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Interview with Darvin Waggoner interviewed by Jean Strader

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February 27, 2009

Interviewees
Darvin Waggoner
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3501 Dirr
Parsons, KS 67357

Interviewer
Jean Strader
311 South 17th
Parsons, KS 67357

Charlotte Waggoner
Presbyterian Manor
3501 Dirr
Parsons, KS 67357

Strader: My name is Jean Strader, and I'm here interviewing Mr. and Mrs. Waggoner. So, Mr. Waggoner, would you state your name for the recording?

Darvin: Would I what?

Strader: Would you please say your name for the recording.

Darvin: Oh. Darvin Waggoner.

Strader: OK. And could you spell that, please?

Darvin: Would I what?

Strader: Would you spell that, please?

Darvin: Oh. (spelling out loud) D-a-r-v-i-n W-a-g-g-o-n-e-r.

Strader: And Mrs. Waggoner, what is your name?

Charlotte: Charlotte.

Strader: And would you spell your first name for the recording.

Charlotte: (spelling out loud) C-h-a-r-l-o-t-t-e.

Strader: OK. All right. So, Mr. Waggoner, where and when were you born?

Darvin: Well, the county seat was—I had it on my mind just a second ago—I was born at Lacey. And the county seat was—what was it going to be down there—it's in northeast....

Charlotte: Garfield County?

Darvin: No, no. Huh uh.

Charlotte: I don't know, then. Hennessey.

Darvin: Yeah.

Charlotte: Close to Hennessey.

Darvin: That's where it was.

Strader: In Oklahoma?

Darvin: That's the county seat. I was born close to Lacey, a little town.

Strader: And that's in Oklahoma?

Darvin: Down in Oklahoma.

Strader: OK. All right. And what year were you born?

Darvin: 1918. Ain't that right?

Charlotte: Uh huh.

Darvin: Been so long ago, I about forgot.

Strader: OK. And Charlotte, where and when were you born?

Charlotte: 1920, Argonia, Kansas.

Strader: And who were your parents, Mr. Waggoner?

Darvin: That would be...

Charlotte: A.G.

Darvin: Yeah. It would be A.G. or Alva.

Charlotte: A.G. what?

Darvin: It would be A.G. or Alva (spelling out loud) A-l-v-a.

Strader: And how many were in your family?

Charlotte: Four.

Darvin: Yeah. No. Yeah, that's right. I'm kind of getting mixed up. That's, our family was born in. I was tending to think about our other kids. And that's not right.

Strader: So you were one of four kids?

Darvin: Uh huh.

Strader: And how about you, Charlotte?

Charlotte: There's three in mine.

Strader: And who were your parents? What were their names?

Charlotte: Ed and Vinetta Snodgrass.

Strader: So, how long did you live down in Oklahoma, Mr. Waggoner?

Darvin: Till we got married, and then some. Let's see.... Do you have any idea how long we lived down there before we come up here?

Charlotte: We came up here.... We came up here to Thayer, and then we went back. And then we moved back up.

Darvin: It's been a mess of times.

Strader: But when you were growing up in the 1930s, you were living in Oklahoma then at that time? Both of you were?

Darvin: Uh huh. We both graduated at the same school—Ames, Oklahoma.

Strader: What was the name?

Darvin: Ames. (spelling out loud) A-m-e-s.

Charlotte: You didn't.

Darvin: That's right. I've got carried away.

Charlotte: We lived in the same vicinity. He was Oppanon (?) grade school, then went to Ames high school until his senior year. And then his folks moved to Waukomis. He graduated Waukomis.

Strader: Did your parents own their land, or did they rent?

Darvin: At that time they were renting. But my folks finally, they finally got bought.

Charlotte: They bought in Waukomis. First one.

Darvin: I was a senior in high school. That's the only one year I... I only went one year at Waukomis. And graduated.

Strader: How big of a farm?

Darvin: 160 acres.

Strader: How about you, Charlotte?

Darvin: It was 160, or pretty close to it.

Charlotte: Well, I... My folks lived on my grandfather's farm. 160. But they didn't own it, until they inherited it.

Strader: So what kind of crops did your family grow?

Darvin: Mine, when I was just a kid, I grew up in a cotton field. You aren't going to find many people around done that. And her folks, the first I knew her, they was raising wheat.

Charlotte: Two years difference in us. It was all wheat until they started diversifying, I guess.

Strader: Tell me a little about the cotton.

Darvin: My folks didn't raise all cotton neither. Then they raised row crops—corn and stuff like that, with horses. We farmed horses, with horses.

Strader: Did they take the crops to market?

Darvin: Yeah. The cotton would be.... I can remember getting on the wagon and riding on top. And they'd take me up to Hennessey, Oklahoma.

Strader: Did people come in and help pick it, or what did they do?

Darvin: No, we.... Well, I picked cotton other places, and I think a time or two we had some help. Most of it we done ourselves.

Strader: Do you remember what price you got for cotton?

Darvin: I couldn't tell you. I have no idea. All I can do is remember riding the wagon, a load of cotton on it, you know, to Hennessey with it.

Charlotte: You didn't last very long.

Darvin: No.

Strader: What didn't last very long?

Charlotte: Raising cotton.

Strader: Oh, really? How come?

Charlotte: Done went to wheat. Too far north, I guess. Reckon?

Darvin: Possibly. I think times.... It was just time to change everywhere. See, you hardly ever saw a tractor. I can remember seeing one or two when I was a kid.

Strader: But your parents didn't own a tractor.

Charlotte: That didn't last that long.

Darvin: No. That's what I'm talking about when I was real young. When I got growed up it was different.

Strader: How many horse teams did your family have?

Darvin: How many what?

Strader: Teams of horses.

Darvin: Probably two. About four. I think we got about four work horses, and then I had a pony to ride. Then I'd herd the cattle and go get them and the like.

Strader: So you had livestock, too?

Darvin: Oh, yes. Milk cows.

Strader: Did you have any hogs or poultry?

Darvin: Oh, yes. Yeah. We had all that. It wasn't no (inaudible). It wasn't no big deal. It was mostly chickens for us for the, to eat, and the eggs and stuff like that. And we would.... I can remember folks selling eggs, too. But most of it we'd take in to a grocery store and trade it in for groceries. I think. I think that would be telling the truth on it.

Strader: How about you, Charlotte? Did your family have livestock?

Charlotte: Yeah. My dad was a farmer, trucker. He hauled cattle to and from the sales.

Darvin: Well, horses were pretty popular there, back in them.... It used to be they (inaudible) time bring a carriage around (inaudible) or two. I can remember him doing that.

Strader: How far did you have to go, to take to the sale?

Charlotte: To the sale?

Strader: Yeah.

Charlotte: Probably to Hennessey or Enid--about 20-25 mile.

Darvin: But we were—I don't know how many miles it was—but we would have been closer to Hennessey than she was.

Strader: So did you process your own food?

Charlotte: Yes. We did all the canning and all the.... We had an orchard. We had fruit and veggies and everything that went with it.

Darvin: Yeah. When I was a kid we'd peddle it out and go to the grocery store, well, not the grocery store but the people in the town. Peddle watermelons and apples and stuff like that.

Strader: How about your meat? Did you butcher your own meat?

Darvin: Most generally.

Charlotte: Yes.

Darvin: Now in the summertime that wasn't right, but in the wintertime it was.

Charlotte: You ate the meat in the summer, same as the winter.

Darvin: Well, it had to be canned.

Charlotte: Had chickens.

Darvin: It had to be canned. Well, chickens, yeah.

Charlotte: Fried.

Darvin: Mostly chickens, but beef and stuff like that, that was just the wintertime.

Strader: Was when they butchered, you mean, in the wintertime?

Darvin: Yeah.

Charlotte: Well, my mom cooked the meat and....

Darvin: Canned it?

Charlotte: Well, she did beef.

Darvin: That's what I mean.

Charlotte: We canned beef. And all you got to do is open the jar and you got your gravy and your meat, but.... I had something else I wanted....

Darvin: I don't remember my mother ever having.... We had beef, but I don't remember ever having gravy in it. Mother would make gravy after we opened the can up.

Charlotte: Well, I know mine did.

Darvin: I haven't never heard that about beef.

Strader: How about hogs? Did you butcher any hogs?

Darvin: Oh, yes. We had hogs.

Charlotte: Fried the meat down and poured lard over it, and we had it right there at the house. That's the way you kept it—you fried it.

Darvin: Yeah. We would always butcher, always in the wintertime.

Strader: And did you have a smokehouse?

Charlotte: We did.

Darvin: A what?

Strader: Smokehouse.

Charlotte: Smokehouse.

Darvin: No, we didn't have one.

Charlotte: We didn't smoke our meat.

Strader: Did you ever have to help with the butchering?

Darvin: No, I wasn't ever any good at butchering.

Strader: So mostly your dad did that?

Darvin: Yeah. Dad was a.... He did. He was good at it. Well, him and the neighbors would get together and do it.

Strader: Did you eat very much wild game?

Charlotte: What?

Strader: Wild game?

Darvin: Well, rabbits and squirrels. Yeah, I hunted squirrels and rabbits and stuff.

Charlotte: My grandfather had, was a hunter. And he killed ducks and geese and....

Darvin: Yeah, he was pretty famous for that.

Charlotte: But that's all the wild stuff we got 'cause Dad wasn't a hunter.

Darvin: But they got me a little rifle, and I'd go out and shoot the squirrels and the rabbits and stuff. And Dad would butcher them and Mom would cook them.

Strader: What kind of rifle was it? Do you remember what kind of rifle it was?

Darvin: I should, but I don't. It was just a little old single shot. I suppose it's one they probably got from Wards or Sears or something, I don't know. It was just a little.... Just put one bullet in and shoot it, then you'd have to put another bullet in it. Single shot.

Strader: How about trapping? Did you trap any?

Darvin: Did you what?

Charlotte: Trap.

Darvin: Very little. Very little trapping we've ever done. I can remember my dad doing a little trapping. But he wasn't trapping for rabbits or anything like that. It was to get rid of...

Charlotte: Skunks.

Darvin: Yeah, mainly skunks.

Charlotte: Didn't eat them.

Darvin: No, you didn't eat them.

Charlotte: I guess some people ate the possums.

Darvin: Well, I've heard of them eating....

Charlotte: They still do that. I mean, these exotic whatever.

Darvin: Well, I don't know what they do any more.

Strader: OK. Now I'm going to be asking you some questions about some different New Deal agencies. As you probably know, FDR, when he first came into office, in his 100 days, he implemented a bunch of programs. And they were called the New Deal. And one of these is what's called the Agricultural Adjustment Administration. And this organization paid farmers subsidies to underproduce or not produce at all in order to prevent oversupply. So, do you have any memories of that?

Darvin: I can remember a little of it happening, but I can't remember us ever cooperating in it. Now, maybe Dad did, but if he did I was very small.

Strader: Do you remember him talking about it? Do you remember if he said that it was a good thing or a bad thing?

Darvin: No. I don't remember anything about it.

Charlotte: They was (inaudible) organizations, wasn't there?

Strader: Uh huh. Yeah. The next one is the Federal Insurance Deposit Corporation, the FDIC. And this was created after the bank failures happened. And this was to guarantee deposits, when people would put money in the bank, it guaranteed deposits. And we still have this today. But this was one of the New Deal organizations. Do you have any memories of when that was first started?

Charlotte: I know my folks put money in the bank, but other than that I don't.

Darvin: I don't remember anything about it. Probably wasn't old enough to know or something, I don't know.

Strader: Do you remember your parents talking about anyone who had lost money in a bank failure or anything?

Darvin: No. I don't think....

Charlotte: We weren't that, we weren't that...

Darvin: Rich.

Charlotte: ...uptown stuff.

Strader: OK. The Public Works Administration. Public Works Administration was the agency that built a lot of, like, dams and parks, things like that. It employed people, so people could work.

Darvin: I can remember some of that, but we never did participate in it.

Strader: Do you remember any big projects around your farm that went in—big dams or anything that were created....

Charlotte: No. We was on the flat lands.

Darvin: It was really, it was sandy land.

Strader: Did you have to irrigate?

Darvin: Oh, no. There wasn't no irrigation.

Charlotte: We had plenty of water.

Strader: Well, were you anywhere near the dust storms?

Charlotte: Yes.

Strader: Oh, really. Well, tell me about that.

Charlotte: There's not much to tell about that. You could see this dust a comin' from the north, or from the west...

Darvin: Mostly from the west.

Charlotte: And, when we was in school and by the time we got home, why it was hit, you know. We was in the dust storm.

Darvin: It was coming in. It wasn't being cooperated there.

Charlotte: And in some places your sandy ground is looser than in other parts. And if it gets to blowing, it got as high as the fence post.

Darvin: Now, I never seen none of that where I was at.

Charlotte: Well, we did.

Darvin: They did on out west.

Charlotte: And we had a family that had a pair of twins in this dust, while it was dusting, all this dust. They had to hang gunny sacks and stuff up at the windows to keep the dust out of the house. We didn't have a refrigerator so we had to have the windows open, so, that's the way they kept the dust out.

Darvin: Well, I don't remember us ever having to do that at our place.

Charlotte: Well, you lived north.

Darvin: Well, we still had the sand.

Charlotte: That's not sand at Waukomis.

Darvin: Huh uh.

Charlotte: No, it's not.

Strader: Do you remember ever losing any livestock or anything like that in a dust storm?

Darvin: No.

Strader: Or anybody....

Charlotte: Not anything.

Darvin: No. It wasn't that bad where we were at. It was what she's talking about was coming in from the west from Kansas, mainly north... western Oklahoma.

Charlotte: It was west of us.

Darvin: Colorado, maybe. I better check it.

Charlotte: Coming in from the south. South winds.

Darvin: Now, if you didn't farm right, that sand would blow east of you.

Strader: Oh, really?

Darvin: Oh, yeah.

Strader: How so?

Darvin: Well, it's just little old sand.

Charlotte: It was sand.

Darvin: Regular sand. And you had to farm it special ways.

Strader: What kind of a special way?

Darvin: Oh, for a row crop, it would be a lister. Just list the crop in.

Strader: What did you say?

Darvin: Use a lister. It would make a ridge out. And you had your crop, and then, when you would, like you was raising corn, you had an old sled that would pull the stuff back in. And then we'd go over it a time or two in the summertime, bringing it back in. I rode that little old sled a lot of times. You probably never saw one, but it had three kind of disc-like things on it that would, on each side, and you would list it. You didn't do much plowing. You listed mostly. And then you'd just bring that back in gradually, took it, brought it back down. To me that's the way you'd farm it—corn and crops like that.

Strader: What about your cotton? How did you farm that?

Charlotte: He wasn't big enough to farm.

Darvin: Well, I can remember. It was planted on top, just on, work the ground and plant it. Now I can remember...

Charlotte: Did you plant it in rows?

Darvin: I can remember it being in small lister rows, kind of. It would have been kind of worked in. But I was pretty young when that was happening. 'Cause it wasn't too long.

Charlotte: It wasn't a big crop at that time where we lived.

Darvin: Well, I don't think that her folks, I don't think they ever raised cotton.

Charlotte: Well, when we moved in there, there was cotton pickers.

Darvin: Oh there was? Well, there probably was.

Charlotte: I can remember that.

Darvin: Yeah. I can remember raising cotton across the road or something, once in a time.

Strader: At harvesting time, did threshing crews come around and harvest for you?

Charlotte: No, we did our own threshing. We raised mostly wheat. And if we raised anything else, it was like milo, I mean oats and—what's the other?—barley. We didn't have, we didn't row crop. My folks did not row crop.

Darvin: (inaudible)

Strader: Did your folks farm with horses, too?

Darvin: Oh, yes. That was the only way.

Charlotte: What did you say?

Strader: Did your folks farm with horses, too? Or did they have a tractor?

Charlotte: I guess...

Darvin: They probably got a tractor.

Charlotte: Not.... Not.... I can't remember.

Darvin: It was a few years ago.

Charlotte: I remember more the tractor part. I suppose he did, to start with.

Darvin: Oh, yeah. He was.... He raised.... Your dad had lots of horses.

Charlotte: But, anyway, didn't last long, 'cause I was....

Strader: How about the Farm Security Administration? And this was the agency that offered low cost loans to help farmers purchase equipment, like tractors. Did your parents ever take out a loan?

Darvin: My parents I don't think ever got in on that deal.

Strader: Do you remember if your parents took out a loan to purchase their tractor or....

Charlotte: I can't remember that. The only ones I can remember is oats—taking out a loan to deal in the farming, the farm, the machinery, and stuff.

Strader: And what year was that?

Charlotte: Well, we started in '38, '39?

Darvin: It's been so long ago, I can't tell you.

Strader: OK.

Charlotte: Let's see. No, it wasn't because we didn't get married til '41. You didn't have a tractor til '41.

Darvin: Ford tractor come out. You remember the old Ford tractors? And I took schooling in that and demonstrated it. And I could have sold one or two, but they was there, like she said. They always finished the deal out. But I would demonstrate it and the like, for them. And when we got married, why I bought one of them because I could buy so much—I got it at wholesale price. Ford give me a special price for helping out. So that's how we got a tractor to get started farming.

Strader: Now where was your farm located when you got married?

Darvin: We rented....

Charlotte: Well, that's a long story. We didn't grow up.... I mean, we didn't start out where we grew up. We started out in Perry, Oklahoma. Do you know where Perry is?

Strader: I've heard of it.

Charlotte: Yeah. Well, that's where we.... We rented a farm over there. And....

Darvin: My dad had a neighbor that owned a farm over there, and he rented it to my dad for me. And that's how we got started. It was an old place that we had to.... The house was shot. We did have to clean it up, do the best we could with it.

Charlotte: The (inaudible) water.... We didn't have a well. We didn't have a.... I guess we had a well; we had to draw the water.

Darvin: We had to draw the water for the house. You can't believe....

Charlotte: We had a house and barn, and that's about all you can say. And we had.... When we moved over there we had one pig and so many cattle.

Darvin: Yeah. I had to build a....

Charlotte: The pigs stayed with the cattle.

Darvin: I had to build some stuff to milk the cows and put in that old barn. And when it rained, it'd leak in on me. We really started at the bottom.

Charlotte: Then we burnt the house down.

Strader: On purpose?

Charlotte: No! Sure not! 'Cause I had a piano, and it started right...

Darvin: Back of it.

Charlotte: Well, I guess it started up above, 'cause we saw the smoke coming out the roof. And by the time we got to the house—the barn was way out there, anyway—the neighbors were there. And so we got mostly everything out. He got his ears burnt and a few things. But we had everything attached to propane. It was running to the—no, it didn't go to the—the heater was attached to—what was it running on?

Darvin: Well, it was kerosene that went to the heater.

Charlotte: Kerosene, I guess. I don't know. Separator was fastened to the floor, and everything was fastened to the floor in the house.

Darvin: Well, there wasn't nowhere else to put it.

Charlotte: Huh uh.

Darvin: Boy, you talk about starting at the bottom. We did.

Strader: What kind of crops did you farm?

Darvin: Mostly wheat. Some oats for the.... I'd raise some oats for the cows, to have the milk cows deal.

Charlotte: We had chickens.

Darvin: And then we'd have....

Charlotte: No. We didn't have no chickens over there, did we.

Darvin: Not very much if we did.

Charlotte: Anyway, we had to move away after we burnt the house down. We had to live with his folks, and then we moved back over to a house close to where we burnt the house down.

Darvin: There was a house there that....

Charlotte: And then in about 3 or 4 or 5 months, why we moved back to Oklahoma. I mean back to Waukomis and Drummond and.... I guess it was Drummond, wasn't it?

Darvin: Yes.

Charlotte: First.

Darvin: Uh huh.

Charlotte: We've had a wild...

Darvin: Yeah. We moved in...

Charlotte: Wild start.

Darvin: We moved in with a lady that had lost her husband and we rented the farm. And she had part of the house and we had part of it. But you can't think about it...

Charlotte: That was the second house we lived in.

Darvin: We... think about it. It's been quite a deal.

Strader: How did you move up here, in Kansas?

Charlotte: Well, after we moved from Drummond to Waukomis, we lived there about two or three years. And in '45 we moved to Thayer. We bought the farm up there. We had two—160 on both sides. It was on 47.

Darvin: And we still should be there.

Charlotte: Anyway, we was there five years and then we moved back to Oklahoma.

Darvin: And now it's all... We was up there a while back to see what it looked like, and the old improvements is all gone. Instead, it's got oil wells on it.

Charlotte: Anyway, we got to go back home.

Darvin: Well,

Charlotte: We didn't get that close, but we were in Oklahoma and I guess that's what mattered anyway.

Darvin: I covered the whole world, but we've take pretty well care of Oklahoma and Kansas.

Strader: Did you ever have any other jobs outside of farming?

Darvin: Not really. I have done other... I have done a lot of combining and stuff like that. I've combined wheat in, well a half a mile of the Canadian border.

Charlotte: That's quite a ways.

Strader: Yeah.

Charlotte: Left me with the cows to milk and kids to raise....

Darvin: We made it, anyhow.

Strader: So, what did...? Tell me about that. Did you go up and start up there at Canada and work your way back down, or....?

Charlotte: Worked yourself up.

Darvin: Yeah. We worked (inaudible) all the time, but....

Charlotte: Well, he'd go west and then go north as far.

Strader: Did you have a crew?

Charlotte: Just one.

Darvin: Yeah.

Charlotte: One year he and my brother went together. One year my uncle and he went together. And of course we had.... He drove the tractors and stuff, and they drove the trucks, whatever.

Darvin: Yeah. That was before very many self-propelled combines was out.

Charlotte: You see, you had to pull them with the tractor.

Strader: OK.

Darvin: But, I made everybody happy when I combined their wheat for them.

Strader: OK. Well, tell me about when you first got electricity on your farm. Do you remember that?

Charlotte: Yes. We lived at Thayer.

Strader: So you didn't have any when you were down in Oklahoma growing up?

Charlotte: I never had any while I was at home. Never. I rode the school bus. But they didn't have it.

Strader: So how did electricity make a difference in your life?

Charlotte: Quite a bit. We had lights.

Darvin: Of course it helped me out a lot, too, in the shop and the like.

Charlotte: I don't know what you done before. I guess you just fixed it anyway.

Darvin: You did what you could do and let it go at that. That's all you could do.

Charlotte: He's always worked on machinery and fixed it, one way or another.

Darvin: Oh, I had my own welders and stuff. Of course when we got electricity, I got a lot of stuff. But up here I had it fixed to work in the shop. On it I had it where wood on one side and metal on the other.

Strader: OK. Do you have any memories about the Civilian Conservation Corps—the CCC—or the WPA?

Charlotte: WPA.

Darvin: Yeah. Now that's what Dad, our folks did, was in. Wasn't it?

Charlotte: Yeah. That was a long time before we moved away.

Strader: So you think your dad worked for the WPA?

Charlotte: Mine did. He was—what did they call it—foreman?

Darvin: Could have been. I don't remember back then. That was before you and I were together.

Charlotte: Yeah.

Darvin: But I can remember Dad having to leave some land out for, little patches around here and there. But, and it seemed like we have. I know we did. That's when we was way up north here.

Charlotte: We had to what?

Darvin: We had places we had to leave, left a little land lay out or something. They'd come out and measure it or something.

Charlotte: Well that wasn't the WPA.

Darvin: I don't know.

Charlotte: Was it?

Darvin: I don't know. It's been so long ago, I don't remember what it's called.

Strader: The WPA was.... It employed people to work on projects, work projects. Do you remember what your dad worked on?

Darvin: My dad didn't have to work out away from home. I got a lot more out than Dad ever.... Well, of course, now, what my dad done when I was a little kid, I don't know. He might've done something like that then.

Strader: Charlotte, do you remember your dad working for the WPA?

Charlotte: Yeah. All I know is, he was a foreman, or the head of a crew that they worked on the road. I suppose they was working on the road. What did they do?

Darvin: I don't remember your dad working on the road. Of course, he could've.

Charlotte: Well, he did. I don't know that. When I went to school, well he was doing his own thing. But after a while he drove the school bus. So, in the wintertime he was driving a school bus. Summer he worked on the farm.

Darvin: I can remember her little old....

Charlotte: Oh, I never was that little!

Darvin: It seemed like you was. She was so small in the bus deal. And her dad drove it.

Strader: So you've known each other for a long, long time then, huh?

Charlotte: Oh, ever since I can remember. 'Cause he went to Ames part of the time.

Darvin: And I went to a little country school part of the time.

Charlotte: I never went to a country school. The bus went by our place the first year I was ready to go to school—six.

Darvin: I can remember when she got on the bus. She was smaller than a lot of them.

Strader: So was it love at first sight?

Darvin: I wasn't interested then anyhow.

Strader: OK. Social Security Administration was also started during FDR's time. And the first monthly benefit payment didn't start until 1940.

Darvin: I can remember playing around with that just a little, but I can't... I'm not well enough remembering on it to know very much about it.

Strader: Do you remember your parents talking about it? Did they think it was a good thing?

Darvin: I can't remember my dad ever having to be in it.

Charlotte: I don't know whether mine was or not. Seems like so much has happened since, I can't....

Darvin: I can remember on the first one we had (inaudible) we got married, the people ahead of us had been on it, because they'd had where they had laid out the land and the lot. But for me signing up on it, I can't remember doing it.

Charlotte: I'm sure we did if we needed it.

Darvin: We probably could've, but I don't remember it. It wasn't a very big program if we did.

Strader: So overall, how do you feel about the New Deal programs in the Depression?

Charlotte: Didn't bother me. I wasn't interested, I guess.

Strader: Were you aware, though, when you were a kid that you were in....

Darvin: I was aware of something going on. But.... I can remember farmers leaving patches of land out. But I can't remember me doing it. But I ain't going to say that I didn't. But I just.... It's just possible that I did when we first started. But I don't think....

Charlotte: What was that? New Deal?

Darvin: Yeah. It was where they laid out land.

Charlotte: Oh, yeah.

Strader: And not farmed it, you mean, for a year?

Charlotte: Yeah.

Darvin: Something like that.

Charlotte: We've done that.

Darvin: It seemed like I can remember doing it one year.

Charlotte: Probably several.

Darvin: Well, it's hard telling. It's something that I didn't think I'd have to remember maybe.

Strader: Do you remember your parents ever talking about FDR? Did they approve of him, or not like him, or anything? Do you remember anything like that?

Charlotte: I don't think they said anything....

Darvin: No, probably they was glad they did. But....

Charlotte: I know they voted for him. 'Cause my mom and dad went up to my grandparents' and when it was time to see whether he'd gotten elected or not. And they all voted for him.

Darvin: I don't think my dad had much dealings with it.

Strader: Do you remember hearing your parents ever talk about there being a Depression going on or any shortages)?

Charlotte: Well, they were in the Depression, yeah. I think they went through that.

Darvin: Yeah. I think, I think it was on all right. And probably we felt some of it. But I was pretty young. And we always, Dad always had milk cows, chickens, and stuff like that. We never suffered from it.

Charlotte: You what?

Darvin: Never had it. I said we never suffered in particular. I can't remember.... I can't remember Dad ever getting any money or anything like that from it. It seemed like to me we give one time, one year maybe or two, had a little something to do where we laid out a little patch of ground or two. But, it was that or else it was where I was farming and somebody else had done it. I'm not.... I'm just not right on that part of it. No, I thought when you got that, I got that note from you that I was going to be a poor hand for you.

Strader: No, you've remembered a lot. Is there any other, anything else that you can remember about farming?

Darvin: Well, that's all I've ever done, but I farmed for a man that was pretty well off. I was just hired for him to run his tractors and the like when I was a young man. But he had the machinery. He didn't drive it much. I drove it mostly for him. And whether he was signed up for the programs or not.... It seemed like maybe he wasn't.

Charlotte: He probably was.

Darvin: Seemed like he was, but he'd just sign up for one year and then next year he'd (inaudible) up and put it somewhere else, but I'm not positive on that.

Strader: When did you get your first automobile?

Darvin: A little Model A Ford, wasn't it?

Charlotte: No, you had.... Well, what was that coupe? Was that a Model A?

Darvin: Uh huh.

Charlotte: I was thinking something else, I guess.

Darvin: It's hard to remember all the old hard, tough times.

Charlotte: You had a car before that, didn't you?

Darvin: Well, Dad did.

Charlotte: Oh, you borrowed his.

Darvin: Well, I didn't borrow it very much.

Charlotte: Yeah. We had a Model A coupe.

Darvin: I can remember Dad buying a new Model T Ford--\$400. It was a touring car. And my grandma lived quite a ways off—about 30 or 40 mile, or maybe 50. And when we'd go up there and back, we'd always figure on having to patch a tire or two. But the old Model T cars, most generally you had to crank them. And they had a deal on it that would generate the electricity. And if you had headlights, if you headed out after night, if you'd slow down, they'd go pretty near out. Then it was, to have to speed it up, why then they'd brighten back up. I can remember going down the road one time after a snowstorm, and we was going to a town called Grubbon. And I was riding in the front seat of that old open car. And my brother was in the back of it. And we was going down the road, and that Model T done this and throwed my brother there at the back seat out. And they had a snowbank, oh, that high. And Dad was going on down the road. And I said, "Dad, ain't we going to go back and get Agner?" And it really took Dad. He looked and there was Agner was out. I remember when we got back, there he was sitting on that big bank of snow. It didn't hurt him. But that old Model T Ford, it got just right around. I tell you, it really got my dad excited after I told him that he was going down the road, just know he'd lost him.

Strader: Well, what did you used to do for fun?

Darvin: What'd we do for what?

Strader: Fun.

Darvin: Oh, I don't know. We just.... We played baseball and stuff like that. And in the wintertime we'd do a lot of skating around on the ice and the like.

Charlotte: Not me.

Darvin: But then, they'd always have ball games in the summer. We could go to them, watch them and stuff. But out in the country that way, it was a lot different than it would've been in town 'cause we didn't get to go.... I think I got to go to one movie one time when I was a kid, just to see what a movie was like.

Strader: Do you remember what it was?

Darvin: I don't remember what it was.

Charlotte: What'd you say?

Darvin: The movie we went to see when I was a kid.

Charlotte: Felix the Cat.

Darvin: Well, it could've been. I don't know. I've kind of forgot. If you (inaudible) for me, I'll probably recognize it.

Strader: How about you, Charlotte? What did you do for fun?

Charlotte: I worked. I was keeping the house. And Mom was out in the garden and doing all the picking and the taking care of the veggies. And I was taking care of my little sister. I had a sister ten years younger than I, and so....

Darvin: Well, your brother's quite a bit younger, wasn't he?

Charlotte: He's three years younger than I. I didn't do much outside.

Strader: Did you go to country school?

Charlotte: No. Never.

Darvin: And I did.

Strader: Was it a one-room schoolhouse?

Darvin: One-room school. I started there, at a little old country school. And it just one room. And then I moved on up north a few miles and I went to another one. And then we moved north of Ames and went to another one. And just, all that there ever was until we got up closer to high school.

Charlotte: He graduated out of the 8th grade, country school.

Strader: Was it quite a distance from your farm?

Darvin: Yeah, we was on the farm. I'd have to walk a mile and a half to school and back home every night.

Strader: And then I suppose you had to do chores when you got home.

Darvin: Oh, yeah. There'd be time, about the time I'd get there go get the cows out and we'd milk them, gather the eggs, stuff like that. Yeah, we'd have turkeys in the spring, or we'd have them the year around, but they'd lay the eggs in the spring. And I've had to spend a lot of time hunting turkey eggs.

Charlotte: Huh?

Darvin: I've had to hunt, a lot of time hunting turkey eggs where they'd lay them. You had to find them because skunks, not skunks but snakes and stuff would get them. And you'd always put something else in there for, to make it look like it had something in it.

Charlotte: Well....

Darvin: I don't think your folks ever raised something like that.

Charlotte: Yes, we did. Mom had to chase the turkeys. She always put a hen egg in a nest so they'd go back to the same nest or they'd make a new one.

Darvin: Well, I think everybody done that.

Charlotte: And we lived on the east side of the road, and they always went across the road west to where there's a lot of trees.

Darvin: Yeah. I can remember that. Nobody lived.... I don't think anybody there at that time, did they?

Charlotte: Yeah. Anyway, they snucked her nest out somewhere else.

Darvin: Yeah. There was more timber and stuff over there.

Charlotte: She had to go find the egg.

Darvin: Well, I had to, too. We had to hunt the eggs out and catch them. It was good old hard times, and we didn't mind them a bit. Didn't know any better. Little kids would have a terrible time now, what we went through. If kids had to walk a mile and a half or two miles to go to school, they would have a fit now.

Charlotte: I rode the school bus the whole twelve years.

Darvin: I know. You was lucky. Your dad.... Her dad had a...

Charlotte: Farm truck.

Darvin: Yeah, he had a farm truck. And he'd take that farm truck and that bus to drive in the wintertime. I suppose he took it—well, I know he did—he had to take the stuff, a lot of stuff off of it to get that bus....

Charlotte: Take the bed off and just put the other bus on, I guess.

Darvin: Well, he had to take the seat off of it, too.

Charlotte: The first bus I rode in was about that wide. No, it was a seat on each side. It was nothing like the buses you see now.

Darvin: Well, that's right. And then a lot of them had one—oh, so wide—in the middle.

Charlotte: No, the first one didn't have no middle nothing. Kids were stacked up three deep by the time we got to school, 'cause we went 15 miles to get there. And we picked up kids on the way. And it was a load when we got there. But then they finally got buses where there was seats on each side and in the middle.

Darvin: I can remember her when she was a little kid getting out of that old bus. Of course, we had one of them to drive up there.

Charlotte: He can't get over that.

Darvin: Well, I didn't suppose I'd spend my life with her then either.

Charlotte: I didn't either.

Darvin: No, we wasn't interested. But she was small for her size back in them days.

Strader: Well, is there anything else that you'd like to share?

Charlotte: I don't know what you like.

Strader: Any memories or....

Charlotte: We didn't have snow like we did. They don't have snow now like they did way back when. We had drifts. We had drifted roads.

Darvin: And they didn't have the equipment to clean it off and stuff like they did now either.

Charlotte: And we weren't on gravel or we weren't on cement or any kind of roads like that.

Darvin: But when I was going to country school, we just cut across the fields. And we'd have a mile and a half of it, or something like that. But everybody put up with it, and we got by. But they'd.... Kids would have a time of it.

Charlotte: I can't remember even getting out of school when it was snowing, like they do now. When it starts snowing, they close the school.

Darvin: Well, they had to.

Charlotte: But, I can't remember that. And I rode the bus twelve years.

Darvin: Well, they really, wouldn't really have to close it. They just closed itself. There wasn't no way of getting them in when they had buses and stuff and the roads was closed. It took a day or two to clean them up.

Charlotte: We had telephones back then, but they were.... Everybody was on the line, so....

Darvin: Well, they was eavesdropping.

Charlotte: Oh, yeah.

Darvin: And that made a difference. I don't remember doing much eavesdropping. Well I don't think Mom would've let me.

Charlotte: Maybe you didn't have a phone.

Darvin: Oh, yes. (inaudible) We've had less phone after we got married than we ever had before.

Charlotte: We haven't had a phone every year.

Darvin: Not in the early years. But we've lived through quite a change.

Charlotte: We started out with three-cent stamps. And look what they are now.

Strader: Well, I guess that's about it.

