

Marshall University

Marshall Digital Scholar

0064: Marshall University Oral History
Collection

Digitized Manuscript Collections

1977

Oral History Interview: Reba Booton Davidson

Reba Booton Davidson

Follow this and additional works at: https://mds.marshall.edu/oral_history

Recommended Citation

Marshall University Special Collections, OH64-197, 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.



MARSHALL UNIVERSITY

J 197
JAMES E. MORROW LIBRARY

HUNTINGTON, WEST VIRGINIA 25701

ASSOCIATES

ORAL HISTORY

GIFT AND RELEASE AGREEMENT

I, Reba Boston Davidson, the undersigned, of
1428 Stewart Ave, County of Calwell State
of West Va, 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 Dec. 10, 1977
to be used for scholarly purposes, including study rights to Reproduction.

R.B.D. 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.
initial

Date Dec. 10, 1977

Reba Boston Davidson
(Signature - Interviewee)

1428 Stewart Ave
Address

Date Dec 10, 1977

Huntington W Va 25701
Laurie E. Dubois
(Signature - Witness)

MARSHALL UNIVERSITY LIBRARIES



1170324976

This interview was conducted on December 10, 1977, by Louise E. Jenkins. The subject of the interview was Mrs. Reba Booten Davidson, who lives at 1428 Stewart Avenue, Huntington, West Virginia.

LJ Alright, please state your name.

RD Uh, Reba B. Davidson.

LJ And when were you born?

RD Um, June 17, 1904. I . . . yeah.

LJ Okay, Mrs. Davidson. um. where were you born? What was the town?

RD Uh, Booten in Wayne County, West Virginia.

LJ Okay, how far away is that?

RD It's about fifteen miles.

LJ I see. Isn't that where they put in the, uh (RD: The . . .) the dam?

RD Yes. The Beech Fork Dam, which is about six miles below that, but the water from the dam will take all that community.

LJ Um hmm. And you told me that, um, uh, your mother's farm was out there.

RD Yes, it was. And, uh. we had to ss--, had to, uh, sell it and move her in here. Back in nineteen and ss--, seventy-tt--, seventy.

LJ Um hmm.

RD And they had lived in that farm home for sixty-seven years. Where she and my father had gone to housekeeping (LJ: Yeah) when they were married.

LJ Did they. uh, did they build the house there?

RD Yes, they built the house themselves. (LJ: Oh my!) And no one ever lived in that house but our family.

LJ Oh, I imagine you miss it alot.

RD Well, that was the hardest thing I ever had to do, was take Mother out of the home. (LJ: Yeah) But she came in here and lived alone until she fell getting off an elevator and broke her hip (LJ: Um hmm), and of course complications killed her at age ninety-one.

- LJ Yeah. Um, so you grew up on that farm?
- RD I grew up on that farm and I also worked on it. I had to work in the fields, and the garden, and help with the housework.
- LJ Yeah, I can imagine.
- RD And the laundry. And we didn't have any modern conveniences then (LJ: Yeah) like we have now. We had dirt roads (LJ: Um hmm) and kerosene lamps. We heated the house with coal and we cooked with wood or coal, most of the time wood.
- LJ Do you, uh, do you like having a stove now that, that the temperature's completely regulated?
- RD Oh, yes. And it's a big improvement (LJ: Yeah, I can imagine.) and before, well, after I left up there in 1920, come in here to go to school, I think it was back in the, uh, forties they blacktopped the road. And yes, during World War . . . no, wait, made what they called the WPA roads and then (LJ: Uh huh) after that. But it was in the forties, they blacktopped the roads and they got electric. And the water was from a cistern on the place. And, uh, gas (LJ: Um huh) from a well on my brother's farm. So it was quite a bit different then.
- LJ Um, I saw something in your notes about the, uh, chore you hated most to do was churn butter.
- RD Eh, that was. (LJ: Laughs) Eh, um, I think I detested that more than any other work on the farm. (LJ: Yeah) Of course as my father said I was always glad to get away from the farm. (LJ: Yeah) And I never wanted to come back. Which I didn't, but I had, uh, some experiences which was nice growing up there. (LJ: Yeah) And my father always impressed on us, you know, to go to school, and to go to church, and to do the right thing.
- LJ Um hmm, and you said you came to Huntington when you were how old?
- RD Sixteen.
- LJ Sixteen.
- RD Nineteen and twenty /1920/. We only had the eighth grade, it was a two-room schoolhouse. (LJ: Um hmm) And I took the examination, they called it a high school examination then. (LJ: Yeah) And, uh, I passed the examination, but my parents wouldn't let me go away from home (LJ: Oh, I see), that age, at the age of fourteen. That wasn't heard of back (LJ: Um hmm) fifty-five years ago (laughs). (LJ: Laughs) /Two or three words indistinguishable/, uh, fifty-seven years ago. So, uh, when I came in here I had to . . . they let me come in when I was sixteen, in 1920. And I, they told me when I went

to make application at Huntington High School that I hadn't completed the ninth grade. So I had to go to Oley Junior High (LJ: Oh) to complete the ninth grade. And, uh, then I went to Huntington High and that's when I met my husband. And we went together for thirteen months, I was eighteen and he was nineteen, when we married. At least we're still living together! (laughs)

LJ (Laughs) Oh, that's more than you can say for alot of people.

RD It sure is.

LJ Um, did, uh, many of the girls that you grew up with go on to high school, or did they stay on the farm?

RD Well, the, the first cousin of mine came in with me (LJ: Um hmm), and then the, the following year, 1921, they built a high school at Wayne and there were quite a few of 'em went over there (LJ: Oh, yeah) to Wayne. But of course after coming to Huntington, I didn't want to go back to Wayne. (LJ: Yeah) (Laughs) You can understand that, can't you?

LJ Yes, Um, let's see. Oh, talking about the car that you had, um, that was your father's car, the model T.

RD Oh, yes. That was the, um, he bought it in 1918 (LJ: Um hmm), it was right after World War I. And that was when we had our dirt roads. (LJ: Yeah) And, uh, when we, if we would go out for an afternoon or evening, why, uh, if it started clouding up, why, we had to go home. Because if we, if it rained very hard, why we'd get stuck in the mud (laughs).

LJ (Laughs) So the car was a lot of help, hunh?

RD Oh, it was a lot of help. My father taught me to, to, uh, drive. I learned on a T-model Ford.

LJ Yeah. Did you have to take driving tests then or was it just--

RD No! I have never taken a driver's test.

LJ Really?

RD Well, I keep my licence renewed (LJ: Uh huh), but I think when you get up to sixty-five years old you should have to, on account of an alert test (LJ: Yeah), and everything. Some people, uh, can drive, and others can't.

LJ Um hmm. That's true. Uh, well, um, going back to the very beginning, um, what are some of the first things you remember, when you were living on the farm? Some of your very first memories of it.

RD Well, uh, when, uh, you know, around the, uh, Christmas time

(LJ: Uh hunh) when we were expecting Santy Claus. In, uh, then especially when we would, uh, have the, uh, Christmas trees at the church. (LJ: Um hmm) Uh, we had to, uh, make our own Christmas tree trimmings. (LJ: Um, yeah) Uh, we popped popcorn, and string it. And we'd cut strips out of crepe paper. And, uh, we always seemed to get some candles, but we weren't allowed to light them, you know. (LJ: Um hmm) uh, because, uh, we were afraid of fire. An, uh, my father was always Santy Claus. And my mother made his, uh, suit out of red and white striped material. (LJ: Laughs) We put cotton around the, uh (LJ: Uh hunh), bottom of his top.

LJ Oh, I'll bet that was cute.

RD And they drew names for that. And, uh, that was one of things we enjoyed most. And in . . . in the wintertime, when it was . . . it was cold, and we didn't want to stay in, if there was any snow on the ground, my brother and I would go out and we'd make us a sled. (LJ: Uh hunh) Well, you know, if you've ever seen a homemade sled, you don't get too many rides out of it 'til one of the runners caves in (laughs). (LJ: Laughs) But anyway, we enjoyed that. And then one particular time I remember, it was back, uh, during World War I, the snow had been on so long. So, uh, we asked our father to, uh, hitch the horses or the cow onto the sled. We had these (LJ: Uh hunh) sleds that the, my father had made, that had . . . were up on runners about like that, that they used on the farm to haul the hay in and things like that. So, uh, I know one time he . . . he took us, uh, I think we went to church that Sunday morning in the sled with the team attached to it. And then another time, when we were out there, after my brother was married and lived out there, we were out there for Thanksgiving and the snow came. And he had stuck the team of the white-faced oxen (LJ: Uh hunh) and took us a drive. (LJ: Uh hunh) Well, we enjoyed that, too. And in the wintertime us girls, we crocheted, and embroidered, and pieced quilts, and did things like that, we were . . . my father's motto was to keep busy. (LJ: Yeah) And that kept's you out of illness. You didn't, you didn't (LJ: That's true) have to have entertainment like you did. And in the summer-time we played baseball. And, uh, went to baseball games on Saturday afternoon, and church socials. (LJ: Um hmm) Ice cream suppers, and things like that.

LJ Well, how did your parents feel when you came to the city? Were they worried about you?

RD No. Uh, my fe--uh, um, I stayed with, um, my father's sisters. I stayed with one of 'em awhile, then I'd stay with another one. Of course, uh, he payed my board, he payed twenty dollars a month and I had to help do the work there. (LJ: Um hmm) And then they sent, uh, produce off of the farm, Milk and butter and meat. They raised hogs out home. And, uh, I was to mind. (LJ: Um hmm) Back in those days they

disciplined them (laughs). (LJ: Yeah) And, uh, so . . . it was, uh, it was a good life. It was different from what the children lead now, but 'course (LJ: Yeah) when you're raised in the country, you miss some of the things in the city. And when you, when you're raised in the city, you miss some of the things if you grew up on the farm. But after our girls came they would go out and visit my parents. (LJ: Um hmm) And, they, they knew quite a bit about the farm life. But some children now don't know anything at all about it.

LJ That's true. Um, what was Huntington like when you first came here?

RD Well, back then we had street cars. (LJ: Oh, my. Yeah) We didn't have buses (LJ: Uh hunh) and, uh, they had, uh, what they called a motorman, uh, uh, that rode on the front of the streetcar. I believe, uh, or am I getting it mixed up with a train? Well, anyway, they, uh, had the streetcars, you know, which on the tracks (LJ: Uh hunh) were all over Huntington. And really we had better service than we do with the bus. (LJ: Laughs) Especially in the wintertime (LJ: Yeah), because you see they, they, unless the snow was too deep, they could just sweep the streetcar tracks off, you know. And run pretty--

LJ Um, and run right on.

RD Uh hunh, and run pretty much to schedule. Well, with the buses, they're like the automobile. (LJ: Yeah) You can't.

LJ Well, I remember my daddy talking about the streetcars and how you could, you could go clear from the south side into town, you know, (RD: Yes) and it didn't cost very much.

RD No, I think it, I think it was a nickel.

LJ Oh, my.

RD And then if you wanted . . . now like if I wanted to go up in the east end, I would get on the streetcar and I got a transfer. (LJ: Um hmm) And go clear there or clear down to Kenova.

LJ Um hmm.

RD 'Course now you know what the bus service is.

LJ Yeah, that's true. Um, what were some of the, uh, the uh, major stores downtown then?

RD Well, we had more stores then (LJ: Did you?) than we do now. You know where the Huntington, uh, Furniture is there, on Ninth Street?

LJ Uh hunh.

RD We had Dierdorf-Siceler's. And where the Keith-Albee theatre is, we had Bradshaw-Die--Zenner-Bradshaw's. (LJ: Uh hunh) There. And they both were supposed to be, um, carry a better quality of merchandise. If you bought things at Zenner-Bradshaw's or Dierdorf-Siceler's it was supposed to be a better quality. (LJ: Um hmm) You paid more for it, I don't know if it was any better or not. (LJ: Laughs) Then Anderson-Newcomb's, Anderson-Newcomb at that time was rated about third. Then we had, uh, Macmahon-Diehl (LJ: Uh hunh) on the corner of Third Avenue and Tenth Street there (LJ: Uh hunh), which later became the Bradshaw-Diehl store. (LJ: Um hmm) But you see Zenner, the Dier--the, uh, Dierdorf's went out of business and Zenner-Bradshaw's went out of business. (LJ: Um hmm) Personally, our shopping district has gone down very much in the time I've been in Huntington. Out on, uh, Ninth Street, um, beyond where the, uh, the Robinson-Prichard building is there, you know, the, um, corner of Five and a half alley?

LJ Um hmm.

RD The Sarrels, uh, family had a music store. (LJ: Um hmm) And Mrs. J. S. Fields had, uh, she called it a fashion shop. And she carried a good line of ladies' clothes and hats. (LJ: Um hmm) I bought my hat and I think my suit there when I was married. (LJ: Oh!) And of course the Style Shop has been in Huntington ever since I can remember. You know it was on the corner of Fourth Avenue and Tenth Street where Beckwith's is. (LJ: Um hmm) Part of that building until it burned down. (LJ: Yeah) Of course, that's, they're out of business now. And then we used to have over there, when the state liquor store was in the nine hundred block of Third Avenue, before they tore that all out, we had, uh, a ladies', uh, shop there called Clara Angrest. (LJ: Um hmm) That was a very good shop. But there's the Princess Shop, Anderson-Newcomb Company, and the Smart Shop. Now those are three of the stores that are left, uh, when I came to Huntington. And where the, uh, Super Bee is now (LJ: Um hmm), that old building on the corner of Third Avenue and Eighth Street was the old opera house.

LJ Oh, really?

RD The first play I ever saw. I went there to see Huckleberry Finn. (LJ: Um hmm) And then, uh, we used to have, uh, live entertainment where the, uh, Palace theatre is. They called it the old Hippodrome. (LJ: Um hmm) And we'd go there to, they called 'em the can-can girls. You know, they danced. (LJ: Yeah) And that was nice. And I think, I think I told you in my story, I mentioned it, that we came to Huntington about once a year (LJ: Yeah), when I was growing up. We rode in on the tobacco. That was quite a treat, all-day trip.

LJ (Laughs) Oh, well, um, when did the Keith-Albee come to Huntington? Do you remember?

- RD Keith-Albee?
- LJ Has it been here all along?
- RD Well, let me see . . .
- LJ You said that there was something else--
- RD There was the Zenner-Bradshaw's. I think the Keith-Albee, it came here in the late twenties (LJ: Um hmm) or early thirties. 'Cause I was married in '28, (LJ: Um hmm), and it was after that. Because let me see, wait, let me see. I was married in '28. No--/inaudible/ Well, that's as best as I can remember. (LJ: Yeah) I should have some history on it somewhere, but I don't know where. If I haven't thrown it out.
- LJ Yeah, well. That was, uh, that was a pretty impressive thing, wasn't it?
- RD Oh, yes! When it was, and, uh, I think it was a big mistake. I haven't been in it since it's been made over into three parts. (LJ: Um hmm) But I do think that it was a big mistake, that some of the Hymans didn't leave money to operate (LJ: Yeah) that, as it should have been. (LJ: Um hmm) But it seems that no one in Huntington endows much for that.
- LJ Yeah, that's a shame.
- RD Just like, um, our galleries.
- LJ Um hmm. Um, well, if you came here in the twenties, you were pretty well settled in Huntington when the Depression hit, weren't you?
- RD Yes, and--
- LJ What was that like for you?
- RD Well, that was hard.
- LJ I can imagine.
- RD And, uh, my husband was working for the Metropolitan Life Insurance Company. And, uh, he, uh, drew a small salary, and he had to operate a car (LJ: Um hmm) out of that. Well, people on welfare now have more than we did during the Depression. And we had two girls (LJ: Yeah), the four of us to feed, pay rent. (LJ: Yeah) We didn't own then, we built this in '38.
- LJ Did you ever wish you were back on the farm?
- RD No! I never had any desire to go back to the farm (laughs). My father said when I left I shook the dust off my feet.

- LJ (Laughs) Um, well, when was your first child born?
- RD We were married January 10, 1923, and she was born December 4, 1923. I was young and innocent (laughs). (LJ: Laughs) And the, uh, then, uh, our second daughter was born December 17, 1928.
- LJ Oh, I see.
- RD And that is when, uh, she was born December 17, 1928, and my husband went to work for Metropolitan Life Insurance Company January 14, 1929. (LJ: Um hmm) And he, he was promoted to management team in 1936 (LJ: Um hmm) and he retired from the Metropolitan Life Insurance Company January 14, 1968.
- LJ Oh, my, he was with them a long time, wasn't he?
- RD Thirty-nine years.
- LJ Goodness.
- RD We had a lot of, you know, a lot of changes in that length of time.
- LJ Um hmm. Where did you, um, live when you first came here, after you were married, in Huntington?
- RD Um, we lived at, well, at 928 Twelfth Avenue. We lived there a short time and then we moved to a house at, that my grandmother owned. (LJ: Um hmm) And we were there a short time. And, uh, then, uh, we lived on Thirteenth Street, in the fourteen hundred block, for four years and a half. Then we built this in '38 (LJ: Um hmm), and we've been here since. And I might add that my husband, when he was in the management team, he worked Logan, Pike--uh, Logan, West Virginia, Pikeville, Kentucky, and sometimes Ashland, and Ironton.
- LJ Oh, that's a long way to go.
- RD (Laughs) I raised the girls.
- LJ Oh, my. Um, did you, uh, . . . I was just a little surprised, most of the people I've talked to, um, that were raising families during that time had larger families. Um, were you happy with, with a small family?
- RD Well, uh, I have had varicose veins.
- LJ Oh, I see.
- RD Well, I didn't feel like I could afford it anymore (LJ: Um hmm), and doctor told me when I had the second one, if I had anymore I could expect some trouble.

- LJ Oh, I see.
- RD With veins. That's the reason I don't get too much alarmed over this, this the fourth eye hemorrhage I've had.
- LJ Um hmm. Um, well, let's see. Going back to, uh, to when you first came, where were the, uh, where were the fashionable places? Where were the places that, um, everybody wanted to live?
- RD Well, the South Side.
- LJ Was it the South Side?
- RD It was considered our best locations. And there were a few homes up on the Eighth Street hill (LJ: Um hmm), the Ritter home (LJ: Yeah), and the Freemans. Let's see. And the Watts, Charles, uh . . . I've forgotten the Watts' name. Let's see, Hans Watts' father. I think he was a Charles Watts.
- LJ Um hmm. I remember reading, um, in one of the, uh, the Sunday supplements that, as opposed to, uh, the better sections in town, there was an area down on Second Avenue where nobody ever went.
- RD Oh, honey, that was the red light district.
- LJ Yes.
- RD You could drive, uh, up there and the ladies, uh, prostitutes they call 'em now, would be sitting in the window.
- LJ Sitting in the window! (RD: Um hmm) I see, okay (laughs). Oh, I didn't even know that such a place had been around, you know.
- RD Well, one time, the girls had heard something about it. And, uh, 'cause those places have been done away with a long time. And somebody was talking about it, and I said, well, I said we'll just drive by there, just give you an idea, (LJ: laughs) how these things are. You know, we just drove by in the car (LJ: Yeah), because when they're old enough to understand those things, and ask questions, the best thing to do, uh, is to tell 'em about it and not push it under the carpet. (LJ: Sure) Like I was. (Both laugh) You know when, I can remember when I was growing up, sex was a hush-hush affair.
- LJ Um, well, what are some of the, uh, the changes you can see in, um, the way children are brought up now and the way they were brought up then? Following along that line.
- RD Well, when my two were growing up, there were five years between 'em.

LJ Um hmm.

RD Well, we only owned the one car, and my husband had to use it, you know, in his work. And if they were going out to roller-skate, or to a church party, or a friend's party in the home (LJ: Um hmm), we didn't have these places to go out and dance (LJ: Yeah) like they do now. Well, the, uh, parents took turns taking them. Then, when the other daughter was growing up, um, there was usually someone in her crowd that had a car (LJ: Um hmm), and, uh, usually to go to school in, while Betty walked or rode the bus. (LJ: Um hmm) And now the children, as soon as they're old enough, it seems that they demand a car.

LJ That's true, yeah.

RD The parents don't know where they are. Or what they're doing. (LJ: Um hmm) And they don't care, as long as they're out of their way. Seems like some of their parents, it's just out of sight, out of mind. And I think, that you have to put a lot of this juvenile delinquency right where it belongs, back in the home.

LJ Yeah.

RD Now there's some. Not in all cases. They are some that I've known of that have been brought up by the best of parents and yet they went astray and have been picked up for drugs and things. But the majority of it . . . And I think the children now have the idea they have to be entertained.

LJ That's true.

RD They have to have a TV and be doing this or doing that. I remember Dr. Trimmer was pastor of Fifth Avenue Baptist Church when our children were growing up, and he said he didn't understand why the children had to be entertained all the time. Said when he was growing up he had chores he had to do.

LJ Um hmm. Yeah, so many, so many of the children now don't have work that they're expected to do, you know.

RD Well, no, they don't. The nar--we didn't grow up with the money that they have now. (LJ: Yeah) And so many, they're just as far beyond their income as they have. They did that even when our girls were growing up.

LJ (Laughs) Um, if there was anything you could do over, what would you do? If there was, uh . . .

RD Well, I would, I would finish my education.

LJ You would have gone on to college?

RD Um hmm.

- LJ I see. Um, what, uh--
- RD I thought different times I would go back, but it seems like the right time never presented itself and I'm too old now (laughs). I'm not going to start in at seventy-three.
- LJ Oh, um, what field would you go into, if you had the time?
- RD Well, I was, I was interested in, when I was in school, in secretarial work, bookkeeping they called it then.
- LJ Um hmn. Did you work any after you had your children?
- RD No. I've never worked, except housework.
- LJ Um hmn.
- RD Someone had to stay at home, the way my husband worked. (LJ: Yes) You know the insurance business you work morning, noon, and night. (LJ: Yeah) And especially when you have a bunch of men under you, that you have to do a lot of book work, or checking of accounts, and everything. See he was with Metropolitan and back then it was industrial (LJ: Yeah), account-making and all. Now it's different.
- LJ Um, do you remember the 1937 flood?
- RD Yes, we lived down on Fifteenth Street, the house has been condemned now. My mother's brother owned that house at that time. It was what they called a double house (LJ: Um hmn), we had six rooms on one side and on the other. Well, he had a sister who lived up on upper Fifth Avenue. And, uh, the water was in their house. And, just before it got into the first floor, someone took them out Thirty-First Street and they walked across the railroad track that goes up Eighth Avenue. And my husband and my brother, my brother and his wife lived on the other side of that house, double house, took our car and went up there and met them. And my husband's sister and her husband and three girls. And of course we had two. (LJ: Yeah) Well, all that was eight. No, that was nine (LJ: Um hmn) in the house. Part of the time my husband was working at Williamson. He'd leave on Sunday or Monday. He'd, he'd, uh, go down here to the depot and get the train and ride to Kenova and get the X & J and he wouldn't get back 'til the weekend. Well, the girls had a ball. (LJ: Laughs) You can imagine five girls. (LJ: Yes) They singled all the time. Well, the, finally the water was shut off. (LJ: Uh hmn) And we had to get the water down at what was the White Wet-Wash laundry. (LJ: Uh hmn) We had, uh, I think we had some lard cans. And, uh, my brother's little boy had a wagon. Well, I suggested that my oldest daughter and his sister's oldest daughter go down and get the wagon. Well, she'd, uh, Er, get the water with the wagon. Well, she didn't want to go. She felt like she was too big. (LJ: Yeah) That Betty could

go. And then, her sister, which was about two years younger than Betty. I said, alright, if Elizabeth is too large to go down there and get the water, we'll just do without, period. (LJ: Laughs) Well, uh, my husband had a brother that worked for the gas company, that lives out on Route Ten. (LJ: Um hmm) So he called up to see how we were getting along. And we told him that we were, we would be out of water that evening. But we could get it at the laundry, but the girls didn't want to go get it. He said, well, he said, uh, he said if you . . . I've got some containers, I can send it to you, if you'll get a barrel. Well, my brother got us a barrel, somewhere, 'cause Wade was out of town. Then the electric went off. Well, I had gone down to the, walked down to Sixteenth Street and Eighth Avenue, then you could walk down that section. (LJ: Laughs) And on the corner of Eighth Avenue and Sixteenth Street, the old building is part of it there, uh, Cavendish. They was everything in the world in that store and I went down and bought an oil lamp and some kerosene. (LJ: Uh hunh) And then we had some candles. And, uh, I think I got another oil lamp somewhere. But we weren't without electric very long. But we were without water. (LJ: Uh hunh) Each time when I would go out to buy groceries or do the, some things that needed to be done, my sister-in-law would turn the fires up in the house, the heaters. And when I came in, of course, I would turn them down. (LJ: Laughs) (Laughs), this went on, I guess, for the three weeks which they stayed with us and the water was up almost to the second floor of their house.

At this point Mr. Davidson accidentally interrupts the interview.

LJ Well, so after that, um, they went back to their house?

RD They went back to their home, after they'd cleaned it up, uh hunh.

LJ Um hmm. I see, so, uh, the, uh, the water didn't do any damage to your house?

RD Oh, no, no, no. It never, we've never lived in a, where the houe, you know, where the water got up.

LJ Yeah, well you were lucky. Um, what kind of, um, life was there over on the Ohio River then? I mean, was there a lot of traffic coming through here? Do you remember? More boats than there are now?

RD I think there were at the time. We used to have excursion boats.

LJ Oh, did you?

- RD Yes, uh, I think it was the Delta Queen. (LJ: Um hmm) When our daughters were small, I would get someone to keep them, and, uh, my husband and I, we usually would have an excursion. And we'd leave here about two-thirty in the afternoon. (LJ: Um hmm) And we would go down the river apiece. Uh, and, uh, you know, they had, uh, played music and we could dance.
- LJ Oh, my. Um, well, after you came to town and, and you, uh, started your family, and you were pretty much, uh, a city person from then on, aside from the excursion boats, what were some of your favorite things to do for recreation?
- RD Well, we would have picnics. My husband, when he was younger, would play baseball (LJ: Uh huh), on Saturday afternoon. That was the first job he had when we were married, he was with the older Huntington Development Gas Company. (LJ: Uh huh) And we would go to that on Saturday afternoons. Then, uh, the, uh, well, the girls were almost grown, the, uh, C & O would, uh, have dances. And, uh, you went by invitation. My brother was a clerk with the C & O, and he knew someone that sent out the invitations. And, uh, sometimes we would, uh, they would have 'em at the Spring Valley Country Club (LJ: Oh, yeah), or the ballroom in the, in the old Prichard Hotel. (LJ: Um hmm) And, uh, then there were, were meetings, usually one nice trip (LJ: Um hmm) a year with the company. We have gone to the, uh, Sherham. Well, the first trip we went was in '36, my husband and I, we went to Niagara Falls. They called 'em sales congress then. We stayed in the Statler Hotel (LJ: Uh huh), in Buffalo, Buffalo, New York. And our banquet, and floor show, and dance (LJ: Uh huh), was in the Prince of Wales Ballroom, in the Canadian side. That's the first time I ever crossed a piece of bridge in Canada. (LJ: Laughs) Then we have been to Cincinnati to several functions. Then we were, at the, uh, in '62, we were over at Washington, at the Sherham Hotel (LJ: Uh huh) to another one. And then the last one we went to was not too long before he retired, was up the Pocono Mountains in New York.
- LJ Um hmm. What was train travel like then?
- RD Well, we drove, except when we went to Cincinnati. (LJ: Um hmm) Well, we had much better service then than we do now. I guess I left out something I should of mentioned earlier. When I first came in here to go to school, um, in the summertime my parents would bring me in the car. Then in the wintertime if, I would usually have to promise my cousin to go home with her on Friday night. (LJ: Laughs) Then I would go with her on Saturday morning or she would cry, she'd get homesick. (LJ: Uh huh) We rode the streetcar to Kenova. (LJ: Yeah) Then we rode the N & W train to a little place

called Dickson, which is about two miles above Lavalette, you know where Lavalette is. (LJ: Yeah) Then if my brother and her brother wasn't there to meet us on horseback, we walked across the hill and through the woods about six miles home, 'cause our parents didn't know we were coming home. (LJ: Oh, goodness) But we always had telephone ever since I can remember. (LJ: Uh hunh) out there. These kind you, matter fact I have two of 'em, that you crank. The one out of the old home place and out of my aunt's.

- LJ I see. Um, well now you, uh, you've told me that you didn't have a job, you stayed in the home, raised your family, and your husband was the one that worked. Um, but you did say you'd go back to school if you got a chance.
- RD I thought I would, you know, when I was younger, but by the time that, when I thought I would I had some grandchildren come along (LJ: Yeah). I went from, uh, I went to, uh, Syracuse, New York, in, uh, '52 for a granddaughter. And in fif--, and in December I went to, from here on out I rode the train (LJ: Um hmm) each time, the other daughter. Then in '55, we drove to Grand Junction, Colorado, where another grandchild was born. Then I took a trip on the train out there, in April of '56, which to me was one of the nicest train trips I ever had. I, uh, took the train out here at 4:30 in the morning to Cincinnati. You had to have a chair reservation then. (LJ: Yeah) I had time to get a cup of coffee. I forgot the train I took out of there. And, uh, then I changed, well I had to change, I took the train into Chicago. New York Central, to Chicago. Then I took a cab from one station to another, clear across town. I took the California Glass Dome Zephyr (LJ: Yeah) from Chicago to Grand Junction, Colorado. That was a beautiful trip.
- LJ Yeah. If you'd had the time, now, and and you'd gone back to school, um, and you could of had a job, outside the home, would you have done it? Would you have taken a job, after your children were grown?
- RD I . . . I think I would, but I don't know if I would a kept it or not. I don't know. (LJ: Um hmm) I've always been busy.
- LJ Yeah.
- RD Then my father was ill for, uh, let's see he was ill for about ten months and passed away in '54. I helped Mother with him because my sister worked and my sister-in-law. I, I think when you work out of the home it's, it's much easier. (LJ: Yeah) There isn't anything more monotonous

than housework (LJ: Laughs), it's never finished. It's like the little boy's nose, when he's (laughs), when he's got a cold, it's the same thing over. But you know I think you should stay in the home when the children are small.

LJ Yeah. So, uh, a lot of the women now, that combine families and jobs, um, um, you think they're doing okay, for the most part, then.

RD Some are and some aren't.

LJ Yeah.

RD Now, they's the oldest daughter, she got to talking about going to work, after her children were both away in college. (LJ: Um hmm) And her husband said well, just go on if you want to. So she took a job in a doctor's office, secretarial job. An, uh, she was to work from twelve noon to five. (LJ: Um hmm) Well, it worked out that way for awhile. Then it got to where they wanted her all day. (LJ: Yeah) Sometimes she wasn't getting home 'til seven, seven in the evening. And she says, well, Mother, it's just as well you didn' work. She said, I tried it for a short time, and there's disadvantages to it as well as advantages. (LJ: Um hmm) Well, the youngest daughter never wanted to work after she was married.

LJ I see. Okay, well, I think that's about it.

RD So I've had . . . we've had our ups and downs same as anyone else. But as I say fifty-five years the tenth of next month since we were married. (LJ: Um hmm). And our life has been interesting, quite a bit of it, but as I say during the Depression we didn't have as much as the people on welfare.

LJ Yeah, well, thank-you very much.

RD Um hmm.