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Margie Williams
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Megan A. Williams (Agent of the Oral History of Appalachia Program) *Fred A. Williams* (Donor)
Margie Williams

Nov 22, 1998
 (Date)

Tape #1

Subject: Life Histories

An Oral Interview With: Frederick and Maxine Williams

Conducted by: Megan Williams

Date of Interview: November 22, 1998

Transcriptionist/Typist: Megan Williams

Summary

This is an interview with Fred and Maxine Williams of French Creek, West Virginia, a small town in central West Virginia. In this interview, Mr. and Mrs. Williams talk about their lives, she as a telephone operator, wife, and mother, he as a man who has worked many different jobs in order to first support his parents and siblings, then to support his wife and kids. This interview chronicles their lives from the beginning, where he was a child who only attended school until the eighth grade only to move swiftly into the work force. He spent time in the military, traveling to places such as Alaska, and came back to find himself meeting a young woman he would later marry and have five children with. He has been everything from a teenage club owner to a railroad worker, to a union member in a factory. Today he spends his days building barns and horse stalls, making his own maple syrup, and never stopping long enough to relax. She was a young girl, graduating from high school and becoming a telephone operator, then meeting the friend of her boyfriend, eventually marrying him and beginning a family. She has had five children, and nurtured them to become successful adults. She now spends her days caring for grandchildren, quilting, and canning. She has the same nonstop mentality as her husband. This interview describes my grandparents, a couple who are hard working, strong willed, and who embody the very heart and soul of Appalachia, closeness to family, belief in God, and a strong work ethic. They have worked the land, loved the land, and lived their lives as an integral part of West Virginia. When asked what their heritage is, their only answer is Appalachian.

Begin Side A Tape One.

Megan: I am interviewing Frederick Arden Williams for my Sociology of Appalachia class. To test out the tape, I want you to say your name and when you were born and where you are from.

Maxine Williams (MW): Name.

Fred Williams (FW): I'm Fred Williams, I was born in Upshur County, West Virginia on May the second Nineteen and twenty-seven.

Megan: OK. Also here is Maxine Williams, say your name, and...

MW: I'm Maxine Cutright Williams, I was born in Upshur County January sixth Nineteen Twenty Nine.

Megan: OK. To start this off I just want to ask you about where you were born, and your family, what your parents did maybe if you want to talk about that. What city were you born in?

FW: I was born in Adrian, and my parents were farmers, and my father worked part time in timber cutting and carpenter trade.

Megan: How many brothers and sisters did you have?

FW: In all of my family, I had twelve brothers and sisters, there was thirteen of us total, but there were three deceased before I was born, and there's only nine of us still living today.

Megan: The three that uh, died before you were born, what was the incidence of their, were they infants?

FW: You want, you want their names?

MW: They died in infancy.

Megan: Oh, you don't have to have a...

FW: Not necessarily infancy, they was uh, I don't know, I don't remember exact age, but each one of them uh, were... I think Delmer was a couple years older, something like that. Gladys was older yet I believe. Uh...

MW: And was little.

FW: Actually, (inaudible), I think she only lived a matter of days. I think that was due to the

anesthetic mother had to have after surgery.

Megan: So there are nine of you left, where do you fall in that nine?

FW: Hmm, there are...

(laughter)

FW: I have to really do some thinking about that.

MW: Well, as far as the living is concerned, you are the fifth. But now I don't know how many was in between you.

FW: There's two older, Virginia and Ed.

MW: Yeah, but, oh yeah, that's the living, you'd be third.

FW: What... well, that's what she asked.

Megan: And where were you in all thirteen?

FW: I was in the middle.

Megan: You were right in the middle?

FW: I think so.

(noise)

Megan: What was that? O.K. Um, schooling-wise, did you all, what kind of schools did you, what kind of school did you attend? Was it a, I know that schools now fall into elementary, middle school, high school. Did you?

FW: I, uh, I attended grade school through, one through eight, and it was all out in the country, big country school.

Megan: All in the same building, one through eight?

FW: No.

Megan: No?

FW: I went to French Creek, and...

MW: She wants, all the grades in the same building.

Megan: Yeah, that's what I was asking because I wasn't sure how it was out here.

MW: All the grades in the same room?

FW: Well, at Smallridge school uh, it was one room, all grades one through eight. And then at the French Creek School there was divid up two grades per room and it was a four room school. OK?

Megan: Oh.

FW: There was first and second, third and fourth, fifth and sixth, and seventh and eighth. I started school at French Creek, and then we moved down here to Natural Bridge, then I went to the Small Ridge School.

Megan: After schhol what did you do?

FW: Well, I went to Public Works after I finished grade school and from there I was inducted into the military service, and spent uh, eighteen months in the service.

Megan: What is Public Works?

FW: Uh, at that time the Public Works was in a steel foundry in Canton, Ohio.

Megan: Oh.

MW: And that's the first time he'd been away from home, when he went to Public Works, right?

Megan: How old were you?

FW: I was just past sixteen.

Megan: OK. What did you do in the military for those eighteen months? What was your postion?

FW: Uh, I was inducted and went through artillery training, then I was tranferred to the Air Force eleventh air force, eleventh fighting squadrant. And, uh, I spent the balance of my time in the eleventh fighting squadrant doing mechanic work on the airplanes and cooking.

Megan: You were a cook? (inaudible)

MW: You spent how many months in Alaska? Which he loved.

FW: Well I spent uh, I think I spent a year in Alaska.

Megan: Wow.

FW: I went up in March and came back in March.

MW: On the Aleutian Islands.

Megan: What was it about that that you liked? What was it about that that you liked so much?

FW: Oh I liked the country up there. At that time it wasn't a state, it, I guess you'd call it a posseaaion. It did belong to the United States but it hadn't been declared a state. And, uh, I very seriously thought after I came back home that I would very soon come back to Alaska and homestead. But things didn't work out.

(laughter)

MW: Not hardly.

Megan: So, when did you two meet?

MW: Uh, a few weeks after he came out of service. You came out of service, in what March?

FW: I got home in March.

MW: Very shortly after that we met. (inaudible) He was a good friend of a friend of mine. And we met when I was working downtown.

Megan: Where did you work?

MW: Telephone operator.

Megan: Operator?

MW: Yeah. And I was out on break one day and met him. I guess that's what you'd say how it got started, I don't know.

(laughter)

Megan: I love talking about how people met.

(laughter)

MW: This was his best friend that I had been dating.

Megan: Uh-oh.

MW: Occasionally. And he had come out, they went to the service together, you know, but they didn't serve all their time together.

FW: No, we got separated.

MW: They were separated because he (FW) ended up in the hospital.

Megan: Why's that?

FW: We stayed together through basic training (inaudible)... transferred (inaudible)... and we flew, we went to Salt Lake City, Camp Vernons, Utah, just outside of Salt Lake City, and that was a replacement center, and they more or less entered you wherever they needed you in the Air Force, and I ended up uh, going to Alaska (inaudible)... went to Japan. I had a bad seige of tonsilitis, went to the hospital and the day I got out of the hospital they shipped out. They tried to process me, but they couldn't do all the paperwork in the hospital. So I spent another two weeks, three weeks, to be exact in Salt Lake City, Utah and shipped out for the Aleutian Islands.

Megan: So just through your military stuff you did a lot of traveling. Because I know you hadn't been out of the area.

FW: Oh yeah, you went where they wanted you to go. Yeah, I had never been out of, well I had been in Pennsylvania and Ohio, that was the only two states I had been in until that time enrout through Pennsylvania on to Canton, Ohio, and back and forth. But then after I went in the service I had experience (inaudible) Seattle, Washington, that's where I shipped out. And I shipped back to Seattle and came back to Fort Sheridan, at the edge of Chicago to see my discharge.

Megan: Did you come back here because of family?

FW: Uh-huh. (nods yes)

Megan: Even though you were tempted to go back to Alaska?

FW: Well, that hadn't really entered my mind at that time, it was after we were married, and uh, we got to talking about our past and I explained what the country was like up there.

MW: At that time they were offering land to people, weren't they?

FW: Oh yeah.

MW: Free land.

Megan: Oh my.

FW: Yeah, you could go up there and homestead just like they did years and years ago out

West.

MW: Back in the West.

FW: And, uh, if you stayed long enough and took a piece of ground uh, for I don't even remember now the amount of years a period of time, but uh, you got free deed to it.

MW: You got the land.

Megan: Wow.

MW: Oh we talked about it.

FW: Oh there was a lot a, there was a lot of people doin it.

Megan: What made you decide not to?

FW: Well..

MW: Afraid to take the chance, a lot.

FW: About the time we decided to uh,

MW: ...think about it

FW: ...think about it, (laughter), she got pregnant.

Megan: With my daddy.

(laughter)

FW: With your daddy.

(laughter)

MW: Well, you think twice when there's little ones.

Megan: Yeah.

FW: And then, uh, that kind of...

MW: Slowed it down.

FW: ...threw a spike in the wheel. And later on, after he was born, it came up again.

MW: And I was pregnant again.

FW: And low and behold...

MW: So I don't think we were meant to go to Alaska.

Megan: It doesn't sound like it was meant to be, if every time the subject came up, you got

pregnant. (laughter)

MW: But we would still like to go.

Megan: Yeah.

FW: No, it's too late in the day now, but I would've...

MW: No I would still like to go see it.

Megan: I don't think its too late.

FW: Just because, I always liked it outdoors, and there's all types of hunting, fishing.

MW: Well, you're as close as you can be to Alaska in West Virginia now, because you spend all of your time outdoors anyway.

(laughter)

Megan: So what was the year that the two of you got married?

MW: May 23, 1948.

Megan: And then the first was born March...

MW: March 10, 1949.

Megan: Forty-nine.

MW: Actually, we moved to Pennsylvania after we were married because he was working there. And then neither one of us liked it, so we came back to West Virginia.

Megan: So, what were you, who were you working for that moved you to Pennsylvania?

FW: Uh, National Electric.

MW: I don't know what they did, what'd they make?

FW: All types of uh...

MW: What it sounds like I'm sure.

FW: ... material for electrical wiring, from switch boxes, junction boxes, all types of (Inaudible) wiring...

MW: What it sounds like, National Electric.

FW: We made thousands and thousands of miles of wires.

MW: We didn't live up there too long.

Megan: What did you do in that factory at the time, what was your job? Was it a factory? It was a factory, right?

MW: Yeah.

FW: I guess my job was more or less considered a stock boy. I drove materials to the people on the assembly line.

MW: Would you believe I didn't know that? I didn't know what your job was there. I just knew you worked there.

(laughter)

Megan: And after the two of you got married, did you still continue to work as an operator?

MW: Uh, not while we were living in Pennsylvania. But when we moved back here I worked part time, at different times, um, a couple three hitches I believe.

Megan: Did you like that job?

MW: I loved it.

FW: The longest hitch that you worked was, well actually we came back here from Pennsylvania, and uh,...

MW: Work was scarce.

FW: Work was scarce, jobs were scarce. I picked up uh, different jobs. Eventually I ended up going to Ohio, and uh, found work up there. We moved to Ohio, for uh, six years. And during that six years I got crippled up and uh, had a leg broken.

MW: At that time we had two kids.

FW: So we moved back uh, temporarily. We came back to West Virginia, and back to Buckhannon, and your grandmother worked for the telephone.

MW: And he babysat on crutches.

FW: I babysat with the two kids on crutches.

Megan: Oh my. I bet that was fun. (laughter)

FW: And then I ended up going back to Ohio, going back to my job, still on one crutch. In fact, I started building our first house. Whenever I, if I didn't have a shovel to walk around with, I

(FW) would use a crutch. And I spayed it out and dug my own footer while I still had a cast on.

Megan: Where was this, is this this house or is this out in Ohio?

MW and FW: Out in Ohio.

Megan: If you don't mind me asking, what did you do to break your leg, how did you break it?

FW: A farm tractor.

MW: but while he was working, and proceeding to build the house, I stayed back here and worked for a few months.

FW: Until we were ready to move into the house.

Megan: So you had the kids here and were working...

MW: My sisters baby sat when I worked at the telephone.

Megan: OK, um, I am going to split off from what we are talking about now and ask you about your childhood memories because you are talking about your sisters. And where and when were you born?

MW: I was born in Upshur County. I had uh, one sister and two brothers. All are living now but one. I'm the only one living back here, everyone lives over in the other end of Pennsylvania, my sister and other brother. But I was raised here in West Virginia. And you were asking him about his schooling, my school was all eight grades in one room.

MW: Oh my.

MW: It was great.

Megan: Did you enjoy it?

MW: Oh yeah, I think it was better, I really do.

FW: Well, you were learning...

MW: You sat there and listened to the eighth grade when you were in second, and you learned from that. You did, it really did. So then I, finished high school, and a few months after I finished high school I went to work at the telephone. Actually I graduated in June from high school, and worked a couple three weeks downtown, ended up having appendicitis, and had to be off work for a while. Meantime, I was called by the telephone office, and I went to work for

(MW) the telephone company in December. (inaudible) and I worked until we were married.

Megan: What was it about the job that you liked so much?

MW: I don't know. I was just, it was just a job I loved. The people, the work, and it's totally different now. I mean there is nothing remotely resembling what we did.

Megan: What did you do?

MW: We had to sit at a switchboard and answer lights. (laughter)

FW: You had a...

MW: People picking up...

FW: ... your panel, here, with chords...

(laughter)

MW: Every time someone picked up a telephone out somewhere a light came on. You picked up a chord and answered that light, and then you picked up another chord to plug in and ring the number they wanted. It was amazing. As a matter of fact then you had party lines, times where there was eight or ten families on one party line, on one line, and you had rings, certain rings for each one. Maybe one had two rings, and they'd know it was their ring. Maybe one had three, or maybe one just one ring. Uh, but that's the way they knew, and you know, maybe sometimes they would like to know what their neighbor was talking about and they could pick up and listen.

FW: The reason I, the reason I knew what she was talking about was I had a short experience being a telephone operator while I was in, in the service.

Megan: Oh really?

FW: Our little switchboard was just about thirty inches wide, and the panel here with your lights same identical thing. We had a uh, battery operated which was for in case you had power failure (inaudible). But it was the same identical...

MW: ... thing.

FW: ... set up.

MW: ... set up. Except he was at one, one board, and there was several boards there was

(MW) maybe eight or ten girls at one time, answering.

Megan: Mostly a woman's job. Mostly women worked there.

MW: Yeah. Basically.

Megan: And did you work for a specific, was there a specific company there that you worked for, or was it just a...?

MW: Chesapeake and Potomac Telephone Company?

FW: yeah, C&P.

MW: At that time, C&P.

FW: C&P Telephone Company. It wasn't all this conglomeration that you have today, course you're talking about fifty-one, fifty-two years ago.

(laughter)

MW: I worked pretty crazy shifts. Lots of times I wouldn't get to see him, but he could sit in the pay station and talk to me while I was working. (inaudible)

FW: Here goes your telephone company coming back. Because this was illegal.

(laughter)

Megan: I think since it was fifty-one years ago, they're not going to mind so much.

MW: But he would talk to me.

Megan: That's good.

MW: So then we were married. We were going to be moving to Pennsylvania, so I couldn't...

FW: Yeah, she worked her notice out to the week before we was married. And I come in from Pennsylvania on the weekend, and we got married, and loaded up.

MW: Went to Pennsylvania.

Megan: Did you guys take any kind of honeymoon after your...

MW: Ambridge, no. No, we just had our honeymoon a few weeks ago.

FW: I had to be back on the job Monday.

MW: After our fiftieth anniversary we took a honeymoon. (laughter)

Megan: Was that to Blackwater, your trip to Blackwater?

MW: No, we didn't have a honeymoon. He had to be back at work.

Megan: Yeah.

MW: Besides we couldn't afford it.

FW: Actually, I did take that Monday off.

MW: That's right you did, so that we could get set up in our apartment. (laughter)

FW: I had, had that worked out ahead of time.

Megan: So what part of um, you moved to Pennsylvania. What city in Pennsylvania?

MW: Ambridge.

Megan: Ambridge, you just said that, sorry.

MW: Beyond Pittsburgh.

Megan: OK. And then you came back and you moved to Ohio, what part of Ohio?

FW: Uh, we lived in Condit, which was a little village between Sunbury and Centerburg.

Megan: Can you spell that, Condit?

FW: C-O-N-D-I-T.

Megan: OK. (laughter)

MW: Not too far from Columbus.

FW: Twenty-seven miles out of Columbus. I worked mostly, I worked in Columbus.

MW: Different jobs.

Megan: Just different, odd jobs?

FW: Well, I, when I first went to, to Ohio, I started work for Pennsylvania Railroad on section work. I would be out traveling on the rails repairing ties, putting in new rails, new ties, whatever was necessary. And then I got a job working in the shop, in the roundhouse for C&O Railroad.

Megan: What's the roundhouse?

FW: A roundhouse is (laughter), that is a, actually what it sounds like. Instead of being completely round, this one was about uh, half round. And you have a turntable outside that, uh, the railroad entered, come in off the tracks, in on the turntable, and then that table turned around

(FW) and lined it up with a track going into the building, and we had nineteen stalls where we could put nineteen railroad engines in the roundhouse. Which, uh, I want to draw you a picture.

Megan: Well, go ahead. Feel free.

FW: I mean, for your benefit.

MW: He has a habit of drawing pictures to explain things.

Megan: Well, that would help me.

MW: And that doesn't show up on a tape.

Megan: That's OK, I can explain what he's doing when I do my...

(Explaining his drawing)

FW: Now this is a turntable, you've got tracks out here different places. That your railroad engine comes in on, and this also has a set of tracks on it that you line up. In other words, you line up like this, you run an engine in on the turntable, then this turntable turns and you've got tracks here, here, all the way around. And whatever stall, I'll tell you if he was going for number one stall, we'd turn over here and line up with number one. Then the (unknown word) would run that engine in on the tracks inside the building. You had doors that closed up back here after the engine come in, overhead doors, and this area here was a walkway that you could travel with your tools and what have you to work on different engines.

MW: Service the engines.

Megan: So you not only worked on the railroad ties and stuff, you actually worked on the engines themselves?

FW: Yeah, my older brother was a machinist, a railroad machinist, and I was his helper, machinist's helper. And whatever, they would give you a slip of paper with whatever needed to be done on a particular engine, and they'd give you the end, and we would move to that engine and we would work on that machine.

Megan: About how many trains a day did you work on?

FW: Oh, depends on your job. What needed to be done on a particular engine, and how long it would take. Sometimes an engine would be in there for two or three weeks. Sometimes it

(FW): would be there for, uh, like an oil pump packing, which would take, uh, an hour, hour and a half, before it'd go back out on the road.

MW: But this all changed when steam engines went to deisel.

FW: I lost my job when the deisels took over and steam engines lost out.

Megan: What year was this? Round about.

FW: Fifty...fifty-one or fifty-two.

MW: Lynda was born in fifty.

FW: Hm?

MW: Lynda was born in fifty and you were working then.

FW: Yeah. Just trying to figure. The big snow was in fifty, so it was after that. About fifty-one probably when deisels got popular enough to shut, to start shutting the steam engines out, and that's when I lost my job because they just didn't need the amount of people to keep the deisel engines going as they did for the steam engines.

Megan: Do they still have these round, roundhouses?

FW: There's a few of them I suppose still in operation because you do have a certain amount of work inside, repair work that needs to be done on a deisel engine that warrants a roundhouse. They had taken three stalls while I was there and remodified them to handle deisel engines. In other words, each one of these stalls inside had a pit where you could get down underneath a steam engine. On the deisel engines they eliminated that pit, and, uh, closed it off to where you didn't have to get down in underneath deisel.

Megan: I bet that was a pretty messy job.

FW: Uh, the steam engines, yeah.

(laughter)

MW: Yeah.

(laughter)

FW: You, uh, had to get down in underneath all those....well, to give you an idea of how messy and dirty you would get, uh, in 1950, I am sure you've heard a little bit about the big snow.

Megan: You said the big snow and I actually have not a clue what you're talking about.

(laughter)

FW: OK, it came on up there...

MW: In Ohio.

FW: ... it was a day or a day and a half later here. But it hit up there on Thanksgiving evening, and, on November the twenty-seventh, nineteen and fifty. We went to work that afternoon on the afternoon shift...

MW: It was forty-nine, because Lynda wasn't born in fifty. The snow hit in forty-nine. You moved me up to Jean's...

Megan: When was Lynda born?

MW: She was born on the fifteenth.

Megan: What, what month was it?

MW: I guess it was in fifty. See, see what happens when I interrupt him.

Megan: No. I want you to put your words in.

MW: It was in fifty.

FW: November the twenty-seventh, nineteen fifty, and Lynda was born in December nineteen fifty.

Megan: So you were just about...

FW: She was very heavy with Lynda. And like I say, my older brother and I went to work on Thanksgiving afternoon, and we got snowbound at the tracks. My dad, living just down the road from where each one of us lived, he'd taken the tractor and wagon, and went up and got your grandmother and hauled her down to Ed and Jean's house and the girls batched there together while we was living at the roundhouse.

MW: They were stranded in Columbus.

Megan: My goodness.

FW: We, uh, didn't get home til the next Tuesday. So in other words we spent Thursday night, Friday night, Saturday night, Sunday night, and Monday night without showers, or without

(FW) baths.

(laughter)

MW: He didn't even leave, other than to hunt for change or something, you didn't even leave the place did you?

FW: No, we uh...

MW: Slept on benches, anything they could find.

FW: ... we got paid, pretty much around the clock. If you got time enough to sneak off and get a half an hours nap, you did something like that, but all we did during this time was keep the water lines from the tender to the engine thawed out so that you keep water going into the engines. If you didn't. the engines could blow up. So we had to forget everything else and take care of this. Now, there were, I forget how many passenger trains did get through, but Ed and I would have to go over to main line, on their schedule whenever they could come through and inspect that engine, and if they were able to continue to run, most of the work engines like that hauled coal and freight and so on, it kept them pretty much to a stand still, but they (inaudible)

MW: Well, what was the inches of snow? Close fifty, forty some inches of snow.

FW: Yeah there was in the neighborhood of fifty inches of snow.

Megan: So, you got towed from you house...

MW: They didn't want me staying by myself because Freddy was little and they moved me in with...

FW: What happened was it started snowing late that afternoon, and uh, by eleven o'clock that night, whenever was should have got relieved. This roundhouse, the parking area, was a section down here and you could look out the windows of the roundhouse down, oh probably two acres or something like that of parking area. And by eleven o'clock, it just looked like sand dunes or something, and it was snow. All the vehicles were covered over.

MW: No one could come in to relieve them.

FW: No one could get in, and we couldn't get out.

Megan: How many people would work at this roundhouse, at a time, on a shift?

FW: I, I don't really know for sure. I would say in the neighborhood of forty, something like that per shift.

Megan: So you went to Jean's? So everybody was living at, living in Ohio at this time?

MW: Yeah.

Megan: Ok, because, your sister's, I understand now, I'm making the connection.

MW: Jean was my sister-in-law.

Megan: Sister-in-law. And, so you went over there. When was Lynda born in December?

FW and MW: The fifteenth.

Megan: Fifteenth? You were cutting it kind of close.

MW: Only she wasn't due on the fifteenth.

Megan: When was she due?

MW: She was due the last part of January.

Megan: Oh my.

MW: But there was still snow piled up all over the place when she was born on the fifteenth of January. She was early, or, she was born on the fifteenth of December and she was due about the sixteenth or eighteenth of January. So she was a little early. And that's one reason I was moved up with Jean because...

FW: Well, at that time we was living in a converted schoolhouse.

MW: It was cold!

FW: It was cold.

(laughter)

FW: And, uh, in fact, I can remember when your dad was...

MW: We was heating him with quilts.

FW: ... he was sleepin in his crib, baby bed? In the baby bed...

MW: Baby bed.

FW: We would hang a quilt over him.

MW: Hang quilts around him. To keep him warmer.

FW: In this particular room we had the linoleum floor. The wind blowing underneath that building would, if there wasn't furniture holding it down, in some places that linoleum would raise four or five inches off the floor.

Megan: Oh my goodness.

FW: Just like a balloon.

Megan: Just from the wind?

FW: Right.

Megan: Were you raised up, were you up on a hill or something or were you?

FW: No, its all level out there, there's no wind breaks like we have here. You can get behind a hill or something. There's no timber, uh, just flat country, and nothing to stop the wind and the underpinnings, there was not underpinning under the house. So it was a very cold place, but it was someplace to live temporary, and uh, that's where we started our Ohio seeds, out in Ohio.

Megan: So, then you started building this other house.

FW: And, and uh... oh Lord, I can't remember the date now. Just shortly after Lynda was born, I had my tractor accident, broke my leg. And that same spring, I was able enough to start working, starting building our first house.

Megan: And that was when?

FW: That was in fifty-one.

Megan: And that's when grandma, and dad, and Lynda were here. They were in this area.

FW: Yeah, they lived in. Well, after I broke my leg, I think it was in March. It was in December, late December, uh, in March we came back down here and she went to work, and I baby sat until I was able to get around and get back on the job, which, like I said, was on one crutch. And, uh, when was it that I broke my leg?

MW: February.

FW: Was it February I was home?

MW: Uh-huh.

FW: Fifty-one. Was it February?

MW: There about the eighth. You used to remember the date.

FW: I was thinking shortly after Lynda was born.

MW: Lynda was just a couple months old.

FW: OK. Huh, that pretty well took care of our Ohio. Well, actually, after I got able to go back to work, I ended up going from the railroad to North American Aviation. I worked for North American Aviation for a couple (inaudible). I had worked at Kilgore's...

MW: Well, you worked a couple of other places before you went to North American.

FW: A couple of other places, small places.

MW: Up there, and then you went to North American.

FW: And then I went to North American, then after North American we came back here. They had me on midnight shift, evening shift...

MW: And that was another place where the children...

FW: Ten hour shift. I'd get home and I'd be in bed asleep, my kids would get up to go to school, and I'd get up later to go to work, I'd come home and go to bed, they'd get up and go to school. I didn't see em.

MW: Well, that's happened after that too, so.

FW: Yeah.

MW: But that was another job that was soon eliminated too, wasn't it? Shortly after.

FW: Uh-huh.

Megan: And where was, where was this?

MW: This was in Columbus.

Megan: In Columbus.

MW: At North American Aviation.

Megan: And this is, you were then living in the house you had built, that you had started building when you were on one crutch.

MW: Yeah.

FW: And then we sold the little house that I built to my dad, and we bought another house,

(FW): bought another house and sold it.

MW: A bigger one.

FW: Yeah. And lived in it until we moved back here.

MW: The position at North American, why did it go bad? Why did they go to something else didn't they?

FW: No, I think they...

MW: They just slowed down.

FW: ... they just slowed down and eliminated a lot of their work force. At the time I went to work for them there was something like eighteen hundred people and they remodified to the point where they could eliminate a lot of workers, but that isn't exactly why I quit. I started to say there, I was on afternoon shift, and by the time I got off work, which usually instead of eleven o'clock was one, because we worked ten hours a day for the biggest part of the time. And, it took me another hour to drive the twenty seven miles to my house, and back and forth to work. I didn't see the kids, I got tired of it, and we decided we'd move back to West Virginia and see if we couldn't starve to death in the hills.

(laughter)

FW: So that's when we moved back, after shifting around up there for a few years.

MW: Stephen was born in Ohio, and we came back shortly after he was born.

Megan: And you moved to where?

MW: Back in this area. Don't ask how many different places we lived in.

Megan: Oh, OK. (laughter)

FW: Yeah, we moved back to Upshur County.

Megan: And what kind of work did you do then?

MW: Odds and ends.

FW: Well I farmed for a short while out of, I bought a few cattle, and started milking and selling Carnation milk. Selling milk to the Carnation plant in Clarksburg. It wasn't exactly Carnation milk that I was selling, but it was well on its way to that. Then, hm, did we, did we (inaudible)...

MW: A restaurant and a teenage joint.

FW: Yeah, like a teenage entertainment center...

MW: Dancing.

FW: Uh, with a little restaurant and living quarters in the back and so on.

Megan: You, you guys did this?

MW and FW: Yeah.

Megan: Oh wow, that's neat.

FW: And then from that I went into Dutch Oven? No, I worked for, Dutch Oven maybe, road salesman for Dutch Oven.

MW: While we were still living there you went to work for Dutch Oven, road salesman for a bakery company, of bread and pastries and so forth.

FW: House-to-house delivery.

MW: House-to-house.

FW: And from that I went to the feed store. I worked six years for Ed Airy Feed.

Megan: What was that? What was the name of it?

FW: Ed Airy Feeds.

MW: A farm and feed store. Different things, they sold different things. But mostly...

(inaudible)

FW: Feed, fertilizer, lyme, fencing...

Megan: And all at the same time, were you, did you have the cattle and stuff then still?

FW: No, no, no. I got rid of the cattle when I went into the restaurant, I guess you'd call it a teen's entertainment with a little dance floor, no alcoholic beverages or anything of that sort.

But we had enough problems with that to make up for it.

Megan: What kind of problems, if you don't mind talking about it?

FW: No.

MW: Oh, fights and...

FW: Like I said we...

MW: We didn't handle alcohol, but people that had been drinking would come in and they would cause trouble.

FW: We were living in the back, so the kids were in the front, they were up amongst the customers.

End Side A.

Begin Side B.

FW: Around fifty-six I think. (inaudible)

MW: Lynda and Fred were both in school. Actually I think Lynda's first year, and that'd be around sixty.

FW: I think I went to work for Ed Airy in fifty-six or fifty-seven, because I went to work for Corhart Factory in sixty-three, the fall of sixty-three, and I spent the next twenty-six years working there.

(Tape Problems)

(laughter)

Megan: See, if we can't do that, then I've got a whole other tape.

(laughter)

FW: We'll have to start over.

Megan: We were at Corhart. You just started talking about...

MW: That's about the time we started building the house. No, we had already started building that house when you were at Corharts.

FW: Oh, I started building that house up there...

MW: You were working at Ed Airy's.

FW: Uh, (inaudible)

MW: That's when his paycheck was about forty bucks a week and we were building a house.

Megan: Now, dad had told me, in talking about you, behind your back (laughter), dad had said that you built all the houses that you have built without putting the family in debt, ever. And he says that he remembers helping you, and he was maybe six he said.

FW and MW: Yeah.

FW: He was ten.

Megan: Ten.

FW: Whenever we bought this.

MW: Randy was a baby.

FW: So while I was building and working on this house up here, he was ten, eleven years old.

MW: Well, there's ten years difference.

FW: About eleven years old.

MW: (inaudible)... when Randy was a baby.

Megan: It is amazing how much they look alike, with a ten year difference. (laughter)

FW and MW: Huh?

Megan: It's amazing how much they look alike, even with a ten year difference between them.

MW: Well, there's ten years between Randy and Fred, and five years between Fred and Steve.

FW: The boys are five years apart. But, it was a long, drawn out process. In fact, the assessor, he would come around once a year and assess the (inaudible word) for you taxes. We finally got ashamed of putting the house down as unfinished for I don't know how many years. Finally he said maybe we'd better...

MW: Finish it.

FW: ... put it in as a finished house.

MW: He had started with the basement and...

FW: Well, we started with a twenty-four by twenty-four, and laid the basement up to that and built the four rooms on top of that, three rooms and a bath. And, uh, at that time, we didn't have no (inaudible). We didn't have no partitions, from room to room. And then whenever we moved in it was just a steady...

MW: You could go from one room to the other between walls. (laughter)

FW: Yeah, you didn't have to use the doors.

Megan: Bet that was fun. (laughter)

FW: And, uh...

Megan: Did the bathroom have walls? (laughter)

MW: Well, at that time we had an outside bathroom.

FW: We had an outhouse, we didn't have a bathroom.

Megan: I remember dad saying that.

FW: We didn't have running water for the first what, two or three years?

MW: But, we weren't alone, there was a lot of people that had the same thing.

Megan: Oh yeah.

MW: That was normal back then.

FW: Right.

Megan: About what year was this?

FW: There was a heck of a lot of people... there's a lot of people yet today as far as that's concerned.

MW: About sixty, no fifty-nine.

FW: We moved in on July the eleventh, 1959.

Megan: I am amazed at how you all remember dates.

(inaudible area)

FW: Yeah, we took (inaudible)

MW: And it was total woods when we started building. And he cleared them all out, and then he planted them all back.

(laughter)

FW: No, I just planted pine trees.

Megan: How much land is this encompassing, at the time that you bought it?

FW: A little over eighty-eight acres.

Megan: Eighty-eight acres? Is that what you have today?

FW: Not for long. We're doing the paperwork right now. Bob and Lynda are gonna buy us out.

Megan: That's what dad said.

MW: It'll still be the home place though.

FW: We did, we spent quite a few years working on the house but like you mentioned before, whenever I was building the basement, first starting, I was working at the feed store. When I had a few dollars that I could spend for blocks, I had an old pick-up truck, I'd go over to the block pile of an evening and pick up maybe ten or fifteen blocks, take them home.

MW: He made sure we had groceries for the week first, so then if he had anything extra he'd buy building materials, right?

FW: Uh-huh.

MW: And so that's the way it was built.

FW: Yeah, the first year that we owned the place we managed to get the basement dug out, and the basement walls just about halfway down. So the next spring, well, through the winter we were using a tremendous amount of used lumber on the house. I had an old house down on the back lot...

MW: That's probably what Fred remembers, your dad remembers. We helped clean out the lumber.

FW: Through the winter, we cleaned lumber, and, uh, well we cleaned up doors and so on. I'd haul doors from here over to where we lived in Rock Cave, and scraped and worked on them of a night. And, uh, what Fred remembers, probably more than anything else, is him and I cleaning the floors.

MW: Tongue and groove lumber.

FW: We had maple flooring and all we used was solid dust and dirt, had been used before and everything. We had to clean all this up, take all the nails out, and saw the damage out, and put it back together. Fred helped me out.

MW: It made a beautiful floor, after it was cleaned up.

FW: After we got cleaned up, yeah, after we got the sanders and sanded it, it was pretty. It is yet today, if you take the carpet up off of it.

MW: Yeah, it made a pretty floor.

FW: That was one way we worked around without using a lot of money.

MW: Well there was a, there was a big two story house on the back part of this lot, and that's what he tore down, and got the used lumber out of it.

Megan: Who lived back there?

MW: For years, there was a lot of people living back there. It was a huge house, a big house.

(inaudible)

Megan: How would you access? How would you get through there?

FW: We loaded it all along through here, all below the sugar house...

MW: You know where the cabin is...

FW: It was sitting right below the cabin.

Megan: Oh, OK.

FW: In that level spot back there. This, at that time, well, eighty or a hundred years ago this was a county road, for horse and wagon. It was a county road.

MW: It's still probably on the maps as a county road, they probably haven't taken it off.

Megan: They probably haven't and people will be trucking on through your back yard.

(laughter)

MW: Well, he did. He downed the old house and that's the lumber that they cleaned up for this house.

FW: We didn't want the kids to (inaudible area). So we decided that this was the only place on the road that was a decent build. And at that time, this area in here was just a bunch of boulders. They had taken rocks, notice that rock wall? From there out to these rocks here (pointing from about fifty yards away from the house on one side to about twenty yards away from the opposite side of the house) all this was just a ridge up through here. They'd taken rocks out of here to build this road.

MW: That's why it is so rocky. We're on solid rock.

Megan: How'd you get that rock wall down?

MW: Oh, back there?

Megan: If it stretched from here...

MW: Well, they dug it down...

FW: They dug it out with equipment, dynamited and,,,

MW: ... before we moved in, because do you remember the rock cliff back here behind the pines?

Megan: Uh-huh.

FW: Yeah, but there was a connection through here.

MW: It was what they called a rock quarry, and they blasted all these rocks out.

FW: For years.

MW: For years. So we're on a solid foundation. (laughter)

Megan: You're not movin.

FW: But anyhow the house that we tore down back there was built in 1899, and I salvaged the lumber out of it to build (inaudible). The main portion of twenty-four by twenty-four was built out of used lumber.

MW: Well, a lot of the other was too.

FW: Quite a bit of it was, almost every (inaudible)

MW: Well, it was good lumber.

Megan: I'm gonna clarify, on tape, that we're talking about French Creek now, because we have gone from Rock Cave to here now. And we keep saying here, and nobody else will know...

MW: Yeah, this is French Creek.

FW: Yeah, we're on French Creek route.

MW: But for us its just so easy to move around when we're telling a story. (laughter)

FW: Well, you don't put this stuff together ahead of time and, uh, a lot of times you get ahead of yourself.

MW: Yeah, you do. (laughter) That's like the history they tried to put together on our fiftieth

(MW): anniversary.

Megan: Oh my.

MW: That was hard to do.

FW: But, uh...

Megan: So that house used to be twenty-four by twenty-four, which was the living room, and the four bedrooms?

FW: Actually it was the hallway and three bedrooms, if you remember the house. The back. Now that was, clear on up on the landing, that was, at that time, that was an outside door.

Megan: Oh.

FW: So then, later on I built a room on this end, an entry room, and we used that for a year or two. That-a-way you could come out of there, down to the basement without going outside. So we were using the basement, I had built a kitchen down there. But to get back a little bit farther back in the story, after we got the house built under roof and got (inaudible), the next year, the next summer, Fred and Lynda and Steve, helped me a little too, they took their little red wagon, and hauled rocks for me.

Megan: Dad remembers this...

(laughter)

Megan: He has talked about this. (laughter)

MW: They wore their little red wagon out.

(laughter)

FW: And with that, the rocks in the basement, then we poured concrete for the floor. After we got the floor in the basement then I moved to building the kitchen down there so that we could tear this entry room I was referring to off and get ready to build a twenty by twenty-four addition on, which consists of the livingroom and the kitchen.

MW: And after that he just continued to build on...

FW: After that I built on the loungeroom or the familyroom part. I built that for a garage, but it wasn't quite big enough, so I finished it up for a living quarters. And then we had the big patio,

(FW): a big twenty-four by twenty-four patio, where the garage sits now. And then later I tore that off and put the garage up.

(laughter)

FW: Well, I even had people ask me if, are you gonna connect a breezeway between the house and the barn before its over with?

(laughter)

MW: Well, I think it ended up being, what, about eighty-four feet long from the end of the garage to the back of the house. Kay says that that's what he did when he got frustrated, he'd build.

FW: It's seventy-four.

MW: Seventy-four?

FW: It's seventy-eight feet from overhang to overhang.

Megan: Now while you, when you got this land, for some reason I am remembering, and I could be way off here, that you at some point slaughtered, did you not? Did you have pigs and cows, or cows and sheep? Or something like that.

MW: Oh yeah. We kept animals off and on.

FW: We kept, we always had, for years we raised our own hogs. We usually had two hogs to butcher in the fall.

MW: Then beef occasionally.

FW: And occassionally a beef.

MW: And he had sheep here.

Megan: I thought I remembered somebody talking about that.

MW: Oh yeah. Randy and Kay had a pet lamb that they bottle fed. I asked Kay the other day what they called her, what did she tell me? Gertrude.

Megan: Gertrude. (laughter)

MW: They named it Gertrude.

FW: We used to be in pig stock all the time, in fact the last two pig pens that we kept, Bob had brought Blacky in here, and he was with the beef handlers back there...

MW: Yeah, he had cattle (inaudible)

FW: The reason I remember that, I went back to doctor his eye , he got his eye snagged, his upper lid, and Bob and I were trying to get it to heal up.

MW: Blacky was Bob's horse in case you want it on here.

Megan: And Bob is Lynda's husband, so we're farther ahead in the story than we were a little while ago.

(laughter)

MW: We do that.

Megan: Oh yeah, there's no escaping.

FW: But like I say, the reason I remember the last two beef, I was raising one for myself, and one for (inaudible area). But I went back there that one day to doctor Blacky and his eye was healed to the point where I didn't think I was going to have to put anymore...

MW: Medication.

FW: ...medication. And I was just standing there, I had been petting him, and standing there watching the beef animals down below him, when my attention got away from him and he just reached over for some reason, and took a hold of me right there. (motioning to the middle part of his right arm)

MW: Bit him good.

Megan: Oh my.

FW: When his teeth slipped off, you talk about hurt.

MW: He thought Fred was gonna put medicine in his eye.

FW: I had, I suppose that's what he thought. I had the darndest bruise on my arm.

Megan: He didn't draw blood did he?

FW and MW: No.

FW: He just pinched me. He just bit hard enough to nail his teeth. That's what they'll do and then oh... I remember the last two beef animals.

MW: Since then we haven't had anything but Bob's horses.

FW: I even had a hog house, I used to raise hogs, back then we used to go camping. We'd go vacation, it would be close to a week, and I had to figure out some way to take care of the animals. So I had it rigged up with a steel barrel and a trickle of water running into the trough, and I built an automatic feeder for the grain so the hogs could eat whenever they wanted to. Course they had access to about a half acre of woods down in there. And that water, just trickled in there real slow, kept plenty of water, and we'd go for a week.

Megan: Oh my.

MW: Then we could go camping for a few days.

FW: Yeah, I tested all this out ahead of time so it would...

MW: It worked.

FW: See that it would work, then they'd be taken care of.

Megan: Wow.

MW: Course this was, oh, that's probably after Fred, Fred never camped with us very much. We didn't start camping until he was pretty much grown. I don't know, that he ever did go camping with us too much other than... he and Lynda either one.

FW: He went camping with us up at Fall Run.

MW: Not at Sutton.

FW: Up at Fall Run?

MW: Oh, when we had a cabin up at Fall Run. Oh yeah.

FW: Yeah.

Megan: You had a cabin?

MW: We rented a cabin, it was with a couple of other families.

FW: Actually it was an old farm house that was, the farm was growed up, and (inaudible)...

MW: It was right close to a stream. River, Holly River, was that the river?

FW: No.

MW: Fall Run.

FW: Well, actually,uh, Holly River, right where it falls, at the shoot...

MW: Yeah.

FW: ... that was Fall Run, that's where it dumped into Holly River. But it went on...

MW: We had rented, we rented that cabin for quite a few years. I can't remember what year it was, but we spent Thanksgiving up there one year, and it actually was warm enough to go swimming. Uh, somebody fell into the creek, and then they all decided...

FW: That got it started, they said hey, the water was warm.

MW: So they decided to go swimming.

FW: Lynda, Lynda was one of them.

MW: Yeah, I can't remember what year it was. But they did go swimming.

Megan: That's funny. It's almost been that warm this year.

MW: You're right, almost.

FW: Was it before Kay?

MW: No, Kay and Renee had a ball. Kay wasn't in school yet. So, at least that, probably middle, late sixties.

FW: Yeah, it was, I was getting ready to say, it was before Kay ever started school.

MW: Fred and Lynda was in high school.

FW: Well, it was in uh, it was after I went to work at Corhart, course that's been thirty-six, going on thirty-six years ago.

Megan: So you started working at Corhart in...

FW: Sixty-three.

Megan: Sixty-three. And you were there for, you said twenty-six years?

MW: Twenty-six years. And he's been retired for...

FW: And I'm going on ten years retired. But, anyhow, the, uh, where our camp was up there. I had taken your grandma and the kids, and this other lady and her kids, they went up (inaudible)...

MW: Picked blackberries.

FW: ...picked blackberries. So I'd taken them up and I had to go to work the next day, so

(FW): helping them get arranged and everything so that they could camp a day or two and pick blackberries. So the next morning, during the night it came a heck of a rain, and the next morning, I was down, and you had to ford the river to get into this, and the water was about four feet deep across the river. I went back to the cabin and told em, I said I don't guess I'll go to work, and why, and I told em, give me some buckets and I'll go blackberry pickin. So I went and picked blackberries, but when I walked by the driveway that went into the river, I laid me a pretty good sized boulder right at the edge of the water, and I went off and picked a couple of gallons of blackberries, and when I came back that boulder was laying here, and the water was a way down here. It'd already run down, so I could get out. So after lunch I headed into the plant at Buckhannon to go to work.

MW: Well, this is in Webster County, I don't suppose Megan's ever been over there.

Megan: No.

MW: Ask your mother about it some time, she went up there and stayed a night with us.

Megan: Was that when they were first dating, or was it after they got married?

MW: Right after they got married.

Megan: That wasn't the snipe hunting incident was it?

MW: No, no, no...

FW: Did they go up?

MW: Yeah, with, uh, I forget who went with him.

FW: It wasn't Glen Hartman's boy...

MW: I think it was David, but I don't know who else. I think they had to chase the snakes out, if I remember right, they had to chase a snake or two out of the cabin.

(laughter)

FW: Well, we used, uh, a wood cook stove to cook meals on.

MW: We cooked Thanksgiving dinner on the wood cook stove.

FW: Yeah, we had Thanksgiving dinner, we set the table up out in the yard out here and oh, it was seventy, seventy-five degrees, it was real nice.

MW: I hope it's that way this year.

Megan: It's workin on it.

MW: I could put some people out on the porch.

Megan: There you go. (laughter)

FW: They're calling for seventy degrees tomorrow.

Megan: So, what'd you do at Corharts? Because I know that's your longest...

MW: Span...

Megan: ... span in one...

MW: ... of work.

FW: Well, I did several different jobs. I went in and went to work as low man on the totem pole, and uh, we had kind of a seniority system, bid system more or less, when I first went to work there to try out for other jobs. And then, later on we became organized with a union job. We set our priorities to step up by seniority. But, I was anything from a kiln loader, to batch mixer, flip caster, this won't mean too much I'm sure.

Megan: Well what does Corhart produce? What did...

FW: They produced a refractory for glass furnaces. In other words its a lining that goes in glass furnaces, like a brick. Where bricks are small these refractories some are pretty good size they go to two inches thick, twelve inches wide, and two feet long, and so on. They are laid together to build walls and ceilings and so on.

MW: And the furnaces, which were used in steel mills, or what?

FW: They was glass work.

MW: Just for glass works?

FW: Right. They were refractories to line the furnace, and inside this furnace, you melted your sand into your glass.

MW: And these things were shipped all over the country.

FW: All over the world.

MW: All over the world actually.

FW: Right. In fact, right now I was beginning to notice the, some (inaudible), the major portion of them were French, they were France. But...

MW: When you quit you were a grinder?

FW: I was a finisher.

MW: A finisher.

FW: It was called a finisher, (inaudible), a big surface grinder that ground these rocks down to size. I went, there wasn't a job that I didn't hold while I was there that I can think of right off. I never operated a kiln. I was a temporary foreman right down to the lowest job. Quite an experience.

MW: And every shift there was...

FW: Oh yeah, I worked rotating shifts, the biggest part of the time. In other words I worked seven days on day shift, seven days on evening shift, seven days on midnights, and then go right back to day shift.

MW: Which was another period of time that he didn't see the kids too much.

FW: Yeah, there's a spell there that I would be on long shifts. I could wave at em when I was meeting the school bus...

Megan: So, uh, you were part of a union then, within this? That's something we've been talking about in class, union organization.

FW: Yeah, the plant organized just two years after I had worked there.

MW: The Aluminum and Clay workers, but now it's something else.

FW: Yeah, it used to be the Brick Clay Workers, and now its combined with Steel.

MW: I know you get the magazine, but I just don't know.

FW: Big organization.

MW: So then he worked there until he retired, and then he's worked real hard even since.

Megan: How old were you when you retired?

FW: Sixty-two.

Megan: Sixty-two. And ever since then, you haven't stopped obviously.

(laughter)

FW: Yeah, I did a lot of building.

MW: He's had a carpenter project every summer.

FW: I bought my little saw mill just a year before I retired. In fact I built the house the year before I retired.

MW: The log house.

FW: I actually have been building ever since.

Megan: Uh-huh. You certainly have.

FW: I've built horse barns, hay sheds, cabins...

MW: Wood sheds, maple syrup sheds...

Megan: So, lets start with the house. Let's start with the house, you built the house the year before you retired, this house would be the house we're sitting in right now.

FW: I started the house in eighty-eight, right? July of eighty-eight, and we moved in eighty-nine.

Megan: I remember coming here in the summertime, and seeing people up on the roof.

MW: Before you, just shortly before you retired.

FW: But I, with the help of the boys...

Megan: The boys being...

FW: Mainly Chet, then Randy...

MW: Bob did the urethaning...

FW: Bob did a little bit more with that than anything else.

MW: Bob did more urethaning.

FW: Fred helped, your dad helped put the shingles on.

Megan: I remember dad getting up on the roof.

FW: I don't think he put many shingles on, but he took the hard job, he carried shingles up the ladders and we put shingles on.

(laughter)

FW: So we all had a pretty good experience at it.

MW: Even the girls nailed some flooring down.

FW: Yeah. Kay, uh, burned her knees good.

MW: Yeah, one day it was so hot she burned her knees on the flooring.

FW: We was putting the subfloor down upstairs. We didn't have any roof at that time, we built it up. And it was so hot that if you didn't keep your nails laying in the shade, especially the ten inch nails that you spike the logs together with, if you didn't keep them in the shade, you picked on of them up, it would burn your hand.

MW: And she was crawling on the floor trying to help out.

FW: She was nailing the subfloor down, which was in four bade sheets of tongue and groove cedar. Chet and I would put one into place, and she'd nail it. She'd crawl around on that not realizing that those surfaces was hot enough that it'd burnt her knees.

MW: But her and Lynda were determined to pound some nails, so they pounded a few.

FW: Yeah, I've got pictures.

Megan: To clarify the birth order, because we keep talking about the kids and then their significant others. Fred was first, and his wife is Wende, and I'm their daughter. And then there is Lynda, who married Bob, and they have two kids, and they are Justin and Rebecca. And then there was Stephen who is married to B.J..

MW: Who retired from the Air Force, and they moved to Georgia.

Megan: ...and they have two children, Stephen Lee and April. And then Randy and Amy, I always think Randy is the youngest, I don't know why. Randy and Amy. And then Kay who is married to Chet and they have two boys, Tyler and Ryan. Just to get that out there. So, when you decided to build the log house, did you, you did the wood, did you cut the lumber, and do the...

MW: Not the logs.

FW: No, I, these are factory made logs. In other words, you, we pretty well designed what we wanted on paper as much as we could, and then taken it to a dealer, and uh, they normally had

their own packages, for this type house or this type, but we wanted our own idea. So they had to sit down then and do the more or less the architecture work on the house...

MW: To determine the supplies.

FW: To figure out the package that we would have to have for it. And they got that all figured out and uh, they was supposed to have gave us two days work to get us started layin logs, but we never got that volunteer work.

Megan: Who are they?

FW and MW: Mountain State Log Haulers.

FW: Well, we got along just fine.

MW: He got along just fine, I don't think I nailed a log.

(laughter)

MW: Not when it takes a sledgehammer to pound the spikes into the log. I didn't do any.

FW: Ten inch nails.

Megan: How long did it take you, to build the house?

FW: It had taken about a year actually from the time I started until we had things ready to move in.

MW: About a year. We started in July.

FW: In fact, Bob and Lynda wanted the house up there. And they had been asking all day, why don't you sell us this house? And I said, well, if you'll give me a year to build me one, I will.

MW: And he had always wanted to build a log home.

FW: So that's the way this pretty much came about. And, uh, they said, yeah, okay. So we agreed on three acres of ground to go with the house up there. And immediately I started planning to build a house. And they bought the premise in eighty-eight, I started building in eighty-eight, and I moved in in eighty-nine, and they moved in in eighty-nine. So we just switched houses, in weeks. But that's how it came about that we ended up with two houses here. Had it not been for that, we'd of probably still lived up there.

Megan: But you got your dream house.

FW: Yep.

(laughter)

Megan: And you did it yourself.

FW: That's right.

Megan: What was the next thing you built? Sorry, I didn't mean to interrupt you.

FW: Well, we built the garage, shop, and cellar, combination deal. And uh,

Megan: When did you build that?

FW: I started it uh,

MW: Less than a year after we moved in.

FW: I would say probably nineteen ninety. The first winter we lived here I didn't have, we didn't have it.

MW: And the next thing was probably the cabin on the back part of the farm, was your next building.

FW: Uh-huh.

Megan: And you built that when?

FW: Well actually the next building was the mill shed.

MW: Storage for the saw mill.

FW: Then the cabin...

MW: Someday I'm going to start keeping a diary so I'll have all these dates.

(laughter)

FW: Then I built the cabin, and then I added on another room to the cabin a couple years later.

MW: With a stone floor.

Megan: About how big is the cabin?

FW: Hmmm...

MW: He's forgotten.

Megan: He's thinking real hard though.

FW: It's thirty feet long, by sixteen feet wide.

Megan: And its...two stories.

MW: Two story.

FW: Well, whatever its got a...

MW: Small room upstairs with bunks.

FW: I call it a loft, for the bunk beds upstairs.

Megan: And you laid the flooring, the rock? Is that what it is?

MW: In the one room he laid the rocks.

FW: Its fourteen by twenty, fourteen by sixteen and its got stone flooring and a stone hearth.

MW: I don't have any idea.

FW: Eighty, Ninety, Ninety-three.

Megan: That's what I was thinking, I was thinking about five years ago.

FW: Ninety two, ninety three. I think we had part of it finished in ninety-four. But I think it was deer season, it might have been deer season in ninety-two, when Fred, Randy, Stephen Lee, Stephen, and I all...

MW: ...and Rebecca had slept.

FW: ...went campin.

MW: And then the next building project...who knows, I can't keep up with him.

FW: Next big project was the barn...

MW: Oh, the barn.

FW: Which was going on three years now, two years ago.

Megan : And I think this is the most amazing one yet...

FW: Two years ago last spring I started.

Megan: Tell me about it , how big is this?

FW: Its thirty by forty.

Megan: How many stalls?

FW: Six now. I've added two more since you've seen it.

Megan: Oh my.

MW: One for each horse.

Megan: Oh yeah, it makes sense how many, it just amazes me.

MW: Right now he's got a baby colt in there that he's weaning from its mother. That's why he had to build an extra stall. So he could separate the two.

FW: It's six months old.

Megan: So how many horses live on your land now?

FW: Six head.

Megan: And these are all owned by Bob and Lynda.

FW: But it will be two years ago this past spring.

MW: It has each, it has six separate stalls, and then there's lights for each stall. With a grooming, what do you call it a grooming parlor? And then his tack room where he keeps his harnesses and saddles and everything.

Megan: I would not be surprised if eventually you came up with some automatic feeding system in that. (laughter)

MW: No, that'd take the fun away from Bob.

Megan: And...

MW: Then after the barn, of course right now its, its equipped with a refrigerator, a radio, a telephone...

Megan: It's got all the modern necessities.

FW: It's all modern.

Megan: And then your baby, your favorite...your maple syrup.

FW: Well, I went from the barn to the maple sugar house last year. And, I'm still doing a little work here and there on that, I went out there the other day...

MW: He's trying to decide what his next building project is going to be.

Megan: Well, I want to know what got you interested in your maple syrup.

FW: Well, actually, a wee bit of it I suppose maybe was when I was a kid. We tapped, Ed and I tapped sugar trees.

Megan: Ed's your brother.

FW: Yeah. And carried the sugar water in. We had to use sealing jars to catch the sap in at that time.

Megan: What jars?

MW: Canning jars, that you can vegetables in. Sealing jars.

FW: Glass jars, quart jars...

Megan: Oh.

FW: And I don't know how many froze and broke on us that year, before we worked better. But the major thing was talking with your mother.

MW: Who is from Vermont.

Megan: Who is from Vermont.

FW: Raised in sugar maple country. And ...

MW: It was her fault he got started.

(laughter)

Megan: Blame it on my mom.

FW: Well, I'm not blaming her solely, its her fault that I got the evaporator.

MW: He got all the equipment that he got.

FW: But I started off here. The first time I tried it, was during the time we was building up here. I tried to make myself some in a kettle outside, and it juts, the syrup was so black you couldn't keep it. So I gave up on it, and never got back into it until, what, four years ago.

MW: Back at the cabin.

Megan: In Nineteen Ninety Four.

FW: I made a little batch in a kettle back there at the top of the cabin, and then I went on to make my own furnace, and pans, and get in it where I had two pans, a finish pan, and one to cook in. So that didn't go too great, but I could make a gallon of syrup a day or something like that. And then your mother sent the article out of the paper to me, and I thought well, if that guy is getting that old, he just might be wanting to get out of it. So I talked your grandmother into

(FW): going with me and I said, lets go, hoping that his equipment, and see if he had anything for sale. And sure enough he had this little evaporator for sale. And I...

MW: And that was when he made the syrup shack, building, the sugar house was built. he had to build a building after buying the equipment.

FW: That's when the sugar house came about. And the second year is coming up now on the maple syrup business. And I don't really do a great lot of advertising, except by word of mouth and the sign a hangin up the road.

MW: Chet sold a lot at the hospital.

Megan: How much do you make?

FW: We made about twenty-eight gallon last year.

MW: It would have been more if he hadn't have broken his ankle.

FW: Yeah that kinda...

Megan: Frustrated you?

(laughter)

MW: Very much so.

Megan: Very much so.

FW: Well, the worst part about it, I had already tapped the trees, they was running. And the day before I had hauled in my first sap. The next morning I was getting rounded up here ready to go, and emptied the ashes from the wood burner, and broke my ankle. If hadn't a been for Bob and Chet hauling the sap here, I wouldn't have made any.

MW: And with a tractor with no lights on it and so forth, they went this. You haven't seen the new addition. They've got a brand new tractor sitting out there in the shed. A brand new tractor ready to go for the maple season this year.

FW: It's got lights on it, too.

(laughter)

Megan: Probably the best part of it, huh? Canning, you were talking about, we talked about canning jars and stuff like that. I know that you do a lot of canning. Do you all still have the

(Megan): little garden on top of the hill?

MW: Yeah we raise a, he raises a garden. And I will can whatever he brings in.

Megan: What do you, what all do you can?

MW: Whatever in the garden. This year was very little, because there wasn't much of a garden, but I can the vegetables, and...

FW: Tomatoes, beans...

MW: Tomatoes, beans...

FW: ... corn.

MW: What I don't can, we'll freeze. And, but I can quite a bit of meat., venison...

Megan: Deer meat, the choice meat of the family.

MW: We, uh make sausage, and we can it

Megan: And the, the nibbling noises we are hearing is actually...

MW: Deer jerky.

Megan: Jerky, that has just been made.

MW: You know, as long as I am able to can, I'll can. I like to can.

Megan: And, you also quilt.

MW: Yeah.

FW: Does she quilt!

Megan: Boy, does she ever!

MW: How long have I been quilting? I didn't start quilting until Kay was four or five years old, so thirty years maybe. Now ask me how many I've made.

(laughter)

Megan: How many have you made?

MW: I don't know but they're scattered all over the world.

FW: Yeah, I'd say that she's made better than fifty.

MW: Oh, honey, fifty doesn't even touch it.

Megan: I can name at least ten.

MW: Each one the kids have, and each one that I've given away as gifts.

Megan: Now one that I have.

MW: I don't do it for money, I do it because I love to do it. Which reminds me I want to show you one I just finished.

End Side B.