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Sylvia E. Sowards

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ORAL HISTORY

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Date 8/2/74

Sylvia E. Swords
(Signature - Interviewee)

Beckley W. Va.
Address

Date 8/2/74

James E. Morrow
(Signature - Witness)



An Interview With

Sylvia E. Sowards

Conducted by

Karen Handley

August 8, 1974

KH: The person being interviewed is Sylvia Sowards. She lives on Route One, Balls Branch Road in Culloden, West Virginia. The date of her birth was September 29, 1901.

SS: O two, honey.

KH: Nineteen o two [SS: Uh huh.], and the date of the interview is August 8, 1974, and the interviewer is Karen Handley.

SS: Uh huh.

KH: Suppose we just start by, ah, you just telling me how life was when you were growing up on Coon Creek.

SS: Well, well, back in the early days, I like to think of the early days of my childhood as the good 'ole days. Since back in the early part of the 19th, ah, 20th century, back in the hills of Putnam and Lincoln Counties, which part of our farm layed in Putnam County and the other half in Lincoln County. Where I grew up mostly a farming community where families lived on, on farms on a small farm and made a livin' for their children from farming. Some were engaged in the timber industry to provide homes and shelters for their families and that's all. Children were taught to work and help their parents with necessary chores; after the day's work was done, cows were brought in from the pastures morning and night to be milked for our family use. Wood used for fuel to provide heat for cooking purposes and to heat the home during winter months mostly used in open fireplaces built of stone. To me it was, to me it was fun to watch the smoke sailing from the top of chimneys high in the air and disappearing into the open sky. Pollution then was no problem as there were few coal-burning factories then to pollute the air. Homes were scattered in the community. Horse and buggy and on foot was the only means of travelling to visit neighbors and attend church services on Sunday. If there were sick neighbors who needed help, always ready to give a helping hand. When school started in the month of September, children off to school, children off to school. Some walking a long distance to a one-room school, and one teacher had charge of all grades from first grade through the eighth grade. And, after school, children going home to do the chores that was required of them to do after, to do and after supper doing their homework the teacher assigned them to do in the course the next day. Fall months were usually very busy months. During, during, storing food for winter; apples to pick. Most farmers usually

raised a patch of sorghum which had to be cut and bladed and stripped, getting ready for the juice to be made into sorghum molasses. After neighbors would, often neighbors would visit the cane mill and observe the process of making sorghum at first hand, sorghum molasses. Many years have gone by so, but so many of the old farms have been abandoned and the hillsides have grown up in brush and the trees and most of the top soil washed away. Well, that's as far as I, now, you want, I better be careful, hadn't I? Is there anything more you.

KH: What year was that when, you know, you were growing up?

SS: Well, from 1902 until, I say, 1918. Then I started to school. I finished my grade, finished, I finished my grade, grade in a country school, and, ah, I attended Hurricane Normal School to prepare for teaching.

KH: They had a normal school there then?

SS: It was just an ordinary, just a school for teacher, your teachers that was planning on taking a state examination. That's the way they did back then. They just, and, ah, back then if you finished eighth grade and got your eighth grade diploma and took this state examination and made a passing grade, you could teach. No, no high school was required back then, back in the early twenties. But, I was two years before I began teaching up at Hurricane and down here, and then I took my grade and got old enough that I could teach.

KH: How long did you go to normal school?

SS: Well, it would only be about a six, maybe a six-week term, ah, ah, usually be in the spring, in the spring after the, after schools were closed the teachers would come in then and have these special schools to prepare teachers for the examination that would be coming up. And, I boarded with, ah, your grand, your great-grandparents, I guess, Jackson and Alice Burns. I boarded with them, and I think at that time your grandparents were planning on getting married because Roy came down to visit his mother's, and they had quite a conversation. They was, I think that was just in the planning stage (laughs), your grandpa and grandma. And, ah, he, he was going to live on the farm. They were living in Milton at that time your grandpa

KH: How many years were you a teacher?

SS: From 1920 to '26, six years.

KH: And, where was it you taught?

SS: I taught, ah, three, three years in, in Putnam County, three years in Lincoln County on Coon Creek, and one in Cabell County. I could stay at my home and, ah, work, ah, attend, I could stay at my home and, and teach at either one of these schools because it was in, in the surrounding area, you know. But during the winter when, when I taught at Upper Coon, I rode horseback. Later in the winter, I had to board down there (inaudible). The last one I taught was down here at the Hudson School. I rode horseback all the time that year. It was quite a little ways. And, I could stay home, you see, because we lived on top of the hill, you know, where Bill and Irene live and, you see (inaudible), and all these hollers (inaudible) headed up right, you know, not too far Panther Lick, Laywell, and Upper Coon. There just wasn't much difference in the distance between each of the schools where I taught. And, then the lower school and, ah, I taught the upper, upper school twice, you see, and stayed home, and then the lower school I rode horseback about three months, I guess, and then the last three months it were only a six month school term then. School would usually be out about the last of February or the first of March, and then the last three months I boarded down Upper Coon (inaudible). It was all interesting. I met up with a lot of nice people. During the month, during the month of August, they'd have, ah, a teacher's, ah, meeting at Marshall. We'd get to attend a week down there. That way we'd meet a lot teacher's from different places, and, ah, there would be instructors there would give you, to give you instructions, you know, on different methods of teaching and different subjects and things of that sort. And, that was all interesting, too. And, what did they call it? I forget just what they called it. But, every year it was in the month of August they have this weeks meeting for the teachers. They'd come from all, all different parts of the surrounding area, you know. Marshall wasn't as large then as it is now (laughs). It stood out a lot.

KH: What was your salary in those days?

SS: Let's see, salary. I think it was from about 70, \$70 a month

for the second, you see, I had the second grade certificate that first year and then the second, the second grade was \$70, and then when I finished, the last year I taught, I think it was maybe 85 or \$90. I just, didn't get a hundred, and they kept increasing, you know, as the years went by. Then you got, ah, extra pay for your teaching experience, you know, how many years. And, and Virgie, she was teaching, your Aunt Virgie Burns, the year I taught the Lower Coon Creek School, she taught the Upper Coon Creek School. We'd pass each other. Now, she lived down the Upper Coon; she'd come up the creek, and I'd be going down the creek (laughter).

KH: What were some of the methods you used in teaching?

SS: Well, we had recitation. They, each class, you know, would, his, have a method, a method for each class, first, second, and third grade readers. Second grade up to the eighth grade, they were the upper grades which consisted of the sixth, seventh, and eighth. And, the lower grades was from the, you might say from the first up to the fifth, and, ah, same way about history. I guess about they were probably in the fourth and fifth grade when the geography and history and, ah, of course, the lower grades from the first up to the third they wouldn't, I had to, class of their own, you know, I just sort of asked them questions about different things, about the state, and taught them the roman numbers and things like that that I thought they ought to know, but yet they wasn't old enough to learn (laughs). And, let's see, when they completed eight years, they complete the history and the geography. They tried to get over the biggest portion of school if they, and if they was the next year they would go back in the same book unless they got promoted to the higher grade, you see, say the fifth grade they would be promoted to the sixth grade then they would go in the higher history and geography and science book and things like that. There was quite a difference from where they had the grade schools now and each grade has his own, each teacher has his own grade. Now, is there anything here that you wanted to ask me? [KH: Ah.] If you've been taking notes, did you take notes of what you was going to ask me, if you take notes.

KH: Yeah, ah, did you ever have any problem like when you were teaching on grade, ah, interference from the other students or you couldn't get them to work on their whole, their work that

SS: Well, sometimes there would be a problem there that maybe the children, they would be, they would be, ah, they wouldn't be interested in what they were doing. They would be listening at the other class (laughs). And, ah, generally, we got along pretty well though. They were very well and did pretty well in their subjects like they were interested, and they would try to help each other. When they would come to the blackboard to work, well, they would help each other and cooperate. In their spelling, they would, ah, the class would line up. They gave head marks back then. The one that would receive, the ones that didn't miss any works they would get head marks at the end of the month, and then at the, they would get some kind of, I'd give them some kind of little gift because they'd made a good record in spelling.

KH: Did you have, ah, peer teaching? Ah, did you have peer teaching? You know, where, ah, one, the older students would help the younger students?

SS: Yes, yes, often times they would. They would help the younger ones, you know, and try to show him and made it easier, easier for him because when one teacher has all those you they had more of a problem that where, ah, each teacher has a separate grade. Each one has their own work schedule to get out, and, ah, you have all, you use about half the time to work out your own schedule where you have all grades.

KH: Did you ever have any problems getting supplies, you know, textbooks, and stuff like that?

SS: Well, sometimes we would but they would furnish, we had library books. Course they have high officials and things like that to purchase the library books, but they furnished equipment for the schools, chalk, and erasers, and things necessary, you know, to keep the school equipped.

KH: Ah, did the students use, ah, those little slates back then?

SS: A little slate? KH: Uh huh. Yes, they used the slates quite frequently, and, ah, sometimes they would, like sometimes they would drop their slates and break them, they'd smash. They, I think they finally ruled out the slates after so long a time, you know, in the later years you didn't see many slates. I don't know why, but you had to have the slates (inaudible)

rely on the slates. And, when I went to school, we used a lot of slates then. I don't remember too much about the slates; when I began teaching school, I don't remember if they had them or not.

KH: Ah, what were some of the methods, methods you used for teaching? Like, ah, did you have any particular way you taught them to read and write?

SS: Yes, we had that (inaudible). We had a penmanship books and everyday, you know, when you'd get those already, letters were already printed out and all you'd have them, you'd have them to recopy this work, and they got so they, and it had the arm movement and all like that that taught them a whole lot about it, about writing and, and spelling. Often times they would get, they'd get, make definitions to the work, have to give a definition to the words. And, ah, just about and arithmetic, of course, they had to know multiplication tables before they could, ah, do good in arithmetic. I'd line them, we'd have a class. I'd line them all up in one class and taught them the multiplication tables that way. Each day they would drill on these multiplication tables until they'd learn them. Sometimes forwards and backwards they would and when by the time they got through with their multiplication tables, they, they could multiply and divide without any problems much. I don't, I don't believe, though, they, ah, line them up now and teach them their multiplication. They have a class multiplication table class, and they'd have, they'd drill on them, you know, day and day and day until they'd learn them. I know I had to go up a long time before I learned them all.

KH: What sort of punishment did you use?

SS: Well, I mostly a little paddle (laughs). Not very, I never did have to punish very many. Mostly, I'd, they'd be standing on standing in the corner on the floor. I did punish these boys, though, that, ah, went down and got black on their face off an old iron (inaudible). Some fellow that lived down there, I think, talked them into it. They came back to school, and they couldn't get the black off after one of these, those old black pots you used on the stove outside of it, and, ah (inaudible) brother (inaudible), the one who has the insurance, ah (inaudible). And, I punished them, punish them, but I didn't punish them I don't think very much (laughs). Mostly

for leaving the school grounds without permission that was why I punished them. They went, left without permission.

KH: What was about the average size of each grade level?

SS: Let's see now, the grades, ah, well, now at school, the Hudson School was, I think, maybe averaged about, well, say about, on the average between six and eight, ah, grades, you know, the different classes cause I had the one up to the eighth, especially reading. Well, I had the reading up to the fifth grade, just had the fifth grade reading, but, ah, I'll say about eight, maybe. I'm just sort of guessing at it. I can't hardly.

KH: Did you ever have any of the students come back like, ah, say after the other grades had finished [SS: Uh huh.] they come back and do more studying like you'd supply them with material to study with.

SS: Yes, yes, sometimes they would send me materials, and I would have to pass it out to the children, you know, and I'd show them and instrxt them how, give, give them some information on how to get this material worked out; and they'd turn it back in. But, usually, now, I didn't get too much material to distribute among the children. It was mostly their own textbooks that they had.

KH: What kinds of games did the children play back then?

SS: The games they played, ah, well, they played base. That was, ah, where the team would line up, and I can't remember it, but they played base and then they played, ah, ah, ball game. Ball was the, was played. That was a game that there seemed like there was most, most interested in the ball game, and they went out and get two teams to bat, and they'd line up and see who could and see which side would win.

KH: Did boys as well as girls play?

SS: Yeah, boys and girls played together mostly. In some cases, course.

KH: Did they let the younger ones play like mixed ages?

SS: Yes, sometimes. Not the real small ones, but, ah, sometimes the bigger ones would play, you know. They would play and get along pretty well, but where they were too little they get little games off to theirselves they played. They didn't have too much playground there at Hudson to play.

KH: Did you have any equipment for them to play on outside, a swingset or?

SS: No, there wasn't, no was no, nothin' like that, just had.

KH: Did you ever use games to teach their lessons like, ah, say math? Play some sort of game to teach them.

SS: No, no, I understand what you mean, but I, I didn't, I didn't have, ah, any, ah, material, you know, to teach them that way. There is games now you can play to teach the little, especially the little, in the primary, in the primary grades. It's, it's quite different now from what it was back then. The children sometimes they had to go off a long ways to school, and they'd be tired when they'd get there and sometimes they'd come through the rain and their clothes maybe would be wet and sometimes their shoes.

KH: Did you ever, ah, did you assign homework?

SS: Uh huh, yes, uh huh. Often times I would give them homework to do. They, they would generally cooperate. They would generally come back with their work just about what I expected.

KH: Did you take any (inaudible) in the fact that they had most of them probably had a lot of chores to do?

SS: Yes, they did have a lot of chores to do when they got home because they were always country school, and they lived on farms and their parents would generally have a lot of things for them to do. That is during the fall months. Of course, in the wintere months they wouldn't have too much to do.

KH: Was that because of harvesting?

SS: Yes, harvest then would be over.

KH: You lived on a farm didn't you?

SS: Yes, I did. I was raised on a farm. It's been a pretty hard life and then I live on a farm practically ever since, practically all my life I lived on a farm, but, ah, I guess it's a pretty healthy place to live. A lot of hard work though.

KH: What was farm life like back then?

SS: Farm life, what was it like? Well, it was pretty dreadful. We, ah, we had to carry water. We lived on top of a hill where everything was to come up hill, had to come up hill. Of course, Bill and Irene could tell you that. They live there now, and, ah, of course, we had, we had a well drilled sometime after we moved there. We had to carry water a long ways. After we got this well drilled, instead of up over the hill. I think Bill and Irene now maybe got a cistern. They had started to build a cistern, and they never did get it completed. They didn't strike any water, and they started to dig the well. They didn't strike water so they just give it up. But later, in later years then when he tried to make a cistern out of it, but it still didn't hold water to run the water in the cistern off the house roof, but it didn't hold water, and, ah, then they just give it up. I think Bill and Irene completed it. They got cinder, ah, cement blocks and walled it inside the cement blocks and made a real success out of it. They had enough water then to run their bathtub, bathroom, and do her laundry, and, ah.

KH: How many members were there in your family?

SS: How many? There were, ah, I had five, five brothers and one, my parents, and the five brothers, and one sister. And, we lived on, we lived on a mail route. We didn't have to carry our, we didn't have to go very far to get our mail. But, ah, then we had, ah, a nice orchard. We had, ah, different kinds of fruits in our orchard, apples, and peaches, and grapes. There was one thing I used to enjoy in the fall of the year was to get out and gather walnuts, and wild grapes, and things of that sort. Hazel nuts. Anymore you don't see any of that. It doesn't grow anymore. I don't know what's happened to the walnuts. We used to gather a lot of walnuts in the fall of the year and wild grapes and wild plums.

KH: Did your dad farm

SS: Yes, he farmed for a living. Back in the country then there wasn't many people that weren't in the public works. The gas, when the gas, ah, field opened up back of Mason County then people kind of left some of them the farm, some of them went to work for the gas, went to hauling, you know, for the gas company, team, team of horses and wagon. They'd haul just, ah, they'd haul the pipe from over here Depot at Culloden back into Lincoln County, and, ah, it was all hard work, but that was back in the teens, back before world war, before and during World War I was when they opened up the fields back over in there on (inaudible) back in there and that gave people then extra money. Some of them kind of quit farming and went to working in the gas fields and, ah, gee, I don't know. I think maybe they drilled about that time one on your Grandpa Burns' place down on the farm right about that time. I think he did quite a bit of hauling in the gas field, too, cause I've heard Alice tell about it, and your grandmother, that would be your great-grandmother, she kept borders and things like that. He would, ah, your grandfather, your great-grandfather he would, ah, he had a car. I guess he, he owned the first car maybe that everybody in our neighborhood and he would go out here at the Culloden Depot and get people, you know, that come up on the train. He made several trips to get people (inaudible). It's only about four miles I think back there. I think it was four miles from the Culloden Depot over back of the Coon Road, you know, where you go over, did you know that three counties joins there? You see, I was raised about where the three counties join (inaudible). I don't know how far it would be from out there where Bill and Irene live, did you know? [KH: No, I don't know.] About quarter mile, would it be over mile, quarter mile you reckon? I believe it would. [KH: I don't think it would be that far, just, just.] Just about quarter of a mile, wouldn't it, out there, and, ah, that's close to the line (inaudible) on goes into Lincoln County on Coon Creek and the other side of our house in, built in Putnam County. Now, the wire I'm talking about in Putnam, but the wire off of the slope, you know, on the east side of our house in Putnam County.

SIDE TWO

KH: Do you remember the working bees?

SS: Uh huh, I remember. I very well recall when, ah, the farm people use to get together and have in the fall of the year, you know, it would be a busy time and children in school couldn't do much else to help their parents, and they would, ah, families would get together; and but men, they would participate in shucking corn, stripping cane, and like that to help out. And, the women, they would come and they would probably have a quilting party. There would be a quilting, and they would all gather around quilting frames and do the quilt and course their dinner, they always but the fix there. Like some would bring their lunch, some would bring dinner with them, and some, you know, but mostly the one that was having the gatherin' would fix and prepare the food, and everybody always seemed to get along and be happy.

KH: What are some, some of the things that you worked on?

SS: Well, quilted mostly. The women would do the quilting and maybe, ah, then apple peelings that was something else. They'd gather in, in the fall and when they went, when they go to make the apple butter, they'd, ah, took quite a few apples to make a very large kettle, and, ah, they would gather in and help peel the apples and mostly at night, though, they'd do this mostly at night, though, they'd have when the young people to come and help do that. Peel the apples to get ready to make apple butter the next day. And, the women always appreciated that because it would take an awful lot of time, you know, to peel apples for a good batch of apple butter. And, ah, then after, after the apples were finished, then they'd play games. You know, games that you never hear of anymore. They'd play, ah, let's see, if I can think of maybe some of the games. One was getting married (laughs). They'd line up, and I remember the little song they used to say. They all just, just in fun, you know. Ah, I was trying to think of some of the other games that they played. Sometimes they would play thimble, and you've got to guess the thimble, and the one that would guess the which hand the thimble was in would get water, a thimbleful of water thrown in your face. Do you remember that game? And, ah, seems like it has been so long. You don't see those games any more, but I can't

recall, but, ah, ah, I remember the song they sung when they'd get married, they'd say, they'd say, "Yonder stands a jolly pair, both joined in heart and hand. He wants a wife, and I know she wants a man. Then they'll get married, if all can agree; so they're marching down the banner. Oh, how happy they will be." And, you see, they would line up on both sides, and then the couple that was getting married would go down the center, and when they'd get to the other end, they would say, "Now they are married, and since it must be so, away to the war this young couple must go. Away to the war join the couple by raising of her hand." That is something with a very strong wind. But, they had a lot of fun. Then post office was another game that was sort of kissing party (laughs). I bet your Grandma Ethyl remembers that.

KH: Did you all ever get together and make catsup?

SS: Oh, yeah, candy, but mostly, not candy, it was mostly sorghum molasses taffy, that was what it was. You know, people, most everybody then, farmers, had a patch of cane and taffy, you didn't buy too much candy because we didn't have too much money to buy with, but they made taffy, and then they had taffy pullings. Did you ever see taffy made out of boy, it was a sticky mess. And, then popcorn balls was something else everybody made popcorn, they'd pop the corn, make the taffy and make then work the taffy into the popcorn and then make the balls. Now, that was a lot of fun in that, of course, it was kind of a sticky mess.

KH: Ah, when it came to workin in the, ah, you know, around the crops and stuff like that, did the girls help in the fields just the same as the boys?

SS: Oh, quite a lot. Except they didn't do the plowing because you had to cultivate, you know, with the hoe. They didn't do much for us, but they would get out and cut the weeds and hoe the corn, you know, and tobacco, and the garden. And, then they'd help gather in the fall cut tobacco a lot of times they would, then, well, of course, then it was different when they were in school. And then there was the hay crop would come in. That was, ah, quite a job. People back then, they didn't do much bailing. Mostly, they had to put it in sacks, you know. We'd sack the hay, and, ah, but never did have room

in the barn to put it. They wasn't any hay bailers back then. And, then people back then used to raise wheat, but that harvest, wheat harvest come off in the summer months. I think it was about June or July, maybe that the oats and wheat had to be harvest, and then it was thrashed; the thrashing machines would come through the country and, ah, they was not very many thrashing machines. You just had to wait your turn come and, ah, thrash grain, and that was always a lot of fun to watch the grain come out of those big thrashers.

KH: I remember my great aunt telling me about that.

SS: Yeah, Preacher Cremeans had one down there (inaudible). I think he was the last that maybe did our thrashing. And then the hay, the children like to play on the haystacks and tear it up, of course, but course they had to sack the hay then to keep the water from (inaudible). And, ah, the hay, the grain, the oats course was saved for the cattle, but the wheat was taken to the mill, ah, to what they call a grist mill. Sometimes they would grind it up into, ah, what they call whole what, ah, and then they'd make bread out of it and call it brown bread. Course they had to get the husks out of it, but you had to sift through a lot of it to get the husks out, but, ah, it had a different taste when it was ground up like that. Then sometimes they would take their wheat to the mill there at Milton, Harshbarger's Mill, and, ah, ah, traded it for flour. They traded food for (inaudible) of flour for a bushel of wheat. That's the way they did it, wheat, but then farmers got so they quit raising wheat. It was too much of a job to crate it, and then to get a thrashing machine, you know, a thrashing machine is hard Up there, the farm we lived on for so long, 21 years, the Parkins Farm, ah, that old man had thrashing machines. He'd go places, you know, all over the country and thrash, thrash the grain.

KH: What was church like in those days? Was it much different from today?

SS: Well, the only thing they, they didn't have the cars. They would go to church in the mostly they didn't ride horseback. Most people walked or they'd go in a wagon, driven a wagon, driven, a wagon driven, pulled by horses, and there would be buggies. And seems like, ah, they would, people back then were more sociable. People would go home, you know, church

afterwards, visit each other after church. They'd go home with them, and they'd visit, you know, maybe until that night, and they had meetings, they had meetings at the church. They called them, they didn't call them revivals then they called them protracted meetings. Sometimes they would last maybe a week or two weeks and people from homes around the country would attend. They serve food, and that's how they got people into the churches.

KH: Did you have church as often in those days?

SS: Well, about once a month they have a pastor, about once a month, you know, the kind and, ah, that he pastored this church, and, ah, but they'd have Sunday School about most every Sunday in the churches. We attended the church at Laywell, Sunday School at Laywell and then on Sunday, he, once a month met on weekends, Saturday night and Sunday. The preacher would come sometimes they'd lived quite a little ways off. They'd have to come in by train if you'd be lucky enough to get a pastor that lived quite a ways off. I remember the Laywell preacher. He lived at, ah, seemed like to me it was Ona, ah, he'd come up on the train. And, his daughter I think has a beauty shop or did have at Milton. And, ah, she lived at, she first married Johnson. He died, and then seems like she married a Forgey or Fogey. Is there somebody in Milton by that name that has a beauty shop there? She did it a long time about her second husband, you remember? [KH: Huh uh. I don't remember.] Anyhow, she was, she was the pastor, Preacher Bostic's daughter. I remember

KH: Were the preacher's in those days were they, ah, trained, say seminary trained?

SS: You mean were they trained to do their special work? Well, mostly, not too many of them. Most of them, they were it was just a gift, they just took up on their own and studied the Bible till they felt like they was qualified. But, they did have to pass an examination if they qualified, you know. It had like a quota teacher's or something. I don't just remember how it was, but, ah, they had what they called had an ordained. That's just the way they did it. There used to be church over on Coon Creek at that schoolhouse. Arthur Potter used to have Sunday School at that upper schoolhouse on Coon Creek back when his last children were young, ah,

growing up, and I don't know, of course, Arthur, his brothers and sisters, they were on over. I, they went there to Balls Branch, you see, they lived on Balls Branch. Betty's mother was living, and, ah, now, I'm not sure, his mother. The church here at Balls Branch, I think, was built. I guess (inaudible) on Balls Branch, of course, she died 1900 up there where Lottie McGinnis lives, and I think that church was built before that. I know they organized it up there in the old Balls Branch Schoolhouse so I don't know where Bertha McGinnis lived. That's where, and it seemed to me like Arthur's mother cooked for the boarders, cooked for the men that was working on that, on the Balls Branch Church. Seems to me like that I heard them say that, and it was in the, I know where they held the meeting in old Balls Branch Schoolhouse. She did, they organized it there. She was living then, but I don't know how long it was until this church down here was built at Balls Branch. I meant to ask Alice sometime if she remembered it. Alice is old; she was about 15 years old when her mother died. She could remember a lot.

KH: What did you all do about doctors?

SS: Well, doctors was, they lived a long way, I mean, quite a little ways, ah, but they just, well, back in the early teens, I think, there were telephone installed, you know, they called it country telephones. And there would be 16 parties on one line, ah, I mean, 16-party line. But, ah, people could, ah, call, you know, all that was on their line, say number seven or number eight, 16, they could call. But when they needed a doctor, they would call, they'd have to, they'd have to call Hurricane, you know, call the switchboard and have them give them the doctor's, the doctor's office in Hurricane or Milton. And, ah, they would come out in the country and ride horseback. I remember that's about the only way they could travel especially before the cars came into existence.

KH: What did you all do when you couldn't get a doctor, and it wasn't serious enough to get a doctor?

SS: Well, we had most of them a lot of the old, elderly, elderly people, they, lot's of them, lot's times they had home remedies they'd use for colds and different things. They would just use home remedies. If they had a bad sore throat or something like that, and, ah, our neighbor, Mrs. Hardin, up there was

awful good hand at fixing up home-made remedies.

KH: What were some of those remedies?

SS: Well, she had one remedy she called, ah, let's see, fever vine. It was some kind of a little vine that grew on a rock, and she gathered that in the fall of the year and, ah, have it ready. And, make a tea out of in the fall, you know, for a cold that fever vine. We lived up on Charles Creek up there when we first went housekeeping and Mrs. Hardin, she was our neighbor. (Inaudible) would get a letter, and she would come clear over and bring it and then, ah, they used to gather the, the tea, make the tea, you know, and things. And, ah, ah, this old field, some called it a field blossom in a pasture field; they used to grow in the pasture field, and they make a tea out of that, and that was good. And just different kinds of herbs, you know that would be used. And, ah, generally, pretty, I don't remember if ever calling a doctor when they couldn't come. They was just, you know, get to the patient as soon as they could. Course it would kind of take them a while to get there when it was very serious if it was necessary to have a pat--have a doctor.

KH: Ah, my great aunt used to tell me about, ah, there was a wave of diphteria. I guess it was in the teens. [SS: Uh huh.] And, ah, they called in a Doc Ball, but I don't think he was, ah, you know, he wasn't educated as a doctor [SS: Yes, uh huh.], didn't go to school.

SS: Uh huh, yes, you mean back when they had the diphteria. [KH: Uh huh.] Yes, now, that has who told you that? [KH: My aunt.] Oh, yes, oh, yes, your aunt, well, ah, aunt who? [KH: Faye.] Oh, yes, yes, oh, yes, she remember that, yes, I know her mother. They would get the medicine and, ah, make different kinds of medicine and cough syrup. Lot's of times they would sort of get syrup that was used for coughing, this diphteria medicine. That was the most serious disease back when I was growing up. A most serious kind of sore throat. It was, it was real contagious. Sometimes if it, if it was let out and then if it was let go on too long, it would get into your blood stream, the effects of it would. That would cause trouble with the heart, but I think those old-time diseases just about you don't hear too much of them anymore. Small pox.

KH: Have you ever attended any county fairs?

SS: Yes, ma'am, I did, with my grandfather when I was 13 years old. I had never been to a fair, a county fair, and, ah, he, grandfather was always interested in picking up places, you know, of interest to show us things that where our parents didn't have too much time, ah, to go and, ah, my, ah, grandmother was from Ohio State; and, ah, they were married in Ohio and then came to West Virginia to live, and she likes to go back. My grandparents like to go back to Ohio and visit her family and attend these fairs, the Lawrence County Fair at Proctorville. When I was 13 years old, he, ah, invited me to go with them, and we went, ah, ah, went on a train, boarded the train here at the Culloden Depot. And, ah, from there went to Guyandotte and rode across the river in a ferry boat over to Proctorville and attended the fair one day. And, ah, and there we met several of my grandmother's relatives there, and, ah, it was held in the month of August. Ah, it was an annual things, but we, ah, got to see many things at the fair that I had never seen before. Many people, and, ah, this a lot of livestock, and cattle, and the horse races, and so many different things on display that I had never seen before. Canned goods, different canned goods. But, I saw the brass band was the first I had ever seen, and I heard, I heard the band play the "Yellow Rose of Texas." I thought that thrill of my life to hear that play. And, during the time the county fair was going on down at Ashland, Kentucky, and that was 1916 and so my grandfather the next day, he wanted to go down there, and, ah, so he got the streetcar there in Huntington, rode the streetcar from Huntington on down Ashland, Kentucky and attended the fair there. And, that was a great, the streetcar ride was a great thrill for me because I hadn't been used to riding streetcars. Rode it from Huntington down. Looking around at the various things on display. They had practically the same things they had up at the Proctorville Fair, ah, the horse races, and the cattle, livestock, and different things like that. And, ah, my, my grandfather while we were looking around he ran onto his Uncle Cal Roberts from Portsmouth, Ohio. He hadn't, hadn't met for several years, and, ah, it was his mother's brother, and, ah, he introduced me to his Uncle Cal Roberts. So, he looked around a while at the merry-go-round. He wanted to take me a ride, he wanted me to take a ride with him on the merry-go-round, and so I did, and I accepted the invitation.

We all enjoyed the day, but that was the last time I ever attended the fair. When I came back home to my home, I had many pleasant memories long to be remembered of my trip to the fair.

KH: What is the farthest that you've travelled?

SS: Well, the farthest I have travelled (inaudible). Well, I say Richmond, Indiana, was the farthest I have travelled. My husband and I were married in 25, and we went out there, ah, that summer to, ah, just to view the country and look around at the pretty scenery. And, ah, we were kind of interested in a farm, and we attended an old farm sale that was given. An old farm sold by these old people had passed away, and that was interesting, but, ah, when we came back, we were gone just about a week, we were visiting friends there, my husband had friends there mostly. We went another, another trip I've taken was to visit my sister-in-law, ah, just outside. She's working in the Veteran's Hospital of Dayton, Ohio, and, ah, she had, ah, ah, she had served during World War I as a Red Cross Nurse in, ah, 1917 to 19, 1916 to 1918. She had finished her nurses training, 1916, and she entered military service. And, the World War I was coming up then, and, ah, back then, you know the Kiser was trying to take Europe, and she joined and to do military duty and work in hospitals, and they sent her to Jefferson Barracks, Missouri. And, ah, she, ah, worked there, but when she signed up for military service, duty, she signed up for service wherever needed, and, ah, that was where she signed up, and, ah, so while she was there taking care of soldiers, ah, this Spanish Influenza broke out in 1917, 1917, no, 1918. And, ah, there were many of the soldiers, boys, coming down with this influenza, and, it took a lot of attention and, ah, a lot of care to take care of the soldiers. She said they were dying there just like hogs with the colic, and they, ah, but she still had plans and intentions of going to France. That's where she thought she might get to go, take care of the boys over there, but they paid her. She, ah, and signed, they said you signed up for service where you, wherever needed. She said, I did, but she, they figured that she was needed there to take care of the soldier boys. And, ah, they, they didn't there weren't too many nurses in charge, but, ah, they had an awful lot of patients that died with that influenza. And, it was hard to get medicine. She said sometimes the nurses would spend their own money to buy the medicine to

treat the soldiers with. But, after the war was over, it ended in 1918, she came back home and, ah, worked a while in hospitals, worked in hospitals here in her home state till 1932, and she wanted to go back and enter in the service for the government and, ah, so, she, ah, signed up again; and they sent her to Dayton, Ohio, to work in the hospital up at the Veteran's Hospital at Dayton, Ohio. But, she stayed there then from '32 until '52, and she had taken care of World War I veterans when she first went there. And, I think there were some Spanish-American War Veterans there, too, at that time. And, then World War II came on after World War I World War II, and, ah, she's taken care of those boys, treated the sick and the wounded and, ah, worked 1932 until 1952, and then, and then she retired from the, she was, ah, she was about 66. She served world war, during World War I and then 20 years later on, and she retired, I think it was 1952 she retired, and, ah, she, ah, came back down to West Virginia. She said she had her, bought a home here in Barboursville. She said, that she could go to the, ah, nurse's home there and stayed there, but she said she wouldn't be happy, and she wanted to come back here so she could be among her people. And, ah, so she came back to Barboursville, and she was, was still, she's still living at the age, she's almost 90 years old now. But, ah, well, for a long time after she went to Dayton she worked in the Veteran's, she worked on the TB Ward taking care of TB patients, and, ah, she said so many of the younger nurses would come down with that TB, and so she was one of the older nurses that they let her work on, on that ward for a long time. She worked on TB ward and then finally they transferred her to the to another, just a general, another hospital. I guess another (inaudible) Dayton Veteran's, just, at that time it was almost as big as Culloden, the whole thing was. And, ah, they have a huge cemetery there where the soldier boys was buried, and it would be a interesting place to be.

KH: Would you like to tell about your New Martinsville trip?

SS: Yes, now that was, ah, that was the farthest. I should have told that first, shouldn't I? Well, anyhow, I guess it was, ah, 1925, ah, I had a girlfriend at from living in New Martinsville that used to teach school down in our county, home county, Putnam County, and, ah, she invited me to her home up there to visit her at New Martinsville. And, ah, after, let's see, he school closed in '24 about a year after

she taught school here and went back home, I went to visit her, and, she, ah, suggested that we go up to the visit the penitentiary up at Moundsville. And, I see, I wanted to see all I could while I was gone. Should I tell about the boys getting out? Well, I the train, the B & O Train ran up the Ohio River and went on the train route. When I was up there, sometimes during the week, I was there was boys from, ah, from the time I stayed there from Huntington jail was taken to the New Martinsville, taken to Moundsville to be placed in the penitentiary. And, the train stopped at New Martinsville on, on the way to Moundsville, on the way to Moundsville and, ah, ah, take, to take on water, and, ah, some of these, ah, two or three of the boys that were on the train from Huntington escaped and the driver couldn't locate them while the train had stopped. And so these people I were visiting, ah, Morris Daugherty was my friends brother, Morris Daugherty, ah, had bloodhounds and maybe they could chase the prisoners down. Well, but if the boy who had been out in training, out training the bloodhounds with, with this Morris Daugherty boy took the bloodhounds, and the Daugherty boy wasn't home, and they chased the prisoners from the train over to the river, and there they learned that was as far as the bloodhounds could go. And, they, ah, somebody was working on the Ohio side, and they had crossed the river over on the West Virginia side, ah, in a boat, and these boys had found that they had taken this boat and went down the river in the boat. So that was the last they ever heard of the boys. But, anyhow, they contacted up at Moundsville, the guards up there, they up there, and they, so she suggested we go so he, the girls, Louise, and go up there on the way to school and stop off; so we did. And, this guard introduced us, she introduced us, you know. And, well, he didn't really care about the bloodhounds, and he had taken great interest in us because the bloodhounds, you know, and he took us all through the different places, different departments added into the big dining, huge kitchen where they made the bread, the bakery where they made the bread, and then different, and then where they cooked different kinds of food in the kitchen and big dining room where they served. And, ah, they took us into the, ah, they took us into the, ah, autatorium where on Saturday evening they had watched the moving picture shows if they were good. And, ah, on Sunday then they have their church services in that same autatorium, and they had the big pipe organs there. Somebody played it. I forget who played it, some, I believe some of the inmates maybe played it. Im not

sure, but, ah, that was then after the, there the, he had taken us up into the cell block where on kept the second tier, and he walked us out through the aisle out through that hall on each side of the cells, and he showed us where they had confined that is the real bad ones. And, this Daugherty girl, and you could turn one latch and the whole thing would lock or unlock. The girl that was with me, ah, she wanted to see how it would see, to be in a cell block in a cell, and he turned the key, he turned the lock, and that locked her up (laughs). She thought that was fun, but it wouldn't have been funny if she would have to stay there. And, after that, we came downstairs, and then he took us out on the outside in the yard and taken, taken us to the, ah, ah, where they have a flower nursery there where they take care of the flowers, ah, flower house and showed us different kinds of flowers some of the prisoners looked after that had had after the flowers, and let's see, different things. They, they were, ah, they were playing games. The men, the prisoners, were playing games out on the lawn. It was a huge place. And, but he showed us everything except the deathhouse. He didn't show us that. That's where they put them to death. At that time, they had a gallows; they would hang them, but I think maybe later on they, ah, used, ah, electric method. But, we didn't get to see that building. We came out of there, we had a lot of things to think about.

