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ORAL HISTORY RESEARCH CENTER

ELIZABETH HOLLAN MATHERS

Interviewed by Catherine Jones
2 February 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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<u>Elizabeth Hollan Mathers</u>	<u>3-19-91</u>
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<u>Cathy Jones</u>	<u>3-29-91</u>
Interviewer	Date

TABLE OF CONTENTS

FAMILY HISTORY

review 1
grandparents 1
family history book 3

GLEN HOLLAN

family history and farming 4

JIM MATHERS

Current family history 5ff

MUSIC

and grandson 11
and parents 11
and son Larry's programs 12

DANCING

Clog 13
square dancing 14
the man's part 15
the clubs 16
round-dancing 18

PAOLI'S FUTURE? 25

building a highway 26
buying clothing in Paoli 27

PAOLI'S TURNING POINTS 28

cars 28
the Peaks 29
the clinic 30
Mennonites 30

PAOLI

think of town? 31
what is it about town? 32
advantages and disadvantages 34

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ORAL HISTORY RESEARCH CENTER

INTERVIEWEE: Elizabeth (Libby) Hollan Mathers
INTERVIEWER: Catherine A. Jones
SUBJECT: Family history; square dancing; women and work;
Paoli's future.
DATE: February 2, 1988
TRANSCRIBER: Norma Olmer
[FIRST INTERVIEW: January 26, 1988]

J: ... Hollan's Menswear on the Square and today is February 2.

M: In Paoli.

J: In Paoli, thank you. (both laugh) Everything down, right. Okey-doke. You know, I listened back to our talk from last time, I realized that I hadn't asked you very much about your grandparents and where they were from. You mentioned that both your mom and dad were from Youngscreek.

M: Yes.

J: And, by the way, what township is that in? Youngscreek?

M: I think that's still Paoli township.

J: Oh, is it! Oh!

M: I think it is.

J: OK.

M: Yes, I'm pretty sure it's Paoli township.

J: Do you know... has ...

M: Greenfield township, no? Township line's just below... or...

J: OK. Wait.

M: You mean county.

J: The real question is the county, right.

M: Orange county. It's still Orange county, but I'm not sure about the township. The township line is above there.

J: OK. That was the important thing. Were your grandparents from there also... or their...

M: Well, they lived there naturally since they lived there. The grandparents, they lived in Illinois at one time or another. A lot of people seem like back in those times would go to Illinois for work. I mean, they had to go wherever they get work. And so part of the kids were born... in fact my mother was born in Illinois -- when they lived out there.

J: You know, I think it was Owen _____, in fact, was describing some kind of work in Illinois that the men would leave to go do for... from what he said, it was seasonal work.

M: Farming. And that kind of thing.

J: But then they'd ...

M: They'd come back. They'd run out of work there and then they'd come back here to work. But, yes, my grandparents lived there. They went... came back in a wagon -- horses and stuff. Must have been a miserable trip, you know. That would be roughly 200 miles I'd say, or so. That was a lot of miles... I think my granddad had a store out there at that time. He sold glassware of some kind. I don't know.

J: So, I'm confused. They lived as _____

M: They had lived here before and then they moved to Illinois for work. And I think he opened up a shop of some kind out there and probably let too much credit or something. I don't know, I would say that's what happened. Anyway, he closed the shop up then and they came back. I don't know too much, really, about that except... And then he started a mill at Youngscreek -- which used to be called Unionville, but was changed to Youngscreek. And he had a mill, a nice-going mill there, for a long time. And, of course, he did farm work and things like that. I believe they lived right in Youngscreek, though, when he had the mill.

J: _____ his name was?

M: Elmer Nice and Josephine.

J: Thank you. OK. That was on your mom's side.

M: That's my mom's side.

J: And how many people, about, would you say, lived in Youngscreek. I know you don't know from back then, but you mentioned that, you know, you went back with your parents sometimes to visit relatives there. I think that's what you mentioned.

M: Yes. Well, my grandparents on the Weeks side lived there, too. They had a nice home -- what I call one of the nicer homes that used to be down there. They lived there. Joseph Weeks was his name and he married... his wife's name was Maryjane. And she was a Teaford before she was married.

J: Yes. Yes. And that was your dad's side.

M: Yes, my dad's side.

J: OK. Now, do you know if those folks had been there for awhile.

M: As far as I know they lived there probably all the time.

J: OK.

M: As far as I know. I never heard of... I would imagine they were born and raised there, probably.

J: Is this the kind of stuff, this kind of background about your family like this -- is this the kind of stuff that you always just kind of knew growing up?

M: Yes. My mother used to study into that type thing.

J: Oh, she did?

M: Yes. Larry has a book on the family history. She
_____ sometime.

J: Oh!!

M: Look _____ too, but... (laughs) But, it has the Weeks book and the Nice book both. And she has traced the Nice(?) book back much farther than what she has the Weeks book. My ancestors are Meek, Nice and Civil. (both laugh)

J: True. Can you believe that?

M: And their children's name are Meek and Charity.

J: _____

M: That's the names of some of my ancestors.

J: Yes. Yes. Was it your mom that went ahead and put those books together?

M: Yes. She put the books together. She got pictures where she could and then... She has all the information that goes back to... Let's see, I've forgotten which one... There was a Rebecca Meek and... I don't know if it was the Civil's or the Meek's that went the farthest back. And then she took the Nice(?) back... I mean, that was on the mother's side.

J: Yes. Yes. That's nice. Maybe sometime Larry will let me ...

M: He might let you...

J: ...look at it. OK. My hands are clean.

M: That's right. My mom wouldn't let you handle it just anyway. You had to be very careful because it... you know, a delicate book. It's a big scrapbook and it's just overstuffed.

J: Why do you think that kind of stuff was important to her?

M: Well, she was interested in her roots. She had talked to her grandfather and she said, if she'd only known at the time that she talked to him that she would have been interested, she would have gotten a lot more information then. But she wrote what she could remember what he had told her. And she really hated it because she didn't go ahead and get with that.

J: Yes. Yes. You mentioned that Larry has it now. Has he, or the girls, been very interested in this kind of stuff?

M: Larry is.

J: OK. OK. And the other thing I wanted to ask you about... (interrupted.) The other thing I wanted to ask about is, you mentioned your husband came from a family of... three kids?

M: Yes.

J: He had a brother and a sister. One thing I had wondered is... I guess I was under the impression that sometimes farming families at that time maybe had larger families? Than three

kids?

M: Some of them may have. I don't know. Probably, but they didn't. Just three.

J: And last time you were telling me something about the _____. Well, I guess you weren't quite sure, but...

M: Well, he chopped wood. And they had a sawmill out here; he had to help with that. When they had cows, of course, he had to milk cows. When we moved to the farm, I didn't learn how to milk a cow because that way I don't have to do it.

J: You did move to a farm, then?

M: When his dad passed away, we lived ten years on the farmplace. We bought it. It didn't have a bathroom in, and he said, "We'll move in and, if we adjust, we'll put a bathroom in." And I said, "I'll tell you one thing, we'll adjust a lot faster if we put the bathroom in before we move in." (laughs) So we did. He kind of tried, he didn't get by with it, you know. (laughs) Thought he might. So, we went ahead and did that.

J: Did he ever think about going on with farming? Or was he...

M: No. We bought cattle one year and we thought we'd make some money that way. We should have made \$3,000. but we lost \$3,000.

J: I remember you mentioning that, right.

M: Decided farming was not our thing. We just live on a farm.

J: Yes. Yes.

M: Of course, for one thing, we had the store. He needed to sell the cattle in the fall. If he could have kept them through the winter so that he could have gone ahead and wintered it out till the price went up, we wouldn't have lost that money, I guess. But we didn't want to take time out from the store to go feed cattle. You have to feed them in the winter.

J: Right. Right. And if gets real cold, I guess it's even more work.

M: You have to watch and chop water for them and everything. All those good things.

J: And I guess you've got _____ too. It occurs to me that farming was, you know, just becoming a harder thing to do. More

...
M: Well, we were just unfortunate people that bought them cattle when they were high and then prices kind of came down on us. That's what happened to us.

J: Just out of curiosity, do you think that if it had worked out better that there would have been a chance that you-all would have gone on and...

M: Oh sure. If we had made \$3,000, we would have probably stayed with it. But when you lose... it took forever to pay that \$3,000 off. We borrowed it from the Production Credit down here. It took us a long time to get that straightened... you know, paid out.

J: Do you think Glen would have ever thought about just doing that and forgetting about the store...

M: Oh no, no. That would have been a secondary thing. But we might have gone with the better, you know. Each year we'd probably would have bought a few and sold them that fall. But our first experience was so lousy, we didn't care to go into that any more. (laughs) That'd been done.

J: Right. You'd tried that and it was kind of...

M: That's right.

J: Go back to the store maybe. And I think you just said that, I guess, you didn't really cotton too much to the farming?

M: No, I don't mind living on a farmhouse but I don't care for the chores that go with it. The wood-stuff like that, we have -- where I live now -- we have a wood stove and I don't mind that of wood. Feeding the stove and, you know, that type thing, but I don't want a cow. Yes. (laughs) Cattle's all right, you know, if you're just going to raise them and let them take care of themselves. They don't do that though. They just... certain time of the year... in the summer they do pretty well but in the winter they have to have...

J: Yes. More attention. Yes.

M: And pigs stink so... (laughs) What's left. Chickens, they won't stay on. Well... I guess not.

J: Do you think your husband ever missed that life or... Since he'd grown up on a farm and...

M: Well, yes, he probably did. He loved it in the country. But we lived in town seventeen years. I wasn't so aware of how much he missed the farm until after we was down there. He'd always get up each morning. "How beautiful it is in the country," he'd say.

J: Oh, really!

M: Till I realized that I had done an injustice to not offer to live in the country before that.

J: Maybe he just didn't realize it himself too.

M: He might not.

J: He maybe just really wanted... He sounded like he obviously wanted to rezone...

M: That was his home place.

J: Yes. Yes. Sometimes you don't know until you go back, I guess.

M: I guess not. Yes, he probably was glad to be away from it. And then after seventeen years it seemed good to be back.

J: _____ too. If, when he was back, he wasn't doing all the chores and stuff. (both laugh) He had the gravy, didn't he?

M: That's right.

J: The beautiful country might be a lot more beautiful...

M: We really... for a few years we had it really made because we lived here in town in the winter and moved back here Thanksgiving and stayed until about March. And then just as soon as there'd be something green show, we'd go live back down there. I liked it better that way, really.

J: Is that because it was harder to drive into town in the winter.

M: We didn't have proper heat and -- what was the other reason? I think the heating was the main thing.

J: OK.

M: We lived there a few years in winter and summer, but... I'd really prefer the town-and-country deal.

J: Yes. Yes. Well, let me ask you this. Now you've been married a couple of years still.

M: Yes. It'll be two years this summer.

J: OK. Mr. Mathers... what's his first name?

M: Jim Mathers. James.

J: OK. James. And you're living in French Lick now.

M: Yes. Rural route. Out in the country.

J: Out in the country. OK. Do you miss living in Paoli?

M: No. I'm here every day. (laughs) That's how I miss it. It's just something to do, you know. I probably would if I didn't come in every day. No, I don't miss it. I miss seeing Larry; I hardly ever can catch him. He teaches in the daytime; I'm usually gone before he gets back here. I see him a couple of times a week. Other than that, why... No, I don't have any reason to miss it. No.

J: OK. When do you think you will retire? Have we talked about that at all? I mean, do you think you'll stay in French Lick or...

M: Probably on the farm... or if we became disabled, this building would be a good place to live.

J: Yes, it would be real close.

M: Yes. Used to, there would be a grocery that you could go to on the Square. There's no grocery that I can think of right now, but... Anyway, you'd be walking -- if you could walk at all... the IGA -- used to be Beylor's(?) store over here -- it's not very far away.

J: Yes. Yes.

M: You could get everything else that you'd want in the _____ Square... if it was available in town.

J: Right. Right. Let me see! Larry I know about. You also have two girls, right?

M: Yes.

J: Karen is the oldest?

M: No, Nancy is the oldest.

J: Nancy is the oldest from Karen and then Larry's seven years older -- younger, younger. What do the girls do now?

M: Nancy is a housewife. She lives in Germany and her husband...

J: In Germany?

M: Yes. Her husband's in the service.

J: Oh, that's right!

M: Yes. Yes. And they have three kids. And she doesn't write home. (laughs)

J: You've gone over there to see her twice, right? Once or twice?

M: Three times. About this time... in times past... I think I've been there three times. I've got to get a passport pretty soon so I can go back sometime.

J: Yes. Yes.

M: 'Cause they'll be gone three years. That's a long time without seeing your kids and your grandkids.

J: Yes. Yes.

M: Especially your grandkids. 'Cause they change so much more.

J: Right. Right. And then how about Karen.

M: And then Karen lives here in town. Her husband's a banker. And she teaches first-grade here.

J: Oh!

M: Yes. And she has two daughters; one's six and one's two-and-a-half.

J: Yes.

M: And one on-the-way. And...

J: You're going to have a lot of grandchildren.

M: Yes. I'm going to have seven. Jim has one grandson.

J: Oh, OK. Right.

M: ...that I claim. (laughs)

J: Right. Right.

M: Step-grandson.

J: One _____, ready made, yes.

M: Yes.

J: _____

M: No.

J: _____

M: No.

J: _____

M: We're also having _____

J: Yes. I guess you might have mentioned before, I guess, he's still not sure what he's going to be doing in terms of staying here or going off and trying his fortune for a while and coming back...

M: He [Larry] seems pretty settled here, to tell you the truth. I mean, he remodeled his apartment and... I don't know how long he'll stay here, no.

J: Yes.

M: But at this time he has work here and sounds like he's pretty well happy.

J: I remember when we were talking about him last time, I was... I started to think, too, well -- what does a young kid do here? Not a young kid, he's my age. But, you know what I mean. Once you're out of high school, there isn't as much to do, and I remember you saying he has a lot of friends that live in different places, so...

M: Yes. Yes.

J: He's real busy but it's ...

M: He has a lot of people who live in Bloomington and Indianapolis _____ Louisville. Hardenburg, French Lick. You know, around other places. And when the hotels -- I think I told you that before -- but when the hotel's busy, he plays music down there in the lobby anyway.....

J: Oh no?

M: ...and in the evening... Didn't I tell you that?

J: In French Lick?

M: Yes. At the French Lick Hotel. He plays usually Friday night and Saturday night.

J: What instrument does he play?

M: Piano.

J: Piano. OK. All right. ... _____ drama. Oh, that's right, he also does musical productions, of course. All right.

M: He's into music pretty deep. He took every class that IUS offered when he was down there. It wasn't something he had to do; it was extra for his own benefit. While he was there, anyway.

J: Was he majoring in Education at the time? 'Cause I know he's teaching here.

M: He was.

J: OK. Does he take after mom. I remember you saying that you had played the piano...

M: Mom and dad.

J: Oh!

M: I play by ear; some by note. I took four years of lessons.

J: Oh, you did! As a kid or more recently?

M: No, from the ages of seven or eight until twelve. I don't know, somewhere along...

J: Did your folks play or...

M: My dad was a musician. My mom was... she couldn't carry a

tune real well at all unless it was something that she knew so well that, you know, you couldn't help but carry it. (laughs) But she knew it, I mean, she knew she couldn't carry a tune. But dad was a good singer. He could play a violin and... _____ chords on the piano and play a guitar and _____ play some pretty intricate things on the guitar.

J: So there was... music parties they used to have, I mean, that sounds like the whole family was pretty much...

M: Yes.

J: ...getting their elbows going. Yes.

M: Yes, I finally got my piano back. It had been out at the 4H building for two months.

J: What?

M: I loaned it. (laughs) I didn't loan it, Larry did. But I took it up. But he said he was going... they were going to come get the piano, I said, "Which one?" (laughs) He has a grandpiano downstairs. (laughs)

J: And you kind of probably knew that it wasn't the grandpiano. (both laugh)

M: Both of us did, but then -- I had to ask.

J: Was this something he was using for the kids?

M: Yes. They did a ... he did probably more than one... he did a musical for the Hartford(?) program for the hospital. A song and dance of some kind. That he used the drummer kids in. And then he played the music and entertainment for our Christmas party. I don't know if he used it another time or two or not but we have an organ back here -- a small one that they just about have it _____ from bringing it up to the _____ building when they have their _____. He plays for the Queen contest and...

J: Oh, OK. OK. Maybe I'm thinking of the Indiana Festival. At the Indiana Festival, I remember there was the Queen and the little Princesses and the Junior Misses and the little bitty-bitty Princesses and stuff like that.

M: Oh they always have actual contests about the 4H building; I haven't been to one for a long time. Sometime they have them over at the high school but some of it they have music for. Maybe when they do their clothing... when they go across stage they have to have music to make it look nicer.

J: Yes. Yes.

M: _____ for the 4H costumes.

J: So this is like the 4H fair where the kids show off all their crafts and their pigs and....

M: ... and things they don't do for the pigs. (both laugh)

J: Don't they show their...

M: Oh, yes, it's all out there. But I mean the music is...
(both laugh)

J: A little bit of something for the sows. (mocking)

M: Right. (both laugh)

J: Oh dear. See how well they can dance?

M: At least they can squeal in time to the music.

J: Gosh, there was something I was going to ask. Oh! That man out there mentioned square-dancing.

M: The man out where?

J: Well, _____. Do you square-dance by chance.

M: I square-dance...

J: Oh, you do!

M: I square-dance and clog and round-dance...

J: Oh, you clog too!

M: Oh my, yes.

J: Well, where did you learn... or how did you learn to clog?

M: Let's see. I got my first lessons... I think I went to Scottsburg at first to get lessons for that June Ritchie gig. No, it was at Bedford. She gave lessons over there. The first one, the boxstep that we learned was ... that's the first step you learn. I went over there and I just loved it and I've had ... I think I've had ... I think at least four or five times I've graduated. (laughs) But I was just about ready to go on exhibition... Four of us, four singles, drove as far as

Bloomfield, Indiana to practice each Monday night clogging. And we were just about ready to go on exhibition. I already had my dress I had made and everything. And then I got married. And Jim didn't know how to clog and it's not as easy for him. He likes it, but it was going to take maybe more than five lessons - or more than five sets of lessons, I mean, to get... He's had one or two. He does like it, but if he couldn't be my partner I wouldn't care about doing...

J: Yes.

M: I never did get to go on exhibition on that. I would have liked to have been at least once, but.. My teacher said I was good and I shouldn't, you know, let it go but... You don't forget how to do it; you might get a little rusty without practice but...

J: Well, is it something ... He learning... Do you go out and clog now?

M: Yes. They had lessons at French Lick coming at -- pardon me, at...

J: Bedford?

M: No, that's where I took my first one. At Hardensburg. The same lady thought that there were people in this area interested there so she started giving lessons at Hardensburg. Which is where I did my... I learned how to square-dance _____ but _____ we would start our own singles club. And so we started a singles club at Hardensburg.

J: But you learned...

M: Learned out here...

J: In the couples club.?

M: In the couples club.

J: Is this when you were married? Or...

M: No, it was when I was single.

J: Not after your husband had died?

M: Yes, about four years after he died. I started taking... I never danced at all [before] that.

J: Yes. Yes.

M: We'd never... You know, the kids were growing up and... It's as best not to go off dancing and leave your kids at home by themselves. And I never cared much for taking kids to a dance. We would have got into it, I'm sure, anyway but then...

J: You mean eventually?

M: Yes, eventually. We'd already... I learned both parts on the square-dancing. I could do the man's part -- either one. There were only about five men for every twenty women so somebody was going to have to learn to do that part or you'd do a lot of sitting.

J: Yes. (laughs)

M: So, I didn't care much about the sitting so I asked the caller if he cared and he said, "No, I don't care. If you can do it it'll make you a better dancer if you learn how to do it. Cause you have to think how you would do it the other way and then you got to reverse it. It takes fast thinking on it.

J: Was it very hard to learn?

M: No, I went through lessons and learned it that way. I had about three sets -- full sets -- of lessons on learning the left-side partner. I never tried to impersonate a man. You know, just holding that place, holding that spot and doing... the lady said I was a good partner. Handling it better than some of the men, as far as you know...

J: I don't doubt that...

M: No roughhousing. I knew how they'd like to be treated and dance accordingly. And of course, the man doesn't walk nearly as far as the women. They get the inside of the square, the men do. So, when I'd be tired, that's when I'd really rather do that side because...

J: That's true, definitely. Because the men are just standing still and the women are going all around...

M: The men aren't exactly standing still but they're going in a smaller circle. I mean it takes less effort to take four or five steps when the women are on the outside. Working much harder. (laughs) And men never twirl, of course. And the women twirl. Sometime the men like to twirl twice. That's great sport, you know. It's alright unless you're tired. (laughs) I like my square-dancing. When I first started out here into that, why one of these ladies says, "Hey Lib, you kind of like that square-

dancing, don't you!" I said, "Yes, I like it." I didn't have to tell them. They could tell by the way I moved about, I guess. (laughs) I think I like the clogging most of any. I'm not doing any of that to speak of right now. But I'll get back with it.

J: Does your James, does he square-dance?

M: Oh yes.

J: OK. Do you-all go regularly.

M: Two of the requirements especially was... he had to be able to square-dance and cook. (laughs)

J: In _____ too?

M: Yes, those were important.

J: Yes, to think of it...

M: Because that would ruin my whole life, you know, if...

J: I remember last time we were talking about _____

M: Sunday he fixes breakfast everytime.

J: Good. Good.

M: I still fix the _____, if you think about it.

J: I was going to say, but at least you get Sunday.

M: That's right. That's right.

J: Oh dear. That's life. So do you all go for the _____

M: We go a couple times, yes.

J: There was someone who was explaining... I guess, each town has its own square-dancing club. But then, each club will go and visit other places...

M: Will go visit other clubs, because they have what they call a banner. Six people come to your club from another club, they can take your banner with them. Take it back to their club. Course it's kind of childish in a way, I guess, but that's the way it's done.

J: So, then, if they get your banner then you have to go back the next week to get it.

M: Six people have to go back and get it. And we try to do it before the next dance because it should be at home because somebody might come to your dance wanting your banner and they get pretty appalled if they came to get your banner and it's not there. It happens every once in a while but they don't like it. So if it's taken away, it's your place to go get it.

J: Does it happen very often that it gets taken away?

M: Yes, pretty much. That's what helps swell a crowd.

J: Right. Right.

M: Because they try for six and sometimes they'll have almost eleven in their effort to get six people there.

J: Yes. Yes.

M: Some of them come from a long ways off. We had people in the Paoli club that come from English and Bedford and sometimes Bloomington. And they really... It's a good club.

J: Are you dancing then mainly... I guess there are some people... Are there always some regulars there, but then you also have people from...

M: Right. We have people who are actually members and then you have visitors. And your visitors list sometimes will be as big as the member list -- or even bigger at times.

J: Yes. Yes.

M: That's how... it makes the club go better ... the better club... the friendlier club you have so the visitors enjoy coming to your club, the better caller you have then the better your club will be.

J: Someone else had mentioned various callers are important because....

M: Yes. If they don't like the caller, then they won't show up.

J: Right.

M: They have a lot to do with it.

J: Well, sure, I guess _____-

M: We do round-dancing too with _____. She's local here.

She's a caller. She hasn't been calling but maybe ... about three years, I guess, or something like that...that I know of, I don't know how long before that. But I think she was just learning about three years ago. _____ And so

_____ Twice a month we come to Paoli and practice so we won't look so bad on the floor. (laughs) That is, unless something happens that we don't get to go. They have it on the second and on the fourth Wednesday. We like to go to those practices because... Well really, we practice harder stuff than what they're doing at the dance but it makes me more confident if you had practiced.

J: And that way you don't have to think about it _____

M: Yes, I enjoy dancing.

J: You know, someone told me...I think it was the round dances, sometimes, tend to get a bit more rowdy.

M: No.

J: No?

M: No, not at all. I'd say square dancing is... If any of them would get rowdy I'd say it would be the square dancing.

J: OK.

M: The ones that want to...

J: Yes.

M: In fact, mostly it's in your singles clubs where they're rowdy. I mean, they call stuff... it depends on what you call rowdy.

J: Yes. (Both laugh) Well, let's define it. When you say singles club, are most of the people older people like yourself? You know, as opposed to ...

M: Yes. Well, there were all different ages. Square dancing is of interest to people... mostly to people who had been married and divorced or widowed or something and were hunting something else to do to entertain themselves in their spare time. We had one lady -- not in our club, but there's one out there -- we went to Lexington one time to square dance one Sunday.

J: Really. Wow!

M: And _____ there was a lady -- it was sort of a special

dance, it was one reason we went, but...

END OF TAPE TWO, SIDE 1

M: Yes.

J: Yes, and then, something else I'm wondering too is, I guess I wondered if this was something people in southern Indiana do.

M: This was national. I can go anyplace I want to; in fact it's universal. You can dance in Germany. I first was introduced to square dancing when I was in Germany watching Nancy and Steve learning over there. And by the way, it's always done in English too.

J: Yes. Yes.

M: And though it's another country, they learn it in English. The foreign people learn it that way too. And I can go anyplace I want to, and it's done the same way. So, that's interesting. When I travel I take a book where all the clubs are and I'll hunt up one. The last time I went to Massachusetts, why a friend of mine and I went -- a female friend.... We looked it up and found two different square-dance clubs. We were there about seven or eight days. One club we had to drive fifty miles to go, but it was a really nice club and they enjoyed having us. Now the other club was not as friendly. I mean, like anyplace else where you go, some of them are friendlier than others. Some of them don't like two women dancing together. That's the only thing I can think of. They have bad thoughts about that. There isn't anything wrong with it, but then they don't... Well, for one thing, they think the woman can't carry her part through. But...

J: Yes. And then maybe particularly if they don't know you.

M: That's why ...

J: They don't know what to think. Right.

M: First time we squared up that way, we usually just go stand and leave those one's who want to can come and join us and the one's that don't want to do that can not join us, you know. But there was a lot of feeling about that. I know I was sitting at one time at a single club down at New Albany with a lady and she said, "You know, I don't like women dancing with men and men dancing with women." And I said, "Is that right?" And then I told her the same thing I told you. I said, "Well, in our club there are about twenty women for every five men." And I said,

"Unless you want to do something like that, you're going to sit a lot." And so, in a little bit they didn't have anybody to dance and she said, "Come on." And so I followed her up there and after I got there I said, "I thought you didn't like women dancing with women." She said, "Oh well." (both laugh) She said, "I looked at it with a different slant." Either the callers will call it that way and make you dance that way sometimes, just to see what you'll do. You know, see who can handle what.

J: Oh reallly?

M: Yes. They've got a name for it. I can't think offhand what it's called. Go ahead, what were you...

J: I can't remember now. It was something else about that; I seem to be forgetful _____ (both laugh)

M: Well, you asked me about the ages of people. I've got _____

J: Oh, I know what I was going...

M: Also, _____ maybe two for Mabel, by the way. Eighty-five, ninety, whatever.

J: Yes, right. Which is...

M: I don't plan to be old till I'm ninety. (laughs)

J: Well, I'll talk to you when you're ninety. And then you can tell me if you're old yet.

M: Yes, that's right. But I still won't wear old shoes. (laughs) Go ahead.

J: Well, I was just thinking two things. I mean one that's kind of neat. You can, you know, whatever age you are now and if you do keep dancing...

M: I'm older than you think I am. (laughs) I'm younger than you think I am, maybe. I don't know, maybe I'm older.

J: But if you keep dancing... I was just thinking it's nice that you can maybe can stay in the same square dancing... You know, square dancing... get older with the same people.

M: Oh yes. There will be some newer ones come along, of course, as you go along but... The age that they usually go into it is after the children are old enough, like to be on their own --

about fifteen or twenty or married or something like that -- because up until then the parents will be most of the time at home. So that when the kids come, the kids won't beat them home. You know, things like that.

J: Really, the _____, I imagine. Or both. Both?

M: To go out square dancing, you almost _____ and get up and go together. But basically I'd say it starts about fifty, probably _____. Maybe late forties; forty-five or fifty.

J: Now that you mention it, you didn't like bringing the kids to the dance, but do kids sometimes go...?

M: Sometimes they do, but some of them are good and some of them are not so good. And that's why I wouldn't want to do that.

J: Yes. OK.

M: I think if you can't have a sitter you probably shouldn't do it.

J: The one thing that I was thinking about too...

M: It might make somebody mad, but then _____

J: Yes.

M: I didn't. _____ I stayed home.

J: Right. Right. I guess I was wondering, you know as a widow, once one is ready to start dating again, you know, _____ I guess it just occurred to me that there probably aren't that widowers around. It must have been hard...

M: I had a lot of men friends, but not too many I wanted to date. We'd come up and hug each other and stuff like that, you know, but.. And you get pretty well acquainted with somebody you just dance with for maybe a year or two. You don't date them... I mean, you're just dancing with them and hold hands with them and let them squeeze your hand or something like that _____ or something. But, no... That's not many at all.

J: Yes. _____ women, you know, the husband is usually older and men tended to die younger, so

M: They have all that strain on them.

J: Right. Right.

M: The women probably put some of the strain on them. (laughs)

J: Now do you really believe that? (laughs)

M: Somewhat. _____, but part of it, I guess.

J: Yes, I guess maybe part of the reason too, is women have work but they also, you know, traditionally have taken care of the family more, so they have both things. And men can just focus on _____

M: Yes, but they definitely more... they feel responsibility of the family, the man does.

J: Yes. Yes.

M: Like the way we are now, both of our families are grown and we don't have that kind of responsibility except for just a few months. Bills paid, you know. And it's a lot different than it is. Even back with the business. Glen did the buying and I did the paying, but I didn't really feel the responsibility in a way, though. But, because I didn't... I don't know...

J: You weren't making those kinds of decisions, I guess. Like we talked about before, you know.

M: Yes.

J: Learn how to write those certain kind of letters.

M: Oh yes.

J: At the time that you and Glen started your store here, which was '58, were there very many women in the position like you. You know, the husband and wife kind of working together like that?

M: Well, Mischo's always had... they were there for years. In fact, they were bankrupt together one time. But that was a lady and man, and she was a strong-willed woman in that deal. And I don't know, I can't think of Kemple over here. They work together. I think that when there was a man and wife, unless it was a man that owned it by himself, the woman actually worked in the...

J: Yes.

M: It wasn't frowned on or anything.

J: Oh, sure.

M: If that's what you were thinking, I don't know. On the other hand, there's some that didn't help. But I couldn't see my husband having something like that I didn't help with. It wouldn't seem right somehow to me.

J: Yes. Yes.

M: So I did what I could with it. Helped... (long pause)

J: OK. I guess I was only thinking it was frowned on. I just was thinking that maybe it could happen ____

M: I think of them of them going ... probably in business it's been going on longer than what a woman actually from her home would go out and...

J: Yes.

M: You see, this is a different situation. They have this business and they need two helpers. And rather than hire somebody, they let the wife do it.

J: Right. Sure.

M: Even back in the movies, you know, these old-time movies, you see the man -- like the Little House on the Prairie -- you see that the man and the woman run this store. The women didn't work out that much, but that woman was there. See, because it was the family business.

J: Yes. But I guess, just women who weren't in the same situation... I don't know, I guess I'm just thinking maybe at that time there weren't as many who went outside and worked. Maybe. I don't know.

M: I don't know.

J: OK. Anyway, _____ back to Paoli for just a few minutes here. I think last time we were talking you said something about at one time --- something to the effect that, somehow Paoli had been more of a bustling town and its kind of quieted down now.

M: Well, it's changed around. Back in years ago, it used to be a -- what they used to call -- a Saturday-night town. The stores all stayed open as late as eleven o'clock at night.

J: Yes. Yes.

M: That was before shopping centers and nobody was open on

Sunday. And families probably had one car and they came to town on Saturday and did their, what they called trading. Sometimes they traded eggs for their groceries or something like that, too.

J: Oh! So it wasn't all cash.

M: No, not always. I'm talking about years ago. That's why, even yet, some of the older people talk about going to do their trading. And that word "trading" comes from trading your eggs or your milk or whatever you had to sell. You know, go in and they'd tell you how much that was worth and you could have that much worth of groceries then. So it really was trading. You'd do your trading.

J: Does that mean that the farmers did...

M: The farmer, yes. Each county _____ had its trade, yes.

J: Yes, sure. Right.

M: They worked in factories, and they had none; they had to buy that stuff with cash.

J: They traded their money.

M: Yes. (both laugh) Yes, they did. And of course, your farmers had to have less groceries too. All they had to buy was sugar and flour and a few basics. Everything else was raised on the farm. Everything else that they ate; the green vegetables and _____ green vegetables in winter. And they had a lot of it in the summer and canned up green beans and things and what they wanted to can.

J: Right. That's true.

M: I still can green beans.

J: Oh, you do.

M: Oh yes. Tomatoes...

J: But you all grew up in the town. Would your Mom'd buy...

M: My Mom...

J: In the summertime you'd can...

M: You could buy a bushel of beans and can them cheaper than you could, you know... Peaches, that you got a chance to get peaches, you would buy peaches... I just hated that, because Mom

always gets so grouchy when she cans. (both laugh) After I do it myself I can understand why, though, cause it puts a lot of pressure on you. You've got to get the canning done right now and peaches had to be peeled. You usually bought over-ripe, 'cause that's why they bought them, because they got them at a good price. Bring them home and work those things up right away.

J: Yes. Yes.

M: The little jars had to be washed ____ I don't do the dishwasher any more, but back then you had to put your hands down the jars and since my hand was smaller than my Mom's, I got the job of... That was the excuse they gave me.

J: So, what kind of future do you see for Paoli? Or what kind of future do you hope to see for Paoli.

M: Well, I hope that we'll get some of the feedback from the Patoka Lake and all that, you know, the things that are going on in that area. The development down there.

J: Yes.

M: _____

J: Is that for certain going to go through? Or have they...

M: Well, if both of these _____ back up. They're _____ to be ...counting to be on it to have the _____ school down there...

J: Oh, really?

M: Nice shopping center, and only one store in it. I mean, I'd be scared very much if I'd been the one that built that and had it for lease, because there's a nice big place down there for rent but...

J: Also, people don't start planning....

M: Planning ahead, yes. People plan on it but whether they do it or not, they plan on it. There's three nice big groceries down there.

J: And then, I guess, if the development goes through _____ You mentioned something about them building a highway.

M: I think... I believe Jim said something about seeing that in the paper. I forgot to ask him again about that this... I can't

imagine where that would go or what but it's my idea it would go between Paoli and French Lick and probably a little closer to French Lick. Did you read anything on that, Ruth?

Ruth: What, the highway?

M: Yes.

R: I don't _____ really knows.

M: You don't think it's really...

R: I think it will go in that direction, but [that's just] guesswork.

M: Yes. I think 90 to 92, something like that; they thought maybe it might come through. It's just a two-lane road from here to Bedford and that's not bad.

J: Yes. Sure.

M: You can go all the way from Louisville to Florida on four-lane and then when you get back to New Albany or come up this way, you get dumped off on two-lane and that's pretty bad.

J: So then the plan would be to make that four-lane?

M: Yes.

J: And this development will be by Patoka? I guess I thought that Patoka was west.

M: It is west.

J: It is west.

M: That's the east. (laughs)

J: Right. Right. OK.

M: You're sitting back ... (laughs)

J: I had a map in my head...

M: You're facing the wrong direction... (laughs)

J: One of us is, allright. It's me, OK. So the highway will go from ...

M: If I'm right, ... for example ... at one time, in the paper

and I wish I'd kept it, but it showed it going from Bedford down closer and maybe cutting into... I think it kind of cuts into 145 up in _____ cause that's already a nice wide highway just past the lake.

J: But it will ----- past Paoli and then go out like that?

M: I think it will miss us.

J: OK.

M: But it might be close enough that people that ... we have people come to Paoli, smart ones to buy men's clothing because prices are higher in the valley.

J: You have... last time I was really surprised ... last time you mentioned when you got to French Lick your husband was surprised how many people you knew.

M: Yes.

J: Because they were ...

M: ...my customers.

J: They were your customers. Right. Right.

M: And also transit people are. I mean, when they get to the hotel, why ...

J: Yes. They'll mention...

M: Yes, they say something about where would be the best place to buy... I didn't bring any swim trunks; I didn't know you had a pool. They didn't read their literature good or something. Or I have to have a sport coat to eat dinner here at the hotel and where could I get one at a reasonable price. Well, I keep a few up here for \$25 because they're old styles but who cares. If they require a coat they don't say what the style is. They just require it, you know.

J: Yes. Yes. And that's a nice low price.

M: Yes, it is. Course I have others... if they want something that they might use some other time then maybe they'll buy my regular stock too. But I do have one little group that I keep. _____ uses them in plays and stuff if he needs... you know something in the...

J: ...something fancy.

M: Yes. Older style, you know. They might date back pretty far.

J: Yes. Yes.

M: But, I never got rid of them because of that fact. And then we sell swimming trunks too -- that type thing.

J: OK, so that would be good for business in Paoli.

M: Yes. Yes, it would.

J: OK. Looking back, are there any either events or people or anything at all that you would think of as turning points in Paoli's history?

M: Well, when we went from horses to cars, I suppose that was... I remember that... it was before my time.

J: Right. Right. Well, did your parents ever... or your grandmother...

M: My mother...

J: ...talk about the good-old days with horses.

M: Well, I don't know if they thought they were the good-old days. But my mother told me about seeing the very first horse... I mean the very first car, and her mother didn't know what it was. She said, "Oh, Mother, I know what that is. I saw it in my book at school." (laughs) She had seen a picture of it in her book. They called them horseless carriages back then. She said, "That's an AUTO MO BILE." (laughs) And so, as usual, the younger people were informed rather than the older ones because they were in school where they were keeping up with what's going on.

J: Right. Right. Do you remember any one -- neighbors or just anyone -- talking about... Did people... Of course when you were young, growing up, cars had been out...

M: Oh, yes. Yes.

J: ... for quite some time, but...

M: I'd say that when people start having two cars in the family, that made a big difference in the family.

J: Yes. Yes. OK.

M: But ... Let's see, something that changed...

Customer's voice: Maybe doing much sewing now. You doing...
(Mathers laughs; other voices in distance. Both laugh.)

J: (Calls to the customer) She'll be on the News tonight. (Both laugh)

Customer: TV? Or...

J: (To customer) Sure. NBC News.

M: (To customer) No. Don't watch for it. (much laughter) It is an interview, but it's for some school work she's doing.

J: All right. Turning points or just important events people...

M: I'd say when people went... when a woman started working and they started having two cars in the family... I'd say that would be a big turning point in the... And also, in Paoli, when the Peaks came along, that was a big turning point here. I mean it helped our business here.

J: Yes. Sure.

M: It sure did. I know the January that they starteeted, I put down...I knew what we usually did in January--we doubled it that year.

J: Oh, really.

M:; I don't know if it's kept up that way all the time, but we did double it that year. And it sure helps.

J: Yes, yes.

M: It made it easier in the past.

J: Right, right. And I guess it's been pretty steady--the Peaks.

M: Oh, yes. This year's been a bad year for them because the weather hasn't been with them--too mild. They can't have snow when it's raining. And it rains hard and then it's sunny--warmer.

J: Yes, yes.

M: Cuts into the snow really bad.

J: And that brings up something else. The Mennonites come in with the clinic and all of that. I don't know, was that something that...

M: Well that was good for the town, yes. We were very fortunate that they chose to settle in a sleepy town like this.

J: I wonder why they did?

M: Well, because they're Mennonites. They didn't want to settle in a city, because they want the children raised in the quiet town where they won't be, maybe, as much into the...

J: ...the stuff that goes on...

M: ...that goes on in the city, which I probably wouldn't even know anything about.

J: Were they from Indiana then?

M: I think that some of them were from northern Indiana; maybe some Ohio, I'm not sure.

J: Yes, yes.

M: We were just talking about that today at noon. We have a lot of Amish people...

J: Yes, I see.

M: I understand they will ride in a car but they don't own one.

J: Hmm.

M: They're nice people. If you want somebody to work for you, they'll give you a day's work for sure.

J: Yes, yes.

M: ...and a lot of good recipes and things.

J: Yes. Have they been around very long?

M: For a long time. I don't remember when I first learned about the Amish, but...they've been here a long time.

J: Again, I mean, I wonder why they came to Paoli? _____

M: I don't know, I suppose they wanted a quiet community and this is kind of like...I mean....

J: I think of the one _____ (both laughing)

M: Well, I don't know how they know it's a quiet community?

J: If it's such a quiet community, how did they find out?

M: _____ if it's quiet, they shouldn't know about it, should they? Oh, they just come by here and see that we're quiet. We don't actually close the door and _____ siesta

J: Right.

M: Somedays I take a siesta with Molly anyway. Don't intend to; try to get her to sleep and I go to sleep first.

J: So how do you think of Paoli? As a quiet town or city or...

M: It's not a city, it's just a quiet town. It's a good place to live if you like a place where there's not too much excitement going on. And if you want excitement, you can go to the city. You don't have to live in a city to enjoy the excitement of the city. I mean, we go to the city pretty regularly....

J: Oh, you do?

M: Yes.

J: Just like for movies and shopping and stuff....

M: Yes, we go to some movies...probably not shopping. I don't shop a whole lot, but then if there's something I need that I can't find here, I might. That's acceptable.

J: Yes, yes..

M: You usually look here and see if they have it and then, if they don't have it, why you don't have any other choice....

J: Yes, yes.

M: But I usually enjoy going--but I'm just as glad to come back. I lived in New Albany for two years. I liked it all right, I guess, but my husband worked at night at that time and we just saved a lot of money because if you don't go any place at night and you're just home for awhile in the daytime, why, the bank account really....

J: Sure.

M: No time to spend the money.

J: Well, what is it about Paoli then....

M: I don't know. I've often wondered what it is I like about it. (laughing) I've wondered that myself. I guess it's because it's my home, I guess. I just feel at home here. Kind of like a rat in a rat hole, I guess. He gets used to a certain one and that's where he wants to be.

J: Yes, but still...I guess that's true for most people, but then you can't help but wonder too... OK, then that might be true. What's home to a person is home, but I wonder if there's also something else that....

M: Oh, the people are nice that are around here. I mean, I like them; there're not too many far-out people around here. And you don't have to put up with a lot of languages that you don't want to hear and you don't have to, I mean, we're not bothered a great lot with drunks and the things that you find in the city. Well, I don't know how to word this, because it all depends on how you look at it, whether it's right or wrong, you know, but people of different cults that maybe I wouldn't go along with or....

J: Cults?

M: Yes.

J: You mean religious.

M: Also different ways of living, you know.... I think it's a pretty much middle-road place to live, as far as most of us...

J: Right. Life-styles and ideas about...

M: Yes, I think we have morals that are different from other places that I've seen. But you can find that any place though, you can find good ones and bad ones in the cities _____

J: Sure, sure. There're all kinds everywhere.

M: That's right, everywhere. (big pause.)

Aside to others: Did you run into water? Did you run into water coming in?

Voice: No. There's _____

M: Well, I didn't come in till about ten.

Voice: _____

M: Yes, one lane was closed, that's all. Between here and where I live, water gets up over the road.

J: _____ I was kind of concerned. I think _____ that between New Orleans and here there wasn't any water on the road but for awhile there was....

M: ... there was water all the way up to the side of the road

J: Oh, really.

M: You caught lost(?) road; sometimes it's dry and _____ it gets lost and _____ you don't know where it goes. But then when it rains, it's found. (laughs) Suddenly, all over the place it's found then. _____ has a lot of mysteries to it.

J: That's the underground river.

M: Yes. The underground river. Part of the time it's underground and part of the time it comes up. They've tried to trace it all over the place but I don't know...

J: Right.

M: ...if they've got all the ways it goes in and comes out or not, but Orange _____ is, I guess, where it starts. Where it first comes out, I think.

J: ...I think....

M: I think it is. I believe that's the origin of it.

J: Well....?

M: Are you just about run out of tape? Do you have any more questions that you had down?

J: I guess that was pretty much the other things I'd wanted to ask you about. Hmm. Can you think of anything that....

M: That might be of interest, you mean?

J: Yes.

M: About Paoli or the general area?

J: Oh, Paoli. Or living here or....

M: Oh, its got its good points and its bad points.

J: OK. Here's one thing. Good points and bad points. What are some of the advantages and disadvantages to living in a small community?

M: Well, I told you some of the advantages. You don't have to put up with a lot of stuff that you do in the city. And you know more of the people, although a lot of the people have come from the city to the smaller towns, so I don't know nearly as many people as I used to. But still, I mean, the people that live here are wanting a nice quiet place to live. So they're still basically the same type people and....

J: Yes...

M: Let me see. Disadvantages? You don't have everything that you need right at your fingertips. I mean, like if you need something that's not kept in a small community, you have to go to the city someplace to find it. That sometimes can be a handicap.

J: Yes.

M: Although we don't let it be a handicap; we just bundle up and go and have lunch and (laughs) make a nice day out of it and let it be. But, usually end up buying something you didn't intend to buy.

J: Sure. I guess this won't apply to you, but it occurs to me too that people who are in business and maybe, you know, make a mistake or do something, you know, something that turns out bad or wrong or something like that, it occurs to me again that the word would get around maybe that might be hard.

M: Yes, that would prob.... Yes, that probably would be.... Yes, that would be a disadvantage. Yes, where in the city you would never know something _____. "Everybody knows more about everybody's business" is what you're saying?

J: Yes, basically right. Right. Do you find that pretty much to be true?

M: It doesn't bother me because I don't care what anybody knows about my business. _____.

J: Yes, yes. (Telephone rings; conversation in background.)

MATHERS2 MATHERS2

M: I try to _____ possible _____. You can turn it off.

J: OK.

END OF TAPE TWO, SIDE TWO

END OF SECOND INTERVIEW

INDEX

Bloomington 11, 17
brother 4
caller 15, 17, 18
car 24, 28, 30
cattle 5, 6
children 4, 20, 30
city 30-32, 34
clog 13, 14
club 14, 16-19
country 7, 8, 19
dad 1, 3, 5, 11, 12
education 11
entertainment 12
farming 2, 4-6
French Lick 8, 11, 14, 26, 27
Glen 6, 22
grandchildren 9
grandparents 1-3
Hardensburg 14
Indiana Festival 12
Jim 8, 9, 14, 25
job 25
Karen 8, 9
Larry 3, 4, 8-10, 12
money 5, 24, 31, 32
mother 2-4, 28
music 11-13
Nancy 9, 19
Paoli 1, 8, 17, 18, 23, 25-32, 34
piano 11, 12
Ritchie 13
round-dancing 17
rowdy 18
shopping 23, 25, 31
Square 1, 8, 13-16, 18-21
square dancing 1, 18-21
store 2, 5, 6, 8, 22, 23, 25
Teaford 3
Youngscreek 1-3
Bloomington 11, 17
brother 4
caller 15, 17, 18
car 24, 28, 30
cattle 5, 6
children 4, 20, 30
city 30-32, 34
clog 13, 14
club 14, 16-19

country 7, 8, 19
dad 1, 3, 5, 11, 12
education 11
entertainment 12
farming 2, 4-6
French Lick 8, 11, 14, 26, 27
Glen 6, 22
grandchildren 9
grandparents 1-3
Hardensburg 14
Indiana Festival 12
Jim 8, 9, 14, 25
job 25
Karen 8, 9
Larry 3, 4, 8-10, 12
money 5, 24, 31, 32
mother 2-4, 28
music 11-13
Nancy 9, 19
Paoli 1, 8, 17, 18, 23, 25-32, 34
piano 11, 12
Ritchie 13
round-dancing 17
rowdy 18
shopping 23, 25, 31
Square 1, 8, 13-16, 18-21
square dancing 1, 18-21
store 2, 5, 6, 8, 22, 23, 25
Teaford 3
Youngscreek 1-3

Interview with Elizabeth Hollan Mathers, p. 37. Conducted by Catherine Jones, 2 February 1988, Paoli, Indiana, Indiana University Center for Documentary Research and Practice, OHRC accession #88-68-2