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ORAL HISTORY RESEARCH CENTER

MABLE IVALOV LINDLEY DAVIS

Interviewed by Chrystyna Huk
8 April 1989
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INTRODUCTION

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Interviewee (please PRINT)

my oral history interview with Chrystyna Huk,
Interviewer (please PRINT)

which was conducted on April 8, 1988, to Indiana University.
Date

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INTERVIEWEE: Mable Davis
INTERVIEWER: Chrystyna Huk
SUBJECT: History of Paoli, Indiana
DATE: April 8, 1989 [aged 92, see notes, p.69]
TRANSCRIBER: Norma Olmer

Huk: Today is April 8, 1989. This is Chrystyna Huk, and I'm here with Mable Davis, at her home in Paoli, Indiana. We will be talking about her life in Paoli for the Paoli Project.

Davis: Business is all left to _____, you know.

H: Yes. We'll talk about that a little bit later too.

Mrs. Davis, can you tell me a little bit about where you were born, and how you lived as a little girl.

D: I was born about a mile-and-a-half east of Paoli. And we wasn't on a state road; it was a side road. It was just an ordinary gravel road. And, of course, there wasn't any cars then. We were...had to go places in a...with a horse and buggy. The only way we had--or walk. I walked to school; I walked a mile-and-a-quarter to school. And I walked for twelve years to school--there and back each day. And I think...

H: It was a mile-and-a-half each way?

D: No. Yes, a mile-and-a-quarter each way. And I figured I had walked 5-thousand miles getting my education. And other people had too, though, as far as that's concerned.

H: First grade through...?

D: High school.

H: 5-thousand miles!

D: It took 12 years of school, I went. Yes. 5-thousand miles. And...

H: And you walked to the high school, too?

D: Oh, yes. Same building. We had the grade school and the high school in the same building; just one building up here on

DAVIS

top of the hill. It's torn down now.

H: May I ask you, what year did you start first grade?

D: 1904.

H: 1904.

D: Yes. I graduated in 1915.

H: 19... I notice that you showed me your graduation picture. And later on we'll talk about that.

I'd like you to tell me more about the newspaper clipping, and your speech that you gave at the 1975 alumni banquet. when you read that to me, but we'll do it again officially.

So you grew up in the country?

D: Yes. And lived there until I was...got through high school and married. Then we moved here to this place.

H: OK. Let's go back to childhood. How many children were there in your family?

D: I just had one brother.

H: Was he younger?

D: He's younger than me; a year-and-a-half, that's all.

H: OK. And what did your parents do?

D: They were farmers. We lived in a big house-- a huge house, a great big house. (laughs) And it was only 7 rooms and two or three halls. And we had a big garden. My mother raised chickens and they milked the few cows; not very many then. My daddy always raised sheep. And hogs; he raised hogs. And he always grew such good corn. Tended the farm; had corn and oats and wheat and things that other people do...that other farmers do.

H: Did you all help with the chores?

D: Oh yes.

H: What did you have to do?

D: Helped clean the house; I helped clean it. Helped my mother with the washing. She washed on the board; I helped rinse the clothes. Helped hang them outside on a line..

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H: Did you have a garden?

D: Oh yes. Had a large garden. I didn't use the hoe on it; she never had me use the hoe. We washed on the board, of course--my mother did. I told that, didn't I.

H: Oh, that's quite all right.

D: (laughs)

H: Can you tell me what your house looked like?

D: Oh, a large two-story house. There's what is called a portico in front--a small one. And upstairs, there's one upstairs over the downstairs porch. There's a...it had a railing around it, the same size, you know, as the downstairs floor. It was a pretty old house, as far as that's concerned; it's a regular mansion now. The fellow that I sold it to has made a regular mansion out of it.

H: Was it white when you were growing up?

D: Yes, it was white. Beautiful place as far as that's concerned.

H: I bet.

D: Yes.

H: Did your parents live off their farming? They were able to take care of all their eating needs and sell food too from their farming?

D: Oh yes. They didn't live to be very old; my mother was only 56 and my father was 65. Of course, that doesn't seem very old to me, when I'm 92. (laughs)

H: My God. You look quite, quite much younger than 92.

D: Well, I had 3 doctors tell me--you may not want that on there (laughs)--that I'm really 20 years younger than my age.

H: I think so. Anything that you don't want to stay on here, we can later on erase, so don't worry about that; we'll worry about it later. But you look very healthy and I'm happy for you.

So, you lived about a mile...how far did you live from town?

D: A mile-and-a-half.

DAVIS

H: A mile-and-a-half from town?

D: Yes.

H: And school was in town?

D: Yes. Up here, on top of the hill. Right up here.

H: And what's in that building now?

D: Well, they tore it down.

H: Ah. And you lived on...what was the name of the gravel road you lived on?

D: Well, they call it...they call it Catholic Church Road now. I don't know what they called it; I don't know whether it used to have a name or not.

H: It was just a gravel....

D: It was just off the highway.

H: Right. OK. Did you can things from the garden?

D: Oh, yes, we canned everything. And butchered our own meat, my daddy did. There was four in the family and he thought that we needed to have a hog for each person. (laughs) So he killed...he butchered a about-175-pound shoat, like he called them, for each one of us. We had 4...that was 4 he butchered. He was good looking after meat; he cured it, he salted it and let it dry out, and then they hung it and smoked it. Had to be hickory smoked. (laughs) Hickory boards of wood.

H: And you had chickens?

D: Yes, we had chickens; my mother raised chickens. Had eggs. Sold the eggs; and I sold them... in the Depression I sold eggs for 6-cents a dozen, after I was married.

H: Are you serious.

D: Two weeks, we sold them for 6-cents a dozen. (laughs)

H: Wow. OK. Do you remember what kind of vegetables you grew in the garden?

D: Remember what?

DAVIS

H: What kinds of vegetables and fruit...?

D: Same as we do now; nothing different from what we did, only we had to have a certain kind of potato. Irish cobbler potatoes they had to have.

H: What are Irish cobbler potatoes?

D: It's a sort of potatoes.

H: And you had lettuce there? Did you grow lettuce?

D: Oh yes. Lettuce, and onions, and radishes, and beets, and cucumbers, and everything that people raise now. Beans, and corn, and... [peas, sweet potatoes, celery, tomatoes]

H: And you'd can some of those for the wintertime too?

D: Yes, we canned some of them. Yes.

H: When you were a very young child, how did you play out in the country? What did you do for fun? Like, about when you were 6-years old.

D: I had to play with boys. My brother, you see... and he had two cousins lived close, and they came over and I had to play with them. There weren't any girls for me to play with, so we just all played together there in the yard. Played ball partly and they played mumble-peg...

H: Mumble-peg? [with the knife]

D: ...with a knife, you know. Did you ever hear of it?

H: No.

D: Mumblety-peg or (laughs) however you pronounce it. You take a knife and half-way fold it up and then you flip it someway.

H: Yes.

D: And I just can't remember too much about it but I know we did that. And we played marbles. You've heard of that, haven't you?

H: Right. What was the other game that was called "mumble peg?"

D: Yes, mumble peg.

DAVIS

H: OK. And then you played marbles...

D: We played marbles and we played...just ordinary ball, town ball, I think they called it back then.

H: Yes.

D: With a rubber ball; we had a rubber ball. We played leap-frog...

H: Sure, I did that too.

D: Did you? (laughs)

H: Yes.

D: Then, when I got a little bit older, I played hop-scotch. Remember that?

H: Sure.

D: (laughs) Well, that's about it.

H: Now, these were like kids that lived close to you?

D: Yes, they lived real close. Oh, about a quarter of a mile, we call that close in the country.

H: Under a mile, yes.

I forgot to ask you: were your parents from this area, too, or did they move here from someplace?

D: No, they were from around here somewhere. My grandfather came from Kentucky; one of them did. They migrated here from North Carolina; that's where they come from originally.

H: Right. Right.

D: My husband's people came from there too. And my mother-in-law told about coming in a...now, she was raised by her grandmother and she said her grandmother came in a covered wagon. I didn't _____ I don't know how mine got here. (laughs)

H: This is your mother-in-law's mother.

D: Yes, my mother-in-law's grandmother.

H: And that's because, I think, Quakers were coming over here. They didn't like...

DAVIS

D: They didn't like it in England, you know.

H: Right.

D: They come to get away from there. And to worship as they please here. That's one of the reasons they came.

H: But they also came to North Carolina, I think, because...

D: They settled there first, and then they migrated west, you know. They kept coming back farther west.

H: Weren't they also unhappy with something in North Carolina? I thought they were unhappy with something there.

D: I don't know whether they were or not. I think they just wanted to settle in a different location.

H: So your parents were from around this area, but the grandparents came from North Carolina.

D: Yes, they came from North Carolina. Yes.

H: OK. Tell me what your elementary school was like.

D: Oh, we had good teachers. I liked them all.

H: Were they all women teachers?

D: Yes, they were all women. In those days, they were all women teachers.

H: And what did you study in first grade?

D: What did I study?

H: Yes.

D: Well, one thing, we studied phonics. (laughs)

H: Did you study phonics in 1904?

D: They started us out. Just the sounds, you know--syllables. She was good on phonics. And we soon learned to spell and to read.

H: Do you remember her name?

D: Ella Colclazure C-L-A-Z-U-R-E I believe it was spelled.

DAVIS

H: OK. So, were there a lot of you in first grade?

D: Well, there were not too many. I don't think there was about 15, probably.

H: OK. And were you in a class by yourself? Or did you share...?

D: Yes, first grade by myself. The second grade the same way. All through school was that way; just one grade by ourselves. I liked all my teachers; they were good teachers. I can't think of anything else outstanding.

H: What did you do for fun in school? during recess? Did you have recess?

D: Yes. We played ball.

H: Played ball?

D: Yes.

H: So basically, elementary school you learned the basics, like how to read and write?

D: Yes. We had English, of course, and physiology--the one subject I liked better than anything else.

H: What did you learn in physiology?

D: Down in the grades, about 5th grade I imagine it was, we had physiology.

H: And what kinds of things did they teach you?

D: Well, about the human body.

H: Ah.

D: They called it physiology; I don't know what you call it now.

H: Well, when I was in school in the late '50s, early '60s, they called it "science". But they possibly call it something else now; I don't know.

D: Well, I wouldn't have thought that that would have been science. (laughs) Well....

DAVIS

H: Yes, they change things. OK. And so you stayed in that building all the way from grade one through twelve. You didn't go to a kindergarden, right?

D: No, no kindergarden; they didn't have them then. Wasn't any kindergarden.

H: Right, that's what I thought. You didn't have to change schools...?

D: No

H: You went to school basically with the same kids...

D: Yes.

H ...in grades one through twelve.

D: Yes.

H: Did you know a lot of kids in your first-grade class?

D: Oh, I knew them all. I was playing with them at school.

H: Did you know them before you started school?

D: No, I don't think I knew but one or two before I started school.

H: You know, Mrs. Davis, I have no idea how small Paoli was in 1904.

D: Oh, it was small.

H: How many people were living _____? [now over 3,000]

D: Oh, not very many. (laughs) I really don't know; I think...I would think maybe it would just about been around a thousand. There wasn't very many here. And I knew who lived in...I had...I chummed with a girl from town, you know, the whole time, and I knew who lived in every house in this town when I was in school.

H: In high school.

D: Well, down the grades...before I got through the grades. I expect about the seventh or eighth grade, along in there. But I sure don't now; I don't know where anybody, hardly.... (laughs)

H: Is that because they moved or new people have come in?

DAVIS

D: Well, so many more have moved in, you see. Strangers moved in. Lots of people come here from Kentucky; and other places too, but so many from Kentucky come up here.

H: Is that right?

D: Yes.

H: OK. How was school different for you in about seventh and eight grade? Any differences?

D: Well, of course it was harder. I remember I won a medal in the seventh grade. Liberty Bell, they called it; Liberty Bell medal for making a grade of 90 or above...average of 90 or above. And my teacher bragged on me; she thought that was fine.

H: 90 and above in what subject.

D: No, an average of all my subjects.

H: Oh!

D: Everything.

H: Oh, what an honor. [domestic science; cook & sew]

D: Yes. You got the Liberty Bell if you had an average of 90 on all your subjects.

H: And then, how was school different for you when you got to high school...when you got into the higher grades?

D: Well, I remember we had botany in the first year of high school.

H: Did you really?

D: Yes, we studied botany. Miss Jennie Troop was our teacher. I had had her in the seventh and eighth grades and I liked her real well. I liked the botany class very well. And then we had a...let me see, it's hard to remember so many years ago.
(laughs)

H: Sure. I think you're doing real well though.

D: Let's see, somewhere in high school we had algebra and geometry, and I never could understand geometry. (laughs) I got through it but then I could never understand it. I took four years of German in high school. They taught Latin, but German too. I thought, "That Latin's a dead language; I'm going

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to take German." (laughs) I had some nice teachers in high school; had some men teachers in high school. The principal and the superintendant were men; I think that was the only two that I had.

H: Were the teachers young? were they old? middle-aged?

D: Some middle-aged.

H: Middle-aged meaning 40?

D: Yes, I expect they were no older than that.

H: Older than that?

D: Yes. Oh, I had another man teacher too, I remember him now.

H: Did you take subjects like physical education, like they do today? Did you have exercise classes when you were in school?

D: We didn't have any physical education.

H: And music?

D: Yes, I took music. When I graduated, I had two-and-a-half extra credits that I didn't have to have, and that was on music. Then I had...they called it domestic science then; that was...

H: Home ec; home economics?

D: Home ec, yes. Home economics.

H: And what about art; did they teach art then?

D: Well, they did, down in the grades, but they didn't in high school, but I remember a....

H: So, basically high school was into like math and science and English and social studies..?

D: Yes.

H: You'd learn American history and...?

D: Oh yes.

H: European history, and you took a language..?

D: Yes.

DAVIS

H: ...and you took domestic science and...

D: And music.

H: ...and music. Did you have things like typing?

D: No, we didn't have anything like that.

H: That was a little bit too early for typing?

D: Yes.

H: How about...? OK. Tell me what your social activities were like in high school. You know how they have social activities in high school; did you have those things in...?

D: I don't think so. I don't think we had those...some kids would...once in a while somebody'd have a party and I'd be invited and I'd get to go to that. And that's about all.

H: You didn't have dances?

D: No, we didn't have dances; they wouldn't let you dance then.

H: They wouldn't let you dance?

D: Oh no.

H: Is that because they were...

D: I was on the ball team in high school; played basketball. And we got to play...they didn't believe in girls to play in public games. But we finally talked them into letting us play one; we got defeated. (laughs)

H: Who didn't believe it: the schools, community...?

D: The school board. I reckon that the school teachers _____, I don't know who. (laughs)

H: Was it part of the Quaker religion? not to dance at that time?

D: No, I don't think so.

H: It was more....

D: The school order was there or something.

H: So, your social activities in high school was that you

DAVIS

played ball?

D: Yes, that was about it.

H: That was about it?

D: Yes.

H: OK. All right.

D: My husband played ball too--on the team--and my son. I had a son that played on the high school team; we all three played on the team--the high school team.

H: What did young people do when they went on dates in high school?

D: Well, I lived out in the country and I didn't get...I went to ball games; I got to go to all the ball games. And unless that we had a picture show on the square, then,...

H: The Strand?

D: Yes, the Strand; and I got to go there. But then, that was about it. You'd go on a picnic, maybe, or take a drive or something. We didn't have much as recreation.

H: How did you get to meet boys? How did people start courting?

D: In school. I met my husband in school.

H: Was he in your high school class?

D: No, he was two years ahead of me. He graduated in 1913. We went together...we dated for four years and then got married. (laughs) I made license to teach school, but he didn't want me to. I didn't...couldn't get a school that year, so I would have to go into college for three months, and then I'd of had my license. But I passed the teacher's examination, you know. I didn't go, you know, because I didn't have the promise of a school, and he wanted me to get married--so we married.

H: So you dated in high school?

D: Oh yes.

H: All the way through high school?

D: Well, not all the way, cause my folks wouldn't let me go

DAVIS

with the boys until I was about 15-years old anyway. I graduated at 18, of course. Well, see, I married a year after I was out of school. _____ four years of high school.

H: And a year longer.

D: Yes, and a year longer.

H: OK. And what did you do when you...did you go on a date with your husband? with your boy...your husband at that time?

D: Did I do what?

H: Did you go on dates with him during high school?

D: Well, he come to the home and visited me, and that was about it. (laughs)

H: Different kind of world.

D: Yes, that's how we were. He had no car; all there were was horse-and-buggy days, you know. And of course, he lived in town. He didn't have any horse and buggy, and he had to walk out there to see me. (laughs) A mile-and-a-half.

H: What did your husband do after he graduated from high school?

D: Well, he worked up to...there was a factory here. It's still here, but it's a different name though. Called _____ Furniture Factory then, and he worked there. And he followed the furniture work all his life, as long as he lived, until he retired. He got to work himself up to millroom foreman and then superintendant of the Knox Hutchins Furniture Factory and others..

H: And after he graduated from high school--and you were still in high school--he still came to the house and visited you.

D: Oh yes. He'd come on Sunday. First he got to come every other Sunday afternoon. I mean he'd come about 4 or 5 o'clock and got to stay until 9. (laughs) And then he finally'd get to come every Sunday. And then before we got married, then he'd come on Wednesday night.

H: So, basically, you did your courting in your...

D: In my home.

H: ...in your home.

DAVIS

D: Yes.

H: Did your parents at least....

D: Yes. I saw him in the parlor.

H: Parlor. Did your parents at least go away and let you talk?

D: Well, the house was big enough that they could sit out in the other room; they didn't.... We were in the parlor and they were in the living room, my parents were. (laughs) He'd walk home with me lots of times from...when I'd go to the ball game or something, you know. _____ with my mother on shopping spree or something. Saturday we'd come to town, you know; she'd have eggs and butter and stuff to sell and we'd come to town. Sometimes I'd stay in and we'd go to the show and then he'd walk me home. [sold cottage cheese and green beans]

H: You went to the afternoon show.

D: Yes.

H: Do you remember...?

D: No, it was the evening show.

H: The evening show?

D: Yes.

H: Do you remember how much the show cost? In 1915?

D: Well, 15 or 20-cents, that's all.

H: Really.

D: Yes.

H: Do you know how much it costs today?

D: Oh no. I don't know; it's much.

H: Five dollars.

D: You don't mean it...?

H: I do mean it.

D: Really?

DAVIS

H: I do.

D: Picture shows?

H: Picture shows, five dollars.

D: Oh my. I didn't know that.

H: You can get a cheap matinee for half price, for three dollars or something like that.

D: A cheap what?

H: A cheap matinee. If you go in the afternoon you can get it cheaper, for three dollars.

D: My son used to go to the matinee and he got in for a dime--on Saturday afternoons.

H: No!

D: Yes. When he was little. (laughs)

H: Well, can you please tell me like...what did the town look like when you were a child? Was the square the way it is now?

D: Just like it is now only there was a...around the courtyard was a fence--an iron fence--and they had a rack there for horses to tie to. Everything was horse and buggy, you know. You had to hitch your horse to the courtyard rack.

H: Yes. And there was stores around the square?

D: Oh yes. It looked a lot like it does now.

H: Can you tell me: how did you do your...what kind of shopping did you need to do when you were a child and when you'd come to town?

D: Well, my folks didn't have much to buy. You see, they raised so much. They didn't have much besides sugar, and coffee and a few staples--flour. Sometimes they went to the millwheel [grist mill] and got their flour and their meal.

H: Well, they didn't come to buy much as they came to sell. They came to sell more than they came to buy.

D: Yes, well, they had eggs to sell. They'd swap their eggs for what we had to have at the store, you know.

DAVIS

H: And where would they do this swapping?

D: In the store, in the grocery store.

H: You could bring eggs to the merchants and...

D: Oh yes...

H: ...he'd give you some...

D: ...you'd bring a basket of eggs and he'd count them out and give you credit for it, you know. And then you bought what you wanted: your sugar and your coffee, and a few other things, you know, he'd have--rice, and oatmeal, and a few things to buy.

H: Is that were the word "trading" comes from?

D: Yes. I think it is.

H: Cause some of the younger folk I talked to used "trading", and I never heard that word before.

D: Oh, you didn't?

H: And I thought that....

D: That's what they call here "trading".

H: Because you'd bring in something that you raised...

D: I reckon they did. It was always...

H: _____

D: _____ that was the word, trading.

H: Now would you come...how often would you come to bring your eggs in?

D: Once a week. Saturday.

H: And how many eggs would you usually bring in?

D: There'd be a basket pretty-well full, about this long, you know, and this deep.

H: So there might be...

D: It might be over half full, the basket would.

DAVIS

H: Maybe three dozen eggs?

D: Oh, there'd be more than that. We'd have more eggs than that. She'd have...I wouldn't know how many that basket would hold.

END OF TAPE ONE, SIDE ONE

H: You think it would hold more than three dozen eggs?

D: Oh yes. I expect ten dozen, something like that.

H: Ten dozen. She at least brought in that many each week.

D: Yes.

H: And she'd buy different things, depending on....

D: Yes.

H: OK. And so....

D: And she'd shop at...if my father needed overalls or we needed hosiery or something like that, why, of course, she bought that too. Whatever she had to have, why, she'd buy. The store that we traded at was Braxton Brothers, and there was general merchandise as well as the grocery, combined. My father used tobacco; she always got it for him out of that. (laughs) Egg money.

H: Sure. So, was Saturday a pretty busy day, then, on the square?

D: Yes, it was a real busy day.

H: And did you get to see most people that you knew?

D: Yes, we'd see lots of people we knew.

H: And so, like, would you also stay and, you know, socialize a bit?

D: No, not much. After we got the business tended to, and visited with a few people we'd met on the street, why, we'd go on home.

H: Did you help with your mom with some of these chores? Like collecting the eggs and...? Did you help with some of these chores? [gathered eggs]

DAVIS

D: No, I didn't have anything to do with that. No, as long as I grew up she tended to all that.

H: Did you have chores to do in the house?

D: Oh yes. I helped clean the house all the time--washed dishes, helped with the work--the general work.

H: But you didn't do any chicken or egg business.

D: No, I didn't do any of that. She did that. I did a little bit after I married and we lived in the country a little while. We lived out there a little while then.

H: You and your husband?

D: Yes.

H: With your parents? Or...?

D: No, after they passed away. They passed away, I inherited the farm. And we moved out to it then; we was out there 15 years.

H: Oh.

D: Had two children born out there.

H: When you were a child, did your mom make a lot of your clothes? or some of your clothes?

D: Oh yes, she made everything I had. I didn't have anything ready made.

H: Was that the typical thing for most people?

D: Oh yes, everybody did. All the mothers made the clothing for the children.

H: So being a homemaker in those....

D: Even the underwear; she used to make our underwear.

H: Even the underwear?

D: Yes. Silk panties. [cotton]

H: The only thing she didn't make was, like, hosiery..

DAVIS

D: Yes, and when I was a little child, I can remember her knitting black stockings for us.

H: Really.

D: Yes. When I first started to school--first two or three years--well, she knitted those stockings.

H: Where did you buy things like shoes? and hats and coats?

D: Well, there was...the same store here in town. Kept everything.

H: And when did that store go out of business?

D: Well, I think it was in business till about the time I was married. And then, it was a little bit different life. We had an automobile.

H: Yes. So basically, when you were little, being a homemaker was a real...more than a full-time job. You had a lot of things you had to do.

D: Yes. Oh yes, it sure was.

H: Tell me how your mom cooked.

D: She cooked on the...she had a wood stove that she cooked on. My father cut the wood on the farm, and sawed it up, and brought it in to the wood box behind the kitchen stove. And had a good hot fire, and she baked the best biscuits you ever ate. (laughs) I thought they were, anyway.

H: Where did you bring the water from?

D: Well, when I was very small, I just can remember her carrying it up from the spring...up a little hill there, back of the house, for three or four years. And then when I was about eight- or ten-years old, my father had a well dug; we had a pump to pump, you know, up and down. One of those old-fashioned ones. You remember; did you ever see one?

H: Yes, I saw one.

D: We always had a cistern, though, to use. When we had to carry water from that spring to drink, we had a cistern that we could use for washing.

H: And you had an outhouse for...?

DAVIS

D: Yes. We never had a bathroom out there at the farmhouse.

H: And how did you bathe?

D: Oh, just in a washtub.

H: Just warmed up the water on the stove...?

D: Yes. Just heated the water in the teakettle and....

H: And how did you keep your food cold?

D: We had a cellar under the house and we kept everything good and cold. Didn't have any trouble that way; we were lucky. Some people had springhouses, you know, down over their springs. Have a shed-like little house over...built over it and.... Lots of people only had springhouses.

H: You had mentioned to me that you had a cellar so that kept your food cold.

D: Yes, under the house.

H: And then, when we took a break, you told me that you had an icebox when you and your husband were married.

D: Yes. After we married, we bought...we lived with my parents for a little over a year--a year-and-a-half. And we saved up enough money to buy this place. It was just a small... we remodeled it; just a small house then. And we moved down here. My first child was born out there. That year-and-a-half we lived there, my first child was born. And then we moved down here and my second one was born. That was in 19 and 19 he was born. No, he was born in 1920; we moved here in 1919. And we had an icebox after we moved here. They delivered ice from uptown from...someplace, I don't know exactly where. Anyway...

H: In a horse and buggy.

D: ...iceman come around anyway.

H: In a horse and buggy?

D: Yes. Horse and a kind-of-a-wagon; ice wagon of some kind.

H: So that kept your food cold upstairs. [in the kitchen]

D: Yes, that kept it cold.

H: And that was a big new change for you?

DAVIS

D: Yes, it sure was. (laughs)

H: Tell me, Mrs. Davis, how did you do wash when you were a child?

D: Well, we washed on the board.

H: I've seen that in the movies, but can you tell me how that was done?

D: Well, you just had a washboard, and put it in a tub, and did like this on that board with your clothes. Just scrubbed them up and down on that board. Did you ever see a washboard?

H: Yes.

D: (laughs) That's the way you did it.

H: And then you just rinsed it. [the clothes]

D: Yes. And then you...sometimes you'd boil them; we'd have a boiler on the stove.

H: If the clothes were really dirty.

D: Yes. You'd just wash them, and then you'd put them on there and boil them to whiten them...bleach them. You used lye in the water...some lye in the water. And my mother even made lye soap. Did you ever hear of that?

H: I've heard of it, yes.

D: (laughs)

H: And then you hung them outside.

D: Oh yes, we always hung them outside.

H: But in those days...this was before we had polyesters, so all the clothes were.... [cotton]

D: They had to be ironed.

H: They had to be ironed; everything had to be ironed.

D: Everything had to be ironed, yes.

H: Oh my.

DAVIS

D: And those old-fashioned irons, have you seen them? An iron iron (laughs) with the handle...?

H: No.

D: You never saw one.

H: No, no. Can you describe it for me?

D: Oh, I thought I had one, but I went in there and looked before you come and I couldn't find it; it might be in the basement.

H: And what did the old-fashioned iron look like?

D: Well, it was...if I had a pencil I might draw one. I've got a pencil here. (pause)

H: OK. So that's what the iron looked like, and then what would you do? How would you get it hot?

D: Put it on the stove; have a hot fire in there and you'd get the stove hot, and those irons would get hot. Set them on the stove. [had several irons]

H: And what did you use for fuel and for light?

D: We used kerosene; coal oil, we called it, for lamps. And fuel was wood; we just had wood. Wood stove in the living room and wood stove in the kitchen to cook on--the range.

H: And how did they light the...did they even have any kind of lights in the street? on the square?

D: Not as before electricity.

H: So, they didn't have any...everything was....

D: I wasn't in town after 9 when I was a child. No, I don't think so. I don't know what they had. (laughs)

H: OK.

D: I don't know when electricity come in; I couldn't tell you that.

H: OK. Can you tell me, now, a little bit, you know, how technology affected your life?

D: How what?

DAVIS

H: Technology. Electricity, refrigeration; you know, when all that came into your life and how things changed. You know, cars, radio, phones....

D: Well, we didn't have...we wanted my father to get a radio, but he didn't want to, so he didn't get it. (laughs) But, of course, after we got married, then, we got a radio.

H: You got married in what year?

D: 1916.

H: And you got a radio when?

D: We got a radio...oh, not too long after we's married.

H: And did you like listening to the radio?

D: Oh yes. We got a big cabinet; one sat over there in that corner with a big cabinet--in a radio. Let's see, in the cabinet, the radio was. Then we had small ones too. Yes, we enjoyed it very much. Quite a change.

H: And when did electricity...?

D: And we had...graphophone, they called it ____ in. [record player]

H: Right.

D: My husband used to go...come to town, and he'd buy records. He didn't always get records that I liked. (laughs) He'd pick out something wild and wooly. (laughs) I wanted something a little bit more classical.

H: I bet. And when did electricity come into your life?

D: Well, rural electrification was slow about coming in, you know.

H Right.

D: But, I don't know...when we moved down here, we had electricity. 1919 we had electricity, for sure.

H: But you never had electricity in.... [about 1932 we wired the farm house]

D: We had in...out at the farm...I can hardly think what year

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we did have. I don't know when rural electricity come in out there. Can't remember.

H: Do you remember what it was like to have electricity at first?

D: Oh yes. It was pretty nice. (laughs) Fine, we was awful proud of it.

H: How did you read, for instance?

D: Well, we had to read by kerosene lamp.

H: And that's hard on your eyes, late at night, so you just...

D: Yes.

H: ...didn't do it or....

D: Yes.

H: When did...when was the first time you saw an automobile?

D: Well, my father...my uncle came down from Norman, Indiana...Fairmount, Indiana, in one, with a great big automobile--a great-big long one. That was before I was married, and I was married in '16. That must have been '13, something like that, when I first saw it. First rode in one...I don't guess I'd seen one either, don't suppose I had.

H: What was that again? I'm sorry, I didn't catch what kind of car it was.

D: I don't know.

H: What color was it?

D: I don't know that; it was dark, though, I know.

H: I think they were all black in the beginning.

D: I think so, yes.

H: And, was there room only in the front...was there only a front seat in it?

D: No, it had two seats.

H: It did?

DAVIS

D: Yes.

H: And where did you sit when you took a ride in it?

D: I think I sat in the back seat. (laughs)

H: And how did they start? Do you remember how they started the car?

D: They cranked them.

H: Did you think it was pretty neat?

D: Yes. (laughs)

H: They didn't go very fast, though, did they?

D: I don't remember. I suspect I thought it was going pretty fast.

H: Well, I think it was, compared to the horse, but....

D: Yes.

H: Were there many people in Paoli that had a car?

D: No, he was about the first one that ever come down here with a car.

H: Your uncle.

D: Yes.

H: When did people start getting cars in town?

D: Well, I don't know when we had our first car, now. About,... let's see, my mother died in 1922. We had one before she passed away; so I really don't know.

H: Do you remember how...?

D: In '24 she died.

H: Before she died?

D: Yes.

H: Do you remember how your life changed when you had a car?

D: Well, I liked to take drives in them, as far as that's

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concerned. And we had a way to go out to see my folks out to the farm. See, we lived here and we had a way to get out there then. And my husband used to drive to work; he worked up the hill here at the factory. And he rode to work in that car--the first one we had.

H: Did women ever learn to drive?

D: Well, yes, they did, but I don't know when. (laughs) I didn't learn to drive right away. Let's see, I drove when...oh, I suspect it was '35. 1935 before I ever learned to drive the car.

H: What kind of prompted you to...?

D: What what?

H: Why did you start to drive? Did you....

D: Yes, I suspect maybe it was a Chevrolet.

H: Why did you want to start to drive then?

D: What did I want?

H: Why did you start driving then? Why did...what...?

D: Oh, well, I just wanted to learn.

H: You just wanted...it was just something that happened?

D: Yes, I just wanted to learn how to drive. Thought everybody ought to know how to drive a car.

H: Was it hard for you to learn?

D: No. Gear shift, you know. They...

H: Yes. Yes.

D: No, I got out in the field out there, and drove the car around in the field. (laughs) After I was shown a little bit about it.

H: About 1935.

D: I expect that's about_____...

H: And you had a [new] Chevrolet then.

DAVIS

D: Yes.

H: OK.

D: I think that's probably about the first we had. We had several Oldsmobiles after that; 3 or 4 Oldsmobiles. Some of them were new and some of them were used. Two of them were new that I know of. Had old Wellis Knight(?), he was a new one; nice car.

H: Did you ever go out of town with them?

D: Oh yes, we went shopping. We'd go to Indianapolis; my brother lived in Indianapolis then. We'd go up and see him. And I had an uncle in Indianapolis; we'd go up and visit a few days. And we'd go shopping in Louisville quite often.

H: How many hours did it take for you to get to Louisville, say, in the '30s?

D: Oh, it didn't take much longer than it does now.

H: No?

D: No.

H: You could go that fast? in the car?

D: Yes.

H: What were the roads like? Superhighways weren't built yet; the roads....

D: No. Well, I don't know what you'd call them now. Macadamized, I think...I don't know what they did call them.

H: But they weren't like our superhighways today.

D: No, nothing like that.

H: Well, when cars came to town...the cars that would come into town in the '20s, in this town...

D: I think so.

H: ...did it change the way people visited each other?

D: Did they what?

H: Did it change how...what people did for fun? [lighted

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square]

D: Oh, I suppose it did. And we used to like to...there used to be so many people come to Paoli on Saturday night. And we'd drive in and park in front of one of the restaurants there on the south side of the square. We had a nice restaurant there. And people'd just line up; the parking spaces would just about be taken all round the square. People just setting there in their cars watching the public. (laughs)

H: When was this?

D: What?

H: When was this?

D: _____ going around. People would tend to their business, you know; they had to. Lots of people waited until after supper. Stores were open then, after supper.

H: They were?

D: Oh yes, till 9 o'clock. ____ a while.

H: Is this in the '50s, or the '40s, or...?

D: Well, let's see...that's before then. That was, let's see... '29. That was in the '20s we come to town and sit around the square.

H: In the '20s!

D: In the '20s, yes.

H: And you'd fill up the whole square?

D: Yes.

H: And that would be something you would do after supper, and just visit and chat.

D: Well, on Saturday, we did. Not too much through the week. They had band concerts through the week that we'd come in on Thursday night. We'd come in and listen to the band concert; park around the square. Park around next to the courtyard, you know.

H: So, before the automobile came, it was hard to do that?

D: Oh yes, you couldn't do that. (laughs)

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H: Couldn't you go down in a horse and a buggy, though?

D: Well, we didn't.

H: It was just...

D: Just on business then.

H: You didn't use a horse and buggy for recreation as you did an automobile.

D: No, we went to church and Sunday School on it, and we did our shopping in town; that's about it.

H: But with the car you did some cruising.

D: Yes, we drove around quite a bit.

H: Boy, that must have really changed your life.

D: Yes, it did. It changed our life. My husband liked to drive; he liked to get out and take drives. I didn't care too much about that, myself. I was kind of like my uncle; he said: When he got in the car, he wanted to get going someplace. (laughs) I was sort of that way too. I kind of liked to have someplace in mind to go; I didn't care just about getting out and driving around over the countryside so much.

H: Well, Mrs. Davis, before you drove to Louisville in a car, how long would it take to get there by horse and buggy?

D: Oh, we never did go in a horse and buggy. I don't know.

H: It would be too far?

D: Oh yes. That's too far; that's 50 [45] miles. There used to be a stagecoach from here that went every day from Paoli to New Albany. Os Bowman(?) was the stagedriver.

H: And how long would that take?

D: He was a colored man. I really don't know how many hours that would take to get there. I think...he made the trip though. I think he went there and back in one day; now, I'm not sure.

H: Do you remember...? [he may have only gone half ways and met another one to continue on.]

DAVIS

D: Yes, he did, because the stage went every day, I think.

H: Do you remember what was the furthest you went in a horse and a a buggy before the automobile?

D: Oh, down to French Lick, I think. On the 4th of July we always went down there. That was as far as we went.

H: And that's about 12 miles on the highway.

D: 10 miles.

H: 10 miles. How long would that take you on horse and buggy?

D: Well, I can't tell you. (laughs)

H: About an hour or two?

D: Oh yes, something like that. I suspect a couple of hours.

H: See, I don't know that, because I....

D: I expect a couple of hours.

H: So that was a trip; that was a big trip.

D: Yes, that was the 4th of July trip. We'd take our dinner. Mom would fry chicken and have fresh homemade light bread--she made her own. Fresh butter, pickles, and tomatoes and everything you could think, you know, that was good to take down there. (laughs) Maybe pie. Maybe green beans.

H: Was this an annual celebration?

D: Yes, every 4th of July they had a celebration down there.

H: The town did.

D: Yes, French Lick did; had it down there.

H: And everybody went.

D: Well, lots of people did. Lots of people went down on the train. You see, we had a train going through here then; Monon went through here. Lots of poeple'd go down on the train.

H: How long would it take to get there on the train?

D: Oh, just a few minutes. I think about 20 minutes; I'm not sure though about that. Not very long.

DAVIS

H: When did trains come through town?

D: When?

H: Yes.

D: Well, they came through town from...I don't know when they started but they were there when I...first I can remember of them, we had trains.

H: When you were a child, you had trains.

D: When I was a child, yes, we had trains.

H: So that's how you would go a long distance, if you had to go someplace.

D: Yes, you'd have to go on the train. I went to Chicago with my mother and grandfather. They used to have excursions; and I went up there 2 or 3 times with them. We had an aunt living up there. That's the farthest I'd been when I...before I was married, I reckon. I don't think I'd been any farther than Chicago.

H: Before you were married

D: Yes.

H: OK. But if you wanted to go to Indianapolis, could you take a train?

D: Yes.

H: And to Louisville?

D: Yes, you'd take a train.

H: That'd be the way to go.

D: Yes, that would be the way to go.

H: And there were trains when you were little.

D: Oh yes, there were trains.

H: I had forgotten about trains. OK.

D: Monon tore their trestle down, though, just as soon as they could...soon as they got...as soon as the newspapers _____ do

DAVIS

away with the railroads, they were afraid they'd have to put them back sometimes, they tore the trestle down the first thing. Happened north of town out there by the Jay C store. If you happen to look just right, you can see that old trestle--where it was. It's a great hollow in there; valley, I guess you'd call it. And they tore that trestle down; it was high, very high. Quite long. I thought they did it just to be sure they wouldn't have to run the Monon down through here again anytime. (laughs)

H: OK. Can you tell me when you remember TV?

D: TV. Well, we had TV; it was in use a few years before we got it. I didn't feel like I wanted one. I don't know why but I just didn't think I wanted one. We didn't get one for a few years.

H: Do you remember when you got one?

D: Let's see, I guess it was around 1950--something like that. Maybe a little before.

H: And were people beginning to slowly get TVs.

D: Yes. Most people had them before we got them. Some way, I didn't think I wanted one. (laughs)

H: Was it a status symbol like everything else?

D: Was it what?

H: A status symbol. You know, it was special if you had a television at first.

D: Yes. Yes, it was special. (laughs) But I liked it after I got it. And I didn't think I wanted color television; I didn't think...we kept the black and white, you know, for a long time. Finally we got rid of it and got a colored.

H: Did you adjust to the color television after the black and white?

D: Oh yes, I liked it too. (laughs)

H: It just took a little while, huh?

D: Yes.

H: And when did you get a phone?

D: Oh, we had a phone when I was in the country...when

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we...before I was married; when I was a child we had a telephone.

H: Did you?

D: Yes.

H: The old party-line?

D: The party-line, yes. Phone on the wall. Old-fashioned.

H: Even when you were a child you had a phone.

D: Yes. Well, as a child...I might have been 8- or 10-years old. I expect I was about 10-years old, or something like that.

H: So what do you think of all these modern things...that now they have VCRs, and computers, and microwaves, and all these kitchen appliances that....

D: Well, I have them. I don't have a computer but I have a microwave; I don't care too much about it, really. I don't feel like I can cook on it like I like to. It's awful nice to warm things up, but I don't get a lot of good out of it for cooking. I guess I just don't know how to use it to cook vegetables and food on. I'd like something I could fry chicken in.

H: Right.

D: A cake won't brown, you know. And biscuits won't brown. I like to do real cooking.

H: Right. I think a lot of people feel that way. It's great to heat up frozen food, you know.

D: Yes, it is. Great to heat up leftovers, too.

H: Yes. Yes. Or even to defrost food.

D: To what?

H: Defrost food. Defrost.

D: Defrost. Yes, I guess.... I never have used it for that, but they say it's good for that.

H: So you can see how it's become a real modern convenience.

D: Oh yes. I should say. Electric iron, and toaster

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END OF TAPE ONE, SIDE TWO

H: So what were you saying about toast?

D: Well, I love a toaster. I said I couldn't get along without that. (laughs) My mother made toast in the oven when I was a child.

H: Do you remember when you got your first toaster?

D: Well, electric toaster...we had a toaster before I got an electric toaster; one you put over the burner, you know.

H: Right.

D: Then we got an electric toaster, and I imagine it was 1940-- something like that.

H: Have you seen today's computers?

D: Yes, I've seen them.

H: What do you think of those?

D: Oh, they must be wonderful, but I don't know anything about them, of course.

H: Have you seen a VCR

D: Seen what?

H: A VCR

D: What's that?

H: You know, when you can rent a movie and watch a movie on your television now.

D: My grandson does that.

H: Yes, it's called a VCR. Isn't that amazing?

D: Yes, it is. He does that all the time.

H: How old is your grandson?

D: Oh, he's 30 or better. 35 maybe.

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H: Young. (laughs)

D: Yes, young.

H: My age; young.

D: Yes.

H: OK. So, technology...you've really seen a lot of technology.

D: I sure have. I've seen everything come into existence. (laughs) We didn't have anything back then.

H: One thing I forgot to ask you: tell me how you felt about planes and rockets.

D: About what?

H: Planes and rockets. Airplanes.

D: Oh, I'm afraid of them. I mean, I'm afraid to ride in them.

H: Have you ever been in a plane?

D: No, I've never been in one. I don't think I ever will.

H: Did you think it was "neat" when you...

D: Oh yes, I think they're wonderful, but I'm afraid of them. (laughs) Afraid to ride in them.

H: And were you amazed when we went out into outer space?

D: Went what?

H: Were you amazed when we went...when we took rockets into outer space?

D: Oh yes. Yes, I sure was.

H: Now how...when do you remember people starting to use airplanes for transportation?

D: Well, I remember when...what was his name crossed the Atlantic? first plane that crossed the Atlantic?

H: Lindbergh.

D: Lindbergh. I remember well when he crossed the Atlantic.

DAVIS

H: 1927? I forgot _____

D: I don't know when it was either.

H: You remember that?

D: Oh yes.

H: Was it exciting?

D: Yes, I was very much excited about that.

H: See, you're...because of your age, you witnessed the change from getting information by newspaper to radio to television.

D: Yes.

H: Correct? So when Lindbergh crossed the ocean, how did you find out about it? (pause) By radio?

D: I think so. By radio, yes. We lived here; I heard it on the radio.

H: And you were a homemaker, basically?

D: A homemaker, yes. I'd become a homemaker...and married in 1916, and my first child was born in 1918.

H: That's quite a lot.... One thing that I forgot to ask you from your childhood: what did your family do together for family-time and for fun?

D: Well, my husband liked to play cards, but I didn't care much about it.

H: I mean your parents, and your brother and you.

D: Oh, what did we do at home? Well, when we was little, my father built us...I can't think what he called it, something on a post, a whirligig thing that had the long.... The seesaws was one thing and the long thing like a seesaw that went around and around, you know, and I don't know what you call it.

H: The kids did that or did your mom do that too?

D: No, the children did that.

H: What did you do together with your parents? as a family?

DAVIS

D: Well, swimming; we went swimming. We had a creek down below our house and we went bathing in that. Swimming. We fished; we all liked to fish. And we fished. We picked blackberries in the summertime. (laughs) I don't say that I liked that though.

H: It's hard work.

D: Yes.

H But mealtime, was that an important time every day in your _____?

D: Oh yes. My mother was a good cook and we had lots of good food on the table.

H: Did you stay and visit during your meal? Did you stay at the table awhile?

D: We usually set there and talked a little while.

H: And what did you talk about?

D: Oh, just anything that...any- and everything; about the work, and play, and school, and the happenings of the day, and things that we heard. We always took a newspaper--a daily paper--my father did. [St. Louis Globe, Democrat] I grew up with the Indianapolis Star in the family.

H: So, did you talk about the events of the day, the national events?

D: Yes, we talked about what we read in the papers sometimes.

H: Well, that's a good point. Let's turn to national events. I mean, 19...World War I must have been a very clear event in your life.

D: Yes. I was in high school when it started.

H: Do you remember something...can you remember before World War I, anything about the country? what you used to talk about at home or in school? (long pause) Or was World War I kind of like the earliest memory?

D: No. I was in high school. I don't remember just what we talked about. We went to Sunday School and church when we could, and my mother read the Bible some.

H: Did you...every Sunday you went to church?

DAVIS

D: When we could. Wasn't every Sunday we could go, but we went when we could.

H: OK. And you were in high school when World War I started?

D: Yes.

H: Do you remember reading about the war in the Indianapolis Star?

D: No, I don't remember reading about it.

H: You were kind of young then.

D: I didn't pay much attention. You see, I had my subjects, my grade school...my high school subjects and, I don't know, I just didn't... it was heresay with me with the war.

H: Because it was far away? It wasn't

D: Far away, yes. Yes.

H: Did you know people that went to fight in the war?

D: Yes, I did. Some people lost their lives.

H: You knew some people that lost their lives?

D: Yes.

H: What was talk like at home and in the community about this war? Did they think we should be there, and did they not.

D: Well, I just can't say about that. I can't remember.

H: You don't remember. Do you remember any rationing for World War I?

D: Oh yes. We had rationing.

H: Can you tell me about that?

D: Well, we had sugar rationing especially. It affected us; we always liked...our mother baked a whole lot--cakes and so forth, you know. And that sugar rationing bothered us; and also flour. We had to eat corn bread quite a lot; we got tired of it.
(laughs)

H: Do you remember talk about our country keeping out of the war? or was that not something that...?

DAVIS

D: No, I don't remember anything about that.

H: Do you remember the war ending?

D: Yes, I sure do. (laughs) We just shouted for joy; we went out in the yard, and the church bells all rang here in town. And we all went out in the yard, and just threw up our hands and screamed and hollered and (laughs).... Just overjoyed to think that it ended.

H: And what kind of...did the town have any kind of celebrations after the war ended?

D: I really don't know whether it did or not. I know the church bells all rang. I just can't remember whether they did or not.

H: OK. Do you remember what...did any of your...you knew people that went to World War I?

D: Any what?

H: You knew people that went to the war?

D: Yes.

H: But they were older than you? or younger than you?

D: Yes, yes, they were older; a little older.

H: Older.

D: Yes.

H: Did you know anybody that didn't make it?

D: Yes, I knew a few--a few boys.

H: How...were they treated basically as heroes?

D: Oh yes, they sure was. Yes.

H: OK. And what was the '20s...the '20s were like for you in this town? It was basically a good time, no?

D: Well, we remodeled the house. Changed it, and entirely moved it around. It was...the end was facing the road and we turned the house around and set it on the foundation, and built two rooms on the back of it. [bath added too] Changed the

DAVIS

stairway, and my husband had the timber--the oak--cut for the woodwork in this house. And these floors, these maple floors, down on his mother's farm down south of town; 4 miles down south of town. Took them up to the factory and put them in the dry kiln and had them all seasoned that way--cured out. And we had the best carpenter the city afforded to do our work for us--the remodeling. Put all the woodwork in, changed the doors and the windows, and made the floors. I helped lay the floors.

H: No kidding.

D: Yes, I did.

H: It looks very nice. I like the woodwork very much.

D: And I helped refinish the woodwork. I think we put 9 coats on the woodwork, counting the sanding and between each coat, you know. Stain, and filler, and shellac, and a coat or two of varnish. Time we got through with it: it was 9 coats; we went over them 9 times. (laughs) I helped some with it. And this floor is maple and the nails had to be set in it. Each nail was set...the two together and they were about this far apart all over this house. Two nails together and that far apart, and I set every nail in this house, and filled them with a filler. With a knife--and put a filler in there; a kind of putty like. Smoothed that over; and its in there to this day. It's been in there all these years; never did come out. [maple floors all over the house]

H: Well, congratulations...

D: (laughs)

H: ...for a job well done. Do you remember, in the '20s...? My impression of the '20s was the time of, you know, a lot of change. You know, women started wearing different kind of clothing...

D: Yes. (laughs)

H: Can you tell me about that?

D: Let's see, I guess that was about the year of the hobble skirt wasn't it? (laughs) Long dresses, of course; everybody wore long dresses.

H: In the '20s?

D: Yes.

DAVIS

H: Didn't the hemlines go up a little bit?

D: What?

H: Didn't the hemlines go up a little bit in the '20s?

D: Well, then they come up... Well, when I graduated from high school in 1916, they wore dresses long, down to their ankles, you know.

H: To school?

D: Yes.

H: And everyplace?

D: Everyplace, yes. And then, in the '20s then, I guess, that's the years of the short dress, wasn't it?

H: I think so. [hobble skirt]

D: Yes.

H: I think it came up with the hemline...I don't exactly remember, but I think the hemline came up and there was...

D: It was up above the knees, or about the knees anyway.

H: I don't think it was that high. _____

D: I think they showed their knees.

H: You think so; I don't remember. But that was a

D: It didn't last...the style didn't last too long, though. Not the extreme style; the extreme shortness didn't.

H: And was dancing a little more popular then?

D: Yes, the young folks danced then. Yes. Well, they used to dance...they danced the old-fashioned dance, what do they call it? They used to have ice-cream suppers out the east out here, right close to where I live. Cox Woods had a platform built down there, and they had a big ice-cream supper and then they danced. What did they call, you know; what did they call it? What kind of dancing is it? [square dancing]

H: I don't know.

D: You don't know?

DAVIS

H: Was it boys and girls together?

D: Oh yes.

H: I don't know which kind it was. Did you do that kind of dancing?

D: No, I didn't dance myself, but most of the young folks did. Seems like I didn't care much for it. I watched them though; I liked to watch them. I went to their suppers and I stood around and watched them a lot.

H: At that time...we had talked about this before, that your husband liked to play cards.

D: Yes, he liked to play cards.

H: Did you play cards with him?

D: Not much; I never cared much for cards.

H: What did the two of you do for sort-of recreation; leisure? or you and the kids? [sledding, ice skating]

D: Well, when the babies were little, we didn't have much time for anything. (laughs) I was busy most of the time. Of course, we'd drive in the car; he loved the car and loved to drive. We'd visit around a little bit.

H: Can you tell me how your life changed during the Depression?

D: He got out of work.

H: Really.

D: Oh yes. Got out of work. 1929. And we had kind of a tough time for awhile. We didn't have much income, I'll tell you. But we were...my father had died then, and we were in.... We heired that farm and we moved out there on it. And we farmed. That's when I sold the eggs for 6-cents a dozen.

H: Right.

D: Two times I sold them for that. Two weeks. Hogs were 3-cents a pound...

H: What were they before the Depression?

D: 10-cents.

DAVIS

H: The hogs.

D: "Dollar corn and 10-cent hogs": I heard my daddy say.

H: And how much for the eggs?

D: Well, that's hard for me to say. They varied; they were a pretty fair price, I think.

H: But hogs went from 10-cents to 3-cents.

D: And calves was about 3-cents a pound, I think.

H: From...?

D: From, oh, I don't know what. I just don't know what they were. (laughs)

H: But they went down in the _____?

D: Oh yes.

H: So, how did you make it if your husband was out of work?

D: Well, we was on the farm. He farmed; went ahead with the farming. And we rented this house. And we had built this store-building over here; it was... it's a beauty shop now. We operated a grocery there awhile, ourselves. But then we lived in the country; we lived out there. We lived 15 years in the country.

H: After you lived here you went back to the country?

D: Yes. After we lived here we went to the country for 15 years.

H: When was that?

D: We thought we'd just stay a year or two, and we stayed 15 years. (laughs) We stayed two or three years, and I heired the farm, and my husband wanted to go out there. And he thought we'd just stay two or three years...

H: Right.

D: ...and we stayed 15. (laughs)

H: Did you like going back out there?

DAVIS

D: Not very well; I didn't want to go. I liked it here and I didn't want to go. He didn't have any work right then, and seems like he felt he had to. So he farmed for several years, and then he hired somebody to do the work most of the time; then he went back to work at the factory someplace. Part of the time he drove to Louisville for several years. Back and forth to Louisville every day; there was a factory down there.

H: No kidding.

D: Yes.

H: Did your kids like living out in the country?

D: Yes, they liked it all right. Yes.

H: OK. What can you tell me about World War II? Do you remember World War II breaking out?

D: Well, I had a son that was in World War II.

H: You have?

D: Yes. Vance. [son Vance Lindley Davis] He was in Japan. And he had a child born at that time while he was in the service. He got to come home to see the baby. I don't remember too much about...had lots of letters from him. I wrote him often. His wife lived with her parents over in Mitchell; he married a Mitchell girl.

H: What was the town...how did the town feel about World War II?

D: Well, I don't know.

H: Well, when the people came home, what was the reaction of the town?

D: Well, everybody was glad to see them, of course. They treated them fine.

H: I bet there was a...some war dead from World War II in this town.

D: Some what?

H: I bet you lost some boys in World War II.

D: Yes.

DAVIS

H: Did you know some people?

D: Yes, I did. At the time; I can't tell you right now who they were, but I did know some.

H: Well, then....

D: It was Vietnam that they...that it seemed like the boys weren't treated like they ought to been, I didn't think.

H: Can you tell me about Vietnam? Did you...?

D: No, I can't tell you anything about it. (laughs)

H: Did you know people...did you know some boys that went to Vietnam? or did you hear...

D: Yes, I heard of a lot of them that went.

H: And what would happen when they came back?

D: Well, they didn't pay much attention to them, seemed to me, like they did in the other two wars. Town slighted them; I mean, they didn't intentionally do it, but they didn't pay much attention to them.

H: Well, you know, during the Vietnam war and right before it, our country went through a real...lots of big changes...

D: Yes.

H: ...in the '60s and the '70s. Do you remember, in Paoli, any of that? Did you see anyone wear long hair like they did...?

D: See anybody do what?

H: Wear long hair. Did men wear long hair in the '60s and '70s here?

D: The men, you're talking about?

H: The men, yes.

D: (long pause) I don't remember it back then. I know, in the past 10 years, I guess it is, many of them worn long hair--in the past 10 years.

H: Something like that, yes. Do you remember people at all talking about the hippy movement? or the '60s or the '70s, and what's going on in the country at that time?

DAVIS

D: No, I don't remember much about it.

H: That's OK. It's probably that that was not affecting your life a whole bunch.

D: No.

H: You know, every community has certain kinds of celebrations, and festivals....

D: Yes.

H: Can you tell me what Paoli had when you were growing up? or later?

D: We had...when I was a child they had what they called Old Settlers Day. They had a big parade and had a big time.

H: It was commemorating the settlers of...the people...

D: I reckon; I don't know what it did commemorate.

H: And do you know what it was? what time of year it was?

D: No, I don't know whether it was the fall or not.

H: Do you remember what you did? [horse back riders]

D: It was the summertime, I think. I remember seeing the parade. And our sheriff was a nice-looking man and he rode a horse around; there'd be horseback riders, you know, in the parade. I can't remember too much about it, but I thought it was a wonderful time, of course. (laughs)

H: And, of course, you told me about the 4th of July, essentially.

D: Yes, essentially.

H: Is there anything else that you remember from your childhood in terms of community celebration--or town celebration?

D: Well, they had...I don't remember it myself, but they used to have fairs over in this part of the town. It's called the Fairground, over this way. And I don't remember; that was before I was old enough to remember much about it.

H: When your children were in school...they'd be in school in the '20s and '30s, right? Your children went to school...?

DAVIS

D: No, they were born in the...my oldest one was born in '18 and the next was born in '20, and it was 9 years before the other two were born.

H: So you had children in school both in the '20s and in the '30s?

D: No, they were...let's see. No, he wasn't born 'til 1920. Well, yes, he was going to school about '27.

H: Right. Can you tell me, did they celebrate certain kinds of celebrations in the schools? when your kids were, you know, in school? Did they celebrate the veterans, or anything like that?

D: I don't think so. I remember, in the summertime, we used to celebrate Decoration Day.

H: Can you tell me about that?

D: Well, they'd gather up on the courthouse square...on the courthouse lawn and they'd have flowers all ready for them, you know. And they'd carry...each person would carry a little bouquet of flowers. They'd walk over to the cemetery and, of course, there'd be a leader and they would put it on the graves...soldiers' graves. [May 30th, flags also]

H: Do they still do that?

D: No, they don't do that anymore. [maybe flags is all.]

H: I don't think so either.

D: No.

H: Yes, they called that Decoration Day, when I was growing up...they changed it to Memorial Day.

D: Yes.

H: At the end of May. But I don't see it done as much anymore.

D: No.

H: Do you remember if your town had any kind of parades for, like, Veterans' Day? after World War II?

D: Yes, we used to celebrate Veterans' Day. Let's see, we didn't call it that...Armistice Day, they used to call it then.

DAVIS

H: Right. And what would the town do for it?

D: What?

H: What would the town do for Armistice Day?

D: We'd have a speaker--and that's about all they'd do.

H: Did they hold a parade?

D: I don't think so.

H: OK. And did anything change after World War II? Did they still have...? I think that's when they started calling it Veterans' Day; I don't know exactly when the change was.

D: Well, I just don't know, but I'm thinking back when... I can even remember when the Old Soldiers...some of them lived from the Civil War.

H: Is that right?

D: Yes. I can remember when they lived. And they all drew pensions, most of them did, you know. And I remember my father and other people speak about it; that's about all I remember about it--hearing them speak about it.

H: Do you remember what they talked about?

D: And I think they... no, I don't remember that. They paraded, I think... had the parade on Decoration Day, they called it.

H: On Decoration Day. [Memorial Day]

D: Yes. Decoration Day; and they honored the Old Soldiers. Put flowers on all their graves. I know a lot of them drew pensions, and I've heard people say that they didn't think they ought to have the pensions; they didn't think they deserved them, some way or other. (laughs) I've heard that.... (machine off)

H: Mrs. Davis, you had mentioned to me that you had heard that some of the Civil War veterans...that there was talk that they didn't deserve their pensions.

D: That's right. Well, there wasn't much talk about it; they just...I don't know, I believe some people kind of envied them; they had sort of an easy time with their pension, you know. You know, they could get along better than other people. And I think that they just...was just a little bit jealous, I believe it's

DAVIS

what it was. It didn't amount to much. [they did not have to work to get by.]

H: Were the Civil War veterans generally those respected and admired in the community?

D: Oh yes, they were admired and respected. Yes.

H: So, you think that this talk about the pension was just sort-of some sour grapes, or something.

D: Yes, that's what it was, sour grapes.

H: That happens. Did you know some of these Civil War veterans?

D: I knew three of them.

H: Did you? Were they your father's friends?

D: They were... yes, they were friends, yes. One of them lived right out around the corner, at the end, up here. Mr. Wilson, Truss Wilson. The other one's name was...he lived right down the street here. Kimbrell; can't think of his first name, but it was Kimbrell.

H: Did they talk about their experiences in the Civil War?

D: I don't know; I was never around them any.

H: You heard that just through hearsay.

D: Yes, I just knew them when I saw them, that was all. I never _____ that was all.

END OF TAPE TWO, SIDE ONE

H: Mrs. Davis, we were talking before about public(?) knowledge you had a _____ of your life, but I missed one area, and that was medicine. Can you tell me, in the course of your lifetime, how has medical inventions and discoveries affected the health of your life and your family?

D: Well, my father had a heart condition that he doctored for-- for the greater part of his life. And my mother-in-law had a heart condition; and my husband had died with cancer--cancer of the colon. And I even had an operation for colon cancer about 15 years ago, I guess.

DAVIS

H: And so, like, surgical procedures and medicine has helped your family.

D: Oh yes. Yes. I've had 5 major operations; and my daughter had diabetes [before the discovery of insulin]. Let's see, I don't know how long she's had it, but she passed away when she was 4 years and 3 months and 21 days of age.

H: Oh my. And what year was this?

D: 1923.

H: This was your first child.

D: Yes, my first child. My second child was about 2-years old when she passed away. _____ When she died, then we didn't know for a long time that...what was the matter with her; they didn't know the fact of the matter. We didn't know for a long time what was the matter with her. And the fact of the matter was, we didn't even know that she was sick for just a few months before she passed away. The doctors didn't tell us what was wrong; the doctors here didn't.

And finally we took her to a doctor down in New Albany and he told us she had diabetes and that she couldn't live long. And that there wasn't anything that you could do for a child. And the Sunday before she died, I read in the Chicago paper that a doctor had discovered insulin. She died the following Saturday. If it could have been earlier it might have saved her life.

H: That must have been very hard for you.

D: Oh, it was terrible; it was just like tearing your heart out. I had all I could do to bear it.

H: Did she have certain symptoms? that you finally noticed that she was sick?

D: Well, she drank a lot of water...fluids, and she ate very heartily.

H: She ate very...I'm sorry, what?

D: Heartily.

H: Heartily. OK.

D: Yes. And that's about all the symptoms she had. Her kidneys acted often.

DAVIS

H: Could they treat adults? or they couldn't treat anybody with diabetes. [by diet only]

D: Yes, they could treat adults, but they said: in a child it was fatal, at that time.

H: 'Cause there were two kinds of diabetes, I guess. In a child and _____.

D: Yes, there are two different kinds anyway. There's one called melitus(?), I think, and I don't know what the other one is. Just diabetes and diabetes....

H: _____ infantile, yes.

D: Yes. Meletus, militus, or something like that, whatever it is.

H: So she was...it was from her last few days of her life that insulin was discovered..?

D: Yes.

H: ...but not regularly used? Had it been a year earlier, her life may have been spared.

D: Yes, that's right.

H: That's amazing how technology comes sometimes...

D: Yes.

H: ...at bad times, and serves other people but.... I'm sorry to hear that.

What were the kinds of illnesses that affected children when you were young? When I was a child in the '50s, we all had, like, measles and chicken pox, and we still had a little bit of polio. Polio was still being wiped out.

D: Well, my grandson had polio. [at age 2 years]

H: Really.

D: Yes. Well, you said he was about your age?

H: Yes.

D: And he had polio; and it left him crippled in his foot. One foot _____ is smaller than the other one.

DAVIS

H: Is that probably because the medicines for polio...the polio vaccine was discovered a little bit too late for him.

D: Yes.

H: What were the kind of childhood diseases that children had, though, when you were little?

D: Well, they had measles and whooping cough and... [scarlet fever]

H: Whooping cough?

D: Whooping cough, yes. Now they inoculate you for all that, you know.

H: Right.

D: We had...I had mumps. Part of my family had scarlet fever.

H: Really?

D: Yes. And chicken pox, of course; everybody had to have chicken pox. We had lots of bad colds; I'd generally always take them around. (laughs)

H: How about flus; was there a lot of different kinds of flus?

D: Well, yes. In 1918, you know, that was the bad flu epidemic that killed so many people. My uncle died with it.

H: You know, I forgot about that flu epidemic. Can you tell me something about it? Was it the whole nation?

D: Yes. It was terrible; so many people died. My family all had it but me, and I took care of all the rest of them. We were living with my parents then; that was the year we was out there. They all had it, but I didn't have it. Or I had it so light I didn't know it.

H: But you knew a lot of people that died that year of the flu?

D: Oh yes. Lots of people died.

H: I'm embarrassed to ask you this question, because I think I should know it but I don't. Was this before penicillin was discovered?

D: Yes, it was before penicillin was discovered.

DAVIS

H: That's what I thought.

D: Yes.

H: So they couldn't give penicillin?

D: No, I don't know if they give that for flu or not, anyway?

H: Well, they do sometimes for, like, to stop bacterial infections--sometimes.

D: Yes.

H: So a lot of people died from the flu?

D: Oh yes.

H: What part of the country were there the ones that were really...hit a lot of people?

D: Lots of people would die. They didn't know much about cancer then. Lots of people had TB; they called it tuberculosis. [called it consumption then]

H: That's right.

D: That was quite common.

H: When you were a child, _____?

D: Oh yes, I heard lots about it. And then so many people died and they'd say: well, they didn't know what was the matter with them. I've heard that over and over and over: they thought maybe she had cancer, that's the way they'd say.

H: Did they know about cancer in those days?

D: Well, they didn't know much about it. They'd just say, "Well, let's see. She just died." And they thought maybe it was cancer; didn't know it wasn't. Thought maybe it was cancer.

H: Well, you know, when people were....

D: That wasn't talked about very much. People were... I don't know whether they were ashamed of it or what, but they just didn't want to talk about it. Didn't want to admit that any in their family had cancer.

H: You know, our public awareness programs of things like mental illness, and mental retardation, and diseases, and taking

DAVIS

care of the disabled and handicapped has changed a lot in the last twenty-five years.

D: Yes. [called mental folks crazy. called mental institutions "asylum"]

H: What happened to people who were handicapped, or retarded, or disabled, when you were a young woman? Where did they go? Who took care of them?

D: You took care of them at home usually.

H: So they didn't go to school.

D: No, they didn't go to school back then.

H: You took care of your own?

D: Yes, you took care of your own. Of course, they did have, away from here, places.... They had...in later years they had...not when I was a child, I don't think, they'd have institutions you could send them to--the mental retarded. I don't know if they did when I was real young.

H: Did you ever know someone when you were growing up...?

D: Yes, I did.

H: Do you remember..? and they didn't go to school? They weren't...?

D: No, they didn't go to school. No.

H: So they didn't have many opportunities....

D: Now he's about 70-years old, I suspect; I imagine he is. And his sister's taking care of him all these years.

H: Wow. You see, I was raised with a whole different world of that...the mental retarded going to school and the disabled going to school and...

D: Yes.

H: ...it's a lot different.

D: Well, of course, we've got a school here now, you know; First Chance they call it. We send them off to school.

H: Can you tell me about the First Chance?

DAVIS

D: I don't know very much about it, but they have a lot of students out there. And I know they advertise for work in the summer; they want to do lawn work and work if they can, you know.

H: That's in town here?

D: Yes. Right here in town. Nice building, out towards the hospital; on the same road as you go down west and go to the _____ and turn right and then it's _____ place. Why you pass it going to the hospital. I believe...yes, you would, you'd have to.

H: Yes. And what happened to the sick when you were growing up? Who took care of the sick?

D: Oh, people took care of them in their own homes. I took care of my mother-in-law for 10 years.

H: Did you?

D: Yes. She wasn't sick; but she was a widow and elderly, you know. And she died when she was 83 or -6; 86, I believe it was. And she had a heart condition. We took care of her in the home. People used to take care of their parents at home. We didn't have nursing homes; hospital would be all we had, you know.

H: Can you recall when nursing homes started becoming more prevalent?

D: Oh (long pause) I don't know. I would say...I don't know whether it's been more than...our own hospital's about 25-years old, I think. And I don't know whether we have a nursing home here...we didn't have a nursing home here then, I don't believe, when it was built. I don't hardly believe we did.

H: And you have one now?

D: Yes. We have two now; we have one that's ready for occupancy now--this month. The folks are going to open it up this month.

H: And what did you...the people go to the hospital before this hospital was...?

D: They had to go the city; they had to go to Indianapolis or Louisville.

H: That's quite a way.

DAVIS

D: That was an ordeal to have to do that. And then, anybody in the hospital, you know, and go so far to see them all the time.

H: Yes. (pause) Well, did I miss any other big medical scene or surgical scene? Were there any other huge epidemics of diseases?

D: Oh, they used to vacinate for smallpox all the time, you know.

H: Yes.

D: I was vaccinated for that. (laughs) I never knew anybody that had it. Not that I recall; I don't remember any other diseases.

H: But you remember...as a child I went to...the polio vaccine: you remember when that came in, cause I was already a child. I was like, ...

D: Yes.

H: ...you know, because people that had gone through polio are about 5- to 10-years older than I am.

D: Yes.

H: It came in during the _____ years of my lifetime. And penicillin, I can _____ a lot of _____, you know.

D: Yes, I don't know when it came into use; I don't remember.

H: You know, one of the things that struck me is that during your lifetime, the role of women has really changed.

D: Oh yes. (laughs)

H: Can you tell me how you see that change?

D: Well, women didn't, years ago, know anything but work--hard work. (laughs) And they got to working away from home, making money of their own. And nowadays it just about takes two to make a living. It's just about half the work now that it was. And, well, there's so many things of interest that... and used to be. For instance, home demonstration clubs; I notice they're going to celebrate their 75th year here in Indiana, this year. Saw that in the paper this week. 75th year. There's always been...the Sarah Longs...I don't know how long; all my life I think, there's been a "Tri Cappa" organization here. And Phi Beta not quite

DAVIS

that long, but quite a while. And Still Woman's(?) Club; I'm a member of that. They asked me to be a charter member, but I had two little tots and I couldn't be then, so I did join a few years later.

H: Do you remember when women got the right to vote?

D: Well, yes, I can remember it, but I don't know...I just can't remember anything about it. I don't know when it was.

H: Well, if you remember it like, just... generally the idea of women voting, what people said about it? what you felt about it?

D: Well, I think it was about the time I was married.

H: Right. A little less than _____

D: Yes.

H: And, I mean, did people think it was weird? or good? or bad? or...? What did people think about that?

D: I don't know. (laughs) I really don't know what they felt about it.

H: Do you remember what you thought?

D: Well, I was tickled about it. (laughs)

H: Oh _____!

D: The ladies....(laughs)

H: Did you vote?

D: Oh yes. I voted from the very beginning.

H: Did you vote for whomever you wanted? or did you vote the same way as your husband? or...?

D: Well, we voted together. We decided who we were going to vote for, and we voted the same ticket.

H: Was it his influence? or did you discuss this together or...?

D: We just...one was a Democrat and the other one was a Republican, and we just decided on the man. We made our choice that way.

DAVIS

H: Did you get to influence your husband sometimes about women(?) you talked to?

D: Oh yes. We decided...we always agreed on everything.

H: Did you really?

D: Oh yes. We always talked everything out and decided on it, and did everything together; agreed on everything.

H: Sounds like you were a lucky woman.

D: (laughs) Yes, I had a good husband.

H: I bet you loved him. So what did you think about the '60s when there were a lot of changes in the world and women wanted changes like...? What did you think of all that?

D: Oh, I thought that sometimes women wanted too much. I know, there awhile, I can't think what it was I had in mind, but (long pause)...I can't think what it was that I felt like the women wanted too much. (laughs) Something, you know, I don't know what that was now. Something that was popular here several years back; do you remember what it was? (laughs)

H: Was it ERA--the Equal Rights Ammendment?

D: Might have been; I believe that's what it was. I know I had the feeling it seemed like they wanted a little bit too much.

H: But was that...was _____ kind of strange time for you, to see all this unrest and change and...? The country was going through a lot of turmoil then.

D: Yes. Yes, it was.

H: Yes. One of the things I wanted to ask...we talked about the square; how the square was so active when you were...in the 1920s. It doesn't seem like it's that active right now.

D: It isn't. Business has all moved out away from the square.

H: Can you tell me how that happened?

D: I just don't know; just can't hardly understand it. This big concern...wasn't any room for them, I guess, on the square, and they had to build out.... South of town, there's a big store out there; some businesses out there. And there's one out...a Jay C store out north of town. There wasn't room anyplace for them. Jay C had a place near the square and...right next to the

DAVIS

square. And they outgrew the building; they had to have a bigger place so they moved out north of town--built a place out there. And Hook's Drugstore followed; and the drugstore took a place there with the Jay C. And this Buhlers moved... built over south of town. And I don't know that _____ of us here, we don't have any department stores any more; we used to have on the square. _____ that we don't have anymore. (long pause)

Of course, I think Paoli is fortunate in lots of ways. We got factories here, and hospital, and nursing homes, and we got a splendid school. And they told me over at the school... when I visited over there, the principal told me that that was the biggest elementary school in the state of Indiana. More pupils. It seems to me like he said there's over a thousand; I forget how many. You know anything about the size of the...?

H: No, I don't. Recently?

D: Yes. Told me that last year: That it was the biggest school in Indiana. Biggest grade school. Oh, we have _____, Paoli Ski Peaks, you know.

H: Yes.

D: That's brought thousands of people here this winter. [to ski]

H: But the town's...but the activity from the town square is... gradually moved away, do you think?

D: Yes, it's moved out, pretty much; moved away.

H: And what do you think people do now, that used to hang out at the square? Where do they go?

D: Well, I don't know; that's a mystery to me. (laughs)

H: That's a toughie.

D: I think a lot of them stay at home and watch television--older people.

H: Yes. And what do you think the young people do?

D: Well, they get in their cars and drive around, is all that I know. (laughs) Have to, I guess; there's no place for them.

H: Has anything, like, replaced...you told me about the Settler's festival they used to have?

D: No, not anything replaced it. [Have a Fall Festival "Indian

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Summer Festival"]

H: They don't have, like, carnivals or....

D: Well, there's a carnival comes, usually the spring of the year, down to Jay C park; there's usually one down there.

H: But, in fact, it's a different kind of emphasis.

D: Yes.

H: You know, when I first came here tonight, you showed me something that I'd like to talk about right now. And one is this lovely photograph of you of...

D: Graduating class.

H: ...seniors at Paoli High School 70 years ago...

D: Yes.

H: ...posed for the class of 1915 photo. You're the third from the left in the second row here. We were studying the picture of you here. Can you tell me when this was in the newspaper?

D: Three years ago, 19 and ...

H: 76?

D: 75. '6, yes. No, I graduated in '15, 1915.

H In 1975 this was in the newspaper?

D: Yes. '75.

H: No, it would be '85. This is...

D: I mean '85. Did I say '7-...? Yes, '85.

H: Right. Right. OK. And there was a write-up about your class?

D: Oh yes. Yes.

H: It's a lovely photograph. Do you think the next time I come to town, I could borrow this for long enough to make a Xerox copy and bring it back?

D: Yes.

DAVIS

H: I would want to take it tonight, but I thought... I would like to have...have this...

D: Have a copy.

H: ...have this to file, yes. I will do that.

D: Yes.

H: How many of there were you?

D: Nineteen.

H: Nineteen.

D: Yes. I think there's...let's see, I think there's just four living now. [all ladies]

H: That's still an awful lot, though. You all should be...

D: Yes.

H: ...I mean, amazing; a long life.

D: One of them is in a nursing home, and the other one's not a bit well, and I guess I'm about the most able one in the bunch.

H: You did something right. What do you attribute to your longevity and your health?

D: (laughs) Well, my parents didn't live to be old. My mother was only 57 and my daddy 65. My grandparents were young when they passed away. I don't know; I try to eat right and tried to live right. I like...one thing, I'd like to add: that I like to do unto others as I'd like for them to do unto me. I try to get a good night's rest. That's about all I know about it. (laughs)

H: And what do you find to be, like, the plusses and the minuses of living?

D: Plusses and minuses?

H: You know, of living in a small town? You've lived in Paoli all your life, right?

D: Yes. Well, I like a small town. You don't have the crime here that you have in the city.

H: Right.

DAVIS

D: Congestion, and so forth. You don't have such close neighbors. Like in the city I'd have a neighbor house stuck up right close to me, I guess. (laughs)

H: Right.

D: And I've got a yard, lawn. Most people have gardens. (long pause) I don't know; I really like it.

H: Did you or your husband ever consider living anyplace else?

D: Well, at one time we...he took a job in Massachusetts; different _____ of the furniture factory. We went up there for...we didn't stay many months; my health was bad up there. I had so much sinus trouble I couldn't hardly stand it--the climate. So we come back to Paoli. We lived in Bloomington a few weeks, and we lived in New Albany a few months, and up in Ohio a few months, and we always come right back to Paoli.

H: What did you miss about Paoli?

D: Well, he...maybe he got out of work; it was the time of the Depression, you know. And we made a few moves and he'd get out of the job and we'd come back here.

H: Yes.

D: Of course, we had that farm out there we could fall back on. He got out of work, you know.

H: So, if I were to ask you what were your best and worst times, how would you answer that?

D: What do you mean, how worse? Of course, the death of my daughter was the worst thing I've experienced in my life.

H: Yes, I sensed that.

D: And then my son _____ died with cancer, brain cancer, about seven or eight years ago.

H: That must have been very hard.

D: Oh, that was hard. Yes. My husband died of cancer. The deaths in the family's been the worst, I think. The deaths. And the happiest has been raising my family; been the happiest times.

H: I can see by all the pictures on the wall.

DAVIS

D: Yes.

H: All these...

D: Family pictures.

H: ...family pictures.

D: Yes.

H: And during that lifetime, your life has changed from where women really didn't have a lot of opportunities...

D: No, they didn't.

H: ...when you were a little girl. So you have grandchildren and great-grandchildren?

D: Yes. I've got, let's see, two...I'm counting them up (laughs). I have two...seven, seven grandchildren. Seven great grandchildren.

H: Seven great grandchildren!

D: Yes. Seven great grandchildren.

H: How many girls?

D: How many girls? Five girls. Five girls and two boys.

H: Do you think that's...how do you see the girls lives of your great grandchildren being different than your life? As a child

D: How do I think they're different?

H: Yes. ___ the four girls?

D: Oh, not much comparison. (laughs) They belong to the Girl Scouts and they take music lessons. Of course, I took music lessons when I was in my teens.

H: Yes.

D: But I didn't...they started out real young with music. And art. Well, they're very active in their schooling; I can see them more active. They run, you know; kids do nowadays. And play all kinds of things that we didn't used to play.

H Do they have better educational and career opportunities

DAVIS

than...?

D: Well, I suppose they will have, yes.

H: Would it have been difficult for you to have gone on to school if you wanted to? Did many girls of your age go on to college?

D: Well, some of them did; not very many.

H: But it was....

D: Unless they were going to teach school, they did, otherwise they didn't go to college.

H: There wasn't any place for them to....

D: No.

H And nowadays, women can do that.

D: Yes.

H: It's a completely different world.

D: Oh yes, it's different. (laughs)

H: Yes. Well, we were going to talk about your speech that you gave. Can you repeat for me when you gave this speech? What the....

D: (sound of paper rattling) This is the speech. That's what they gave me in my Sunday School class.

H: Right. What was the occasion? [Alumni Banquet]

END OF TAPE TWO, SIDE TWO

H: Mrs. Davis, what was the event where you were asked to give this speech that you read to me before?

D: Well, it was around the banquet...it was the banquet held every year at the end of school. And I represented my class, the class of 1915.

H: How many people attended this banquet?

D: Oh, I suspect two-or three-hundred.

DAVIS

H: OK. And you gave the speech that...

D: I gave the speech.

H: In 1985.

D: In 1985, yes.

H: OK. Do you mind reading it again so that we that we can have it on tape?

D: (Clears her throat; reads) Alumna of Paoli High School and Friends: I'm happy and so thankful to be here for my 70th honor year. I'm proud to be a graduate of Paoli High School and to have had a husband and three sons who were all graduates. Marred by Alvis' and Vance's deaths, (aside: that's my father...my husband and son) I'm especially pleased to have my two sons with me, Merrill from Louisville and Arnold from Indianapolis; and Ruth Gierke Davis, also a graduate. Will you stand?

We can't say "Still sits the schoolhouse by the road" of the school I attended, for twelve years known as Paoli Central or Paoli Grade and High School, built in 1871 and torn down in 1970 after 99 years of usefulness. I remember well that September day in 19 and 04 when we entered Miss Ella Colclazure's first grade. There were no automobiles then, so our mothers walked with us that first day. That era was known as the horse and buggy days. Six who entered that day went the twelve years together to graduate in 19 and 15; four boys...fourteen (aside: let's see, oh no) four boys and two girls, namely: Mayne and Harold Lingel, Chester Hammond, Paul Stout, and Ruth Kibbler Brown and Mable Lindley Davis, that's myself. We were taught phonics in the first grade. Our teacher, Miss Ella Colclazure informed us there was no Santa Claus--to our dismay and sorrow. Our second-grade teacher, Anna Braxton, stressed music with her DO RE MIs and DO MI SO DOs, giving me a desire to learn piano. Other teachers were Grace Lindley, Anna Underwood, Gertrude Comingore. Seventh- and eighth-grade teacher was a dear old soul, Miss Jennie Troup, and lucky me to have had her. With her oft-repeated, in a scolding manner, "Increase your vocabulary." I think I loved them all.

I lived on Catholic Church Road, formerly Triangle Road; only a dirt road then, about 1 1/4th miles from school. And I walked five-thousand miles getting my education as did others, I feel sure. But it didn't hurt me a bit. Maybe that's why I'm still around. We had deep snows at times, and my father would walk in front of us through the fields, making a path for my brother Earl and I. We memorized so many beautiful old poems in the grades.

We were joined in our freshman year by several teen-agers.

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Living now are Lucille Ham, Zella Kearly, Neva Heiss, Letty Jackson, John Mearis and myself, Mable Davis. The superintendent was Charles Todd, and principal Daton Atkinson, joined by other competent teachers. Our junior/senior proms, called Receptions then, were held in our junior year at the home of Mayne Lingel on Water Street, and as seniors we were entertained at the Mineral Springs Hotel by the junior class. Commencement was held at the Paoli Friends Church.

Some might call us a romantic class as two couples got married soon afterwards: Elta Boss and Frank Lindley, Roy Clancy and Hattie Dixon.

In closing, I'd like to quote from one of our old poems.

We build a ladder from which we rise

From the lowly earth to the vaulted skies

And we mount its summit, round by round.

Thank you.

H: Thank you for reading that to me.

D: OK. I'm glad to do it. I feel honored to think that I have that place...I don't know where it will land, but....(laughs) Wherever it is.

H: Thank you, Mrs. Davis, for reading that lovely speech to me again. And before we close tonight, I'd like to thank you; but also, I wanted to make sure that I had asked you kind-of the important things about how your life has changed, how the community has changed, any possibly-national events that affected your life...of the community. Is there anything that I missed that you could tell me about?

D: Well, speaking of John F. Kennedy makes me think that I saw Jack Ruby shot on television. I happened to be sitting here in my chair watching the television, and saw him fall dead.

H: So you saw murder on television? Tell me...I didn't ask you about John F. Kennedy on the tape...do you remember when JFK got shot?

D: Yes, I remember about it. Yes.

H: How...what was the reaction of this town to that?

D: Well, I think that they were very much touched and hurt.

H: Even though this is a basically Republican town, they still felt that?

D: Yes, everybody loved Jack Kennedy.

DAVIS

H: Yes, that was pretty shocking. Is there anything else that I missed in asking you, or that you'd like to tell us about the community of Paoli that, you know, that you think is important to know?

D: Well, I don't think of anything right now.

H: OK. Well, I'd like to thank you for having me in your home this evening. And we've talked pretty long and you're very sweet and I...it was fascinating; I felt very naive and I feel like I've learned a lot. Thank you for your time.

D: Well, you're very welcome. Glad to do it for you. (laughs) Feel honored to be approached by a representative from the University. To think that you'd be interested in little-old me. (laughs)

H: Well, actually, we feel honored that you take your time out and let us come into your home and see the world from your eyes. And I apologize; I'm new at this and maybe I could have done a little bit better, but....

D: Well, I thought you did fine. (laughs)

H: Well, thank you again.

END OF TAPE THREE, SIDE ONE

END OF INTERVIEW

[Mable Ivalou Lindley Davis]

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Transcript was mailed to Mrs. Davis and was returned (November 1990) with the following:

Which Might be Added

We had a small orchard of apple trees, also peach and plum trees, in the back yard and gooseberry and currant bushes for our fruit; also strawberries. Gathered wild greens and had sassafras tea in the spring, thinking it purified our blood. Buried turnips in the fall to be dug up and cooked.

Raised cane for sorghum molasses and had our own cane mill, horse drawn to extract the juice and then boiled down in a large vat, making sorghum molasses.

In spring we tapped sugar trees for molasses--after boiling down in a kettle. Can also boil corn cobs for maple flavored syrup.

Made kraut in a 30 gallon barrel. Made hominy from corn boiled in a kettle with a bag of ashes (for lye) to cut off the husks on the corn.

Gathered persimmons for puddings. Butchered a calf for beef. Fished in summer.

Raised ducks and geese and picked their feathers for pillows and feather beds. We had four feather beds. After wheat harvest followed by the threshing. Machine coming around and making a straw stock, we filled muslim bed ticks with straw, then topped them with feather beds, used as mattresses, making comfortable beds.

Snares were set in the fall to catch rabbits and other fur bearing animals.

We raised kaffir corn for brooms, also raised pop corn. We roasted potatoes and onions in the ashes just inside the fire place.

A peddler in a wagon or van, covered, passed each week and we traded our eggs for staples from him. We sold butter and cottage cheese and green beans in town.

- - - - -

Short marginalia was included between brackets [] in the text itself. Longer marginalia follow:

Page 1. Paoli Public School. The farm was 90 acres. Father a good manager and managed to save money and had some to loan to

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others for interest. He half soled my shoes.

Page 5. Hide and Seek, hopscotch, jumped the rope, skated on a pond, sledding.

Page 6. Father borne in this house too, same as grandfather. Lindley name of him.

Page 29. Did not have band concerts before the automobile.

Page 56. Paoli hospital: built 25 years ago. Dr. Fran Clark operated a small hospital here for several years before the Orange County Hospital was built.

Page 57. I'm a member of Eastern Star. Masonic Lodge. Sunday School and Church--Quaker Church, known as Friends Church.

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