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### Oral History Interview: Christie H. Meadows

Christie H. Meadows

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# RELEASE FORM

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I, Christie H. Meadows, do hereby give to the Oral History of Appalachia Program of Marshall University the tape recordings and transcripts of my interview(s) on Nov. 24 1998.

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Amanda L Meadows  
(Agent of the Oral History of Appalachia Program)

Christie H. Meadows  
(Donor)

Nov. 24, 1998  
(Date)

#593

Tape #1

Subject: Life Histories

An Oral Interview With: Mr. Christie Meadows

Conducted by: Amanda Meadows

Date of Interview: November 20, 1998

Transcriptionists: Amanda Meadows, Ruth Meadows and Matt Moyer

Mr. Christie Meadows was born to a long line of farmers, miners and loggers in rural Raleigh County, West Virginia. Early in life he was taught how to live off the land and respect the things he had.

Mr. Meadows was taught how to identify the different species of trees, what the different kinds were used for and what made one better than the other for various tasks. Also, the signs of the moon and how to plant by them was a significant lesson he learned early in life and provided a lifetime of information.

Modern conveniences such as electricity and running water were absent from his childhood. Instead candles and oil lamps lit his path while springs provided water and what little refrigeration was present.

All food was raised on the farm and then canned or salted. Some, like potatoes and cabbage were buried for preservation throughout winter.

Education was important and stressed. A one room school house was where he learned the ever-important 3 R's: Reading, Writing, and 'rithmetic. Unfortunately, after a family tragedy Mr. Meadows had to withdraw from school after his first year of college and become a sole breadwinner practically overnight.

Donor (D): My name is Christie Meadows. I was born June 8, 1948, the son of James Meadows and Ruby Kincaid Meadows. I was born at my Grandfather's farm with the assistance of a midwife. The Meadows Family ancestry was from England and Cherokee Indian. We lived with my Grandfather and we had a 261 acre farm. To the kids then, Grandfather was known as PaPaw and Grandmother was known as Granny on the Meadows Side. Early childhood illnesses were doctored by Grandma's home remedies and Indian remedies.

As a boy became old enough you was taught to be thankful for what you had and appreciate the things you had and church was for Sunday. You were also taught how to make a whistle and a trap. You made a whisle from the maple tree -- the striped maple -- known to some as polecat wood. You were taught to trap, the kinds of trees and what each kind was used for, how to hunt and use the moon signs, and how to plant vegetables for food.

As you grew older you were taught how to work the horse in the fields. There were not too many modern conveniences. Most homes had fireplaces, no electric power, and no water. Food raised was canned, stored in cellars, potatoes and cabbage was stored in holes in the ground for winter use. The beef and the hogs were stored in an outbuilding called the "meat house". When spring came, the pork was washed and dried. A mixture of white corn meal, Boraxo, black pepper and salt was

(D): placed on the meat. It was then wrapped in white cloth and hung up in sacks. The pork had been salt cured during the winter and it would keep during the summer until it was used. The beef had to be canned.

This was the start of the summer's work. The fields were plowed in February, the fields had to be harrowed and drug to make the field smooth for a seed bed. Corn and crops were planted mid-May. You were taught when the dogwoods bloom and the whippoorwills holler it was time to plant crops. After the crops were planted the fences were to mend and you started working on your winter wood supply. We made fence rails from dead chestnut trees.

Cherries were ripe in late June. We picked and canned a lot of cherries. Blackberries got ripe next, and everyone looked forward to the Fourth of July. New potatoes, beans, peas and new cabbage out of the garden. The wheat was cut and shocked to dry so it could be thrashed for flour.

The vegetables were getting ready to be canned and the hay was ripe and ready to cut. The hay is stacked outside in large haystacks for feeding cattle during the winter. After the hay is finished, applebutter is made. The apples are cooked in a large copper or brass kettle outside. Dead dogwood was used for wood it made a hot fire with little smoke.

By now the seasons were changing, Fall was not far away. Next, the corn was cut and shocked so it would dry for shucking and storing.

Interviewer (I): How did you shock it up?

D: It was cut into four bunches, the bunches set together with four stalks that wasn't cut loose and then it was tied all the way around with a stalk of corn. That's what held it up.

I: How did you cut the hay?

D: With horses and a mowing machine.

I: How did you bundle it together?

D: The hay?

I: Yes.

D: You didn't bundle the hay. You raked the hay with a rake. And you used pitch forks to stack it.

After the corn was cut it was time to make the cane molasses. Neighbors would bring cane to have molasses made this would usually take 2-3 weeks. You had to strip the blades from the cane stalks and cut the tops off of the cane known as the heads. You fed the cane to a big press to squeeze the juice, it was then put in a large pan to boil for about five hours to make molasses.

Thanksgiving was butchering time for the hogs. Most work was done on a schedule with the seasons. Sometimes during the year without planning a little cornsqueezings was made for special occasions and medicine.

I: Like what kind of special occasions?

D: Well whenever some of the family visited, or after a

D: church social, for a wedding. Dry corn was used to make the mash and this was cooked in a copper pot. Dry sumac was used, it made a lot of heat with no smoke.

We also lived and spent a lot of time at Grandfather Kincaid's home. To us he was known as Grandpa and Grandmother was known as Grandma. His farm was located in Farley's Creek and when I-64 was built it went through the middle of the farm. Now known as Sandstone Mountain. Growing up on the farm was not all work and no play. We had a lot of good times too. A small store was located not far from Grandpa's farm and at the end of the day he'd give me 25¢ to go to the store. A bottle of pop was 10¢, no deposit, and candy was 2 pieces for 1¢. And to a boy that was heaven.

The summer I turned six, Grandfather Meadows gave Dad a plot of land from the farm. We built a house and moved to our place so I could start to school.

I: Where was that located?

D: Where I attended school was known as the Meadows school until I finished the sixth grade. The year I started the seventh grade consolidation was beginning to start and the Board added onto the High School making it grades 1-12. This was Richmond Elementary and Richmond High School combined.

I: How big was the school?

D: The school I attended known as the Meadows School was a one room school.



I: How many grades was in it?

D: Six.

I: What kind of heat did they have?

D: A coal stove.

I: Did you have to take you lunch?

D: Yes, there was no hot lunch programs then.

I: Who built the fire? Who took care of it?

D: Well different people throughout the community was hired as janitors then and for about four years my mother was the janitor.

I: Where did the school come from?

D: Well my Grandfather Meadows built this school and that's why it was named after him.

I: Was it located on the family farn too?

D: It was located on the original farm that my Great Grandfather had owned.

I: How many generations did the farm go?

D: Six generations. It has been a hand me down since the ancestors came here from England.

I: How big was your family?

D: I was an only child until I was 19 years old and then I had a brother.

I: How big was your father's family?

D: There was 5 boys and 4 girls in the family.

I: What about your Mother's?

D: There was 1 boy and 5 girls.

I: What did your Mother and Father do for a living?

D: They were farmers, my Dad had a sawmill. He cut mine timber.

I: Did he work in the mines too?

D: Later in life he became a coal miner and worked 23 year before his death.

I: Was it with a coal company or was it a little reserve mine that goes and finishes up a job?

D: No, it was with a coal company.

I: How did he die?

D: He died on the family farm during the miner's vacation period. He had a heart attack.

I: What was he doing?

D: Putting up hay on the farm.

I: Were you using horses then too?

D: No, by that time we had gotten modern enough to have a hay baler and a tractor.

I: Now you said when you were a little boy, the boys were taught how to make a whistle, identify the trees, and about planting.

What did the little girls do?

D: (Laughter) I wasn't a little girl!!

I: Well didn't you have any little cousins or little girls around?

D: The girls were taught how to do the house work and cook and sew, and can, and how to take care of what was in the house.

D: This was the era of the time that the man made the living and the wife done the housework.

I: Did your Mother ever churn butter?

D: Most definitely. You milked cows and churned butter and made cottage cheese.

I: How did you take care of the crops and fertilizer, what did you use?

D: Yes, we had fertilizer got fertilizer in the Spring and fertilized the crops just like you do today. Just wasn't as much done.

I: What kind of animals besides the cattle?

D: Well, we had horses, mules, sheep, and hogs, and cattle.

I: When you moved in your home, did it have modern conveniences, electric power, indoor plumbing?

D: By that time, all homes had electric power. We had a well, later we got water put into the house. Still had outside bathroom facilities.

I: Did you have radios and televisions at that time?

D: Yes, we had radio and television.

I: How old were you at that time?

D: I was probable fourteen.

I: What did you use for a refrigerator before you had power?

D: Well, to keep the milk and the butter, about everybody had a spring. To get there water and they had a water box below the spring that cold water kept it cold.

I: What happened if the spring went dry?

D: Well, we were always fortunate enough to have plenty of water and we never had to have that problem.

I: Did you hunt as a little boy?

D: Well, after I got big enough to hunt and was taught how to hunt and the safety of huntin', I was permitted to hunt.

I: What all did you hunt?

D: Well, mainly back then you hunted squirrel, rabbits. There wasn't many deer in this area at that time, there were very little deer hunted.

I: When you graduated from high school what did you do?

D: Well, the first summer I graduated, I went to work with a masonry company. Then that fall I started to college and went to college one year. Then I went back to work for a masonry contractor.

I: Where did you go to college?

D: Beckley College.

I: Why did you have to quit?

D: Well, that was the summer my Dad died. That kind of left me with the responsibility of taking his place on the farm.

I had my mother to take care of and a small brother.

I: How old was your brother at that time?

D: Eleven months old.

I: Did you all receive mining pension from his work or did you

have to depend on all of your work?

D: No, at the time my mother received widow's pension from him working in the mines.

I: When you were a litte boy, what kind of games did you play?

D: Well, typical kid's games. We played a lot of ball, we sleigh rided a lot in the winter time.

I: What kind of toys did you have?

D: Well you didn't have too many toys. Stuffed animals were homemade and my dad made me a sled to sleigh ride with.

I: Were the winters bad then?

D: Very bad! There wasn't much equipment to open the roads with like there are today and whenever it would come winter and the roads would block up, it would be a lot of times it would be two or three weeks there wouldn't be any traffic on the road. They traveled on horseback.

I: What kind of vehicle did you have?

D: A ton and a half Chevrolet.

I: How did you go to the store and where did you shop at?

D: Well, the area had four stores in it and when we went to the store we went to Beckley, that was the nearest city.

I: How long would it take?

D: It would take about an hour to go to town.

I: How long does it take now?

D: Well, with the I-64, it takes about 20 minutes.

I: If you didn't go to Beckley shopping, where did you go?

D: You had to go to Hinton. Which that was a little closer.

I: When you were down on Farley's Creek, where did you shop then?

D: We rode horseback to the bottom of the holler and that came to the river at Meadow Creek and you rode a ferry across the river and shopped in the stores at Meadow Creek.

I: How much did it cost to ride the ferry?

D: 5¢

I: Kids too?

D: They didn't charge kids.

I: What was your most memorable winter?

D: Probabley the winter when I was in the sixth grade, mainly the reason I remember it, there was a guy who lived here and he had died and it took the state road twelve days to open the road up to the church and the cemetery to have his funeral. And then one winter we were at school, they brought a snowblower here to open the roads. The teacher took us out on the porch of the school and let us watch this giant machine blow the snow over into the fields.

I: How important was education?

D: Well, education was very important. It was more of the basics, you were taught the 3 Rs. Your reading, writing, and arithmetic was one of the most important things in education.

I: Now when you had this big snow, and the roads were still blocked, you were still expected to attend school?

D: No, we attended school whenever you know the kids could get there and the teacher could get there. But times like that everything was just at a standstill and no one attended school.

I: Did you have any family legends? Anybody that everybody still talks about?

D: Oh yes! Most all of the Meadows family men were big people. Grandfather was six foot six, and his brothers were all six-five and he had one brother that was seven foot tall. He wore a nineteen shirt and a sixteen 5E shoe. And most all the women were six foot tall. This Uncle, he was known as 'Gentle Giant' and he was a humongous big man.

I: Was he ever married?

D: No, he was never married. He had a part of the family farm that his dad had given him and he farmed just like my Grandfather did.

I: He was so big, where did he get his shoes and his clothes from?

D: Well, most of his clothes were kindly sewn onto and handmade and back then there was a shoe shop they kinda custom make shoes and he just made out more or less the best way that he

could.

I: Did you buy your clothes or were they made (he nods his head) just buy material and make them or did you use feed sacks?

D: We used and wore a lot of both.

I: Did you mother sew?

D: Yes, a lot. My Granny and my Grandmother sewed and made a lot of our clothes.

I: Did anybody in your family play music; a fiddle, banjo, or anything?

D: About everyone played a music instrument but usually on Saturday night that was alot of entertainment. They would have dances and sit around the fire and would play fiddle and banjos.

I: When you went to school were you allowed to carry pocket knives, chew tobacco, was that allowed?

D: Nooo, there was no smokin' or chewin' allowed. As far as our knife, it was probley just part of the boys everyday thing, you never knew what vandielism or using it in a wrong way was.

I: You were talking you became a brick mason and was working at that and from there what did you do?

D: During the time I was brick mason I started driving a school bus during the winter. I still drive a bus today.

I: Do you do any brick mason now?

D: Very little.



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I: Do you do any brick mason now?

D: Very little.

I: What happened to that job? Did you just quit doing it or did it just fade out?

D: Well, it was something that just more or less faded out work in this area, it came to a standstill and everybody moved from here and went to the Carolinas to seek work. And the guys that I knew and worked with a lot of them moved and changed jobs and we just kinda all got separated and never got back together. Also, during that time I increased my farming operation until it takes all of my time.

I: What do you do on the farm now?

D: Well, we run a herd of purebreed cattle, now. Raise about all of the feed for these cattle. Grow corn for silage, cut and put up a lot of hay. Show some cattle at the state fair now.

I: Did you say it was beef cattle or dairy?

D: Beef cattle.

I: Do you still milk cattle?

D: Not any more.

I: What animals do you raise or have you raised?

D: Well, when ever I was a boy, we had horses and mules, we raised sheep on the farm and hogs have been raised on the family farm for as long as I can remember.

I: Are you married? What kind of family do you have?

D: Yes, I'm married. I have two girls and one boy.

I: When you said your father was a miner was that a big industry in this area?

D: Yes, that was what this area was all about it was the biggest trade that was going. Most everybody worked in the mines or cut timber for the mines.

I: Were you close enough to the river and the rails for it to be an industry too?

D: No, coal was all trucked from here to the railroad cars.

I: Did you ever take part in any kind of rallies or protests or anything?

D: One time, they started strip mining and whenever they came into the area, they mined without any regulations or control. They just scarred the mountains and they just had no respect for the people and the landowners. So all the people in the area protested the strip mining.

I: How close was that to where you were living?

D: Well, by air miles, it was probably two miles.

I: Was it any of your land or your families land?

D: No, when we protested, we got the strip mining stopped on the side of the mountain that we lived on. And they never crossed over onto our side of the mountain.

I: What kind of protest or rally was it.

D: Well, they was doing the protest march in Charleston. We went down and marched in front of the capital to get the

attention of the governor and all of the high officials that had control over and about the mines.

I: What was the result -- was any law enforcement brought in or was it a peaceful protest?

D: No, it was very calm and controled rally and it was more or less a thing the people show their support or non-support for. The people that was in charge of this and had the authority came out to look the area over and decided they wouldn't issue any strip mine permits on our side of the mountain, because of the way the coal companies had done on the opposite side.

I: Did you do any traveling as a young boy or teenager?

D: Whenever I got out of high school, I had a aunt and uncle in Cleveland, Ohio and they sent me a bus ticket and I went to Ohio to help them move back to West Virginia. He came back to his family farm to live. And I had an aunt and uncle that was in the Navy. They were stationed in Hattiesburg, Mississippi and I went down to drive his family, his wife home to the family farm.

I: Could you see a big difference in the climate and the terrain on these trips?

D: Well, very much. All I had ever seen and been used to knowing about was up one side of the mountain and down the other side. When we got to Mississippi it was all level. I left here in a winter coat and when I got to Mississippi, it was like summer.

I: Did you ever see anybody or anything memorable on these trips?

D: We went to Mississippi we got in Birmingham, Alabama and had a three hour bus layover and at that time, Martin Luther King was there with one of his parades, and I saw him.

I: Was it one of the peaceful parades or one of the protest parades?

D: No, it was one of the peace parades that they had then.

I: Did you ever take part in any military or wars? Or was your family in any wars?

D: Well, about all of my uncles was in the wars, and my Dad was in the medical battalion in the Army. I would have been drafted for the Vietman war in 1968 and when he died, I got out for hardship defer.

I: What war was he in -- the Korean War?

D: Yes

I: What industry is in the area now? Is coal as big as it was then?

D: No, all the coal mines have shut down and left the area and right now timber is the big thing. A lot of saw mills are in our area and there is one big company that makes this pressed board. They are cuttin' timber just every direction you look in.

I: Now, your father did some logging, when you were a boy did

you help then?

D: Yes, before he started to work in the mines and lived on the farm. That was how they supplemented their income. They had a small sawmill and cut mine timber and mine post.

I: Did you actually cut down trees or a resource person in the woods or what did you do?

D: Well, he would go cut the trees down and I knew how to work the horse and I would pull the post trees into the place where they was cut up and loaded into the truck. Then I would work on the sawmill whenever they sawed and load up the trucks and go with him when he took them to the mines.

I: Where were the mines located from where you all lived?

D: Well, there were some mines located about 5 mile from the farm and then there were some located on the other side of Beckley known as Stanaford and that was probably 20 miles from the farm.

I: Do you remember the names of those mines?

D: Well most of the mines at Stanaford was known as Stanaford Number 1 and 2, 3 and 4.

I: Were they Union mines or had the Union came into play yet?

D: No they were just small what was known at that time as "punch mines". The only Union mines in the area at this time was McAlpine, East Gulf, Slab Fork and such as that.

I: And are any of those mines still running today?

D: East Gulf is still running on a smaller scale. Slabfork's been shut down for years. McAlpine has been closed up for years.

I: When you were a little boy and you had to take your lunch to school, what kind of things did you pack in your lunch then and what was a normal diet then, as far as, what would you eat in the morning?

D: Well, mostly what you took in your lunch is what had been home raised. We'd have egg sandwiches or you would have a bacon sandwich or a fried ham sandwich.

I: Did you bake your own bread or did you buy bread then?

D: It was home made bread and you'd have a home made fried apple pie for dessert.

I: What kind of drink did you take?

D: We didn't take any drink. Most all of the kids just drunk water out of the well at school. Now after we got into the seventh grade and went to the high school, they had a hot lunch program. They had soda machines and things were really beginning to modernize and really change, then.

I: What does your mother do now? Is she still living and you said you still had a brother or two?

D: She's still living and she's on the home place, the family farm and she just takes care of daily chores as a farm wife.

I: Does she still can and sew?

D: Yes, she does.

I: Does she still churn butter?

D: No, we quit milking cows ten years ago or maybe a little longer.

I: Did your brother have the opportunity to go to college and get an education?

D: Well, he graduated from high school and then he went to automotive diesel college and became a diesel mechanic and he works as a purchasing agent for the parts department as a diesel mechanic, now.

I: What kind of college courses did you take?

D: Just the general college courses that were required if you had gone farther for anything.

I: So, just basic math...?

D: Right.

I: What were you hoping to go into?

D: Well, if I had stayed with it I'd probably have gotten a degree of some type in agriculture, but that never was my idea or my want to be. As I grew up, I always wanted to be a state



trooper, but back then the requirements were you had to have four years of military background and of course life was kindly changed and I just never did get the goal accomplished.

I: How did you become involved in agriculture and want to go into school other than on the farm? Were you in any clubs or organizations or anything leading up to that?

D: Well, our high school program had a FFA, Future Farmers of America, and I was in that for four years and just the activities that it had was a big interest. Then you have these vocational agriculture teachers to come in and you just learn a lot of experience from them.

I: What kind of activities and projects did you do with that, the FFA?

D: Well, they had a work shop in the school and the school had a projects that it used to make money. We had a strawberry patch and we would grow beans and sell them and we had an orchard on the farm and we would harvest apples and sell 'em. Then they had a ham, <sup>bacon</sup> ~~bake~~ and an egg show and we would show vegetables at the state fair.

I: What kind of things do you do with your family now and your children to try and keep some of your heritage still to teach them things from your heritage and to keep it going?

D: Well, probably the biggest thing is being our involvement with the cattle. We have shown cattle at the state fair for probably twelve or thirteen years and all the kids have had a project in cattle that they have taken to the fair.

I: Are they involved in FFA or anything?

D: Yes, the boy's in FFA and girls were in 4-H club as they were in school. I tried to instill in my kids what the older days were all about and to appreciate what they had in the good days and we still try to do a lot of the things that was done in the older times such as the apple butter making and the molasses making. We still butcher hogs on the farm like we did years ago and the beef.

I: Now, do you all do the meat yourself or do you send it off and let somebody else cut it for you?

D: No, we do our own home butchering and curing and can our meat.

I: Do you still render lard?

D: Yes, we still render lard the way we used to do. About the only thing that's not done is we used to make lye soap and any more that's not done.

I: What kind of heat do you have in your home now?

D: We use all wood heat now and my mother uses wood and coal.

I: When you were a kid and hoeing corn in the sun, did you ever get a sun burn and how did you treat stuff like that?

D: Got a sun burn about ever summer, stay out too long and they used to take the cream off the milk, the fresh milk, and put that on it and it would kindly dry on youf skin and it was quite soothing.

I: I guess there wasn't a scare of skin cancer and didn't have people preaching that you?

D: You never heard tale of cancers of any type back then and it was just a common thing, especially for boys, to get rid of that shirt when the sun shined and you really tanned during the summer.

I: What were any of the major illnesses that's been in your family.

D: Well, I'd say probably there's been several of them I had the heart attacks. There has been some cancers in the family.

I: What kinds of cancers?

D: Most of that's been internal cancer, leukemia, and stomach cancer.

I: Were they treated at the hospital or how did they know they had it so they used a lot of home remedies?

D: Well, yeah, in later years they received hospital care, but probably in the early years they may have had some of these diseases and were never knowing really what it was.

I: Now, you said you own your farm?

D: Yes, I do. I've inherited this farm from my father and he inherited it from his father, which was my grandfather and it was a hand-me-down from his father.

I: Do you own the mineral rights to your land?

D: We do own the mineral rights to the farm.

I: Do you know if there are any minerals on it?

D: There is strong coal reserve under this farm.

I: Anything else? Natural gas or anything?

D: There has never been any gas prospecting done around here.

Now, adjoining farms probably Air mile a couple miles away, there is some active gas wells working today. It's a possibility that there could be gas here.

I: You said you had some Indian ancestors?

D: Yes, my great grandmother was Cherokee Indian.

I: Did she have a lot of remedies?

D: Very much so, and they used a lot of the old Indian remedies and that's how they doctored. That's what a lot of the moon signs were from and taught to you.

I: What kind of plants and herbs did they use in remedies?

D: Well, in the spring of the year in February they would dig sassafras roots and make sassafras tea.

I: Do you still do that?

D: Yes, we do and then there was a plant that was used to make worm medicine in the spring. They firmly believed that all kids had worms and they had to be wormed come spring.

I: What did it taste like?

D: Tastes very bad.

I: Do you know what it was made of?

D: I don't know the name of the plant. I know the plant when I see it.

I: Do you ever or does your mother ever still keep up with these home made remedies and still do them?

D: Yes, she does and they used to get a tree that was called "The Balm of Gillihad" and take the buds off of it and boil that down and it would make a cream and that was used on wounds or places that didn't seem like they would want to heal. They called it "Bam McGillian Sav" and other being spoke of in the Bible and from Indians its not known. It's a very rare tree; doesn't grow in very many places.

I: Is there any on your farm?

D: No, there's none here. It grows on my grandmother's farm.

I: Is that the one at Farly's Creek or the other?

D: Yeah, it's the one at Farly's Creek.

I: You said that 64 went through it so was the farm split up or how did that happen?

D: Well, whenever they was buying up the right of way for 64 by then my grandparents had moved off of the farm and had moved on closer to the road so they wouldn't be so isolated. They owned this farm and of course whenever the right of way was bought, what it was bought for was divided amongst all of the children.

I: You seem to have a little bit of a cold there. Did you ever have a cold or a cough remedy that your grandma made.

D: Well, it used to take rock candy and whiskey and take some of that corn squeezen, put a little sugar in it and call it "~~A Tottie~~" "~~Apotie~~". It worked good at bed time. I have used "Save the Baby".

I: What's that?

D: It used to be a medicine you could buy years ago.

I: What did it taste like?

D: Very bad.

I: Any kind of cough syrup?

D: They used to take a plant called "Mullen" and you would dry it and then after it dried you'd boil it down and used honey in it and that was used for cough syrup.

I: Did raise your own bees or where did you get your honey?

D: Most everybody had stands of bees.

I: Did you ever take care of them and rob the bees for the honey?

D: No, I never did. My grandfather did. I was always allergic to bees. I got stung and it made me very sick and it was very dangerous.

I: Did anybody ever have allergic reactions to the medicine you all made?

D: Not that I know of.

I: The farm that you live on now, do you know any of the history behind it as far as settlers on it for your family?

D: Well, this farm at one time had been occupied by the Woodman Indian tribe, which today we still find a lot of Indian relics, arrowheads and so forth.

I: How did you build fence when you were a boy? Did you have the barbed wire?

D: They had some barbed wire. It was very limited use. Most all of the fence building was done from making chestnut fence

rails, this was very plentiful and the chestnuts had blighted and died and they learned to use anything and everything that they had and take advantage of it and this chestnut was easy to split and it was light to carry and they would cut these trees down and most of the time you quartered it in four pieces and that made you four fence rails.

I: Did you have a sawmill to quarter them with?

D: No, that was hand work. You drove a wedge in the end of them and that split them open a little distance and then they would take hickory pieces of wood and make wedges that was called "gluts" and you kept driving them in from the end you started and it just kept spreading it apart until it busted it completely open.

I: I bet that took a while?

D: No, the chestnut was straight grain and it was pretty dry and it was easy to split.

I: Did it take a long time when you farming with horses as far as getting the fields ready and doing the hay?

D: It took a very long time. You had to get the plowing done early. That's why most of it was done in February because if you let it get late spring the ground would settle, it was hard for the horses to pull the plows and they'd get plowed in February



and then in the spring it wasn't too bad to work the seed bed down.

I: Where did you get your livestock from? Did they have livestock markets then or did you trade or buy from other farmers?

D: Well, I guess they probably bought some to get started, but mainly the only livestock that was bought was a herd bull and they just raised all of their replacement cows.

I: Did you build the house or where do live at now on your farm? House or a mobile home?

D: Well, when I first got married I moved into a mobile home on the farm and then we built a house on the farm.

I: Do you use any of the timber and resources on your land now?

D: We use the locust trees for fence posts now and if the house when we built it we cut all the trees on the farm and had them sawed to build the house and if we need to build some fence or an out building why we cut enough trees down to build what we're needing to build.

I: Did you build your house yourself? And you said you were a brick mason, did you brick it or what did you do?

D: It's not brick, but I did build the house myself.

I: Do you have anything in the house from the farm? Anything special?

D: We have two walls in the house that's paneled with wormy chestnut.

I: Did it come off the farm?

D: Yes, it did.

I: How big of a herd do you have now on the farm?

D: With cattle?

I: Yes.

D: Well, at the present time we're running about twenty-four head.

I: You say you drive a school bus now do you do any other jobs outside the home for income.

D: No. By the time I get the bus runs made and get the things taken care of on the farm, I've used up about all my day.

I: Do you see the farming industry as a dying breed?

D: Well not necessarily as a dying breed. It is a thing that's becoming more controlled by giant companies and the little farms are being weeded out.

I: Has the modernizing of today's society the technology, has that hindered the farm or helped it?

D: It's been a whole lot of both. You can grow more cattle and more feed and do it easier with modern technology and then also it's made it harder with the regulations to comply with, the things that you have to do.

I: Do you still hunt today?

D: Yes, I do.

I: Does any of your family hunt?

D: My son hunts. My brother hunts.

I: You said this land you inherited from your family, do you have other family members living around you?

D: My brother lives on the family farm and then all of the farms that are adjoining me are uncles that inherited from my grandfather and his brother.

I: Is there anything else from your childhood that you want to tell us about?

D: Most people would probably think of my childhood as kindly boring or maybe not much fun or a hard childhood, but really it wasn't. When I look back on it, I kindly think of it as the last frontier. There was a lot of good times and some sad times and times that you learned how to continue going on by, but all in all I wouldn't trade it for anything I've heard of or know about.

I: You were born in '48 in a very rural area so was the family still trying to recuperate from the depression? Because, I know it hit the farming industries and the rural areas a lot harder and it took them a lot longer to recuperate than it did the cities.

D: I'm sure that they did, but still you know it was a thing that the farm was about all that they had ever known and it was always hard times to make it. Probably the biggest thing about the farm is what you work to achieve was to have a roof over your head and to be warm and dry and have plenty to eat; which you were thankful you had all of that. You were always taught that you didn't complain cause it could be worse.

I: Well, if there's nothing else that you feel like talking about, we'll end the interview and I thank you for your time.

D: All right. Thank you.