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ORAL HISTORY RESEARCH CENTER

ELIZABETH HOLLAN MATHERS

Interviewed by Catherine Jones  
26 January 1988  
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## INTRODUCTION

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I, Elizabeth Hollan Mathers, hereby give  
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my oral history interview with Cathy Jones,  
Interviewer (please PRINT)  
which was conducted on 1-26-2-2-88, to Indiana University.  
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Wished me to send copies to above places, 3-25-91  
CJ

In full accord with the provisions of the Deed of Gift, I hereunto set my hand.

<u>Elizabeth Hollan Mathers</u> Donor	<u>3-19-91</u> Date
<u>Cathy Jones</u> Interviewer	<u>3-29-91</u> Date

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INTERVIEWEE: Elizabeth (Libby) Hollan Mathers

INTERVIEWER: Catherine A. Jones

SUBJECT: Life history. Paoli changes. The Depression.  
Marriage and business.

DATE: January 26, 1988

TRANSCRIBER: Norma Olmer

JONES: We're here at Hollan's Mens Clothing Store on the south side of the square. Today is January 26, 1988 and we're working together on the Paoli Project. So much for that.

Let's start out at the beginning; when and where you were born and stuff like that.

MATHERS: You mean 'what year?' (Laughs.) You want to go that far back? (Laughs.) I was born here in Paoli, Indiana a number of years ago, let's say.

J: Alright, fair enough.

M: ...and in the depression times. In 1930. And things were pretty tough then.

J: What kind of business was your father in then.

M: My dad was a ... he worked at the Paoli Chair Company for years. He was the first man that handled the lumber to the factory. He knew what they were going to be making and the length they needed to be made to start out with. When he quit his job a number of years later they had to get two guys to do it.

J: Oh really. Really. Was your dad from here?

M: Yes. Well, they were raised in Youngscreek, which is a little town south of here; it used to be called Unionville. Then they found out there were two Unionvilles, so they had to change — to Youngscreek.

J: Oh really.

M: Yes. This one had to be changed. 'Cause the other one was named first, I found out.

J: Was it also in Indiana?

M: Yes.

J: OK.

M: It's only about -- let me think -- it's about six miles, I guess, south of here. Just a little wide place ----- but it used to be a nice little town.

J: Why and when did he then come to Paoli.

M: Well, for work. There wasn't that much work down there. When my mom and dad first got married, they did live in Unionville. I don't know exactly where he worked but he drove to town to work. I'm not sure about that, but she ran the telephone exchange there, at that time. That sounds kind of fun, but...

J: Yes, yes.

M: And then they bought some property in town and there was an old house on it. Moved the old house and built a new house on the place and then tore the old house down after they got the new one built.

J: Was your dad already working at Paoli Handle at that point?

M: Not Paoli Handle; it's called Paoli Incorporated. They made chairs and it used to be called Paoli Chair Company. But... No, I don't think he was working there. I think he worked at the mill. There was a feedmill here that he worked at. He was a fireman in the feedmill -- first. And then, later on, -- I don't know how many years later -- he got a job there.

J: OK. How about your mom. What was...

M: My mom's name was Eva Elizabeth Nice Weeks.

J: \_\_\_\_\_?

M: Yes.

J: And how about your mom's folks, where were they from?

M: Well, they were from Youngscreek too. In that area. And

they lived different places out in the country. I think that's where they became acquainted -- going to school down there.

J: When you were growing up, did you -- as a kid -- ever go out to Youngscreek to look at...

M: Sometimes. There's a cemetery there that... the Teafor(?) Cemetery that... my father's mother was named Teafor... goes to that cemetery. And we went out there \_\_\_\_\_

J: The thought just occurred to me, did they ever talk about how different Paoli was from Youngscreek.

M: Well, that was the big city, you know.

J: Yes, that's what I mean. Yes, yes.

M: I was going to tell you about that. That's what the thought was. My dad and mom both only went to the eighth grade. And the reason for that is, if you went any farther than that you probably want to be a schoolteacher. And she didn't want to be a schoolteacher. She thought there was no reason to go to school any farther than that. But she did go to the eighth grade, I think, two years to be sure to catch all of it. But she educated herself over the years. But, you see, if she had wanted to come to town, as they called it, she would have had to board at some place because there wasn't a schoolbus that went back and forth to pick her up and take her to school. She had to come to town to live up here. You know, she didn't want to do that.

J: Well, I don't know if money was a concern...

M: Well, she would have worked for somebody probably. They usually got a job, maybe to earn their board and room. I think that's the way they did it. But she elected not to go ahead to high school because... She helped her brother go, though. And, of course, her brother went on to... they called it normal school, I think, after high school instead of colleges. They went to what-they-called normal school. I'm talking about a number of years ago; way, way long time ago. And he did become a school teacher then. ...Taught a lot of years.

J: But even though she didn't go on to high school, education was still something...

M: Oh yes, she never quit learning. She always watched TV in later years, even when she was -- you know, in her eighties she always liked the TV. And she never missed the news; at least, if she could help it. She stayed in touch, you know, with what was going on in the world and...

J: You think she influenced... having that attitude toward education had an influence on you in any...

M: Sure. Yes.

J: How about your dad. He went to the eighth grade.

M: No. Well, he was not so much to read as like... He was more interested in cars and... He was educated in a different field. But we were all smart in some field. (laughs)

J: Yes, sure.

M: And they didn't have the same field necessarily of education. I mean, she was interested in Bible and stuff that he wasn't. But then, that was her prime interest. And she read it a lot and anything that went along with that she used to read. Study and...

J: Yes, yes.

M: Words, and things like that. And, of course, when Larry (Hollan) came along, he would teach her.

J: Oh!

M: I have a real cute poem that she wrote to him and which encouraged him to go ahead and go to college.

J: How nice.

M: I'll let you read it.

J: OK, thank you. Thank you.

M: Maybe make a copy of it, if you'd like.

J: OK, great. Yes, thanks a lot. Did they talk about -- you know you said for them Paoli was a big scene and I thoroughly appreciate that... Did they ever talk about, you know, to tell folks [that] people's ways were different and stuff like that.

M: Well, I don't know. Ask Clarence, he's just bringing his ladder in. By the way, back when they first moved to Paoli, lights were turned off at ten o'clock at night. Electricity was all turned off... The lights were all they had...

J: Well, I'll be \_\_\_\_



MATHERS

M: That was many, many years ago. They were married in 1913 and I think they lived in Youngscreek for maybe three or four of the years, you know... But when they moved to town, why that was what it was. They had electricity for the light bulbs, you know. That's all they had, at least. Maybe other people had refrigerators and things. But they used their ice box and stuff until I was a good-sized girl.

J: Yes, yes.

M: I remember, you know, we put the sign out for the iceman. And the thing in the bottle for the milkman. (laughs)

J: Yes, yes.

M: So that... you told what you wanted him to leave, so that he didn't have to come in and then... You had different colors, you know, for different things.

J: Yes. Right.

M: Did you ever see one of those.

J: Yes, I did. In fact, my aunt in New York... in New Jersey they had that going on \_\_\_\_\_. She had the same thing out there. I always thought it was kind of a nice little custom, or something.

M: Yes, it is.

J: ...Let's see! How many brothers and sisters do you have?

M: I have two brothers.

J: You have two brothers. (inaudible dialogue)

M: I have a lot of sisters now, though...that I've adopted. (laughs)

J: But at the time, it was just...

M: Yes.

J: You were the only girl.

M: Yes.

J: What was the order of ...

M: I'm the baby.

J: The only girl and the baby.

M: (laughs) Terrible.

J: Were you spoiled \_\_\_\_\_?

M: Well not terribly.

J: \_\_\_\_\_

M: (laughs) I wasn't... Let me see, how shall I say this... I was spoiled pretty bad until I was ten years old and then suddenly they cracked down on me. It was like, you know... (laughs) They suddenly realized, this kid's getting out of hand; we've got to get a clamp on her -- and they did. I know when it happened. I remember quite well. They must have discussed that. (laughs)

J: Childhood is over. (both laugh)

M: Do-what-you-please is done.

J: Was that because you were the only girl in the family or... I guess what I'm trying to get at -- were little girls spoiled in any way more generally or was that because you were the only... you know. You were the only one in the family and ...

M: When \_\_\_\_\_ people have children -- my mother was 35, I think, when I was born -- you have a tendency to be more lenient to your last child than you are to your others. Not because you love them any more, but just because you're more lenient. You're older and you realize that every little thing doesn't have to be done just exactly the way you thought it ought to be. I mean, your first kid, you will be very picky.

J: Yes, yes.

M: With the first child, the pacifier, if you drop it, you'll boil it. With the second one, you wash it off. And with the third one, you wipe it off ... (laughs) I've heard that, and it's pretty well true. Well, that's probably the way that works. ...No, I don't think it was any more of a trend \_\_\_\_\_ at that time. No, they suddenly realized they'd have to have a \_\_\_\_\_

J: Yes, yes, yes. Getting out of hand. ...Where about in Paoli did you live? How close were you to the Square.

M: I was about three blocks north, and a block-and-a-half east. Lived in front of a sort of railroad switch. (electrician's

voice) Oh sure. OK. Which... (electrician's voice continues)  
Oh, did it? I thought it wasn't coming out right away. Oh now  
we have light.

Electrician: Yes, it's got it on there now.

M: OK.

Electrician: We'll get you \_\_\_\_\_.

M: Thank you, Clem. (Another voice: What happened \_\_\_\_\_?)

J: When would you-all go down to the Square? For shopping and  
everything.

M: My dad and I used to go shopping like on Friday nights when  
he got his paycheck. I would go with him. My mom didn't go  
because she didn't drive and he never \_\_\_\_\_ to drive. So she  
most of the time didn't go along with him. But a lot of the  
country people would come to town though and they would maybe  
make a whole day of it on Saturday. Shopping, visiting...

J: I remem... if I remember right, I thought you said that your  
husband was \_\_\_\_\_ about that, but you yourself didn't really  
know that that was going on.

M: That's right.

J: That's right? OK.

M: As a child I didn't know. He told us about that in later  
years; that that's the way they always did.

J: They'd come in on Saturday...

M: They'd make a big deal of coming to town Saturday and they'd  
stay till maybe ten or eleven o'clock. They'd go buy some cheese  
and lunchmeat and things before the A & P store would close --  
which was on the corner about here at that time -- and...

J: Yes. Yes.

M: Then they would visit until -- oh about eleven o'clock -- a  
lot of years ago.

J: Yes. Yes.

M: That would be in the early thirties, I'd say. That was like  
that. Store owners kept closing a little bit earlier then.  
Grocery store owners had to stay open until about eleven, at that

time. When we started a store in 1958... at the time we started, we stayed open till nine o'clock at night on Saturday night. That was the only night, though. The other nights we stayed till six. And I think we opened about eight...

J: Yes. Yes.

M: Eight till six. \_\_\_\_\_ I work nine to five. I mean, not because I'm lazy, but because \_\_\_\_\_ the trend is what you follow.

J: Yes, the folks don't come in...

M: \_\_\_\_\_ just as many people through the week that you-all... or maybe more so than you do so on Saturday. It's not what we call Saturday-night town... We were probably one of the last towns to quit that, I think. But...

J: And that was sometime around \_\_\_\_\_

M: It was probably... maybe early seventies before we tapered off, I would think.

J: I remember, the last time we talked, you said you thought that was because once families became two-car families, the wife didn't have to wait...

M: \_\_\_\_\_ (Calls after customer) Thank you. Read about it.  
\_\_\_\_\_ (laughs)

J: Wives had their own car so they could just go shopping anytime they...

M: Yes, yes. \_\_\_\_\_ if they have two cars, \_\_\_\_\_ doesn't matter  
\_\_\_\_\_ even more \_\_\_\_\_ one for each child past sixteen.

J: But the one thing I started to think about, though, -- I guess I was thinking, why, if these were... if it was a man and wife who were farming, then why would the husband even use the car for farming.

M: He might have a truck and a car. Anyway, they do have two ways... Maybe she comes in the family car; maybe he uses the truck during the day.

J: OK.

M: But I \_\_\_\_\_ that eighty percent of the shopping in the men's clothing \_\_\_\_\_ is done by women. You know, the men.... The mother buys the clothes for the son until he gets married, and then the man... I mean, most -- I mean that doesn't apply to my

son. But that's the way it is with a lot of families.

J: Yes. Yes. But I guess, what I was saying is that, well, if there's only car and the husband isn't really using it in the farming, I thought, well maybe the wife was helping more with the farming and she couldn't get away or something like that.

M: That's probably right too. They used to... See, another thing that's a lot different... they used to have threshings and different things like that and...

J: Yes. Yes.

M: They would... (aside) Quit breathing \_\_\_\_\_. (laughs.)

J: No heavy breathing.

M: They used to fix up these big dinners for the help that would come in and help them, but with the bigger machinery -- you know, that makes a difference there too, you see.

J: Yes. Someone was explaining that to me in terms of bailers. Before they would bail hay in just those square, you know -- not too big-size -- and the neighbors would help with that. And once they got the \_\_\_\_\_ that people could use to make those big, big round ones that you see, then they didn't have to use...

M: They didn't have the help...

J: Yes. Yes.

M: I'm sure that made a big difference.

J: Yes, I imagine it did.

M: But see, back then they'd have eight or ten helpers that would help. And those people, they could have brought a lunch with them... and probably, if they didn't... In this day and age they'd probably have to bring a lunch if they wanted to have anything to eat. But back years ago, the woman could cook up a big meal.

J: A big...

M: A BIG meal. All kinds of... a lot of times, two or three kinds of meat, \_\_\_\_\_, vegetables and definitely dessert for those men. They'd be real hungry.

J: Right. It wouldn't be lunch, it was dinner.

MATHERS

M: That's right. (both laugh) It was dinner. Yes. That's how dinner got started at noontime. Because, that was dinner.

J: Yes, I think I've got the hang of that now. (both laugh) You were born in 1930. What was it like being a kind of Depression kid?

M: Well, it would have been pretty rough, but my mother was a seamstress and she also washed for people and she sewed for people and washed for people and she should have been a -- what do you call -- a designer; she designed her own clothing. By the time she was eight years old, her mother couldn't make dresses to suit her. I mean, she learned to make them in different ways than just the way her mother made them. She could think of prettier ways that she wanted to \_\_\_\_\_ and did. She made her first money, sewing by the time she was eight years old.

J: Wow.

M: She made doll clothes for a lady and outfitted a doll for either for her daughter or her granddaughter. So my mother sewed for me and...

J: Did she have a machine?

M: Oh, yes. Yes. She did have a ... at the... I think she got an electric machine along about the time when I was maybe... In fact, I was very neglected as a small baby. I mean... she...

J: Because she was too busy sewing?

M: She was busy sewing. She'd set me up if I was awake and lay me down if I went to sleep. That type thing. Feed me when I got hungry and keep me clean, you know, and everything. But, I mean, she never spent any time playing with me, or anything like that. Much.

J: Well, was she working -- how can I say this -- did they need the money.

M: Oh, of course. That's the only way they made ends meet. The ones that didn't do that, I mean, it really made it rough on them. But she always did that. And so we had extras that other families couldn't have. And I had always really nice clothing, because she could make anything out of anything.

J: Yes.

M: I remember, the maddest she ever got with me one time was -- she was making a short jacket, a hip-length jacket out of a long

raincoat, and where the coat pocket had come, she was taking the bottom of that from the coat on down and bringing it up, you know, to make the jacket. And right on the shoulder here, was a place that was going to be ugly. She said, "What am I going to do with that? That doesn't look good." And I said, "Oh, I don't know," and of course she fretted around and after a while she says, "I know what I'll do with that. I'll just sew a tab down there and put a button on it." "I was wondering if you'd think of something." Oh, she got mad (laughs) because I didn't give her any help, you know, in thinking what to do with it. But that's the way she was, I mean, she's as \_\_\_\_\_, if there was a flaw, why you were to cover it up to make it look like it was supposed to be there.

J: Right. Right.

M: Then, of course, she was always making something out of something else. Take a big item and make a child's "something" out of it. Her church coat, she turned wrong-side out, you know; take them all apart and resew them.

J: Did you ever feel, as a kid, that your family was struggling to make ends meet.

M: No. Never.

J: Did they let you know...

M: The only thing is that my life has always been influenced by that; I can't throw anything away very easily because I was... By being a depression child I'm a saver. I mean, you never know when you might need that. And so, therefore, that's always influenced me even to this day.

J: Right. Yes. Sure.

M: It does. Not to the point that we didn't have anything to eat, or... She was a good cook and... Saving with her cooking and, of course ... (aside to customer) Thank you. Thank you. (laughs) No, I never felt... I knew that they had had problems. She told me so, I mean, that there were people around who had lost their homes and things like that but they were fortunate that they didn't lose... They paid \$1555.55 for their house. I mean, the one that they built. The one that I can show you up here -- that sits up here...

J: Oh really. Still. Great.

M: It sits up there. We sold it for \$17,000 something and we didn't get really what it was worth out of it. I mean, a big

home like that. It was a three-story home counting the basement.

J: When did you sell it then. It must have been a while back.

M: Well, we sold it back in... She died in 1980 -- I think she died.

J: Really! And the house only sold for that much.

M: Yes. It was sold at auction, see, and you don't get as much out of an auction. If we had just put it up for sale... But wanted to get it done and over with.

J: Yes. Yes.

M: We sold all the inside stuff and then we sold the house.

J: Yes. ...OK, well if you didn't feel that your parents had to struggle to make ends meet, was there the feeling then that, be grateful, we really are better off than a lot of people.

M: Oh, yes. Oh definitely. Always thought to be glad for what I had.

J: Were there some families that you can remember, maybe neighbors or something like that, who were really having a hard time getting by and stuff like that.

M: Well, I can say that our next-door neighbor lost their home. Their parents did buy it, though, and eventually ... they got it back that way, it came back around. But, yes, I'm sure there were plenty \_\_\_\_\_ that had hard times. And just the ones that were willing to tighten their belts and be conservative, were the ones that came through \_\_\_\_\_.

J: Yes. Yes.

M: They had to \_\_\_\_\_ be pennywise.

J: Yes. Yes.

M: Squeeze that old buffalo, you know. (laughs)

J: Yes. \_\_\_\_\_ in the good days when we had buffalo nickles and they could do something like that.

M: Yes. Yes. That's right.

J: What church did your mom and dad belong to?



M: Well, back when I was a small child...

J: If they belonged to any...

M: Well, they belonged to a Baptist church back when I was a small child, but as things became tougher, why she found it a little harder to meet the demands of the church. So they didn't go ahead and go.

J: You mean in terms of time needed \_\_\_\_\_...

M: Well, no. Like, they came one time wanting for a cake-bake or something. They wanted a cake baked. Well, she said, "I could have enough flour and stuff to bake one cake. But," she said, "if I baked one, my children wouldn't want it." And she said, "You know, it would be hard for me to take...bake it and take it away with them..." It really would be. And she... actually she \_\_\_\_\_ and didn't charge admission at the door. (laughs) Which you can leave in or leave out, I don't care. (laughs) But there was another person who came along about then that had a new line on .... a new flannel religion and they \_\_\_\_\_ more. I mean, this woman... it was a woman preacher.

J: Oh!

M: That came in and had a small church up close to our home. So that's where we went after that.

J: Seems like there's been a lot of different religions... here as there are \_\_\_\_\_ something...

M: That was a non-denominational type, I think.

J: What was it called or what creed...

M: It didn't have any denomination.

J: She started a new church and \_\_\_\_\_

M: Yes.

J: Oh! Just out of curiosity, did your dad go over with that, too, or was that just your mom.

M: He did feet-dragging a little.

J: Yes. Yes.

M: At first he didn't but then... Before it was over, he did.

I mean, he was pretty proud of her because she stood for what she thought, you know, and whether he totally thought the same way she did or not, at least she respected her for standing up for what she felt.

J: You know, some people have told me that \_\_\_\_\_ at that time... Well, how can I say it. You know, sometimes \_\_\_\_\_ they'd keep the money of the family made more \_\_\_\_\_, and things like that.

M: It depends on whether you've got a strong man or a strong woman.

J: Yes.

M: Of course, in my family, my mother was more the decision maker. My dad... if there was something he felt strongly about, yes, he would. But unless... I mean, she was the stronger-willed one of the two that ... I wouldn't say she ruled the roost exactly but, of course,...

J: And then, something else you mentioned. Was this the kind of thing... (customers voices in background)

M: Yes, that's Rex.

J: Yes, hey there Rex. ...

(Voice, unclear)

J: Pretty good, how about yourself.

Rex: Oh, not too bad.

M: Going to get you a new zipper?

R: Well, Michael's been... (recorder turned off)

J: (recorder turned on again). We're doing simple activities that, you remember, that took place at the church.

M: I used to sing at the church when I was about two, I guess I sang there. But I don't remember it.

J: Was this book about this church and \_\_\_\_\_...

M: Yes. I sing. And, of course, they did have their certain things but I don't remember any of that.

J: OK. OK. What was the entertainment at Paoli at that time?

M: Well, there was no swimming pool. (laughs) There was no swimming pool, and... we had bicycles. We did ride our bicycles and we used to play ball... (child's loud voice interrupts.) Yes, that's your house. Honey, you go talk to Ruth... It's your house, yes.

Used to go to the lumber yard and throw the ball over the stacks of lumber... (aside to the child) \_\_\_\_\_ Don't step on the recorder. Maybe I ought to put that over \_\_\_\_\_

What else did we do? Oh, we really never lacked for things to do, I don't think. But I always played with paper-dolls as a small child myself, because \_\_\_\_\_ when I went to the toilet outside, -- you had the catalogs down there, I'd pick up two or three pages and I'd bring them to the house and cut them up. Until the time I was about four years old till \_\_\_\_\_...

J: Good.

M: That's what I had for entertainment. Entertained myself that way. Now let me think. What else did we do? Just visited with each other and did more visiting than what they do now. There wasn't TV. People didn't have TV's at home until... I know when... I graduated in '48 and when we talked about TV in school, some of the people didn't think that it would ever amount to anything too much.

J: Really.

M: Yes. I thought it would, but some of them didn't think that it would. Of course, I saw a thing on TV the other night... they had had it for a lot more years than what I realized.

J: Yes.

M: But we read about it in our book at school.

J: Well, I'll be darned.

M: Yes.

J: So even in high school, did many people in your class have TV's?

M: I don't think too many did, because nobody said anything about it. By 1950 a lot of people did. And then about '52 they had color TV and things like that. But I think my family had... along about then, my family got TV.

J: Who were the kids that you played with and visited with? Kids from school or your neighbors or ...?

M: Neighbors mainly.

J: Neighbors?

M: We'd play "Hide and Seek." I mean, like in the evenings we'd play that. Took up till dark and... (pause) I think riding the bicycle was the main thing I think I remember doing. I mean, we rode the bicycle a lot. But in Ellis(?), you go down the hill you always had to push it back up the hill. (laughs) I mean, that wasn't the greatest... I would want to go to Illinois and ride a bike, because...

J: Or in northern Indiana.

M: Or someplace where it's level...

J: Was it the kind of thing -- as a kid here, did your parents know all of your friends? Most of your friends?

M: Sure. I would think so. Maybe not the ones I went to school with, but then... The ones I walked to and from school, they might not have known them personally. But one of my best friends was my next-door neighbor and she was a cousin of mine also. So naturally my family knew her real well.

J: Well, was it ever annoying there -- or anything like that -- when maybe, as you got older your parents knew what you were doing and what was going on. I mean, were there ever times when you were a kid you kind of wanted to get away...

M: No. No, I wasn't that kind of a kid, I don't think. I guess I wasn't... No, I didn't go anyplace or do anything very much until I sixteen or so and then... Or even then, they pretty well knew where I was. No, I don't... They had teen cans down here, but I didn't go, other than ...

J: Teen cans?

M: The teen cans. It was... that was what they called the young-folks get-to-gether, where they played cards and danced and had a good time.

J: Was that through the school? Or the church or something?

M: I don't know who has that? Maybe it was a church group that did that \_\_\_\_\_, but I didn't participate in that.

J: Do you remember, as a kid, any kind of special event or whenever going on at the Square?

M: Oh, they'd have band concerts \_\_\_\_\_ at night. I enjoyed those a lot.

[End of Side One of Tape One]

J: ... Asking \_\_\_\_\_ Square, and you didn't bring very much and she \_\_\_\_\_ memories of...

M: It was a place where you came to get your groceries and... Oh, when you needed new shoes, you'd come down and buy new shoes. Or a new coat, or whatever it... I mean...

J: Yes. Yes.

M: Not as many people went out of the town... like they do any more.

J: Yes, like they...

M: Didn't have as nice cars as we have.

J: And I guess you... When you came into town with your dad, \_\_\_\_\_ socialize \_\_\_\_\_

M: Oh, sometimes we'd talk to somebody. He wasn't too much like that... He mostly did what he had to do and came home. I'd go with him to pay his taxes or something like that. I was with him just about every place he went.

J: Yes. Yes.

M: If he was off work, well I pretty well, you know, would go... Oh, we came to the movie theater... He'd bring me to a movie. I remember one time, when I was sick... I had been sick; I guess I was getting better and there was a \_\_\_\_\_ every Shirley Temple show that ever was because he loved Shirley Temple movies. And they put the thermometer in my mouth to see... He said, "OK, if you have any fever, we can't go." I was about to be ready to go back to school but, I remember putting it above my tongue instead of under my tongue so that I could get to go to the movies. And I did get to go. And I never did know if I would have had temperature if I'd have put it under there or not.

J: But you didn't want to take any chances.

M: No. I just went ahead and put it above my tongue. I thought, "It surely won't show up as hot there."

J: Were there any people that your parents taught you... you know, kind of the more respected people in town or were there any

people that...(distracted by someone/thing) Let me get this.  
(Voices.) OK. Right. Can you think...

M: Well, \_\_\_\_\_ she told me there some drunk people because they didn't know what they were doing. And I did have drunken neighbors that would stagger past the house -- at a very early age. Like about four I made my mind up that I would not spend anymore time around anyone who drank than what I had to because it was not my idea of... (calls after a customer) Thank you. ...He's bringing a paper and taking one. (laughs)

J: Was that \_\_\_\_\_ time? I wonder if...

M: I don't know.

J: Yes.

M: I suspect it was. Yes, I think... my husband said he used... he went to his neighbors one time... They had what they called "homebrew." About every farmer made that. He said he drank a lot of it and what he didn't drink he'd poured out. (laughs) He made an awful mess with it. (Child's voice. To child) OK. Go put your milk back in the refrigerator, what you don't want. Don't spill it, please. Thank you. He's in already, a little? Well, I'll clean it. I'll clean it up. Go put your milk back in the refrigerator, please. (Dialogue with child.) Go ahead, please. She knows \_\_\_\_\_ she can't have milk. No, no, no.

J: Let's see, you were saying about the drunk, stay away from...

M: Oh yes. I was taught to stay away from drunks and ... because they're not really at themselves and so... I had been taught that because they did pass by the house, you know, and ... it was a necessary thing. Like I said, I wasn't any more than four years old when I made my mind up that I wouldn't put up with that kind of stuff if I ever had any choice in the matter, you know.

J: Well, they must have made quite an impression on you.

M: Oh, they did. Yes, they'd stagger way over and then move back and sometimes fall down even and...

J: Were these just neighbors.

M: Yes, they lived up in the woods from where we lived. They... this woman had... she was a very fine woman and... you know, a Christian woman and... But her boys all dipped heavy on the bottle.

J: Yes. Yes.

M: That was a shame, but that's the way it was. Yes, that made a real impression on me. As far as colors or anything like that, I wasn't taught to be any... (Referring to child) I have to see what she's doing. [Tape recorder turned off.]

J: Well, I forgot what we were talking about. Let me go ahead and ask...

M: \_\_\_\_\_ and things like that. Due to my mom's religious ideas, I wasn't taught to be prejudiced against color of skin or poor or the likes of that. I mean, poor people to me are just... they get up in the morning the same as we do and everybody else, I mean, and... In fact, we're all poor in some ways and we're all rich in some ways. You know, we're rich if we have our health and we're poor if don't do the things that are set forth in front of us to do they we should do.

J: Yes.

M: That's ... You know, if we have bad attitudes, that's poor. There's a lot of things that people are poor about and... That's the sort of general thing that she taught me... was to always treat everybody the same. I don't mean, let people walk on you, I don't mean that. But then there are ways of handling things that, if you were just to take the time to do it...

J: Yes. Do you know how she would have felt about -- oh you know, women working?

M: I don't think she'd have had anything...against women working, she made me get out and get a job when I was eighteen. (laughs)

J: She did?

M: Yes. (laughs)

J: Why was that? Because the family ... was it economic? or...

M: Well, she wanted me to... she didn't want me to just sit around the house and... So, yes, she encouraged me to go get a birth certificate and apply for a job. I applied for a job at Mischo's, the clothing store here, and they didn't need anybody. I was kind of glad, but... It satisfied her urge for me to apply for a job and so... She went with me, even in fact, when I applied for the job. And she didn't have much say; she, you

know, went with me.

And so these people drove up in front of our house -- oh, either the next day or two or three days after that -- and said, you know, that I could come to work. She said I was as pale as a sheet; I'm sure I did because it scared me half-to-death.

(laughs) But I did, I went to work for her and ... I worked for them until I started to talk about going to college and then she (Mrs. Mischo) let me go because she couldn't... She didn't see any sense in spending more money on me if I was going to do that.

And \_\_\_\_\_ before I got a chance to go to college, I was all set up and everything, I got a job here in town working for a salesman. Blish Monyhan worked for a manufacturer-representative in his office. I worked there almost three years -- almost exactly.

J: Yes.

M: And then I got a chance to work at the hospital and I found it more exciting and different and so...

J: Well, when you first started out to work, it sounds like you would have stayed home and not...

M: I think I would have.

J: Did your attitude change around... during the time that you did work? I'm wondering why you kept on working then.

M: Well, for the money. And, by the way, my mother saw to it that I paid a certain amount of money for rent every month. It was only \$5 but I only made 20 a week. So \$5 a month wasn't that bad. Maybe it was 5 a week I gave her; I don't remember. But anyway, I was supposed to give her a certain amount and she said I could call it rent or whatever I wanted to call it. But anyway, I think she just used it for tithe money; that's what I think she used it for... I don't think she ever...

J: \_\_\_\_\_

M: Tithe money. I mean, you know, I think she...

J: Oh. Oh. Yes.

M: To buy things for somebody with. I don't think she ever bought herself anything with it is what I'm saying.

J: Yes.

M: But she was just teaching me to dole my money out and... I bought a piano -- at that time I was making \$20 a week and it was



a repossessed piano that came out in the paper. And I bought a piano and paid for it out of that amount. When I got married I had a piano and a sweeper and my silverware -- all three big items I had bought and I'd only made, like I said, 20 a week. My cousin who lived in Dayton was making 35 at the same time I was making 20 -- almost double what I was making. And I don't know just what she had. \_\_\_\_\_

J: What do you... I guess your good money-managing skills were apparent even then.

M: (laughs) I squeeze them.

J: Squeeze those buffaloes. (both laugh) Did you live at home then, till you got married?

M: Yes.

J: And, how old were you when you got married?

M: Twenty-two.

J: And how old was your husband?

M: He was twenty-two.

J: He was twenty-two also?

M: Yes.

J: Oh. I meant to ask you...

M: For a week.

J: Was there any age difference between your parents?

M: No. My dad was a little older than mom.

J: Yes.

M: I think she would be one age in December and then he'd pass her up the next May.

J: Yes. Right.

M: So, really, just about six months difference -- or a little less.

J: Before we go on to get married and the adult life, let me flip back for a second to high school time. And that's where you

and your husband met, I guess.

M: Yes.

J: I know your husband grew up in the country.

M: We're speaking of Hollan.

J: Yes.

M: Yes. The first husband.

J: And his first name was what?

M: Glen.

J: Glen. OK. So Glen grew up in the country. It was a farming family.

M: Yes.

J: I wondered, at that time in the high school -- did kids from farming families, were they active in the same activities that kids from the town were?

M: Well, he was. I mean, some of them may not have been. I don't know how he managed that, but he was cheerleader at least the last two years of his high school career. He didn't... he wasn't a ballplayer; he wasn't that coordinated, I don't guess. But he was a cheerleader. And a fairly good one. Because we'd yell, you know, real loud for him and he'd really get a lot out of them. Throw a lot into it and he'd get a lot out of it. When he first started out, he looked at the floor all the time -- he was bashful. (laughs)

J: Right.

M: But after he got over that little hump, why...

J: He started yelling \_\_\_\_\_

M: Yes. He \_\_\_\_\_ chewing them out.

J: Well, I just... Part of the reason I'm asking is because... some people have said that -- and these are more people from the country, I think -- have said that they felt that, during high school time \_\_\_\_\_ there was some prejudice or... not prejudice but just something different between the kids from the town and the ...

M: Well, a lot of... He probably had certain chores he had to do. It most likely did make a handicap to him to do those things. You know, they had to practice their cheerleading after school, I imagine. And, at least then, they had to go every ballgame; they were required to do that. I don't know how many... or if he had to take care of hogs and feed cattle or things like that. I knew he chopped wood and things like that for the family and... I don't know if in his high school years... I did remember hearing him say that he was, I think, a senior in high school when they got electricity at their house. His mom switched the light off and on. Of course, I'd had electricity all my life, as being living in town; but down there, that's when they first got it when he...

J: And you graduated when?

M: '48.

J: '48. \_\_\_\_\_

M: That would be forty years.

J: Yes. Yes.

M: (laughs) \_\_\_\_\_

J: So you're saying that it was more... kids who lived on the farm just had a lot more chores... That kept them...

M: He probably had an old car that he drove to town. He rode the schoolbus in, and a lot of times I know he rode it home because I used to wave at him. But I don't know... (dog barks. To the dog) Fritz.

I don't think it hampered him, but a lot of kids it did. You know, they didn't all get to play ball or do things that they wanted if they lived... But I don't think anybody held it against them or anything. It was just a thing that they... They had other things they could do. You learned how to bake and stuff like that, because... And make caramel corn and things like that that maybe I wouldn't have the... I was out playing hide-and-seek or something at the time when he would have been maybe... when he did that kind of thing.

J: And, they probably had... the farming kids probably had 4H and stuff like that.

M: Yes. Yes. That's right.

J: (coughs) Pardon me. At the time of high school, did you have any... what kind of life did you see for yourself at the

time. What did you want for yourself? Did you have any aspirations or stuff that you wanted to do or ... ? or places to go?

M: No, not at that time. No, I have a lot more places I want to go now than... When we studied geography in school I never thought too much about it because I never thought about getting to go to those places. But there is'nt any place that I can think of \_\_\_\_\_ that I would like to go. I made my grandpa so mad he could about have a fit when I tell him I want to go to Mars if they ever had a .... (laughs) a shuttle. Yes, something that was going out before they had spaceships, but I could see that, maybe, in years to come they would have, since they had airplanes. Now that seemed reasonable to me. And I know I've probably not \_\_\_\_\_ the same way I do, but it seemed to me awful foolish that God put people on earth and didn't put any people on any other planet. I think that's pretty unreal to think that, I mean. And I suppose that they're more intelligent than we are.

J: One could know \_\_\_\_\_

M: (laughs) That's right.

J: So there wasn't any time when you were young that you ever wished that you lived somewhere else or that you wanted to go visit somewhere else?

M: No, not really. I had a cousin who lived in Bloomington; I used to go up there... I could see that life was quite different up there from what it is down here but I never exactly felt jealous about it or anything. And we almost moved to Bloomington. Mom's dad got a job, that's when they put two men and an extra saw for him. Was when he decided, he and mom both were going to work up there. And they worked for about three weeks up there, but then he didn't go ahead and get the \_\_\_\_\_. Circumstances changed; let's just put it that way. The man that hired him, his sister became suddenly separated from her family and came home and she needed the job. So she needed the job that my mom had. Naturally blood's going to be thicker for your sister than it is for your wife's sister-in-law. So she wasn't fired, but she could see that that was the writing on the wall-- saw what needed to be done.

J: Yes.

M: So they came back. I didn't really want to live there anyway. Not especially.

J: How did you... I don't know if you remember this but how did you think of Paoli at the time. Did it seem like kind of a nice

quiet town or \_\_\_\_\_

M: [deletion]

J: Let me ask one more question about your folks. Did they belong to a political party?

M: Opposites over \_\_\_\_\_ (laughs)

J: Oh!

M: They never really voted but my mother leaned one way and my dad leaned the other so...

J: Can I ask which one or ...

M: Well, yes. My mother was Republican.

J: And your dad was a Democrat. Of course there weren't many Democrats at that time, were there? Or \_\_\_\_\_

M: Not in this county. (laughs)

J: Yes. Yes. Sure.

M: But she did not get out and go vote. He may have, but I'm quite sure that she did not. I don't think that he did either.

J: Your're quite sure that she did not.

M: I'm sure that she did not \_\_\_\_\_.

J: OK. OK.

M: But that's the way she leaned. I mean... and then I married a Democrat and we raised two Democrats and one Republican. (laughs)

J: And you're a Republican.

M: I lean toward Republican. I have voted both ways. I wouldn't vote for just dog if his...

J: Just for the party...

M: Yes, just for the party. No.

J: Well, let me ask you this.

M: Unless it was a good one, like Fritz. (laughs)

J: Do you know why she was a Republican versus a Democrat? Was there something...

M: They probably were conservatives.

J: You mean, like not having social programs?

M: Well, I don't know exactly. She just leaned more toward that way -- I'll put it that way.

J: Yes. Yes.

M: I don't know.

J: How about yourself? Can I ask you why you're... why you tended to be... Is there something about the Democrats that you just don't...

M: No, it isn't that. I go for the man. I listen to them talk and see what I, you know... I decide which one I think would do the best job in the position he's trying for. And then I vote for the man.

J: Yes. Yes.

M: I do a little scratching on the...

J: On the ballot. Yes. OK.

M: I guess that's Independent, isn't it?

J: Yes. Unless, of course, you always think that it happens to work out that... (both laugh) \_\_\_\_\_ just one party always \_\_\_\_\_ doesn't matter that much.

M: No. No I don't.

J: Are there any particular things that... you know, social programs or I'm not sure what the \_\_\_\_\_ for.

M: \_\_\_\_\_ just the way they would see fit to spend the money and for general attitudes about different things. And things like that.

J: Now, you graduated from high school in '48. So you were going to high school and beforehand during World War II.

M: Yes.

J: What was that like. How did... Did World War II in anyway directly affect your family? Do you have an uncle or a cousin?...

M: I have brothers \_\_\_\_\_

J: Oh, you do. OK. Brothers.

M: \_\_\_\_\_ were in Germany. At the same time, in fact, one of them didn't know the other one was there. The older one knew the younger one was there but the younger one didn't know the older one was there, so he got permission to visit the younger brother. And he had this jeep that had a kind of a funny-looking gun on it and Jason was just standing there, you know,... he wasn't really looking at the people in the jeep because he assumed he didn't know them. But as they drove up he was looking at that odd gun, and you know... it was very large? or anyway it was something different to what he'd seen before. And he liked to never got his attention because of that. My other brother Darrell. There he was, looking at that instead. But they had a nice visit then.

J: Yes.

M: But it was pretty frustrating to us, to hear them writing and one of them doesn't know the other one is there.

J: Oh yes.

M: And then the younger one got wounded... in his hand. He has almost a perfect swastika on his hand. (child's loud voice) Just one little... (to child) Oh, you've got makeup on? How'd you get makeup? Ruth give you makeup?

Child: Yes.

M: She did? Well, that sounds a little far-fetched. But (laughs) (Child makes noise) No, no, better not... (Tape machine turned off.)

J: How did... \_\_\_\_\_ in some way to affect Paoli? Do you remember? Was it something people talked about a lot?

M: Well, yes.

J: Mostly...

M: Almost everybody was affected \_\_\_\_\_ by having someone in their family in it...

J: Was there much that the community did as a community or maybe

churches or schools in terms of having projects to raise money and stuff like that.

M: (laughs) Wasn't into that \_\_\_\_\_. I'm sure they did, but I...

J: And the last thing as a kid, I think you mentioned \_\_\_\_\_, what kind of things did the family do for entertainment?

M: We did go to the movies. Oh, what involved was once every two weeks or something like that. It was movies we especially liked. Mostly my dad and I went. I don't remember mom going.

J: Yes.

M: She \_\_\_\_\_

J: Just let me know.

M: Let me see. Really, movies was the only thing beside... We'd have music parties sometimes. My mom and dad did. They had different musicians that came...

J: Oh!

M: And they had a lot of popcorn and nuts and stuff like that. And people that liked music would gather in and they'd listen to music till all hours of the night. (laughs)

J: You know, Owen Stout had a music party \_\_\_\_\_.

M: Well, he was at our house one time; we went to his place one time.

J: OK.

M: You know what I'm talking about.

J: Right. Right.

M: \_\_\_\_\_ music party.

J: \_\_\_\_\_ wonderful.

M: Oh, yes.

J: But as I remember too, \_\_\_\_\_ it was for songs or church hymns.

M: Part of them were, yes.



J: OK. Was that probably true for your folks too.

M: Yes. I'm sure it was.

J: Yes.

M: \_\_\_\_\_, was if they wanted to, and things like that is, you know, participation and ...

J: Did you take part in them too?

M: Oh yes. I would sing with them.

J: Were they fun?

M: Oh yes. I thought they were.

J: I thought they were too.

M: Yes. I thought they were. That was one I liked. They didn't kick the rug back and dance or anything like that that I can remember but (laughs) ...

J: And you also mentioned too, that just in a very general way, people used to visit more.

M: Oh, they did. Yes. Before TV. And before Ann Landers made it socially not-the-thing-to-do.

J: Did she!

M: Sure. She wrote in her column, you know, that you should never go visit someone unless you've been invited. If you wait for an invitation, it's going to be a long time about going to see somebody...

J: Well, don't you think she meant more city people though, I mean...

M: Maybe so...

J: ... different.

M: Maybe so, but she said she would be very appalled if anybody came to her house... You know, drove up and say, "Hello, I come to say howdy." Why, we did that all the time around here, but after I found out that, you know, that's not acceptable then, you know, it was something that shouldn't have been done.

J: Did you ever talk about that with your friends though? To

see if maybe they thought she was right or they thought she was nuts or something? Do you know what I mean?

M: Yes. Not really. I guess it was then that our kids were growing up and had different interests anyway. You know, when they were real little you could visit but after they got older you had to kind of... you more-or-less had to stay at home and be available as they came and went.

J: I see what you're saying now. Right. Right.

M: You were tied down a lot more then.

J: OK. You got married in...?

M: '52.

J: '52. And then, how soon after that did you and your husband go on and open up...

M: '58.

J: '58. OK. OK. Did you have your children?

M: We had two of them.

J: You had two of them. OK. And you've got Larry and...

M: We have the two girls. Nancy's the oldest and then Karen and then Larry's the youngest.

J: And then Larry's... Is there much year-difference between them?

M: Nancy and Karen are two years and four months apart. Larry's seven years younger than...

J: OK. So he was the baby boy. Just like momma was the baby girl.

M: Yes, right.

J: And just let me ask you another question too about your husband. How big a family did he come from?

M: Three.

J: Three. Oh!

M: He was also the baby. But wasn't the only boy.

J: OK.

M: He had his brother and sister.

J: OK. Were there any differences that, you know, between you two in terms of looking at things and something like that... because he had grown up on a farm and you were\_\_\_\_\_...

M: Probably quite a bit. I don't know exactly, but ... I suppose there were some differences there and attitudes about things -- that type of thing.

J: Yes. Yes. Now remember you telling me when your husband got the idea for the store, you weren't too pleased about it. (both laugh)

M: No, I didn't like that idea. I talked him out of several service stations and restaurants and... but he said he wasn't going to be talked out of that because he wanted to do that. And I didn't think it would really do any good to talk him out of it, so I could... And its been good to us.

J; Yes. Yes.

M: He was in it from '58 to '80 and then I carried it on eight more years here. I'm in my thirtyith year this year.

J: Yes. Yes. How's the business changed over those years?

M: Well, we used to stay open real late hours on Saturday night. We lowered that and changed that. And we used to buy in lot larger amounts than you can anymore because the merchandise was a lot cheaper than it is anymore. I mean, just a little bitty box of stuff can be \$600 and that type of thing. I mean, in those ways it's changed and...

J: Is it more hard to stock it the way you want to with so many more brands and...

M: Sure. I completely quit tennis shoes because whoever wants... Think of all the different brands of shoes and each one that wants a brand, they only want that brand. They don't want anything else except that brand. And I couldn't guess what they wanted, so I said, "Well, the smart thing for me to do is not..." One time when pointed-toe shoes went out, we had 200 pair of them in here. We had to sell 200 pair of pointed-toe shoes at \$1 a pair. Now, that's not fun. So, we learned from a few little experiences like that that... You have to take it... I buy more conservatively than he did.

J: Yes. Yes.

M: I have to.

J: When you-all first opened the Square and you first opened up, like you mentioned, it was on the north side of the Square and you're now on the south side of the Square.

M: Yes. Yes.

J: Who were you aiming the store at? It was youth versus older \_\_\_\_?

M: Yes. Yes. That's really what... That's who buys all the clothes... or the main... more than anything else is the youth.

J: Now, when you say... you mean just after high school age or just young twenties and such.

M: Yes. From... anywhere from where they'd be interested in clothing on the way up till \_\_\_\_ about thirty. I mean, we had other stuff for other people but still... That's the main bulk of \_\_\_\_ the clothing that I've bought.

J: Has that changed any? Is it different at all now?

M: No, that's still where most of the clothing is bought but the styles change very rapidly -- very rapidly -- like \_\_\_\_ ladies do, say, because they keep right along with them.

J: Well, one thing I was speaking about too is, I'm kind of under the impression that, you know, there's a certain amount anyway of young kids that \_\_\_\_\_

M: Yes.

J: And they \_\_\_\_\_ over the years. And I would guess certainly since like the late '50s, I wonder, if because of that you kind of go after a different age...

M: Well, we buy staples as much as we can. I also carry things that the youth would like but not in as large a quantity as I did before. Because it just doesn't work... I thought of something else that...

END OF TAPE ONE, SIDE TWO

END OF INTERVIEW

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teen cans 16  
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Interview with Elizabeth Hollan Mathers, p. 33. Conducted by Catherine Jones, 26 January 1988, Paoli, Indiana, Indiana University Center for Documentary Research and Practice, OHRC accession #88-68-1