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### Interview with Alva and Mary Hall & Jim and Sharon Lang

Mara Bell Mancini

Alva Hall

Mary Hall

Jim Sharon Lang

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Mara Bell Mancini  
ANSO 67-68  
Interview with Alva and Mary Hall and Jim and Sharon Lang  
Tues. Feb. 28, 1995; 6:30 PM

MB: Have they seen the pictures yet?

AH: No. Well, they might have seen the little one.

MH: Sherry has.

AH: Now wait a minute. No. I wanted the other one with the . . . me and the dog. Like this one.

MH: A big one?

AH: With the dog and the barn on it.

Kid: Dog and barn on it.

MH: There it is. No that's the donkey.

Kid: There. That's not good graphics.

AH: No.

MH: Oh. It was right here, wasn't it? Probably in these.

AH: Yeah. There it is. Now show that to your dad. Now that one. . . Here. Take this one with you and show him both. Take 'em together and I'll tell him 'bout 'em. Now that's the old barn, Jim. Burnt out here in 'bout 1930. See Dad, then, in '44 he built this new one out here. Dad and the McPharlan boys and Dick was out there helping--he's four years old. I's telling her the other night that when that barn burnt Helen was in the back room up here sleeping and . . . I don't think I ever told you this, did I? Helen was in the back room sleeping and Dad and I's sleeping in the bathroom--where the bathroom is now. Dad seen light flicker on the wall and he asked me what it was and I got up and looked and I told him barn was on fire. So he says, "I'm going out and see if there're any cows in and get them out and get the car out." He told me to go out and ring the bell. That's like 911. The big bell. And I rang that. Then as the flames got up people come over the hill and up the road and this way. \_\_\_\_\_ come down and this old gray mule. He got him and another one put together. Anyhow, he got the mules out and pulled the corn shredder out, which is in that barn there. You can see the place there where it's at. And he pulled it out there along the road and he put the fire out. It burned some but it didn't burn it up. A little but it didn't burn it up. Anyhow, we had a straw pile down here, and the men carried water all night to keep the straw wet because the wind was coming out of the North and going that way and they's afraid it would shift and then it'd burn both the barns. Then women came like they always did and they made coffee and whatever, sandwiches I suppose, for the men and the next morning Helen came down stairs and whether we told her or whether she looked out and she says, "Where's the barn?" And they cooked right here in our dining room. That's where the kitchen was. They cooked there all night. Talked and whatever, and she never knew it. She slept through the whole thing. And that picture is Grandma, and she died on Christmas Day in '23. And I was probably one year old there. So it wouldn't surprise me at all if those two pictures were taken the same day, because there were not that many cameras around at that time and it wouldn't surprise me at all if they's taken the same day.

MB: Do you remember her?

AH: Just about. . . Yes. When she passed away she lay right across here.

MB: How old would you have been?

AH: Five years old. And she lay right across here and 'course then the neighbors come in and set up with them all the time, you know. 24 hours a day. They never left them.

MH: That's where you had the funeral 's in the house a lot of times.

MB: Did the family stay here with the neighbors and everybody . . .

AH: Yes everybody.

MH: Everybody that could.

AH: Bring things in. And 'course they'd have a wreath on the door at that time. The bedroom here was full of people.

MH: That was a parlor.

AH: And I was back in the corner here and course our bathroom, our toilet, was up here on the where the chicken house is. And now this is one of the first things I can remember is that I had to go to the bathroom and I couldn't get out of there so they picked me up, I was a little boy and five years old, and just handed me across the top. And our hired hand took me here by the hand and took me up to the bathroom and took me back. That was the day of the funeral.

MB: Was the funeral in the house?

AH: Right here, yes.

Kid: I don't think I would like. . .

MH: Grandma lived with him. For how long did you Grandmother live here?

AH: Well, she lived here 'till she died.

MH: What happened to her husband?

AH: He died in 1904, see. Grandpa Hall--he's the one that built this barn down here and he didn't have it finished when he died. And that's why I've always said they finished it in 1905.

MH: Then she just lived here with your dad and . . .

AH: Yeah. Dad and Mother.

MB: And so after he died the farm went to your father?

AH: No, after she died.

MB: Oh, ok.

AH: After Grandma died, she died in '23, then Dad bought the farm from the estate.

MH: Now that's what this sale thing is. Your mother or grandmother. . .

AH: Oh no.

MH: That's not the one?

AH: That was in 1877.

MH: That was way back?

AH: That was when my great-grandmother and grandfather died.

MH: I was thinking that was when your. . .

AH: No.

NL: This is down the road and up and up. . .

AH: Now you take this over to Daddy and you tell me what it is. . . so I can tell Mara Bell.

JL: That's a buzz saw.

AH: That's what I thought it was. . . . Cutting wood.

MB: Oh it is?

AH: Yeah. That's what I thought it was but I wasn't sure.

NL: Let's see. . . can't see very good. There's that barn right over there.

AH: No, no. This is the chicken house. You sat right up here, Nathan. See here, see here. Turn it around this way. Turn it around. See here's the steps when you come up to the house. See here. And here I am. And right over here, that'd be right out here, that's an old chicken house. That sat there for years and years.

MH: That was a new one over there.

AH: Yeah, that's a new one over there. That was build way. . .

MB: On that side? That's the new one?

AH: Yeah. A long time ago. . .(laughs)

MB: When was that built?

MH: The new one was the one I had chickens in.

NL: And you had the dog too.

MH: And my kids had chickens. . .

AH: The only thing I can tell you. . . I think it was built in about 1932 or '33. But the last time I can remember doing anything with it was when President Kennedy was killed, 'cause they re-sided it that day. Working on it.

NL: This probably only cost 25 dollars 'cause it didn't cost much back then.

MH: Don't bend the picture.

AH: But I don't know anything else. . .

NL: Who's this?

AH: That's my dad.

MH: That's your great-grandpa.

AH: Yeah, that'd be your great-grandpa driving the pony. See, when I's a little boy I had a cart just like this for my pony.

NL: So if that was your great-great-great-grandma then that'd be my great-great-great-great-grandma.

AH: That's right! Oh you're pretty good.

SL: How many greats? You didn't remember them did you?

NL: Didn't even know me.

AH: Not then, did I? Well, why don't you take Jim and Sherry out there and give them a good going over. That's the main thing you want and they can answer however they want.

MB: OK. (switch to porch with Jim and Sharon) I guess I just wanted to talk to you a little about living here on the farm and taking care of things. They talked a little about what goes on now on the farm but not too much so I thought I'd ask a little bit about that. So how many cattle do you have right now?

JL: We got 29 head. Those are all breeding stock, no calfs.

MB: How many calfs do you expect?

JL: 24. 24 this year, if we don't lose any.

MB: And then you raise them for how long?

JL: Oh, we'll have those for about 6 months, and then we'll probably sell them this fall. The way things are anymore you can't, you can't hardly raise the grain and feed 'em on up to a bigger size and make much money on 'em. If you've got the grain you can do it. It takes a lot of acreage to start putting out the grain and everything. All we've

got here is hay.

MB: So do you sell them privately or through an auction?

JL: We don't like to take them to the auction. Normally we can sell them privately. Nathan, close that door tight and leave it that way. (door slams) He's probably driving your tape crazy.

MB: That's OK. So you don't like to take them to the auction?

JL: No, you find that when you take them to the stock sales they can pick up a lot of sickness out there.

MB: Oh really?

JL: Oh yeah. And the same way with buying them. If you go to the stock sales and buy them you take a big chance in picking up sickness and bring it home to your herd.

MB: So do you think people are weary about buying now?

JL: There's still a lot of buying and selling going on. But you'll find that. . .we've had privates come here and actually offer us more than what they're selling for at the market.

MB: Do you get people that know that you raise good cows and they come back year after year? Do they hear by word of mouth?

JL: It depends. A lot of it's word of mouth.

MB: What do you see out there?

NL: Nothing.

SL: Dark.

MB: I've been talking to your parents a little about growing up on the farm and what it used to be like. What are some of your early memories of growing up on the farm?

SL: Oh the chickens. Taking care of the chickens. We did a lot of hay bailing. That was a lot of hard work.

MB: Did all the kids help out?

SL: Yeah. (to Nathan) Well, you weren't around, but you do help out now. I don't remember. . . we had a dairy cow but I don't remember the milking part too much of that.

MB: Did they stop that before you were born?

SL: I believe so, yeah. Well, no 'cause Mom said she'd milk when . . . well she'd take us down to the barn and she'd be down there with 'em so I was probably pretty young because I don't remember. But I do remember we'd go down and get a little milk out for the cats, you know, kind of do that kind of thing. But that's all I can really . . . as a big operation I don't remember anything like that. I can remember a few pigs that we used to have around. We used to have pet lambs. We used to go out and ride 'em--they got so big, you know. Just ride 'em.

MB: How many would you have?

SL: Well, I don't know how many we had but each of us . . . well, my sister and I each had a lamb. I remember bringing them in sometimes when they were born. Very little, you know. Bringing them in and putting them by the stove. Bottle feed them and all that kind of stuff. And. . .that's about the main thing that I can remember.

MB: Would you have a lot of work to do on the farm, like when you got back from school?

SL: 'Bout the only thing. . .being in school time we didn't have that much going on other than chickens, you know. That's about the only thing really, and then in summers the hay. You know that type of thing. That's about the only thing I can remember.

MB: What made you want to stay?

SL: I don't know. I just guess I'm a home body. I just don't like the town. So we just had a chance to get this land up here and I just went ahead and did it.

MB: You bought that from your grandfather?

SL: Uh-huh. I bought it when I was working. I saved up my money just a little bit by little and I had enough that we could buy that piece. So I kind of really bought it out of my little savings that I would make. So then we built out there.

MB: What do you think about keeping the farm in the family?

SL: I don't know. I don't know if the kids would take a lot of interest in it or not. The youngest one seems to but the oldest one's kind of hesitant, you know. So I don't know really how much. . . .

MB: Did your brother and sister ever have any desire to stay?

SL: No.

MB: They went on to teach?

SL: Uh-huh. Both went to college. I just kind of stuck around. I just never had the . . . I don't know to go on with school or anything. Soon as I graduated I got this job with the schools and I was there 13 years. So I just went from high school, then, to working.

MB: And then bought the land and stayed.

SL: Yeah, stayed around. Then I met him while he was helping with hay and stuff. So he'd come and help. He was our helping hand. That's how I met him. And then he had a farm, they had a farm. They lived over this way and they had a farm over here so they'd go by, he'd go by, this way. So and then I don't know how you got to be a farm hand.

JL: Your dad came over and saw us one day and needed help bailing hay.

MB: Are you from Knox County?

JL: Uh-huh.

MB: And then you worked as a farm hand for a while?

JL: No, we had our own farm too. When I was old enough that I graduated from school I was in college one year and my dad decided he didn't have much help so he sold it. Sold the farm.

MB: Did he ask you?

JL: No.

MB: How'd you feel about that?

JL: Well, I didn't particularly like it but wasn't anything I could do about it.

MB: So what'd you do after that?

JL: Oh I done little bit of everything. Mostly I've done carpenter work. I learned pretty much all the trades in doing. . .

SL: Well, you worked for a carpenter for a while.

JL: Yeah.

MB: Was that in town?

JL: Well, they were located in town but we worked everywhere.

MB: In the county or just all over central Ohio?

JL: Mostly in the county but . . .

SL: Had a few jobs out.

JL: I built a Lawson's store in Gallian. That's about as far away as we had to go. That was a lot of work.

MB: So you make great furniture.

JL: Yeah. I like to make furniture.

SL: He's very general. . .toys.

MB: Did you learn that . . . .Where did you learn that?

JL: To build furniture?

MB: Yeah.

JL: Mostly in Mt. Vernon, Ohio. Like now at Coopers I work maintainance. And Maintainance is a lot of repair work, and for me there's nothing you can't repair. They'll bring something in say, they'll say we'll order a new one. This can't be fixed. I tell 'em if I think I can fix it. There isn't anything that can't be fixed, if you want to do it. So



we get a lot of work.

MB: How many hours do you put in on the farm?

JL: Wintertime? Oh probably a couple hours a day. In the summertime it's hard to tell.

MB: About how many?

JL: Hours a week? Probably on the average of 25 to 30 hours a week.

SL: Giver or take a few.

JL: Yeah. Some weeks you work more.

SL: During hay season or anything.

JL: Maybe up from daylight to dark doing things.

MB: What about upkeep on the farm, like fences and stuff like that? Do you take care of those for your parents?

JL: I take care of that.

MB: You take care of that?

JL: Yeah. It's a lot of work. It's an on going project, it seems like.

SL: Just get one section done then the other one.

JL: I'm going to try some high tinsel wire the next fence I put up. They claim it won't rust.

MB: What's the difference between that and regular?

JL: Regular wire if a tree or something falls on the fence it stretches it and breaks it. The high tinsel it can be mashed to the ground and come back.

MB: Is that the kind. . . is it wrapped?

JL: No, it's just like a straight piece of wire with nothing on it but you can stretch it tight. It's almost like piano wire. You can play a tune on it if you stretch it that tight.

MB: Now he said that you have. . .that they're three cows out in the barn? Were two for your sons? They're raising those?

JL: Helping. Yeah. (laughter)

MB: OK. Are they in 4-H?

JL: No.

MB: They're just raising them?

JL: Yeah. Just to be learning how.

SL: See whether it does any good or not.

MB: So what do you think? Is it doing any good?

SL: The oldest was not doing. . . you know he. . .

JL: Oh he'll come down with me. He'll feed the hay but he's not interested in getting in with them.

SL: The other one does. He likes to get in there with 'em.

JL: Till the one butted him. Now he doesn't want to go in anymore.

MB: One of the cows did?

JL: One of the calves, yeah. Butted him. She butts me too.

MB: Did he get hurt?

JL: No.

MB: He just got scared?

JL: Yeah.

MB: Which is the oldest and which is the youngest? What are their names?

JL: David's the oldest. He's 12. Nathan's the youngest and he's 8.

MB: Did you want them to join 4-H or do any of the. . .

SL: I was never gotten them into that. I always thought that was something that he could, you know, with the farm and stuff, but he's just so busy with everything. I just didn't think we'd have the time to really get into 4-H projects and things.

MB: Do you think a lot of kids around here do 4-H or do you think it's not that popular?

SL: I think a lot of kids around do it. It's pretty popular.

JL: A lot of it's not even farm anymore, 4-H.

MB: What do they do?

JL: They do all kinds of projects. Learn how to take care of lawns and trees. There's just all sorts of things they do anymore. Doesn't seem like the 4-H as we knew it.

MB: Were you in 4-H?

JL: Used to be a 4-H project though was like take a calf or a pig or a lamb. . .

SL: Raise it, take care of it.

MB: Maybe take it to the Fair.

JL: Take it to the Fair. Yeah.

MB: And then what's the white cow in the barn?

JL: That's an Airshire. That's a milk cow.

MB: Do you milk her?

JL: Not yet.

MB: Oh. She's . . .

JL: She won't come due 'till October.

MB: How old is she?

JL: She's two years old.

MB: You going to keep her for the family milk?

JL: Probably.

SL: Milk is getting so expensive anymore.

JL: Not only milk's getting expensive, it's things they're putting in milk anymore.

MB: What do you mean?

JL: Chemicals to homogenize it. All homogenized is so the cream won't separate anymore. You're probably not old enough to remember going to the store and buying milk where the cream was at the top. You'd have to shake it up to get the cream back in the milk.

SL: Cream separator. Make butter. Cottage cheese.

MB: Do you remember doing that?

SL: Yeah, but not the old you know what you think this way. We just had the crank, you know, the jar and this way.

MB: To make butter?

SL: Uh-huh.

MB: What about cottage cheese? How do you make cottage cheese?

SL: Just sour your milk and then heat up to what is it? I used to remember. I don't even remember what the

temperature is now. I can't remember. It's been a while since I made it. You bring it to a certain temperature, to curds. You know, and then just drain it and rinse it. And then that's about it.

MB: And you remember doing all that?

SL: Even when his dad had a cow, that hasn't been too long ago. Well, it's been several years.

JL: 12 years.

SL: Been 12 years. He used to bring us over milk. Then I'd make the . . . I never made butter though. I don't think we ever had enough milk to make butter. I'd make cottage cheese. Sometimes it turns out better than others, you know, but not one. Somedays, I don't know if it's the way it soured or . . . but you take like sour milk and make it. Get your curds.

JL: A lot of people don't understand how people make cottage cheese. You take fresh milk instead of refrigerate it you just leave the bacteria in there and let it . . .

SL: Curdle.

JL: Curdle. Let it sour. When it sours the curds, or the white part, will come to the top. And. . .

SL: The water part.

JL: The water part, which is whey, settles to the bottom.

MB: I didn't know you heated it back up, though.

SL: Yeah. I don't know what temperature and I don't know how long.

MB: Probably to kill off anything that would be in bad milk. Do you do any canning?

SL: Yeah, quite a bit.

MB: Do you have a garden?

SL: Yeah. Pretty good size garden. We do. . . I freeze. I haven't got into--I'd like to--freeze drying. I haven't got into that yet but I thought about trying it this year maybe with I think strawberries would be good. They say watermelon is good to freeze dry.

MB: Oh really?

SL: Yeah. But I've just never got into that yet and I'd like to.

MB: Do you think it was a good thing to raise kids on the farm?

SL: Oh yeah. They learn a lot. Yeah. The city people think "What is this?" or, you know, "What is that?" and the kids they don't even think anything about it, you know, they just grew up with it and they just, you know, don't think anything about it. Different things but. . .

MB: What do you see happening in Knox County with the family farms? Do you think most kids are moving out?

JL: Most of 'em. I work at Coopers and there's a lot of guys down there that still have small farms. A lot of guys in their 30s, 20s, 30s, staying with the farm but you still have (loud noise) 'cause you just can't make enough on the farm anymore. And that's partly our government.

MB: What do you mean?

JL: Well, when I went to college in '67 I took agriculture courses.

MB: Did you go to OSU?

JL: Yes.

SL: Mansfield.

JL: And one of the things professor taught us, and it's coming true, is the government wants to take over the farms so that all that we have is a few number of big farm operations. And so far that's what they're doing. It's crowding the little guy out, 'cause you're not going to make a *living* on the farm anymore unless you go pretty big.

MB: And you see the effects of that here?

JL: A lot of it, yeah. The young people aren't interested.

SL: Working.

MB: The young people are working?

SL: No I said a lot of hard work and I don't think they know what hard work is anymore.

JL: Well, that's like we bale hay. Alva likes to put all the hay up in big round bales. I don't mind doing the first cut in, maybe second, but I like small square bales. It's a lot more work.

MB: To do the small square ones?

JL: Yes.

MB: Why is that?

JL: Well, you've got to handle it all. Big round bales you just. . .

SL: Roll it up. . .

JL: Stay on the tractor, roll it up. And when you're done, haul off the field. It's all tractor work. Small bales you gotta handle it.

MB: But you think they're more convenient?

JL: I find the beef cattle, our cattle, are fat. I mean even right now. Second, third cutting alfalfa there's a lot of protein in it and they over eat it. I can set a bale out a day, and that's too much for 'em. They don't need that much hay. Where as if I take it out in small bales they're still getting plenty to eat but I can more or less ration what

they're getting, 'cause they'll waste a lot of hay. Over eating.

MB: I never knew cows over ate.

JL: They'll eat 'till they're as full as they can be. Yeah a cow, especially grain, they'll over eat 'till they founder.

MB: What does that mean?

JL: They'll get so full that their insides will bloat. It'll kill 'em. Veterinary--I guess I've never had it done--veterinary'll come out and with like a long needle get 'em in the sides, stab 'em in the side and let that gas out. That's what happens. They can't, the cattle, can't handle the gas.

SL: We had to do that once, I remember. Somebody come out to do that. 'Cause it got so big.

JL: Oh yeah that steer out here.

SL: I think we lost one too, maybe or something. I think maybe we had two but I think we saved the one because we caught her in time.

MB: And that's called foundary?

JL: Founder.

MB: Founder.

JL: It's when they over eat.

MB: Never knew.

JL: See you don't have that with pigs. Pigs. . .

MB: They can just eat forever.

SL: That's why you call pigs!

MB: Do you have any pigs?

JL: No. We used to. When we had our farm we had pigs. You do things to pigs to make 'em eat.

MB: Like what?

JL: Put their feed in a feeder that's got a metal lid on it that they have to lift the lid. They'll take their nose and they'll lift that lid and get their head in there to eat. That lid's hitting them on the head. They don't like that. I irritates them. (end of side one) Oh mix water with their food like slop.

SL: Slop the hogs.

JL: They go crazy over that.

MB: Get rid of all the scraps from your meal.

JL: Oh when you've got pigs around you don't have to worry about scraps. They'll eat anything. They'll eat coal. They love coal.

MB: That can't be very good for them.

JL: Doesn't hurt them. Coppers is a poison. It's poisonous to us? My dad used to give our pigs coppers to kill worms.

MB: It doesn't hurt them but it kills the worms?

JL: Kills the worms.

MB: What other animals did you have? Did you have sheep?

JL: Never been around any sheep.

MB: You said you had sheep.

SL: Uh-huh. We had sheep. I remember shearing them. I never did but I'd be around shearing them. That's all the animals I can think of.

MB: Except the chickens.

SL: Yeah. We had chickens.

MB: How many chickens?

SL: I couldn't, I wouldn't even remember. I don't know. They die off and you get more. Keep adding to 'em, you know.

JL: See, she doesn't like chickens and I'm thinking about buying 'em again.

MB: Did she tell you that you could take care of them if you get them?

JL: I do anyway. All I do is bring the eggs in and expect her to clean the eggs.

SL: Some of 'em aren't too bad, but some of 'em get pretty. . .

JL: But I like farm fresh eggs. And I don't care what anybody says there's a big difference.

SL: Then he says there's a difference when you have 'em cooped up or eating out of the field. You know out, just open.

JL: Let 'em run.

MB: Is it better when they can run?

JL: Yeah.

SL: I guess they get gravel. What's the gravel for?

JL: That's what helps them grind their food. Chickens have to have sand gravel to eat. They pick it out of the ground themselves. When we got 'em all caged up we give 'em oyster shells. They eat those. That helps them grind their food.

MB: Are you going to move into this house some day?

SL: I don't know. I don't know what that'll be.

MB: You said your youngest son is interested in farming?

SL: He's more so. He's more apt to go out and help do things. He helped quite a bit with the unloading hay out here and loading it up on the wagon.

JL: David helped out. . .

SL: Yeah.

MB: You have a lot of relatives right around the area? Cousins and. . .

SL: Yeah, quite a few.

MB: They were talking about the family reunion where all the people come.

SL: It's dwindling down. I mean, it's not as many. There's still quite a few.

JL: Well, it's not dwindling down, it's just people don't. . .people don't socialize much here anymore.

SL: Well, a lot of 'em have kids and they're busy with them. They have ball games or something.

JL: Yeah. But you know you set a date and it's the same date every year. . .

SL: So you know. . .

JL: They know.

SL: It's not like you change it. And people. . . we've had some say, "Oh that's our vacation." Well, you know, they know it's that time of year so make it a week later or something. But that's the way it is.

MB: Do you think the family's getting more spread out?

JL: Your family is for sure. (pause) I guess I'd have to say my family is too.

MB: Were they mostly in Knox County too?

JL: I've got one brother and one sister still in Knox County. My one sister, she's a principle in a school in what's that, Dublin area?

SL: I think it's Dublin. St. Brandon's.



JL: And then my brother just a year younger than I am he's in Kansas.

SL: He's been everywhere.

JL: None of the others have any interest in the farm at all, in farming at all.

MB: What do you think makes somebody stay and somebody else want to go? What do you think it is?

JL: I think it's something you've got to enjoy. It's not for the money. I've got a guy I work with--he's the same way.

MB: You work with at Coopers?

JL: Yeah. He lives just down here below Gambier a ways. He does it just for the enjoyment. Cattle. Raises hay and some corn. The biggest thing I've got against your big farm operations, especially here in Knox County other than one particular farmer that I know of, is that most everybody's gone to no till. Where they don't have to go out and really do much work anymore. They want to go out, spray the fields to kill everything, use a no till planter of some sort, plant it and two or three days they're done. Wait for. . .

SL: The harvest.

JL: Wait for harvest. Nobody seems like they want to work anymore. Now, Sprays down here off of Sicamor Road, they still . . . he's an organic farmer. He won't spray anything. That's the way I am with my garden. I won't put anything poisonous on it.

MB: Do you think people are going to no-till just because they don't want to do the work or is there any benefit to the land or anything?

JL: There's no benefit to the land. It's harming the land. It's harming our drinking water. But I don't understand why the government's allowing it. Putting a lot of poison on the ground. A lot of it. (pause) The Sprays down here what they do they rotate their crops. That keeps building the soil and I think after a five year program you don't even have to put any fertilizer on it anymore. He uses an organic fertilizer. Most people just they don't even want to try it.

MB: Why do you think that is?

JL: Oh for one they like to put out, at least what I see as just put corn after corn after corn in the same field year after year. When you do that you're taking nutrients out of the field and not putting anything back. Where, like, if you rotate. . .Sprays rotate with clover. Clover hay puts a lot of nutrients back in the soil. It puts the nitrogen back and I think you get some phosphorous back. And what they do, they plant two years of hay and then the following year they put corn, no beans, then corn, then wheat then back to two years of hay. When you plant your wheat you plant it in the fall. The next spring you put your clover seed on the ground. It doesn't have to be tilled in. You can put it right on the top it'll work itself in. Seed down so once you take the wheat off you've got new clover hay growing underneath of it. So you actually use the wheat as a cover crop for your grass to get started. If you don't have a cover crop the sun'll kill the young clover.

MB: Seems to me it makes a lot of sense to rotate the crops like that. But I guess if you're going for cash crops then. . .

JL: That's what it is. I've never tried it and I know Alva's not interested in it but Spray down here he claims that he can have as good a yield on his corn as the farmers that are putting all the chemicals on. And he doesn't have the cost of the chemicals. Chemicals are expensive. Very expensive.

MB: And don't you have to have somebody come out and take a look at the soil and decide what chemicals would be best?

JL: Well, you do that yourself. What you do you have to take a soil sample and take it in and they'll test it and send the results back to you.

MB: And then you decide what to. . .

JL: They'll have on that paper what you need. And 'course then it's up to you how much you're going to put on. It's very expensive to go that route.

MB: Do you think a time will come when you want to do more with crops?

JL: Myself?

MB: Yeah.

JL: I'd like to.

MB: Do you think you would head the organic route?

JL: Well, I know I would. I don't put poison on the ground. It's catching up with us.

MB: Do you think the attitude about work has changed as well?

JL: Oh yeah. I can see it even with my job in town. My bosses. . .to me they're lazy. They don't want to work and they don't try to keep me work. It makes everybody lazy that way.

MB: And you think it's like that on the farm?

JL: For a lot of people. But you find a lot, you find some around that put out a lot of work. There's a guy over on the Howard-Danville Road, it's a \_\_\_\_\_ and he works from daylight to dark. They start at four in the morning.

MB: What kind of farm is it?

JL: Dairy. Milking cows.

MB: Do you think the hours are longer on a dairy farm?

JL: Oh yeah. Well, he's doing more work than one man can do. He's milking a hundred cows a day.

MB: By himself?

JL: He's got his wife and son helping him. They had a hired hand. I don't know if he quit or what but he's not there anymore. Start at four in the morning you can't get the cows milked 'till they're all done at eight. There's four hours. You've got to do that twice a day.

SL: You can't miss. (laughs)

MB: No I guess you can't.

JL: There's no skipping.

SL: No, "Oh I'll do that tomorrow," or do it three or four hours later.

MB: Do you work in town still?

SL: I just sub right now. I haven't done too much yet this year but I'm hoping maybe next fall maybe get something more permanent.

MB: Was that elementary school?

SL: Not too much. Mostly it's been high school. But I just like to get out sometimes.

MB: Well, I can't think of too much else that I was going to ask. Unless you can. . . . Do you have any stories from. . . Can you think of any stories about your parents farming? What was it like having your grandfather here all when you were growing up?

SL: I don't know. I guess just being raised with him you just consider him he's always there. We enjoyed him, I mean. He was funny. Real likeable. You grew up with him you just knew he was supposed to be there, I guess.

JL: You could sit and talk to him for hours. He was a nice old man.

SL: I remember my sister and I and a friend of ours we'd get together and we put on shows for him, you know, when we were just little kids. We'd put on shows and he'd just watch and do this and that and he'd pay us. Then we'd take our money, there used to be a store up here on 229, Kilroy's, we'd take our little pennies and go. You could buy penny candy at this time, you know. And we'd go about, spend our little pennies, that he'd pay to watch the shows. He did a lot of things with us.

MB: Did you want your kids to grow up near their grandparents? Was that a consideration?

SL: No. I don't know. Just happens, you know, that they did. They don't. . . well, his mom's still living but his dad died when David was 6 months. So he really didn't get to know him. So he really didn't know him and then none of them were born when Gramp died were they? So he didn't know them at all. I think that sometimes keeps them going. (tape off for a bit) And I forget he'll kind of watch them here and I'll watch them if they're down in here. I kept looking at that one and she was laying down and she'd get up and she'd lay down. I'd get my binoculars and check her.

MB: Do you have to kind of stay far away when they're . . . ?

SL: Not necessarily, no.

JL: No.

SL: They're pretty tame. But anyway, I think we did lose that calf, but it's come out backwards. The feet were coming first.

JL: You mean the back feet.

SL: The back feet, yeah. Usually it's the head and the front feet.

JL: The feet do come first--the front feet.

MB: If the back feet are coming out first what can you do? Can you do anything or do you have to have a vet?

SL: If you get a head of time you can call 'em out. If like during the middle of the night or something you just can't get 'em. If it's during the day you can watch 'em and notice 'em. We had that one we pulled out in the barn.

JL: That one year I pulled four or five.

SL: I know. We had her in the barn and I felt so sorry for her 'cause, you know, you can tell when she's having a contraction she, "Nnnnnhhhh" and then we'd pull and pull and you'd think that'd just kill her.

JL: You get in there and you put twine around the calf's front feet and you may have to reach back in and just feel to get a string around her feet and get it on there and when she starts pushing you gotta pull at the same time. I've pulled hard enough it's cut the circulation off in my hand.

SL: You know when we were growing up that was a no-no. Soon as they look like they're having a calf we're not supposed to be around.

MB: Why?

JL: They weren't supposed to see it.

SL: That's something you don't see. But pulling that calf out of there I said it was really, I don't know. . .

JL: Well, you had never done it before.

SL: I'd never done it before. I've seen 'em born but I hadn't actually helped one do it. It was amazing, really.

JL: Now see Alva he wanted to call the vet. He did call the vet. I told him, I says, "Who needs to spend the money for a vet?" I said, "We can do that."

SL: He's going to do the same thing.

JL: So the next one that came along. . . I mean even though, even though those cows you can't pet 'em. They won't let you pet 'em. When they're having a calf you can usually do whatever you want with them.

MB: But right afterwards you have to leave them alone with their calf?

SL: They get a little more touchy.

JL: Yeah, it can be tricky. I've had them run me out.

MB: What do you mean?

JL: They'll come charging you. You best be moving. Yeah I pulled one out down here in this barn and the cow was she was too weak. She couldn't get up after the calf was born. And the next morning I went down to check her and I had to get her up and I think just a day or two after that, I mean, she was able to get up and around on her own. She tried to put me out of the barn. Yeah. That's when it's best to carry a big club. And there's places where you can hurt 'em. I mean not damage 'em but. . .

SL: They'll get the idea.

JL: They'll get the idea. And there's places that it won't bother 'em. Now the bull, you know how they got such a big head here on the top? You can hit him as hard as you want and you won't hurt him.

MB: Just hit him on the head?

JL: Might make him mad. But you hit him across the bridge of the nose and he'll pay attention to you. And that bull, he weighs over a ton.

SL: He's big. You've probably seen him outside when you went on the tractor.

MB: No, I didn't see him.

SL: You didn't see him with the cows?

MB: We really didn't go over there. It was too muddy . . .

SL: Oh yeah.

MB: So we didn't go right by the cows.

SL: Well he's. . . You don't think he's too big until you get up against him.

JL: 'Till you get a cow beside him.

SL: Oh it's just like here's the cow, here's the bull. He's just huge.

JL: Yeah he doesn't look that big. You get him beside a cow and you know the cows are weighing 11 or 1200 pounds.

SL: Then we had to get him in the barn. Was that last year we had to get him in?

JL: Yeah.

SL: 'Cause he had a foot problem and had to give him a shot. But he didn't mind it too bad I don't think. But that cow, she sure didn't want it. The cow. . .

JL: I never did give her a shot.

SL: Didn't you ever give her one?

JL: I got half of it in her.

SL: She was a mean old thing. She didn't want that shot.

JL: The bull, we bought it from Cassells. And Cassells they have good bulls. He halter breaks every calf.

MB: What does that mean?

JL: He takes 'em inside and puts a halter on 'em and leads 'em around.

MB: Every one?

JL: Every one he sells.

MB: So they're pretty calm?

JL: Tamed down. But like when we bought this bull we brought him home here and Alva put him in the barn. We just fed him in the barn for probably four months 'till it was time to turn him out. But to turn him out--you got to remember he's only about a year old--so they're pretty frisky. We had to bring him across the road and get him in with the cows. And we couldn't stop him. He took off down the road. He got to our house and went down the fence that way. Went down and ripped up my garden. And I went down to bring him back up and he was going to chase me. So I got in behind the tractor and he went on around. Well, whenever he went around the tractor, I had a hitch pin in my hand because I knew he was after me.

MB: What's a hitch pin?

JL: A pin, just a pin you use to hook up a wagon or a combine or whatever you're pulling. And on that hitch pin I got another little pin at the bottom to keep it from coming out. When I through the pin at him that little pin caught my finger and I didn't even hit him. So I picked up the hitch pin again and I pulled the little pin out. And I come clear up the hill there to the house and here he come back after me again. So I waited and I got a pear tree. I put the pear tree between us and he came around there and I threw that pin. I hit him right across the bridge of the nose. I hit him so hard it just rang. You know, I was able to drive him up the road then.

SL: He means business.

JL: But you take an animal like that. If you let 'em know that you're afraid, you're in trouble.

MB: Did you ever have any more trouble with him?

JL: Uh. . .

SL: Is he the one that bent the gate out here?

JL: No.

SL: Oh that was the other one. He was kind of a mean one.

JL: I really haven't had too much trouble with him since that. I've . . .

SL: He likes to play with the hay.

JL: Oh yeah. He's strong.

MB: What do you mean "play with it?"

JL: I'll take a bale of hay out and set it down and go to get off to put the rack over it. Shoot, he may have it half way down the hill before I get to it. I saw him one time. He got his head under a bale and actually lifted it off the ground.

MB: On his head?

JL: Yeah. He's strong. Now see, I don't have any trouble with him any more. In fact I can go up to him and just go like that--like I'm going to hit him--and he'll. . . . And it's kind of funny 'cause you know an animal that big. He can hurt me more than I can hurt him. But. . . I don't mind him being around me but I watch him.

MB: How 'bout with the boys? Do you worry about them getting too close?

JL: Oh, well I just as soon they didn't go over in the field without me around. Especially at calf time. We won't let 'em go out in the field when there calfs. Now I've been out with them. I'll go. I'll get out in cows when they're having calfs. They'll get used to me and they won't bother me. But they're real protective once they've got their new calfs. They don't like the deer around.

MB: What do they do to the deer?

JL: They'll chase 'em off. Our dog. . . they'll try to get her. But she's more of a pest sometimes. They can't catch her.

MB: Do you worry much about safety?

JL: In what respect?

MB: Like with the animals and your kids, or with the kids and any machinery.

SL: I don't like 'em around the machinery too much. Tractors and things. That always bothers me.

JL: Yeah, there's things they got to learn. Even me. I know how to work on the equipment, but there's things that are spring loaded and you got to watch what you're doing 'cause a spring can hurt you. For the most part, never get off and leave one running to see what's wrong unless you're just looking to see if it's a chain off or something like that. You never want to get your hand in there. Or your body anywhere where anything might turn. Things happen too fast. I like to keep power take off shields on.

MB: Do what?

JL: I like to keep the power take off shields on. Fact, I fixed one on Dad's bush hall last fall. They've got a telescoping shield that . . . like when you turn a corner that power take off shaft has to be able to pull in and out. OK. What they do on the outer side of that shaft they put a round shaft over it that if you were to run up and grab it like that that part will stop turning. Where the inside of it's still going. Well, if you don't have that shield on there, it's turning, it can get ahold of your clothes like that and before you know it you're wrapped up. You can ask Alva. It happened to him.

MB: Oh really?

JL: Yeah. He's lucky.

SL: That was a . . .

JL: Elevator, wasn't it? Wasn't it the elevator he was running?

SL: Corn?

JL: Yeah.

SL: Yeah. They were putting corn in the corn crib.

MB: What happened?

JL: Happened right down here. Well, he didn't have any clothes on.

SL: Yeah, it took 'em right off. Everything. (laughs) Everything was gone. The only thing that really they think saved him cause he had an old belt. It just broke. But if it wouldn't have been for that belt braking it would have taken him right on in with it.

JL: See that's what happens. If your clothes won't tare. . . like new pair of jeans.

SL: He's always in that old pair when he goes out.

JL: Well, it'll just wrap you up. Beat you to death.

SL: I don't like machinery. I just don't like it.

MB: It's kind of scary.

SL: Then the only thing I . . . like when they're running tractors with hay and stuff I'm always afraid kids will ride (?) 'cause you can't hear cars. And you know if they're just going they don't even, you know, they ride and they don't think. And that always bothers me--when the tractors are running. That's the only bad part.

MB: Little faces keep popping up in that window. (laughter)

SL: Two of 'em or one of 'em?

MB: They alternate.

JL: Now I finally went out and bought me a big tractor for these hills. She doesn't want to run it.

SL: That other one's bad enough. Now you've got one bigger than that one.

JL: It doesn't get pushed around on the hillside. I don't like getting pushed around. Get a big load of hay on the batter (?) it can push you.

MB: Really?



JL: Yeah.

MB: Like if the engine isn't powerful enough to pull it?

JL: Well, it's traction. Your tires'll brake loose. It'll get to shoving you.

MB: So your new tractor can withstand it?

JL: Yeah. I wouldn't call it new. Farmers can't afford to buy new equipment. See, I can work on things so I gave 3800 for it. But I probably put close to \$2000 in it.

SL: Parts aren't cheap.

MB: Do you have to get parts through a dealership?

JL: A lot of them you do.

MB: Where's the nearest one?

JL: For my tractor it's down close to Coshocton. That's the trouble any more it's what type of tractor you own where you're going to find the dealer. The only thing in Mt. Vernon right now is a John Deere and a Ford dealer.  
(end of tape)