

Marshall University

## Marshall Digital Scholar

---

0064: Marshall University Oral History  
Collection

Digitized Manuscript Collections

---

1973

### Oral History Interview: Mrs. J. C. Bradbury

J. C. Bradbury

Follow this and additional works at: [https://mds.marshall.edu/oral\\_history](https://mds.marshall.edu/oral_history)

---

#### Recommended Citation

Marshall University Special Collections, OH64-156, Huntington, WV.

This Book is brought to you for free and open access by the Digitized Manuscript Collections at Marshall Digital Scholar. It has been accepted for inclusion in 0064: Marshall University Oral History Collection by an authorized administrator of Marshall Digital Scholar. For more information, please contact [zhangj@marshall.edu](mailto:zhangj@marshall.edu).



ORAL HISTORY

GIFT AND RELEASE AGREEMENT

I, MRS. J. C. BRADBURY, the undersigned, of  
CHESAPEAKE, County of LAWRENCE, State  
of OHIO, grant, convey, and transfer to the James E.  
Morrow Library Associates, a division of The Marshall University Foundation,  
Inc., an educational and eleemosynary institution, all my right, title,  
interest, and literary property rights in and to my testimony recorded on  
APRIL 20, 1973, to be used for scholarly purposes, including  
study and rights to reproduction.

JCB  
initial

Open and usable after my review.

\_\_\_\_\_  
initial

Closed for a period of \_\_\_\_\_ years.

\_\_\_\_\_  
initial

Closed for my lifetime.

\_\_\_\_\_  
initial

Closed for my lifetime unless special permission  
is gained from me or my assigns.

Date April 20, 1973

J. C. Bradbury  
(Signature - Interviewee)

Rt. 3, Box 183c  
Address

Chesapeake, Ohio 45619

Date April 20, 1973

Stephen Skut's  
(Signature - Witness)



An Interview With:

Mrs. J.C. Bradbury

Conducted By:

Stephen Sheets

Place:

Cheaspeake, Ohio

Date:

April 20, 1973

Transcribed By:

Brenda Perego

Mrs. J.C. Bradbury

Interview with Mrs. J.C. Bradbury, Route 3, Box 183c, Chesapeake, Ohio. Conducted by Stephen Sheets on April 20, 1973. The interview was done at Mrs. Bradbury's home in Chesapeake, also present at the interview were Mrs. Bradbury's granddaughters, Mrs. Patricia Sheets and Mrs. Glada Fleure.\*

SS: Okay Berry, tell us about the first Christmas you remember.

Mrs. B: The first Christmas I remember I was 4 years old. We was living in Ohio and making preparations to move to California and a few nights before Christmas my father was outside a lookin' at a full moon, a very bright moon. Come inside and picked me up and took me outside to look at it. I'd been asking for a doll with yellow hair and he told me to look at that moon, that that was the color of hair my doll would have. And I got the yellow-haired doll for Christmas. Well after that we was gettin' ready to go on the trip. We went to bid goodbye to my father's parents, my grandparents. They were German, couldn't speak English and I didn't have no conversation with them for I was too small. And my aunt that lived with them picked me up and took me in the dining room where there was a built-in large cabinet that held fruit and glass jars and told me to pick up a glass jar of cherries, and she said, "We'd been keepin' them for you because we knew you liked them and it's the last can we had."

SS: When you were 4 years old must have been in 1887 then, right?

Mrs. B: Well I was born in '83, February 15.

SS: Well tell us about your trip to California.

Mrs. B: Well I don't remember much about the trip. I expect it was a long tiresome trip at that time. And we, uh, we went to Santa Barbara which is in the southern part of California and,uh, we wasn't in the town but

was in the fruit country, with all kinds of fruit and awfully large vineyards, very large vineyards as far as you could see of grapes. And, uh, my father was a cabinet maker, a carpenter, and uh, I don't remember how many years we lived in California, I went to school 1 year there. Then they started to build a town up at Portland, Oregon and my father decided he wanted to move up there. Well we moved up to Portland, Oregon. I don't remember just how long we lived there but my father and mother separated and we stayed there. My mother worked and my sister was much older than the rest of us she looked after the children and, uh, my grandfather, my mother's father lived in Ohio and he wasn't satisfied with us being that far away, nobody to look after us but our mother and he sent for us to come home to his place. Well we come back to Ohio and come on the North Pacific Railway, which was the longest route if we'd a knowin' it. On the train, we was on the train 9 days and nights and we come into Toronto, Canada through one of the coldest fogs I ever saw, nothing but ice, there wasn't a thing on the streets, no vehicle of no kind. People could barely walk and it was just a glare of ice. We stayed overnight there, came on down to Gallipolis, Ohio and my grandfather who lived at Crown City, li-no started to get that right, lived at Crown City, owned a large portion of land there come to Gallipolis by riverboat the only way you could travel to the Ohio side unless you crossed the river on, on the train and met us at Gallipolis. Brought us down to Ohio to his home and we lived there till we were almost all grown. My mother worked, she worked for Dr. Lou Williams my, her first cousin, my grandfather's sister's boy that wouldn't be right, you'll have to change that. And, uh, well went to school till I was 16 years old that was as old as I could go to school, we didn't have no high school. We, uh, didn't live too far from the school because my grandfather's property went to the edge of town where he had sold it off on the riverfront where the town's built. And, uh, at that time my aunt's sister lived in Huntington and needed somebody to

help her with her children and stay with her until she got able to look after um again. And they let me come down here to stay with um till she was able to do without me. I don't remember too much about Huntington then because I didn't get out. But they wasn't much town there. I can remember that they lived at 18th street and the only thing, the only walk they had from downtown if you was downtown or went downtown, from 20th street downtown or back up as far as 20th street was nothing but plankwalk, just plankwalks. Marshall College was just the Old Main building in that building. John Marshall's monument was out in front, just like it is today. After I, after I left my aunt's sister I went to work downtown in a restaurant. I'd walk up 18th street and I'd have to walk on that plankwalk, that's all they was, they was nothing else there.

SS: How much of, uh, Huntington was there then?

Mrs. B: Then, at that time, (pause) that time I didn't stay very long till I left and went back to my grandfather's house and didn't leave there for a while on account of my grandmother's family, the girls married and moved away and she had no help. I stayed there until my mo-, till my 2 brothers went to work down at Coal Grove, and my mother left and went down there to keep house for um. I went back down there then after that I went to work at Klutz (?) House in Ironton, the only hotel there which was a very small place and, uh, as a waitress. And I don't remember how long I worked there but, uh, after that I come back to Huntington to work and I went to work out at the State Hospital. Then Huntington had streetcars run by electric, the only transportation they was. And, uh, there was nothing below 8th street only, uh, one hospital on 8th street and 4th avenue and one other building I can't remember what it was and one, uh, what is it, uh, . .

GF: Funeral home.

Mrs. B: Funeral home. Well that's what I say, you've got to

help if you can. One funeral home and the rest from there on out as far as I remember they was no courthouse, all the rest it was corn field from 4th avenue on out as far as I went at that time. And, uh, but not too long after that while I was still there on that job they started to build the courthouse and they was quite a few houses up on 4th avenue. Quite a few up in the east end along 18th and 20th street. I remember on 20th street the United Brethern Church was there, the old one was there until they built this new one which I don't remember what time but it wasn't long, let's see now.

SS: Then after you quit at the State Hospital where did you go then?

Mrs. B: After I quit at the State Hospital I went to work at Vie's Restaurant on 9th street and worked there a while and went to work at a family hotel run by Weatherholt's family. I'd lived at the hotel and I lived at the hotel. I'd worked there quite a while. Now what does, after I quit there was, what was it, after I quit there was when I married.

SS: Well go ahead tell about that.

Mrs. B: After I quit there I married and, uh, lived in Huntington a while and we moved to Columbus, Ohio. Worked there a while, we moved to Lawrenceburg, Indiana and lived there 2 years and moved back to Huntington for a while, went back to Columbus. Worked there a while again, lived there a while again. Now we didn't get in there when I was working at that hotel but I knew we wouldn't GF: Yes you did. Where I went to the show, we ought to get that in there.

SS: Well talk about it now.

Mrs. B: Hum?

SS: Talk about it now.

Mrs. B: Well when I was, uh, working at this hotel where we lived, uh, in Huntington, while we lived in Huntington was working at this family hotel. I was doin' the cookin' and they had to have everything, had to be home cooked, hot biscuits every night for supper. I, they was, uh, then on 8th street and 3rd avenue was an opera house. And they was a show to be on one night that I wanted to see, The Birth of a Nation. And I went to that show. I always had to start, and be there in time to get supper but that time it run a little late. When I come back the whole place was upset. But one of the girls was in the kitchen a workin' and they was, uh, all upset down in the office and so excited and I just went right on upstairs and, and didn't pay no attention to um, went in the kitchen and went right to work. They said we couldn't have hot biscuits that night. I said yes we can and (laughs) we went right ahead, had supper on time and had hot biscuits. And, uh, now that was, that was what was suppose to go in, you know, where it goes in / GF: Yeah. / when I worked at that hotel. Now that's where that went in.

GF: Do you remember the name of the show?

Mrs. B: Hum, Birth of a Nation, oh boy was it good, um! You talk about seein' good shows you seen um then. And you remember that there picture we seen, The Bells of St. Mary's, how good that was, I went and seen it twice. Is that all goin' on there (break in tape)?

SS: Allright Berry, what do you, what can you tell me about what it was like during the Depression and what all you did then?

Mrs. B: Well during the Depression things was so bad, nobody hardly had a job. My husband was a working at the furniture factory and they closed down. They had another one in, uh, Haggartown (?), Maryland, they sent him out there. And, uh, had, uh, we, we was living in apart-in an apartment and, uh, things was so bad everywhere, my daughter and the children were



livin' up in Ohio and, uh, things was bad for them. I give up the apartment and stored my furniture, moved up there with them so I could help them with what rent I was paying. My daughter and I raised a big garden, canned alot of vegetables, fruit, made tomato catsup, made gallon jugs, glass jugs of tomato juice; lasted 2 or 3 years. And, uh, then things got no better and there was no jobs nowhere for anybody. I got a chance to go on a boat with a woman that was cook on there, to wait table as a maid and I worked for the Ohio River Company, still has a, has a, uh, terminal in Huntington on one of their boats. I don't remember how long I worked there.

SS: Do you remember the name of the boat?

Mrs. B: No, I don't remember it's been so long.

GF: Kenna?

Mrs. B: Huh, Kenna, yes it was a small boat, Kenna. They built a larger one later but I wasn't working on the river then. But later on I went to work then for . . .

SS: What, what was it like on the riverboat?

Mrs. B: Well . . .

SS: Where did it run?

Mrs. B: Only thing, the Ohio River Company run from, uh, Kanawha River, Charleston to, uh, Cincinnati that was their, uh, home base, one of them. And they made trips on down the river as far as Cairo, went 2 or 3 trips we did to, uh, New Orleans. And, uh, it was pretty much just like livin' at home, all you do is cook for a bunch of workin' men.

SS: Did you cook, feed um well?

Mrs. B: Feed um what?

SS: Did you feed um well?

Mrs. B: Feed um well? Yes, we fed um well. They was the best fed people I suppose any where around at that time, had to be to keep um on the job I guess. Well after I quit them I went to work for Raymond City Coal Company.

SS: Was this still during the Depression?

Mrs. B: Oh yes! And they run, they owned, they had, they had their own coal company, Raymond City Coal Company up Kanawha River and they run from there to Cincinnati their, uh, their terminal was in Cincinnati.

SS: Was that on a boat too?

Mrs. B: That was a Raymond City boat, [ SS: Oh I see. ] a different company. And they, they had, they had immense large boat. They had bought a large boat from off a southern river somewhere, from the South somewhere, it was a, it had been a government, used as a government boat at one time, it was an immense large boat and, uh, carried a lar-large crew.

SS: Did they haul coal?

Mrs. B; It hauled coal, oil, sand, gravel, hauled everything that you could put in, in a barge, hold anything you'd put in a barge whenever they had an order for it. They was busy all the time. Well I worked there for quite a while they, they run to Cairo 2 or 3 trips. Well after I got tired of that and quit them things was a gittin' a little better. I come back and went to work (pause) come back and my husband went to work fer, uh, Duncan Lumber Company, Huntington. And I, you had better stop that thing until I git caught up again.

SS: Okay (break in tape). Was this about the time you started to work for Marshall College?

Mrs. B: Yes, we moved in an apartment up close to Marshall and, uh, it was a handy job. And I decided to get a job over there and decided to go to work over

there for a while.

SS: What'd you do there?

Mrs. B: I worked in the dining room and, uh, helped with all of the, uh, fixed for the parties and things that they had there. And, uh, I don't know how long I worked there before I quit at that time (microphone interference) because I quit work there and didn't work for a while then and I went to Logan, went to work in a pastry pantry in a hotel in Logan. My brother had just moved there. I worked there a while, I came back to Huntington and my husband quit working at Duncan's, work had got slack there and a friend of his in Florida, the head of a building concern down there offered him a job, he went down there and worked for 2 years. While he was working down there I went back to Marshall again because we lived just close walkin' distance, cause I was by myself in the apartment. And worked there until I was 65 years old and I had to quit on account I couldn't work in West Virginia after I was 65 (break in tape). That's when I quit workin' at Marshall. That, that's the last work I done. Then . . .

SS: Did you have trouble keeping jobs or did you just like to move around alot?

Mrs. B: No, I didn't seem to have any trouble getting um either (laughter). Seemed to me like I got more than I wanted, it seemed to me like I always had a job.

SS: Do you remember what it was like at Marshall then?

Mrs. B: Well I can't really say that I remember very much what it was like. It, uh, they had nice rooms for students. They had, uh, good food and good cooks. They had good waitresses, they had, uh, a good nurse and, uh, seemed to me like it was pretty nice. They had boys that, uh, the first time I worked at Marshall they had boys that worked in the dining room to help

pay their tuition. They had, the boys, the waitresses in the dining room at that time was all boys cause they was a working to pay their tuition.

SS: That was in the old cafeteria?

Mrs. B: That was in the old one, yes, course they wasn't no amount of students right there then like they was the last time I worked there. Then they had an immense large dining room. Then at that time I was just, uh, practically, uh, at that time all I done was just oversee the dining room and the students dining room to see that everything was in order and kept that way during the meals and that it was that way all the time and if, uh, if the, uh, teachers wanted to have a party they had a special room there for it. I had to see that their table was fixed like they wanted it. They give orders what they wanted and, uh, I had that to look after. That was, uh, and like I said it all seemed mighty nice to me.

SS: Then, then what was it like after you quit at Marshall?

Mrs. B: After I quit Marshall things got slack at my husband's work and a friend of his, I think we went over that though, went to, had a job for him in Florida. He went there and I was at the apartment alone and got a chance to go on a Pittsburgh boat. That runned from Pittsburgh to New Orleans. And I made one trip there from Pittsburgh. They had come down to pick, and picked me up going to Cincinnati down, picked me up at Huntington and made one trip to New Orleans and come back to Pittsburgh, come back to Huntington instead of Pittsburgh, made another trip to New Orleans, it was gittin' close to Christmas. About 2 weeks we would just have been about home for Christmas if we had come on into Huntington. And we come on back then to Pittsburgh, it just about put us home in Huntington for Christmas and they decided not to come on to Huntington, to lay up at Pittsburgh, and, till after Christmas and go back to New Orleans. And I got off of the boat and caught a boat home, that was about the only way to get home then, caught

a boat home\*and that was the last I worked on the river and the last I worked, because after that, after my husband come back from Florida business had picked up and he went back to work at, what is it, / SS: Duncan? / Duncan's. We bought a place in west Huntington, he done alot of repair work on it and built on to it. We lived there 2 or 3 years and sold it and bought another one in Huntington then sold it and bought a lot here in Cheaspeake, Ohio. Built a home and lived here 13 or 14 years, I don't know you can figure what it was of course, now that's it.

SS: Sounds pretty interesting.

Mrs. B: Hum?

SS: Sounds pretty interesting, what was the part you liked best?

Mrs. B: It don't sound interesting to me!

SS: Did you like when you worked on the riverboats?

Mrs. B: No, I can't say I did.

GF: You didn't get much time off on the river, did ya?

Mrs. B: No you didn't get much time off on the river, there was nobody to take your place, nobody wouldn't do it. Then I don't think now they take women on boats at all. But, uh, then it was, uh, mostly a new job for women, they wasn't, uh, interested in it. And the pay wasn't very good, but then it wasn't at no job at that time. You want that (hands interviewer a picture)?

---

\*Mrs. Bradbury later stated she took a bus from Pittsburgh, not a boat.

SS: Um, mmm.

Mrs. B: Now that's all.

SS: Well thanks alot.

Mrs. B: You're welcome.

SS: There's nothing else you want to say?

Mrs. B: No, there's nothing much to say now, only I'm just taking it easy and letting the world go by.

SS: Okay, well thank you.