maceo or?

OS: Well, but uh, down this away from Maceo, uh.

KS: Closer to Owensboro?

OS: Yeah, just, I'd say just above Gadises?? there, back uh, to the left. Well, I think they got a coal, uh, some kind of a coal deal back where they ship coal out, I guess.

KS: Mm hm.

OS: Well, that was where we lived. And uh, when we finally, uh, decided we had to get out, we had to cut the fences and, went out in a wagon and, team, and sometimes the wagon bed would, try to float off, and uh, then we was cuttin' fences and goin' out the highest places we could go.

KS: Now, cuttin' fences, now, would, you mean, you couldn't get down a road or?

OS: The water was too deep and we had to go up on the high places, and uh,

CS: ??

OS: Go through the field where we could, and fence, why, they just cut it, and uh, we had uh, had a cow that uh, we drug her through the water, all three or four times, and then she went back so finally we just uh, decided to let her go. Figured she'd drowned and, uh, the next time we heard uh, uh, from her, why she was in a livery stables here in Owensboro.

KS: Oh. {Chuckles}

OS: They had uh, uh, taken her off from a straw stack. Her and some more cattle, that had uh, got up on this, straw stack. And uh, we uh, came on out, up by Maceo, and we got up here at Yellow Banks and there was a colored church, uh, colored school, there at the time.

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

Interview with Oda Shouse, Sr. and Clara Shouse (CT 56)

Well, we stayed uh, in this uh school for uh, about three days, I guess, three days and nights, then we, got so that we could get through here, and we uh, we came down through here and went to Owensboro and stayed at the, Third Baptist Church for uh, I think about three weeks. And uh, then we moved to Red Hill. We really got out of the water. {Chuckles}

KS: Yeah. No more of that, uh?

OS: Uh.

CS: Mm nmh.

KS: Did you all have children, uh?

OS: No, we didn't have any. Uh, some of my brothers uh, uh, was with us at the time, that, some of them were small, and we had them,

CS: Kids.

OS: But anyway, we slept there in that colored school house, for, about three days and nights and, and, 'course I say then we went on to Third Baptist Church. They were, they were a lot of people there, that, you know, from the water, and uh, when we went back to our home, why, they wasn't, nothing there, that was, worth saving. I mean, uh that is, any woodwork was all, and all fell apart.

KS: Water got up in the house?

OS: Well, the water got up just even to ceilin' in the house. We were, and uh, so we uh, like I say, we went to church, well then all we, all we had, why, the church, gave us, that is they uh, taken us down to uh, uh, uh, furniture store, and uh, they bought what, what we could get by on, and the Red Cross had, had come, uh, supposed to have been helpin' people, and uh, I went to the Red Cross, and they said, well, the deal was that we had rented a farm like I said, at Red Hill, and uh, they were two, uh two farms, close together, and I, I rented one house and my dad rented the other but we were both livin' together ,{Car goes by.} so we could just uh, ?? together to uh, you know, go and uh, split up and go to other houses, and they said that, the Red Cross said that they couldn't uh, they couldn't help us because there's two families livin' in the same house, and I thought that was pretty good, and uh, the Red Cross called me here awhile back and, wanted, somethin', a donation. I said, "Well, I, I like your nerve to, to uh, ask me for somethin'." I said, "I haven't forgot the '37 Flood, that I asked y'all, and I got nothin'." And uh, 'course they didn't talk to me very long. {Chuckles}

KS: Okay, well let's, let me go back here and get a little bit of uh, uh, of record of ya. Now, where, where were you born?

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

Interview with Oda Shouse, Sr. and Clara Shouse (CT 56)

OS: Right over here on this creek. Uh, a little house, uh, oh, about half a mile from here, I guess.

KS: Now, when was that?

OS: Uh, 1911, July the 3rd, 1911.

KS: Okay. Where, where were you born?

CS: {Chuckles} I guess around Thruston??, far as I know.

OS: Yeah, she born over here to Thruston, uh, 1908.

KS: Okay. Now can uh, either, either one of ya, well, let's go way back here a little bit, now, see if uh, if you remember much about your school days, when you started school?

OS: I started school right here on this ground.

KS: Right here where you're livin'?

OS: Right here where I'm livin'.

KS: Tell me a little about that, uh.

OS: Well, first day I went, why, I uh, we had to walk over yonder uh, at uh, oh, the lights??, acres, I guess, you call it, over here, the school, but anyway I, {Truck goes by.} I got tired sittin' in the schoolhouse, school house was up off the ground, so I just came out, crawled under the schoolhouse.

KS: {Chuckles}

OS: They uh, finally coaxed me to come out. {Both chuckle.} But uh, uh, I had uh, we walked, rain or snow, whatever. And uh, uh, first, I guess, couple o' years, here, and then uh, there was a school, over to Ensor, went to awhile, and there was another one back up here at Sand Hill, and uh we, I went to that for, a year or so, then uh, my eighth grade, I finished up here, came back here.

KS: What was the, there was a school right here on this ground then?

OS: Yeah.

KS: What, what was the name of it, do you remember?

OS: Spice?? Knob.

KS: Spice?? Knob School. {Truck goes by.} ?? had the grocery right up there. I forgot where I was here for a minute.

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

Interview with Oda Shouse, Sr. and Clara Shouse (CT 56)

OS: Yeah.

KS: Okay.

OS: That's right where ??

KS: Well, is this the knob here, where we are, or?

OS: No, I, I, they's, they's a couple uh, uh, well, hills, right over here,

KS: Okay.

OS: I think that that was uh,

CS: What they called.

OS: What they called, Spice?? Knob.

KS: Did you go to Spice?? Knob School, too?

CS: No, I don't go to school about three years. {Chuckles} Got much, schoolin'. It was Thurston School.

OS: There was a school down at Thurston.

CS: Mm hm.

OS: There uh, uh, right across the creek there, I don't know uh, it's, it's a house now, but anyway that,

KS: {Coughs}

OS: What school that she got, she got it there.

KS: Uh huh. Okay. Now what, your, your, your, your parents were farmers, both of you?

OS: Yes.

CS: Yes.

KS: And you are farmers, too?

OS: Right.

CS: We worked,

OS: Well, I tell you, I've done, a little bit of everything.

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

Interview with Oda Shouse, Sr. and Clara Shouse (CT 56)

CS: We done ?? {Chuckles}

OS: Farmed a while, after I married, and uh, I was just thinkin' about the times that uh, people complain now about what they get out of, out of their crop and uh, I forget what year it was in the '30s, that I, hauled corn from up here, uh, on this road that goes back into Yellow Banks, uh, uh, to Maceo, to a feller by the name of Forest Macintyre?? run a store, over there, and uh, sold it for fifteen cents a bushel.

KS: {Chuckles} And that was in the '30s?

OS: Yeah.

KS: Woo.

OS: 'Course at that time, you could buy bread, uh, make loaf[?], and uh, some lot of changes.

KS: Did ya, were, were either one of ya around, other, other children much when you were a kid? Did you have buddies that you could play with up and down the road?

OS: Oh, no, we never uh, oh, that I remember, I mean, when I was big enough to work, I worked up until uh, 'til I left home.

CS: I did, too. I worked out the field. Raised tobacco, we did.

KS: What kind of chores did, did kids have to do?

OS: Well, uh, milkin', sometimes,

CS: I never did milk.

OS: And, fed the hogs, that's all the ??, chickens, but uh, most of it was out in the field. We didn't have, {Car goes by.} we didn't have spray stuff to spray and kill the weeds like we do, uh, they, they do now. We uh, corn fields and all, we went in there with a hoe and sack, chopped[?], weeds out and, sometimes the corn maybe we thought was a little thick, we'd cut some of that out, thin it out. But now, they sow it, they don't uh, {Chuckles} worry about it being thick.

KS: What's uh, what would be the difference in sowin' it 'n, and plantin' it? I, I'm not a farmer, so?

OS: Well, uh, uh, we're talkin' about the distance, uh, of the, of the corn in the row.

KS: Okay.

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

Interview with Oda Shouse, Sr. and Clara Shouse (CT 56)

OS: See? Uh, you, you can look out here at this now. It's looks, you know, real close together. Well, why we didn't do that. We put it, you know, about, at least two foot apart, maybe.

CS: In squares, like.

OS: More than that.

KS: Why would ya, why would you plant it further apart, and what was the idea about that?

OS: Well, uh, we didn't have the fertilizin' stuff that they have, that they have now, and, another thing, we didn't have the money to buy it, if we did, if they'd had it, so we just didn't fertilize. We just, let it grow and make what it did. So, uh, we didn't figure the ground was strong enough to grow it, real thick, so we just, spread it out.

KS: Okay. What about uh, what about young girls growin' up in those days, did you uh, get a chance to, did you have any, any buddies you could play with, or, did uh, were you able to get out much uh, play with friends?

CS: I wasn't able to get very much to play. We usually worked at somethin'.

KS: Uh huh.

CS: And I did, I did ?? {Car goes by.}

OS: Well, I tell you that uh, the, the children in those days, uh, they didn't, they didn't have the time to play that they do now. A lot of, uh, kids, in this day and time, uh, most of parents, uh, a lot of 'em work uh, uh, at uh, public work, and they uh, the kids grow up uh, uh, fifteen, sixteen years old before they even think about work. And after they get that old, why most of 'em are too smart to work,

CS: {Chuckles}

OS: So, {Chuckles} they uh,

CS: We had seven children. I don't know how many grandchildren. {Chuckles} I've lost count of them.

KS: You all had seven children?

CS: Mm hm.

KS: Uh,

OS: Yep.

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

Interview with Oda Shouse, Sr. and Clara Shouse (CT 56)

CS: Four boys and two girls.

OS: They've all, all got uh,

CS: All, all got children.

OS: All the boys got good jobs, {Car goes by.} One of 'em, works at uh, {Car goes by.} full time at church, and uh, I've one that's a school teacher at Kokomo, Indiana. And uh, one that uh, over at Vincennes, Indiana, he uh, he runs a shop uh, ?? {Tractor goes by.} And uh, another one I have that works at ??, so they all got, they all got good jobs.

KS: So you have free hats then?

OS: Huh?

KS: You get free caps that way.

OS: Yeah. {Chuckles}

CS: Yeah. {Chuckles}

OS: Yeah,

CS: ??

OS: He gives me a cap once in a while.

KS: Y'all remember the first time you ever saw a automobile?

CS: {Chuckles} ?? years

OS: Well, yes, uh, the first time I remember one, it was back uh, oh, I guess, 19n18, maybe, uh, '18, yeah, about 19n18. A fella by the name of Elliott had, had an old Model T, back over here, in the country. That's the first one that uh,

CS: You remember.

OS: That I, remember.

CS: I don't remember, 'course that was ?? {Chuckles}

OS: And uh, I guess we had the first Victrola that uh, was in the country, and at that time, your neighbors, why, you never thought about uh, thought nothin' about maybe walkin' a mile to uh, pack ya music with you,

CS: {Chuckles}

OS: And set up, you know, and talk, and uh,

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

Interview with Oda Shouse, Sr. and Clara Shouse (CT 56)

KS: Just take the whole Victrola or just take the music?

OS: Yeah, well, it wasn't, you know, just, just big enough to uh,

CS: That he could carry it.

OS: Uh, oh, I would say maybe it's a eight or ten inch, uh, well, the albums are better than that. It's probably twelve inch, square, and just big enough for a record. But anyway, we'd pack it sometimes, and go over to the neighbor's house, 'n, and set up and, talk and listen to music. {Chuckles}

KS: But did those things, you didn't have electricity, of course, I mean, how'd they?

CS: No, huh unh.

OS: Huh uhn, no.

KS: How'd they run, did you have a crank?

OS: Yeah, they had to crank it, before it'd go on.

KS: Okay. Then I guess when uh, when it slowed down, when the record

OS: Oh, yeah, you,

KS: A little bit, you'd have to crank her again?

OS: You'd crank her up a little bit more.

CS: {Chuckles}

OS: ??

CS: ??

KS: Now uh, what about, what about, uh, illnesses back in uh, oh, I suppose, I guess you would have been awful young for that though, that, there was a big flu epidemic back in, uh,

OS: Yeah,

KS: Fifteen years.

OS: I, I remember 'em talk about it. I don't uh, uh, think to say to goodness[?], that was back in the '20s. Uh, a lot of people, rural[?] people died from it. And uh, whoopin' cough, and, measles, had uh, remember havin' them. And there's, had shots for, uh,

CS: Scarlet fever and all that ??, of course.

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

Interview with Oda Shouse, Sr. and Clara Shouse (CT 56)

OS: Diphther-, diphtheria, I believe, and uh, a few things. Doctors came to the house then, that, we didn't, have to go to hospital, and uh, take shots and things, and, and have x-rays. Didn't know what a x-ray was. And uh, people just didn't get sick like they do now. Wonder sometimes if the people don't uh, just imagine that they're sick. {Chuckles}

CS: {Chuckles} Never know about that.

OS: Sometimes think that I, imagine a whole lot of things, well, {Car goes by.}

KS: How, how did you two meet?

OS: Huh?

KS: How, how did you two meet?

CS: Farmin', raisin' tobacco. {Chuckles}

OS: We uh, moved on the same farm, and uh,

KS: Your families, moved to,

CS: Mm hm.

KS: The same,

OS: Yeah.

CS: Uh huh.

KS: Piece of land?

OS: We did. We just, at that time, I was workin', at fifty cents a day. And uh, those days was about fifteen hour days, I mean, start in

CS: Sun up to sun down.

OS: At sun up, and uh, sometimes, you didn't quit when the sun went down, but uh, you worked a little bit long, so it was, quite a day for fifty cents.

CS: {Coughs}

KS: Now, now when you all were getting to know each other as, as, as young people, how, how did, how did people go on, how did people go about on, go on dates and that kind of thing back in those days, did they?

OS: Well,

KS: I know.

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

Interview with Oda Shouse, Sr. and Clara Shouse (CT 56)

OS: I, I had uh, I had just bought uh, uh, Model A, and ‘course, they was uh, really something back in those days. {Chuckles}

CS: It was new.

OS: So uh, yeah, we had a way to go. It was, ice cream supper, that’s about all we ever.

KS: Where, where did they have them?

OS: Oh, at Thruston down here, at Thruston School, uh, different places, you know, those kind of, it was, remember one over here at ?? a long time. I had taken, Dad had gave me a quarter, and I bought uh, two ice cream cones and, and three boxes of popcorn,

CS: {Chuckles}

OS: For a quarter.

CS: Now you cain’t get nothin’. {Chuckles}

OS: And I had, I had all I wanted. {Chuckles}

KS: Okay. Well now, what was, what was school like, what, let me ask you how old, how old you all were when you started to school, er uh?

OS: Oh, I guess about seven years old.

KS: Okay.

CS: I was about eleven, before I start to school. {Chuckles} My mother was sick. I had to stay home, and ??, take care of the little ones at home.

OS: Yeah, I guess I was about seven years old.

KS: What, what was school like for, in, in those days, or?

OS: Well, ‘course uh, we had one teacher and she taught,

CS: One room school house. {Chuckles}

OS: From first to the eighth grade. She uh, taught ‘em all. Wasn’t too bad, ‘course I didn’t care that much about school. {Chuckles}

CS: I didn’t mind goin’.

KS: {Coughs} Were you the oldest in your family or something, or you?

CS: No, I had,

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

Interview with Oda Shouse, Sr. and Clara Shouse (CT 56)

KS: You mentioned younger ones.

CS: I have two, there's two, three older than me. I have two brothers, two brothers and a sister that were older than me.

OS: But then she had some young ones, too, while she was ??

CS: Yeah, yeah, there was three.

OS: The mother had uh, uh, I forget what you call it, it's, she'd pass out at times, and uh, she had, to stay and, uh, take care of the others, and that was she didn't get to go to school until then.

CS: ?? sometimes, or somethin', ?? Just fell on the streets or anything.

KS: Oh. Uh, do you remember, let's see back, now you would have been uh, you all would have been teenagers in the '20s, I guess uh,

CS: Yeah, yeah.

KS: I guess it was the late '20s.

OS: Yeah,

CS: Just ??

OS: I was, I was eighteen uh, {Car goes by} I was eighteen years old when, when we married, uh, I was, that July, that July the 3rd, I, I was uh, eighteen years old, and we married in December the,

CS: The 21st.

OS: The 21st of that same year. {Car goes by}

CS: And I guess I was twenty one, 'cause.

KS: You all remember much about uh, Prohibition, then, back in the '20s, uh?

OS: Yeah, I remember uh, lot 'o talk about it. Uh, different ones, get caught once in awhile, and I'd ???. A guy up here in Knoxville, I don't remember his name now, but, they said every time they'd put him in jail and turn him loose, he'd go right back and, start makin' 'er again.

KS: Yeah.

OS: And uh, but so far, I mean in knowin' the people and all that uh, I didn't know that much about it, but, but there was a lot of talk.

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

Interview with Oda Shouse, Sr. and Clara Shouse (CT 56)

KS: Did, do you remember the stage coach that used to come from, come through Thruston and to go up to Knoxville?? I, I met with another woman over on,

CS: No, I don't.

KS: On 405 and she was tellin' me about that stage coach there.

OS: Well, uh,

CS: I don't remember one.

OS: What, what was her name, do you remember?

KS: Uh, Abell.

OS: Abell, yeah, uh.

KS: Carrie Abell.

OS: Carrie Abell.

CS: Oh, yes, we knew her real well.

OS: Well, she's, she's a little bit older than, than we are. I don't know how much older.

CS: Yeah, oh, ??, she was born in ??, you know.

OS: Yeah, that's what I say, so she's,

CS: I was born in 1908, 'course she's ?? than me.

OS: Well, but I don't know when she, uh, when Carrie was born.

CS: No, no, I don't know when. No, I don't know when

OS: But the only thing is that she is older than we are.

CS: Yes.

OS: But I never remembered any, stage coach.

CS: No, me neither.

KS: Yeah, that's when she was a child.

OS: Yeah.

KS: Do you remember hearing about that bank robbery up at West Louisville?

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

Interview with Oda Shouse, Sr. and Clara Shouse (CT 56)

OS: Oh, yeah.

KS: Back in '21?

OS: Yeah. Yeah, uh, two bro-, let's see, two brothers and his wife, wudn't it? And,

CS: ??

KS: I'd say that be uh, pretty big deal here.

OS: Uh huh. Yeah, they got away and went down and I believe it was Memphis {Car goes by} uh, uh, Bob ?? which was kin to us, was the Sheriff, at that time, and he went down there and got 'em.

KS: They, they catch 'em soon after it happened, or, did it take 'em awhile?

OS: Well, I don't remember that. I, I know, I remember 'em talkin' about Bob, uh, goin' down and gettin' 'em.

KS: The old uh, one of the machine guns they used in that uh, Sheriff's Department still has it. They, they loaned it to us. It's got one of those big drums on it, you know.

OS: Ah.

KS: That's neat.

CS: {Chuckles}

KS: So you all would have been settin' up housekeeping, I guess, in, in uh, right about the time the Stock Market crashed and all that stuff ?? {Car goes by}

OS: Yeah, yeah, we uh, well, '20, uh '29, that uh, December would be, been uh, about uh '30, you know, started in,

KS: Mm hm.

OS: About '30.

KS: What was that like for ya? That have any affect on you all?

OS: Well, no, just meant, a little more work. I just tellin' some of 'em that we uh, {Car goes by} we, not all of us were ?? at the time that we married and, 'course when we went to get groceries, why, I had to get, buy coffee because I thought that was part of keepin' house.

CS: {Chuckles}

OS: {Chuckles} And uh, so we got started drinkin' coffee.

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

Interview with Oda Shouse, Sr. and Clara Shouse (CT 56)

KS: You guys started drinking coffee just 'cause you thought you were supposed to?

OS: Yeah, I thought that was part of married like.

CS: We didn't growin' up, ???. Oh, me.

KS: Well, what was the, what was the farm economy like then, what was it like for farmers? Was it harder or was it easier on 'em?

OS: Well, yeah it, it was harder on 'em than it is today. Way yonder harder, because I mean, everything was done, the hard way. We uh, uh,

CS: By ???

OS: Well then, 'course uh, when, when I first started out, that's my son-in-law.

KS: Uh huh.

OS: There, Bobby Ber???. Uh, when we first started out, they had uh, knife, you know, we would split the stalk,

KS: Okay.

OS: There, almost to the ground and then cut it off, and, and hang it on, on sticks. But now, they don't, they don't split it, they just, {Car goes by}

CS: Cut it off.

OS: They just cut it off and spike it, you know.

KS: ???

OS: Now it was a whole lot ???. We shuck corn by hand. {Car goes by} About all hand work. And uh, we uh, 'course suckered tobacco, which uh, they never do anymore.

CS: No, they ???

OS: Uh, they, spray it, kill the suckers, but we went in and, suckered each plant.

KS: ???

END TAPE1, SIDE1

TAPE1, SIDE2

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

Interview with Oda Shouse, Sr. and Clara Shouse (CT 56)

OS: welding??, and uh, uh, we burnt sulfur, to uh, melted it to pour in knot holes and, and worm holes that was in the, wagon wheel, the spokes and all. But we put uh, {Car goes by} sometimes this would get a fire, and man, that's an awful fire. And, and yet, we couldn't smoke 'til we got out, on the street. {Chuckles}

KS: So you, you worked for the wagon factory?

OS: Two weeks.

KS: ??

OS: And uh, I said, when I came in I said, "Well," a two weeks vacation, I said, "Well, if I can find a job, I'm not goin' back." First place I walked in, I got a job. And uh, so I can say I worked there two weeks, and during the two weeks, why, they got to talkin' about uh, gettin' a union, and I said I didn't want any part of it. And uh, I just took off and went to Chicago.

KS: Okay, now then, then how long did you stay in Chicago this time?

OS: Uh, well, I don't uh, I don't remember. All together it was about twelve years. It's uh, from the time we went up there, 'course, like I say, I come back here two weeks, but then, I went back, so I mean, you couldn't, couldn't really count that, at all.

KS: Did you all move your whole family each time you did that uh, or, or you?

OS: Uh, well, yeah, uh, they would uh, they would usually, follow us, why, I mean, where we went, why, kids went, too.

CS: Where we ??

OS: But uh, our two youngest ones were born in Chicago. Boy that works at Modern[?], uh, he was born in Chicago, {Car goes by} and so was my youngest daughter that lives in Louisville, uh, she was uh, uh,

CS: ??

KS: Do you all remember uh, when radio came around? Do you remember hearing your first radio?

OS: Yes. I don't remember when it was, but uh, I thought it was a wonderful thing at the time.

KS: Were you, were you married yet?

OS: I, ??

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

Interview with Oda Shouse, Sr. and Clara Shouse (CT 56)

KS: The reason I ask that back in the '30s when uh, WOMI came on the air. The first there's a radio station around this area.

OS: Yeah, well, I remember when, when they put uh, uh, WOMI on. ?? in the country at the time, and now, uh {Chuckles}

CS: ?? {Chuckles} Now it's ??

OS: Now ?? country.

KS: People pretty excited about that, when it opened up?

OS: Well, I think they were. I think they was, pretty, pretty excited.

KS: What was, what was the radio station like then, uh, was it much different than it is now, or?

OS: Well, I say there's a lot more real thing uh, then, than there is now. There's too much junk. It's like uh, we talked about uh, the news. I get so aggravated tryin' to listen. It's all that I ever look, uh look at on, on television is uh, the news, and there's so much advertisement on there, why, I get

CS: ??

OS: I hate it every time I try to listen to the news. {Car goes by} Too much advertisement, and uh, when they, when they think that, when they tell you they've given you somethin', it's a big mistake, because you payin' for that advertisement, and uh, I know too much about it, and I, they want uh, they want to tell ye about, with all this sticker price on these cars, uh, they give ye below sticker price and this and that. Well, that sticker is already been set up, uh, so that uh, they, they, they got room to come down. See, I mean, they not givin' you a thing. They just, they just bringin' it down to where it ought to be, and uh, oh, it's just a big joke. I's talkin' to uh, a guy, at the drug store, and he's talkin' about these uh, genetic drugs, or whatever, uh, he was showin' me some that was, that was uh, the very same thing that uh, that, that ones was advertised, and I could buy them at half price. And I, I, I was, I was kiddin' him about uh, advertisement. He said, uh, that if they had to pay for the advertisements, he'd be broke. And uh, I knew it all the time. I mean uh, when they, they tell ya they've givin' you something. It's real easy to mark somethin' up, you know, and then cross it out, and uh, and make it appear that, that they've given you a cut.

KS: Well, how'd, how'd people do it when you were, when you were younger? What ??, what's different about it?

OS: There wudn't no, there wudn't no advertisements. I never heard of there being any kind of a thing like this.

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

Interview with Oda Shouse, Sr. and Clara Shouse (CT 56)

CS: We didn't have much to get, ??

OS: Well, all they had was newspaper.

CS: Mm.

OS: And uh, they didn't put a lot, in that that I know of ??

CS: Mm hm.

OS: You wanted somethin', you went to the store and bought it. That's the way I do now. I'm a whole lot, more apt to buy somethin' that wasn't advertised,

CS: {Chuckles}

OS: Than I would somethin' that was advertised. {Car goes by} Because people, people have to throw such a fit, that some of them do, to advertise, uh, there must be somethin' wrong, or they didn't have to do it. Don't you think, that if somethin' was good enough that it would advertise itself, but uh, you wouldn't have to go to all the trouble advertisin'?

KS: There's a lot of things that you don't see ads about.

CS: Mm.

OS: But I, I, I, I, I just, I don't uh, {Coughs} I don't get it myself.

KS: But they, just, did people have like uh, when you bought your first, you were talkin' about your Model A that did uh?

OS: I think I give fifteen hundred dollars for it. And it was,

CS: ??

KS: Did people run, did they run ads for cars back then or how'd you , how'd you pick that one?

OS: No, I just was in town, and uh, I knew where the, the, the place was at was on the corner of, of uh, of uh, Third and, and Elizabeth, uh,

CS: Street.

OS: Street there. I went there and uh, bought. Never, heard a lot of advertisement. Least, I didn't.

KS: Did you, did ya test drive different ones, or did ya?

OS: Huh unh.

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

Interview with Oda Shouse, Sr. and Clara Shouse (CT 56)

KS: You just walked in and wanted that one?

OS: Uh, I signed ??

CS: You could ?? it and took it.

OS: That's the one I wanted. That's the one I wanted.

KS: Bet that's pretty exciting, get your first uh,

OS: Yeah.

KS: Your first car there.

OS: Well, uh, I had uh, 'course, had Model Ts, and, and uh, lot of junkers like that, but that was the first, that was my first new one, and, ever bought, and I was kind of proud of it.

CS: Mm hm. We had lots of ones that ?? old ones.

KS: Well you, you said you got that what when you were uh, about eighteen, too, you were pretty young to have a new car?

OS: Yeah. Yeah, I was eighteen years old.

KS: Uh huh, how did uh?

OS: Oh, well, the fact of the things is I got it uh, before we ever married.

KS: Did you uh, make all that money farming? Did you save it?

OS: Well, I didn't pay it all. {Chuckles} I mean, I just paid a down payment. That's, that's what you have to do now.

CS: ??

OS: You know. Uh, uh, these, these high prices that they, way they've got 'em now, well, if you didn't, uh, if you wudn't a millionaire, you'd have to make payments.

KS: What was it like, what were the roads like out, out in your ??

OS: Dirt. Thank goodness,

CS: Just dirt around here.

OS: This, this, low place right in here wasn't, was it, at that time? And uh, all

CS: You got ?? {Chuckles}

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

Interview with Oda Shouse, Sr. and Clara Shouse (CT 56)

OS: All, dirt roads, uh, my first reclection, that uh, Owensboro was gravel, down to, the city limits, that is down to, uh, Light and Water Plant.

KS: On Fourth Street there?

OS: Yeah. Yes, it was gravel all the way down there.

KS: And then you had to drive the rest of the way, all the way back out here on dirt?

OS: Well, they was gravel up to uh, about over to ?? bridge, and the rest of it, 'course, all out here, everywhere else, was, dirt, ??, whatever. ?? {Chuckles}

CS: Most of the time it was mud, wudn't it?

KS: It was a little tough gettin' around when it rained?

OS: No. ??

KS: Had one man

OS: You didn't do a lot of drivin' out when it would be rainin', muddy, unless you just had to go. They would, put chains on, scrape the mud.

KS: Chains. I had one man tell me that the road, one of the roads he used to live on was uh, got ruts in it, he couldn't, you just,

OS: Oh, yeah.

KS: You'd go to sleep drivin' on it, and it could steer itself.

OS: Well, yeah, it cut, it cut down, and uh, uh, lot of times that you would meet somebody, that you couldn't hardly get out of the ruts, to uh, to let them pass {Car goes by}

KS: Got a little spooky then, I guess?

OS: {Chuckles} Yes.

KS: Somethin' gotta give. What were kind of the, what, what, what was important to somebody that was uh, when, when you all were starting out, your, your, your family, what, what was, what was something that was real important to ya, that, that ya, what was one of the most important things for a young couple startin' out in those days?

OS: Well, I don't

KS: I know it's kind of hard to pin down, but?

CS: Mm hm.

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

Interview with Oda Shouse, Sr. and Clara Shouse (CT 56)

OS: Yeah.

KS: These days, you know, people have different concerns than they might in those days, uh.

OS: Well, all we thought about was, makin' a livin' 'n

CS: Farming.

OS: Uh, raisin' family. 'Course, we didn't start our family, quick as we got married. We, I think about, four or five years, six before we ever, started a family.

KS: Where, where did you, now, you talkin' about, talkin' about farmin', too, and, where'd you take your, your uh, your, what'd you, what'd you raise and where'd you take it?

OS: Well, all we ever raised was corn and tobacco. Take the tobacco, well, tobacco and corn both at Owensboro. And uh, they never uh, back then, why, you'd take it, the, the, cob and all, you know, and they shell it, uh, at the mill.

?: ?? a letter.

OS: They don't do that no more, uh, they uh, it's either shelled or they don't buy it.

KS: How'd you get it there, uh?

OS: Wagon.

KS: First startin' out?

OS: Wagon 'n team. ??

KS: A team of, a team of horses?

OS: Yeah.

CS: Mm hm.

OS: Yeah.

CS: Load it up so high, scared to ride on the top. {Chuckles}

KS: I, well, I guess that it probably took a while to get to Owensboro, didn't it?

CS: Yeah.

OS: Yeah, a ?? time.

CS: Took a little time. I know I was pretty near froze, sittin', {Chuckles} cold.

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

Interview with Oda Shouse, Sr. and Clara Shouse (CT 56)

OS: Uh, we went,

CS: The ??, you know ??

OS: We went with you Daddy, you know, went with him?

CS: Not with me, no. It was with my Daddy, no. All he done, raise tobacco ?? Farm. Yours too, wudn't it?

OS: Well, he raised uh, corn, tobacco.

CS: Well, ?? corn 'n tobacco ?? Raised our own gardens, ??

KS: Yeah, I've heard some people say that during the Depression, the farmers, at least uh, they had, they had food. They didn't have to worry about that.

OS: Well yeah, we, we never worried. I, I don't ever remember uh, of, of ever missin' a meal, that I know anything about.

CS: Always had somethin'. Might not have been very much ?? {Chuckles}

KS: Yeah, a guy told me that, said, that it might not have been what you wanted,

CS: Yeah.

KS: But uh,

OS: Well, uh, the Lord, you know, said he would supply our needs. He never said nothin' about our wants.

CS: {Chuckles}

OS: But he did say that he would supply our needs, and he's always supplied ours.

CS: Yes, he has. Never wanted ?? Food, clothes, or anything.

KS: Were there any uh, any big events that happened around here that, that uh?

OS: Nothing.

KS: That affected people much?

OS: Nothing that I know of.

KS: What, what kinds of things got people excited in those days?

CS: {Chuckles}

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

Interview with Oda Shouse, Sr. and Clara Shouse (CT 56)

OS: There wudn't nothing to, that excited 'em. They used to have a fair in Owensboro once in a while, they'd,

CS: There was ball games.

OS: They'd go to that, or a ball game. They, used to have one over here where it was Carrie[?] Bogle[?] you's talkin' about, they had uh, uh, a ball field there, and every time they had uh they had a ball game, they'd have fights, so they,

CS: They quit that.

OS: They quit that.

KS: That was at Thruston?

OS: Yeah.

CS: Mm hm.

OS: So I ???. I never was uh, a sportsman, uh, anyway. I mean, I never, the only sports that I ever cared about at all, was either coon huntin' or rabbit and bird huntin'. And I did that up until I got to where I, got too lazy to walk, I guess. {All chuckle}

CS: Too lazy to get out, huh?

KS: Did uh, well, was, was coon huntin', did they do it the same way they do it these days, or, with a dog?

OS: Yeah.

KS: Yeah?

OS: We had, 'course, a coon dog, and, but uh.

CS: We had one, didn't you or your dad or someone. Coon dog.

OS: Yeah, the dog that this guy killed over here, we had uh, uh, did you remember it, uh?

CS: No.

OS: Uh, a fella used to go by our house, uh, and he kept hittin' it. An old man that walked with a cane, hit it. The dog would run out. He wouldn't bite nobody, but he kept hittin' that dog, 'til the dog did bite. And uh, somebody killed 'em, and I, I, I, I feel like I knew who did it, but, you can't prove something, why, but uh, we've had some good coon dogs.

KS: What about uh, you remember gettin' electricity?

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

Interview with Oda Shouse, Sr. and Clara Shouse (CT 56)

OS: Electricity?

KS: Or were, were you up in Chicago then? When that all started ??

OS: Yeah, uh, no, they, they had already got uh, uh, electricity here before I went to Chicago. It uh, I remember, I can't think the year it was, but I helped uh, clean off a right-of-way for electric at, at West Louisville. Uh, they cut the right-of-way, {Car goes by} when they, see, the creek bottom there, goin' into West Louisville, and I, I was uh, I helped 'em uh, on that, and I don't remember what year it was.

KS: ?? about the mid-30s or somethin' like that, the '30s.

CS: ?? I remember it was ?? from room to the other.

KS: Carryin' a lantern?

OS: Well,

CS: Lamps.

OS: No, now uh, what you talkin' about is all together different. We lived in one place, one uh, one summer. Well uh, we moved there from Chicago and, and stayed one year, stayed two years, I guess, and, and then we went back. Uh, but, the place we moved when we came back here, had electric, and then, the place we moved, {Car goes by} ?? so uh, we had lamps, get some lamps and uh, uh, they were so dim, you know, uh, besides electric, you ??

CS: You couldn't see nothing with the lamps, oil.

OS: ?? from one room to the other.

KS: Oil lamps?

OS: Yeah.

CS: Yeah, oil lamps.

KS: Yeah, I guess you all would have been here then when they, when they first started hookin' houses up, ??

OS: Yeah.

KS: Had to, had to wire their houses, I guess, uh?

OS: Oh yeah. Yeah, that. It's a lot of, a lot of wiring done, back that I, I can first remember, and ??

KS: About uh, telephones?

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

Interview with Oda Shouse, Sr. and Clara Shouse (CT 56)

OS: Telephones are very scarce. Uh, in fact hope to goodness that I don't remember, where the first telephone was at. That's, that's one thing that I, I lost track of, is where I remember, that, I remember there was a crank, and you'd uh, say you'd, crank two longs and a short there, two shorts and a long.

CS: Ring.

OS: You know,

CS: Ring.

OS: And uh, uh, well, I was a pretty small kid when telephones, was gettin' up through here.

KS: Did your folks have a phone?

OS: My, my, my folks never had no telephone.

CS: Mine didn't either.

OS: Never knowed what it was. When I first,

KS: Well,

OS: Put this one in here, the, the regular bill that, it was just the monthly rate, I think was two dollars and a half. And that, that's uh, private line. And today I think it's, up around, thirty dollars, at least, somethin' ??

CS: That's a change. {Chuckles}

KS: When, when'd you put that in, ??

OS: It's been uh, oh, about twenty-five years, I guess.

KS: Yeah, you're lucky probably even to have a private line.

OS: Well, yeah, they, they told me at the first that I couldn't get a private line.

KS: Uh huh.

OS: And I told 'em, if I couldn't, I didn't want any one. And they said, well, uh, that they would uh, put me on one, so I, I could get one.

KS: Back in the, back in the '20s, now the uh, the Klu Klux Klan, kinda sprung up in a lot of places.

OS: Yeah, this uh, in 19n-, either '26 or '27, one of these hills here that we call knobs,

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

Interview with Oda Shouse, Sr. and Clara Shouse (CT 56)

KS: Mm hm.

OS: Just uh, right, right to the other side of that house up here, uh, they was a cross, burnt, on that hill. It was either in '26 or '27. I don't remember.

CS: ?? I remember seeing it.

OS: I don't remember, which year, but it was one, one or the other. And then uh, Klu Klux, we were at the camp, ground, up here at the camp meeting one night, and they uh,

KS: Up, up here, up the road?

OS: Yeah.

CS: Yeah, up the road.

OS: And they uh, whole bunch of 'em come up there and marched around, you know, and stood outside. They didn't bother anybody, but uh,

CS: Just, just marched around, and,

KS: They wearin' the hoods over their heads and all that?

CS: Yeah.

OS: Yeah.

CS: Mm hm. Yeah.

KS: Do, do you know why they burned a cross up there, or did, anyone hear why?

OS: Don't, don't have any idea. Never did hear why. But,

CS: Never knew who done it.

OS: We lived, just over the hill, and not too far from it, when they burnt it.

KS: What'd people, what'd people think about that?

CS: Well, they ?? {Chuckles}

OS: They didn't do too much talkin' about it that I ever heard. 'Course, like I say, at that time, I was a kid, and they wudn't talked to me about it anyway. But uh, I know I was pretty excited when I seen

CS: ??

KS: Ex-, excited good or excited bad, I mean?

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

Interview with Oda Shouse, Sr. and Clara Shouse (CT 56)

OS: Well, uh, kinda scared, {Car goes by} you know, not knowin' what's goin' on.

CS: ??

OS: But uh, that's the first, in this country that I know'd anything about. I, I never heard any about it, and then when they, when they, put 'er up and set fire to it, why, kind of a scary lookin', deal.

KS: And I heard that they were after the Catholics around this part of the country. They

OS: Well,

KS: Weren't a lot of black people, but uh,

OS: Could have been. Yeah, I, I don't uh, uh, think the ???. I never uh, uh, never heard anybody really say what uh, what they were doin'. 'Course they tell me that they were uh, they were Communists, uh, I don't even know that. I mean, I don't know, you know,

CS: For sure.

KS: There was another group we've heard about from some other counties. They call 'em the Possum Hunters, and, and different things. They were, they had to do with uh, with farmers. I, I'm not quite sure how they worked, but uh,

OS: Well, I tell you what, I believe that was, that was uh, I, I don't know have, I mean, I'm not sayin' that this could be right, but I think what, what was happening was uh, farmers at one time, joined the unions. And uh, uh, I believe that it was something about that, but I uh, like I say, I was, a kid and, and uh, {Car goes by}

KS: ?? Yeah, I, I believe you're about right. It's somethin' to do with that. If you didn't join 'em, they'd scrape your plant bed or?

OS: Yeah, uh, {Car goes by} And then uh, none of 'em, none of 'em stuck to it after they uh, after they did, you know,

KS: Mm hm.

OS: That they was uh, they was allowed, I think, to sell so much, and then they was uh, there was pin hookers, that would uh, that would buy what you had left, you know, and uh, so it, it uh, the, the union didn't work out for 'em. But I think that was, that was, part of what it was?

KS: You remember, remember uh, what they call 'em, uh, community, community club?

OS: Community clubs? Well, I've heard the name, but so far as knowin' what it was,

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

Interview with Oda Shouse, Sr. and Clara Shouse (CT 56)

KS: It was meetings that they used to have at ?? and places out in the country. ?? Here when uh, when they built Ken-Rad, opened that up? Turned into GE.

OS: Yeah, yeah, I remember when it was uh, {Car goes by} I remember when it was, was Ken-Rad, yeah. And, they finally, as you said, turned it into GE, and then they built another one, too, out uh, uh, well off of uh, 54 out there, I guess, there. But they, all of that's gone haywire, hadn't it? Then,

KS: Mm.

OS: The guy that owns this farm right here, and that house up yonder, well, he was uh, he was a kind of uh, a big shot in it, and uh, he uh, when they closed down, why he, he rented his farm out, and I think went to Texas. I believe that's where they went, {Car goes by} but uh, he said after he uh, retired, well then he was comin' back to the farm, but that he was gonna rent it out until, he retired. Uh, he, they, they used to send him overseas, different places, you know, and, and uh, he was, {Car goes by} I guess, pretty well, up in the business, and uh, that's how come him to uh, to farm down there. {Clears throat}

KS: Well. I guess that about take care of me, but I, {Car goes by} can you think of anything from uh, from those early years that I haven't asked you about that uh, you, you remember, stuck with you, or?

OS: No. Uh, I don't think so. Think that about, wraps it up. Lot of this stuff after you get old, may be you, uh, you don't know it yet, but a lot of this stuff you forget, after you get,

KS: Well, I do that now. {Car goes by}

OS: {Chuckles} But uh, you, you, you know, you know somebody and you want to call their name, and you can't,

CS: Think it to save yourself.

OS: And then after you go off and forget about it, then it'll come to ya.

KS: Mm hm.

OS: That's, pretty aggravatin'.

KS: I do that. Well, you know, one thing I, I didn't ask you about was uh, you mentioned fertilizer and how you didn't have it, and, and, and do you remember what, what it was like when you first started using it?

OS: Well, yes, I remember, uh, 'course they just use it, to my knowledge, in, in tobacco. And at that time, they crossed tobacco off, you know, the ??.

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

Interview with Oda Shouse, Sr. and Clara Shouse (CT 56)

CS: ?? square.

OS: About three foot square, and then, then they'd made hills, and they'd take uh, at that time, it'd come in hundred pound bags, and uh, they would uh, uh, just take a pinch, and drop it in,

CS: Take a bucket.

OS: You'd take a bucket and, and uh, {Clears throat} get you a bucket full of it, and walk down the row. When you'd come to those squares, you uh, you dropped, just, they said don't drop more than, than just, what you can hold in three fingers, 'cause it would burn it up. It was, strong.

KS: Mm hm.

OS: But uh, uh,

CS: Oh, we made lots of hills in our time. {Chuckles}

OS: But the deal was that uh, I don't think it was that bad. They uh, they was just a little tight with it, and, {Chuckles} and just startin' out, too, you know, they didn't really know what it was, but now, uh, we used to, when I farmed, why, we scattered, scattered it on the ground, you know? And uh, uh,

KS: How'd you hear about it, the first time?

OS: Well, that was durin' my Daddy's time,

CS: Mm hm.

OS: When it started out,

CS: {Chuckles}

OS: And I didn't uh,

KS: Okay.

OS: Uh, I just remember him getting' it in. It was, I don't know, uh, either hundred or hundred 'n twenty pound, pound bags, but I know it, these uh grass sacks. I remember them mighty well, and that's, that's what they came in. I believe the first, uh, name that I remembered of it was Fox, Knox, I think it was ?? Fertilizer, and uh, but uh, that was back, uh, around 19n18, 'n '19. Uh huh.

KS: Okay, what, did, did y'all have a tractor, uh ??

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

Interview with Oda Shouse, Sr. and Clara Shouse (CT 56)

OS: Nothing, nothing but teams.

KS: What was it like when they uh, usin' a team ??

OS: Well, my Daddy, uh, 'course, never did own a tractor, uh, uh, it was all team work. I mean, you'd go out there, work 'em, sun up 'til sun down.

END TAPE1, SIDE2