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### Oral History Interview: Anna Casto Hopkins

Anna Casto Hopkins

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Mrs Anna Hopkins  
rec'd 5-13-75





L. Mrs. Ava Munday (sister)  
R. Mrs. Anna Hopkins

rec'd  
5/13/75

### BIOGRAPHY OF ANNA HOPKINS

Anna Hopkins is a native of Jackson County, and she is currently residing in Ripley, West Virginia. Anna was born September 26, 1893, at Belgrove, Jackson County, West Virginia. She was the daughter of Joel and Mary Casto. Anna quickly acquired the nickname "Annie" which has stayed with her all through life. Annie had six other brothers and sisters to share the log house that they were raised in.

When Annie was twenty years old, she married Robert Hopkins. They had three sons and one daughter. During their married life, they resided about five miles from Harmony, West Virginia, near Beech Fork. Their livelihood was made primarily from the farm, although Rob did work in the oil fields at times.

Rob passed away in 1965. Annie stayed on the farm for a time, until she fell and broke her hip. After this accident, she stayed with some relatives near her farm. Two years ago, Annie sustained another fall and has been a bed patient since. She stays in Ripley, and her sister Ava stays with her to care for her. Annie can walk a short distance with the aid of a walker; however, she does not get outside the house at all.

I chose Annie to interview because she has a very sharp memory and is familiar with the local customs. Also, she grew up in the country, and I feel these are the people who can really get the feel of Appalachia. Besides all this, she seems to enjoy talking about the "way things used to be."

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EXPLANATORY NOTE:

The lady that is heard in the background on the tape is Ava Munday, Anna's sister. I had not originally planned to interview Ava, but she had information that she contributed to the conversation as we progressed. This usually only amounted to an addition or comment, but her voice is heard on the tape. So, I will provide the following background information on Ava:

Ava Munday was born on Bear Fork, Belgrove, West Virginia. There were six other children in the family when she was born in 1900. Two children that were born after Ava did not survive. Ava's parents were Joel and Mary Casto.

Ava lived on the farm until she married Brady Munday and they moved to Parkersburg, West Virginia. Her husband passed away a few years ago. She now stays in Ripley with her sister Anna who is a bed patient as the result of a fall.

Mildred Kroeger  
April 9, 1973

In the following transcript, I shall refer to myself as M and I shall refer to Anna Hopkins as A. Anna's sister Ava Munday shall be referred to as AM.

M: March 23, 1973.

This is Mildred Kroeger and I am interviewing Anna Hopkins of Ripley who is seventy-nine years old.

ok, Annie, where did you grow up? In what area?

A: Well, at Belgrove, Jackson County.

M: That was pretty far out in the country wasn't it?

A: Yes, it was a good piece out in the country and we had some pretty deep snows to wade. And along about Christmas time Santa would try to get there and bring us some candy. And Oh, we thought it was grand to see Santa Claus coming maybe two or three nights before Christmas. And then on the night before Christmas, Christmas Eve we called it, we'd hang our stockings in front of the fire place and we felt sure that Santa Claus would come down the chimney and bring us some toys. And he usually did, bring us some little thing, not like they do today though. Today they expect so many grand toys, but we just got some little...oh, maybe a little dish doll or some candy and things like that.

M: What is a dish doll?

A: Well it was...the body was cloth filled with saw dust with little legs from the knee down dish and little arms and hands from the elbow down made out of dish and a dish head made out of dish. You never heard of nothing like that before?

M: I never heard of it before.

A: Well, that was the type of doll we had when I was a little girl; that was all the kind we got. They didn't even have the dolls that was made out of...that had wax hair, you know. We had them later, but now this was when I was a little girl, that was the kind of doll we got. We had to be real easy with them, or we would break their legs off or their hands, but we was really proud of them.

M: And, did your mother make them or what? Did they buy the parts?

A: No, they would buy them at the store; but, of course, we thought that Santa Claus had them.

M: But what about this tradition that we called Santa Clausing out in the country?

A: Well, people would dress up, you know, with their false faces on and go Santa Clausing. We called it Santa Clausing. They would go to people's houses where they had little children, you know, and they would take them candy and they never took toys, they just took candy then, you know. But now on Christmas Eve when we'd hang our stockings up was when we'd get our toys. But they would bring us candy and sometimes a little chewing gum, apples or something like that. And, it used to be nearly always a white Christmas, not like it is now. We always had snow nearly for Christmas.

M: Yeah, that has changed even in my life time. I can tell a difference in that you know.

A: I bet you can too. Well now, it was nearly always a white Christmas. We never... it wouldn't have seemed like Christmas unless there had snow on.

M: Yeah. And that was just in this one area primarily wasn't it?

A: Well, as far as I know it was just mostly out in the country and like that. Now days, they wouldn't even know what that meant.

M: Right, I told somebody about it at school and they didn't have any idea about what I was talking about. I thought everybody knew what Santying was, you know.

A: Well, you know, after I was married and had my family little, there would still be Santa Claus come every year nearly. They'd come for miles, a whole big bunch of them. Of course, they didn't bring no candy or nothing, they just come to ...

M: let you guess.

A: Yes, just for the fun of it.

M: I know, we used to gang up and head down for Ed Rhodes', down in that vicinity.

A: We've had Santas at our house clear from Lower Big Run, up there at home. Santa Claus with their false faces on and old clothes try to make it look like Santa Claus.

M: Yes, I always looked forward to that, I kind of miss it now. Nobody goes Santying any more. I don't guess they do out in there even. Nobody left out in there to go, hardly.

A: I have went, you know, after I had my family raised up. I went Santa Clausing with the children a lot of times.

M: Mom wouldn't miss it.

A: Well, I have went with them and it was really funny. We had a good time, fooling people, you know, and trying to guess who we were and everything like that. It was different from today.

M: What about out in there, I don't remember too much about it, you know, it was a little more modern by the time I came along. But, what about doctoring, do you remember, did you go to the doctor very often?

A: Not often. All the doctors we had would come from their home to our home. We never had no hospitals close and didn't even thing of going to the hospital for every little thing like they do now. Doctors would ride all night to see a sick person. They would go day or night. There is more difference there than anything I can think of.

M: You have to get an appointment to get in the hospital now, even.

A: You can't hardly get an appointment, but now a doctor would ride all night long to come to see if you were sick and called him. A lot of times, you had to go after them, you know, for a long time they didn't even have no telephones or nothing like that. You'd have to go and get a doctor, but they would always come if they was at home, they never failed to come.

M: Boy, that has changed.

A: That right there is the biggest difference I can think about, I think.

M: Did they give you any immunizations or shots before you started to school? Like they do now?

A: Not when I went to school, they didn't, not any. Didn't even hear tell of such a thing, and we all drunk out of the same drinking cup and out of the same water bucket and everything like that.

M: And never thought a thing about it.  
What about where you went to school, was it a one-room school?

A: A one-room school and there would be about from sixty to seventy scholars and one teacher taught all of them.

M: In all grades?

A: From the first grade to the eighth, including the eighth.

M: Did you go down to White Pine?

A: Yes, White Pine School. It was crowded, but we didn't know the difference.

M: And what about your teaching? I mean, did they actually teach you every minute, or did you sort of teach yourself?

A: Well, now, I think they did more teaching then than they do now. I really do. They taught all of them.

AM: They taught all ages.

A: From the ABC's and through the eighth grade. They was busy, but now they all tried to learn, seemed like and did.

M: And when you went in, you knew it was time to get quiet, didn't you?

A: We knew it was time to get quiet. Of course, we had a fifteen minute recess between eight o'clock, no 8:30 and 12:00 and then we had an hour at noon.

M: Whenever you went out to play, did the teacher go out and watch you? Now days, you know, we have to go out and make sure they are supervised all the time.

A: Well, if they wanted to go out they did, and if they didn't, they didn't. We played base, ball...and played ball. In the winter time, we would skate on ice.

M: Play fox and geese?

A: Everyone that was big enough to go to school could skate on ice.

M: You know now, they won't hardly allow you to do anything in the schools, you've just got to supervise them every minute and not allow them to do this or that. Don't go out when the weather... or when there is any snow on, we don't take them outside.

A: They probably looked on us to see how we were getting along, but a lot of times, the teacher would join in the fun and sometimes they didn't.

M: What about your books, did you have a lot of books and paper? Was it provided by the school?

A: No, we used slates and slate pencils mostly for our school work.

M: Did you erase it each time?

A: Yes, erase it each time. And, a lot of work done on the blackboard with chalk.

AM: Everyone had to buy their own books.

A: Oh yes, we all bought our own books.

M: Bet you took care of them too.

A: Yes we did, then passed them on down to the next one younger than us. That's the way we did. And, I still got part of my old books yet; and I sent, oh about I expect it has been about eighteen year ago, I bought McGuffey's Readers, you know. I bought the whole outfit, up to the seventh. I didn't get the eighth, I don't think. I'm proud of them books, I got them.

M: I tell you, I had one of those books in third grade and I thought I would never get finished. That book was a lot harder than the books they have now in third grade. I'll tell you.

A: Every lesson in them books had a moral seemed like, you know. There was always a good side to everything in them books. There wasn't books like they got later. They seem kind of dull to me. They didn't have no moral to the lessons, like them old readers.

M: What about your spelling book? Did you find it difficult to spell?

A: No, there was a ...that was one thing I really liked was spelling. Every word, or lots of words, was spelled two or three different ways and they give the meaning of each word, what it meant, you know. Like a-u-n-t aunt, you know and ant—an insect and things like that. And all kinds of words like that and we had to tell the, I reckon you would call it the meaning or abbreviation or something like that. I don't know what you would call it, but now you knew what the word meant, the way it was spelled.

M: Whenever...if the teacher ever had to punish you, how did they punish you?

A: Most of the time, they used a little switch, and sometimes they would tie a scarf or something around you and tie you to something there in the school house—a post or something.

M: I bet that would settle you down for a while, wouldn't it?

A: Yes, and put them in the corner sometimes.

AM: They made you toe the mark.

A: I never did.

M: I was going to ask you if you ever had to do that.

A: No.

M: I guess you were good all of the time.

A: But now, there was a post went up on each side of the stove, and they would put a scarf around them and tie them to that sometimes.

M: I never heard of them doing that. I didn't know they did anything like that.

A: Well they did.

M: You learned to settle down, didn't you?

A: Or make them set in the corner.

AM: Yes, sometimes they had to set in the dunce corner. I'll never forget that I had to set on the teacher's knee my first year in school, and I was a real good girl after that.

M: I'll bet you were. After all, I mean, you learn to settle down in a hurry. That is one way of making you sit up and learn. They don't

do things like that now hardly. They think it is too rough on people.

A: I don't know what they do now to them.

M: Oh, I don't know. Some of them paddle and some of them...

A: Send them to the principal's office, I reckon, or something like that.

M: Kick them out of class and keep them in from play. There are different ways.

How about superstitions, are you superstitious about anything?

A: Not really, that I can think of. Some things I don't do, but I would if it was necessary that is supposed to be superstitious, but I don't really believe in anything like that.

M: You don't? Did you ever hear of any unusual ones that people did believe in when you were growing up out in there?

A: Well, there was a lot of people that believed in ghosts and things like that, and said they seen things, but I never did. I used to be an awful coward when I was little, you know, afraid of the night. I was afraid, but I wasn't superstitious, I don't think. I was just afraid.

M: Yes, there is a little bit of difference ther.

A: Yes, there is a big difference.

M: What about...I can vaguely remember when we got electricity out in there. What was this you were telling me the other day about having to go to the store and get some kerosene before you could light the lamp or something?

A: That was before we got electricity, and I nearly always had to fill my lamps and clean the globes every evening. Well, this evening I had gone to fill my lamps and didn't have no oil. Well, the store was I expect, a quarter of a mile down there anyhow. Well, I grabbed my oil can and my basket of eggs to get my oil with, and I knowed I would have to hurry, or it would be way after dark before I could get back. And, I took a near cut over the hill through just a little path and I had a slipper that had a sole loose right at the toe of my slipper and I was going down through that little path just a making ninety, and I caught the sole of my slipper on I don't know what, but anyhow, there I went I expect I was at least ten feet before I quit sliding. My oil jug flew out of my hand and went over into the hollow and broke into a million pieces and my eggs scattered all over that path. I expect I had four or five good eggs when I went to pick them up, but I knew I had to have my oil. And so, I went ahead down to the store and got me a bottle and got me some oil. I hurt my knee awful bad. I laid there a right smart little bit, thought I was killed, you know. And, well, finally, I thought I would try to get up and I got up and limped on down to the store and I got my oil and come back home, and I filled up my lamps. But, I couldn't hardly get up and down the stairs for two or three days after that, my knee was so sore—it was bad. It hurt my knee pretty bad, but we had our lamp oil. Now things like that happened, that really happened, you know. Things like that happened often.

M: Why sure it happened.

A: And that was before we got our electricity. We have had it about—oh, let me see, I figure about twenty-three years.



M: Sometime around in—I know we got it over home about the same time you did. I was just big enough to barely remember. I was born in '47, so it would have been some place around '50, '51, or '52. Some place around in ther, '50 or '51 probably.

A: Yeah, I know it was. I figure it has been about twenty-two or three years ago.

M: That would make it about right. I can remember them putting it in through there.

A: Oh, we thought we had everything.

M: I'll bet.

A: Just press a little button and flip a little switch, you know, for our lights and everything. It took a while to get used to that.

M: What did you do for refrigerators before you had that?

A: We just done without.

M: Did you use ice boxes, or anything like that?

A: No, we never did have ice boxes and lot of times, we would tie...

AM: Put our milk in the well.

A: Put our milk in the cooker with a bail and tie it on a rope and hang it down in a well to keep it good and cold. The well was about thirty-five feet deep and that milk would stay good and cold and that was our refrigerator.

M: What about ice cream? Did you ever make ice cream?

A: No, we would make snow cream.

M: How did you make that?

A: Well, we just get snow and we would beat the snow up in the cream off of our milk, you know. We would skim cream off of our milk, have a good rich milk with a lot of cream in it. And we would sometimes take a spoon and sometimes a egg beater and beat that up, put our flavoring and sugar in just to suit our taste, you know, it was good.

M: Sounds like it would be.

A: It was good—I said the other day when that snow was on that if I was able to get out, I would get some snow and make me some snow cream, it would taste better than the ice cream.

M: We have got so much pollution now though, I don't know if it would be any good around here.

A: They claim—but we did that, even after we got to buying ice cream we liked it.

M: How did you make your living on the farm in those days? Mostly what you raised, or what?

A: We mostly all but our sugar and soda and coffee and stuff like that. We raised our living mostly. We had our meat and our milk and our butter and our chickens and our eggs and our hog's meat. We was never hardly ever out of anything like that, and we raised our own corn and wheat for corn bread and biscuits and flour, we raised. Instead of buying beans and potatoes and everything like that, we raised all that, always on the farm.

- AM: Put our beans in a sack and threshed them.
- A: Take it to the mill in the fall and go to the mill the next year and we nearly always raised cane and had molasses and our fruit. We nearly always had fruit, you know. We hardly ever had to buy anything like that. Never bought a can of tomatoes, nor peaches, nor a glass of jelly or apple butter or anything like that. Never bought a jar of that in my life when I lived on a farm.
- M: Yeah, that has all changed now. It's getting now it is hard to do.
- A: I still like my home-made jelly and butters better than I do the boughten.
- M: There's a world of difference in them, I'll tell you.
- A: There is a big difference in everything.
- M: And you usually took eggs in, whenever you had to buy something, you usually took eggs in to buy it with?
- A: Yes, and walk five miles to the store, take a basket of ten or twelve dozen eggs and buy up a basket full of groceries, enough to, you know, just like going to the store here every day. We went once a week to get it and walked many times five miles to the store and back in time to get our dinner or go in the afternoon and go in time to get back and get supper and walked and wouldn't even be tired. Wish I could do that now.
- M: Yeah, wish I could do that now.
- A: There's not very many people can. But now back then, it didn't seem like anything to me. Come back and cook and maybe have all my family maybe to cook for and part of the time have work hands to cook for too.
- M: How about canning, you did that all on your own, right?
- A: Canning? Yes, I always done my own canning, every bit of it.
- M: Did you ever use those stone jars? To keep anything in?
- A: I don't think I ever canned any in stone jars, but my mother used to. That was the only kind she ever had, but now, I don't remember ever canning in stone jars. We would use, instead, my mother dried a lot of stuff instead of canning it. She would dry beans and corn and all kinds of things like that, where we canned it when I got old enough to be raising my family. We canned that is about the time when we was canning green beans and things like that—corn.
- M: How do you dry corn? I know how to dry beans, but I don't know how to dry corn.
- A: Well, you just cut it off and spread it out and let it dry and when you cook it, it's real good. You cut it off when it's right in its good tender stage—and peas the same way.
- AM: Did you cook it first?
- A: No, you just cut it off.
- AA: Grandma always did Annie.
- A: She did? Well, I don't think I did. Well now, I never dried very much, I think I nearly always canned mine.
- AM: Why don't you tell her what an awful job you used to have a washing.
- M: Yes, what about your washing?



- AM: How you used to wash all day on a board.
- A: Oh yes, I never had a washer until after my family grew up. We always washed on a board and made most of our soap that I washed with. Make enough soap every spring to do until the next spring.
- AM: Boil your clothes for an hour.
- M: Yeah, get them good and clean, I guess. How did you make your soap?
- A: Well, I would take the meat scraps and extra grease, and we would save that all winter until spring and then we would just get us some lye and put all the grease in it that lye would eat up and boil it so long. We could tell when it got into soap and let it set until it got cool and we would take a big butcher knife and cut in that big kettle cross ways, this way and that way, and lift it out and put it on papers on the table in the building and let it dry, and then I would just sack it up and get it out as I used it. And, it was good soap.
- M: Pretty rough on hands, though, I bet.
- A: No, it wasn't.
- M: It wasn't?
- A: It didn't seem to be.
- M: I am surprised at that.
- AM: Annie, Grandma used to make it with lye.
- A: Yeah, she used to make it with ashes, they called it a ash hopper, you know, and fill it up with ashes and pour water in and let it run out a little spout, you know, and that is the kind of lye she had, but now, I never did it that way, I had lye in the can.
- A: I have a recipe now cut out of a "Good Old Days" magazine. They even made toilet soap and some of these days if I was able, I would make some of that. It would be easy made and put a little perfume in it and I would just like to try it.
- M: I never heard of that. I would like to give that a try too.
- A: I cut that out of the magazine and put it away. I thought sometime somebody might like to have that.
- M: I might borrow that and give it a try, that sounds interesting.
- A: Why don't you?
- M: Of course, it wouldn't turn out for me like it would somebody else's.
- A: Well, a fellar, wouldn't have to make very much of it if you didn't want to.
- M: Give it a try and see.
- A: They said it was better than any soap you can buy. They said it was good for your complexion.
- M: Don't guess it would get rid of freckles though.
- A: If I was able, I would really try that out.
- M: I might borrow that from you and give it a try. It sounds interesting. I never heard of that. I have heard of the lye soap, but not the other.

A: But now, this sounded like it would be real good soap. I will hunt that up. I believe Avie put that some place for me. I believe it was in my needle box. It's either in ther—I put it some place.

M: Somewhere around, huh?

A: I'll find it.

M: What about your all's house that you lived in, I mean I saw later on, but did you ever live in a log cabin or anything like that, or was it always from the boards?

A: Well, I was raised in a log house.

M: Were you?

A: Well, the house up there at home was a log house with just weather board, but now, just made out of logs.

M: Was it, underneath that? I didn't know that.

A: Well now, it is. But I was raised in a log house with great big logs. Some of them I expect nearly two feet wide, notched and put up that way.

AM: Grandpa took a broad ax and hewed them down.

A: I like a log house.

M: Well, did you ever go to one where they were making it? What they used to call a house raising around here?

AM: You know, that is a real beautiful log cabin.

M: Is it really?

A: If I was a building a house, I would build it out of logs.

M: You would?

A: I would.

M: Dirt floor? Did you have a dirt floor or did you have the other kind of floor in it?

A: No, we had —a lot of people had dirt floors, but my dad didn't, he had a floor, and sealed on the inside with lumber and paper.

M: Was it all just one big room, or what?

A: For a while it was just one big room, and then they made bedrooms and a kitchen off and a porch and rooms between the living room and the kitchen. You had to go across the front porch to get to the kitchen. It was log too, and it was just one room, and it was pretty good sized, though.

M: Sometimes I used to see pictures of them, where it looked like it was all just one big room and it looked like it would be about as big as this room.

AM: Three bedrooms, living room, and kitchen.

M: It was pretty good sized.

A: They had log raisings then, and put it up in just a little while. I have heard him tell it.

M: Everybody would come in and help out?

A: Yes, everybody came and helped him. People used to do that, you know, helped one another.

M: I was going to say, what differences do you see in living out in the country and in town as far as people helping you out?

A: Every little thing, you know. But now then, they would help one another at butchering time. They would all help one another, and then you would help them back when they went to butcher and things like that.

M: Got a mess of meat, right?

A: Yes, always get a mess of good fresh meat and then when the other fellow butchered, you would get you a mess from them. You know, always.

M: It all came out in the wash. I know even when I was out there, if somebody had something in their garden that didn't turn out, somebody would bring them a mess of that and a mess of this. It all worked out just fine.

A: It did, and people was real neighborly. They would visit and go see one another. Of course, they didn't have no television, nor no radio, or anything like that; and the kids had to make their own fun, you know. And, they really had some good times.

M: How did you pass the time when you were a kid if you didn't have a tv or radio or anything?

A: Well, I have wondered, but it seems to me that the children were a lot better satisfied then than they are today.

M: What did you do, just make up your own games?

A: Yeah, make up our own games and meet at a certain place on Sunday and play games of all kinds, and tell tales, and I don't know.

AM: Popped pop corn.

A: Yes, and cracked hickory nuts.

AM: Made taffy.

A: Had taffy pulls and things like that. We always had molasses to make popcorn balls and make taffy.

M: I don't know, I think there was a lot of advantages to life then.

A: They think its poor today, but now, it wasn't really. We worked, but we got time off. We wasn't going in a run all the time.

M: I think so too. Now everybody is in such a rush, they have every minute scheduled. They have got to do this and they have got to do that.

A: Yes, that is true. Did our own making of clothes and everything like that.

M: You probably even had some of your dresses made out of feed sacks. One of the things I wanted to ask you about was a custom that... Oh, they did it some when I was growing up out in there, but I think it was more common before that time and that was sernading. You know, whenever somebody got married, what was that all about?

M: I see you have got some company, and I am about out of tape on this side anyway. So, we will pick up on it again probably tomorrow if that will be all right with you.

(March 25, 1973)

- M: We talked about some of the customs they had out in the country, but one of the customs they had was serenading, and a lot of people aren't used to that. Do you want to tell me what it was like and what it was all about?
- A: Well, let me see now...Is it turned on? Well, a whole crowd would come in the first night after you was married with cow bells and cans and serenade the newlyweds. And, the more noise you made, the better it suited them. I suppose that goes on yet.
- M: How did they get you to go home after you made all of that racket?
- A: Well, the newly weds would come to the door and kiss and then they would quiet down, but sometimes they would let them make an awful lot of noise before they would come to the door and kiss.
- M: Sometimes did they... they usually had to treat you before you would go home didn't they? Some candy or something?
- A: Yes, most of the time, had candy and cookies. Most of the time candy, you know, and cigars and things like that. That was about all there was to that, it was for me.
- M: What did the young people do at the serenade, did they play games?
- A: Yes, they did, they played games after the serenade for an hour or two. Most of the time outside if it was pretty, or inside I reckon if it wasn't, but now, they did play games.
- M: Like "Four in the Boat" and what's that other one? "Skip to my Lou"
- A: I don't know what all. Now, at my serenade, they didn't play games. They just talked for a while. But now they do play games. I know they did when Jeanie and Arnold was married.
- M: What about... Did they ever have showers for girls out in the country when they got married like they do here in town?
- A: No, they didn't ever. We never even thought of such things. Never had any showers until just the last several years they have had them, but they didn't used to. Or baby showers either.
- M: I guess everybody, probably the neighbors just handed their stuff around.
- A: What?
- M: I said, probably the neighbors just handed their stuff around to one another—hand me downs.
- A: Yeah, they did more then than when they had the real showers. When somebody had out-growned their clothes they would give them to the new baby. They did that, but no showers.
- M: What about the way you dressed when you were let's say maybe in grade school. How did you all dress then?
- A: Well, it was mostly home made dresses, it was the only kind we had. My mother always made my clothes, and I made my childrens clothes till they got pretty good sized little children.
- M: Did you ever wear those bloomer type things?
- A: Yes, I wore bloomers a lot and midi blouses and well, I just don't know too much about that. They nearly all dressed pretty much alike. There wasn't very many that had anything fancy.
- M: What was this you were telling me the other day about not having boots when you were a kid?

- A: Well, I just got one pair of shoes all winter when I was going to school. Get a pair of heavy shoes in the fall and wear them all winter without any boots or over shoes. Never had anything like that. There was sometimes I could have used them wading the snow knee deep, but we got along.
- M: I can imagine. What about when you came to a creek, how did you get around that?
- A: Well, we usually had foot logs to cross the creeks to the school. Well, most all creeks had one, the store had foot bridges—foot logs we called them—just mostly a big log across the creek at the narrowest place they could get. And I have waded the creek.
- M: I wouldn't like that in winter, it would be all right in summer.
- A: Well, I have, pulled my shoes off and waded it instead of going to the foot log.
- M: I wouldn't like that in winter, it would be all right in summer.
- A: Well, I have.
- M: You don't happen to—I don't know if you can recall this or saw it or anything—that last hanging they had here in Ripley, you didn't happen to come in for that did you?
- A: That is something I don't know anything about. I was only a little bit of a girl then. I don't think any of my Dad's people went. John Morgan, you know, that was the last one. I have read about it and heard people tell about it. People came from miles and miles to see that, but I was little—very little.
- M: I didn't know how old you would have been then.
- A: I couldn't have been over six or seven years old, maybe not even that old.
- M: Oh, I thought you might have been older, I don't know really when it took place.
- A: I don't know either.
- M: I just read that it was the last. I guess it was the last one in West Virginia that was public, you know that people could come.
- A: The last hanging. I have heard a lot of talk about it, but I was too little to remember much of it.
- M: Yeah, you were too little. Well, they wouldn't have wanted to have taken you to something like that anyhow. I wasn't sure when it took place, I had just heard about it.
- A: Well, it was here right close to here someplace, wasn't it?
- M: Yeah, right down here just off Rt. 21, just right at the edge of town, down there where Kelly's live—Bernice Kelly's—not Bernice Kelly's but—anyway Kelley's. Right off 21 down there.
- A: I knew it was here close by. I remember passing the place since I grewed up and they said that was where it was at, but I don't remember just exactly where it was at.
- M: What about the moon walk, what did you think of the men walking on the moon?
- A: That there is something too deep for me, I just can't understand that.
- M: Were you surprised at it?

- A: Yes, I was surprised. I didn't think that could be done. I have worried an awful lot about them trips to the moon and back, for I didn't think that could be done, but it was and I don't reckon they lost any men did we?
- M: No, just one time, and that was here on earth. You know, whenever that rocket burned or whatever.
- A: That there was something that surprised me. I don't pretend to understand and still don't know much about that.
- M: I find it hard to believe still yet too, so don't feel bad.
- A: But I guess it really—they have been there too many times for it not to be true.
- M: Oh, yeah, it is hard to think about really, or it is for me, even.
- A: Well, I didn't think anybody was ever suppose to explore the moon, but I don't know.
- M: They are going to try to go further and try to go to Mars now, and that is even further away.
- A: I don't doubt it.
- M: What about World War I and II, do you remember very much about them or how they affected the people around you?
- A: Well, they both affected me in a way, because I had been married... Well, anyhow, I had two little children. Johnny was born the year that WWI started and Jessie was just a little boy. I was really afraid they would take Robert, but they didn't. We had two children, but now if it had went on much longer, he would have had to have went. But, of course, I will never forget World War II, because Jessie and Johnny both went clear through that. Thank God, they came back home safe and sound. Of course, I can't tell, I know a lot of their experiences that they have told, but I couldn't tell them.
- M: What about your way of life at home, did it affect anything?
- A: We worked harder than we had ever worked in our lives. The ones that was left at home. We raised everything we could raise to feed. Well, we wanted to know that they had plenty to eat where they were and done without a lot of things at home to let things be sent over there to them, to our boys overseas, and we at home really worked harder than we had ever worked in our lives, I think.
- M: How did they work that? Did they send your things to a surplus place?
- A: They was supposed to, I suppose they did. And, you see, we were rationed on sugar, and coffee and shoes and everything; and a lot of things we done without willingly so that we could have more to send to our boys overseas.
- M: You know, I really don't talk to too many people that went through both of those to see what kind of a sacrifice it was. I guess a person has to go through it to really understand.
- A: Absolutely, and then you couldn't describe the worry and uneasyness and I never prayed as hard in my life as all the years they was gone. Our boys was over there, and I still thank God for taking care of them and bringing them back home to us.
- M: Did you ever think that the United States might lose that war?



A: No, I didn't ever think that.

M: You always thought they would win, huh?

A: I always felt like they would win.

M: Of course, I think that is a basic American assumption that they would win.

A: I had faith that they would win that war.

M: How about the depression? In ways, did you sacrifice more then or during the war? Did that affect you very much since you lived out there on the farm?

A: No, not really, not too bad. You know, on the farm that way it didn't.

M: I thought it was mostly people in town that got the full effect of it.

A: More so, I figure.

M: That is what I thought. I didn't know on that either, but I have heard various people talk about living through the depression.

A: On the farm, we still had plenty to eat and everything like that. We raised a lot to sell and things like that—helped feed the nation.

M: How about—out in the country, I know it used to be different on doctoring and so on, but if anybody passed away, how did they usually take care of it? Did they bring them in to the undertakers like we have now?

A: No, it was taken care of in the home. They kept them in the home. For a few years before they got to taking them to the undertakers, they would come to your home and then they got so that they always come and got them and took them to the undertakers; but they didn't used to do that.

M: And the people in the family, would take care of them?

A: No, the neighbors. Friends would stay through the night and the corpse was set up, and sometimes they would sing good religious songs, and sometimes they would just sit and talk, but it was not like it is now.

M: No, totally different now. What about the grave, it was always taken care of by other people?

A: Always, and it is yet, you know, a good bit out around home there. But now lots of people—lots of cemeteries—they have someone to dig the grave.

M: Yeah, special ones.

A: But now so far in my, in all my family and relatives, the friends dug the grave. I don't know how long that will go on though, because people is a changing all the time.

M: Yes, I think so, some ways good and in some ways not so good.

A: Seem like in so many ways. It won't be long before everybody will have to hire somebody to dig their grave and take care of that.

M: How about, out in that area in particular, like when your grand children were growing up, how did they earn their money, most of them? If they wanted a little bit of money for the Fourth of July.

A: Well, they used to just work and save every penny for the Fourth of July. Oh, they thought they was seeing sights.

M: How long has this Fourth of July been going on down here?

A: Well, let me see, Millie, I can't tell you how long. It has been several years, but I just don't remember. I used to come pretty regular, but then it seemed I didn't care anything about it. Seemed like if you seen it, you were seeing the same thing over.

M: I just wondered how they got started.

A: I don't know how that got started.

M: It is quite a tradition around here. I mean, you know, I know it is to celebrate the Fourth, I just wondered how it got started so big in this particular area.

A: They claimed last year there was more people than there ever has been, and they are already preparing for it again this year.

M: Yes, I think they begin as soon as it is over. Then that Arts and Crafts Fair.

A: I haven't been there for ten years or more, since I have been there, maybe longer than that.

M: I just wondered if you could remember when they first started having it around here and how it got so big.

A: That was when I used to think it was wonderful, but after I come a few times, it seemed like I would just rather stay at home.

M: Well, the charm wears off after while. What about the Sunday schools out in the country. You probably haven't been able to go to any of the churches here in town to really compare them.

A: I like the old country Sunday school meetings. It didn't get too bad to go to the Sunday school and meetings and prayer meetings. Between the revivals and such as that, we mostly always had something going on at the church, but now I don't know of a church—or very many churches—out in the country around home that is—well, there are too, at Harmony and Wolf Camp, I guess, but White Pine and Falling Water and places where I used to go to church—the churches are just gone nearly. Them two churches are just about gone. It is a pretty sad thing to think about really.

M: How about your preacher when you were little, did they have just a local preacher or somebody that came in or how did they work it?

A: They usually had a, you know, a certain preacher for each church, or I mean of course they would....

AM: They had a circuit.

A: Yeah, but they would be just the one preacher and sometimes some more would come in just to help out, but they payed just that one preacher. I suppose they do that yet.

M: I don't know how it works, I think each church does it different. I think that out in there most of the preachers do still have four or five churches, and each Sunday they go to a different one or something like that. Did you always have pretty good attendance?



A: What?

M: Did you have pretty good attendance out in there?

A: Oh yes, everybody went for miles and miles.

M: That was about the only way they had of getting together, I mean really, to see everybody?

A: Yes, it was really. And they would go for miles to attend a big meeting. There would be so many sometimes the church wouldn't hold them all and there was so many more people then in the country than there is now and they all liked to go to church.

M: Out in that area in particular, it has really changed. There are just so many houses that are empty now. I don't know if people moved out because they thought it was more convenient in town or they just can't make a living there or what.

A: I think they could have made a living most of them, as the ones that stay have made a good living I know that. Until they got old like me and had to leave.

M: Oh, well...

A: If I was able to tend a garden, I would be out home there yet.

M: I don't know why everybody moved out, I don't know if it was because it was so hard to get the kids out to school or what.

A: But they enjoyed it, didn't they?

M: Oh, yeah, I think they enjoyed it all right.

A: They did, and hardly ever missed a day of school.

M: I think you usually find your better attendance from country kids. You know, as a rule. Sometimes there is exceptions. You know, they used to have out at school pie socials. Did they have those when you were going to school?

A: Yes, they had a lot of them.

M: And what did they do in order to raise money? Do you remember some of the things they would do?

A: They would buy some extra books or buy something for the school—something they needed, you know. Of course they didn't make very much, things didn't sell very high; but a little bit of money went a long ways then and they would buy things for the school that they all wanted and needed. They used to have literary in schools, you know, a long time ago and they would take up a subject and one would argue one way and one another, you know, and that was pretty interesting.

M: What was that called? Literary?

A: Literary

M: I think that is what we call debate, but I never heard it called literary.

AM: What do you call it now?

M: Debate. I suppose you won all of those.

A: And then you know how we used to have spelling bees and different schools would meet and see who could out-spell the others, and who could spell the longest and things like that; have arithmetic races and...

M: Geography races. And some of them used to get together and play each other off in ball games.

A: Yeah, I don't know too much about that.

M: Well, we used to do that quite a bit. We used to go out once a year, you know, whenever they was making molasses. The teacher would usually take us out and let us what they called sop molasses. We used to have a big time with that.

A: Well, Millie, when I was a little girl going to school in the fall of the year. You know, instead of bringing their cattle to cattle sales like Ripley and Spencer and different places you know, somebody would come around there and buy up all the cattle they had to sell and then they would take them out and just drive them and we have set—the teacher when they would be passing our school—the teacher would take us out and let us—sometimes they would be an hour in passing the school house in droves of cattle.

M: Well, I'll be, I never knew that.

A: Well, they did. I wish I had a picture of that.

M: So they would drive them all, one person would buy them all, a cattle buyer or something.

A: Yes, somebody would come through and buy them all. It was just surprising how many would go out of the country every fall that way you know.

M: I never heard about that, that is different.

A: I'll never forget that, we always got out and the teacher would always go out with us and we would sit up on the bank and watch the cattle pass.

M: That sounds like the west and the cowboys, you know, rounding up all the cattle.

A: They used to buy turkeys, you know, somebody would buy turkeys and drive them to market.

M: You mean you can drive turkeys?

A: You can drive turkeys, and now that was real, for they have roosted them a time or two up home. Robert used to buy the turkeys that way you know. Hundreds and hundreds of them and when it gets so late you have to let them to go roost, you know, they won't go any further.

M: That is a new one to me, I hadn't heard of driving turkeys.

A: They'd go for miles and miles to buy turkeys and drive them to market.

M: That is really something, I hadn't heard of that one. What about Thanksgiving, was it a big event in those days?

A: Yes, seemed to me like more then than it is now. I mean, in a way it's different. I don't know, we always thought Thanksgiving was something special, really special.

M: Did you have the whole family in for a feast?

- A: Pumpkin pies and all kinds of things in —turkey or whatever. Something that was really good, you know, we thought for Thanksgiving dinner. Seemed like we always had something to be thankful for.
- M: And the homecomings out in the country, of course, some churches still have them, but like down at White and so on, did those go on when you were a kid too?
- A: No. No, not when I was little.
- M: They didn't? Is that sort of something new for that area?
- A: That began after I grew up and was a woman. I don't remember ever having any homecomings. They would have dedications when they had a new church, or something like that. They would have a big dedication day to dedicate the church. I can remember them when I wasn't too big. Even the White Pine Church, now I can dimly remember when that was dedicated—I was awfully little.
- M: Don't remember what year? I have seen it above the door.
- A: I don't remember, it would tell it on the church, but I can't remember.
- M: I can't place it either. Now Aplin was 1890 something, wasn't it? Or, eighty something.
- A: I was born in 1893 and I was real small, but I can dimly remember that dedication and Aplin Church, I remember it well.
- M: I can't place the White Pine, but I know it wasn't too—about a hundred years or some place along in there. Well, it couldn't be that old; it would be about seventy-five, I guess.
- A: I remember when Aplin and Fairview and them churches was dedicated. Now Falling Water Church and White Pine Church I can dimly remember the White Pine Church, but can't the Falling Water Church. It has been there ever since I was big enough to remember.
- M: What about—I don't know, maybe you don't know anything about this, but you know, now, when people get a little bit insane, they put them in an assylum or some place; but in those days, did they have asylums for people?
- A: They must have, but I never knew anybody that went there then, when I was growing up; but I suppose they had asylums. State hospitals they call them now. But most of the time, when anybody lost their mind, they kept them in the home.
- M: That was what I wondered.
- A: And old people's homes, there never was anything like that, like they send them now, to rest homes and things like that. The family always took care of their parents, never sent them like they do now, in their homes.
- M: What do you think has brought that change about? Everybody working now, or what?
- A: What?
- M: I said, what do you think has brought that change about in starting that old folk's home.
- A: Well, I don't know. Sometimes it might be ok, but sometimes I don't know. I never read too much about them or knowed anybody that was in them. They might be ok.

M: I was just wondering. I guess it is because people are working now, and they can't take care of them.

A: I guess that is it.

M: Where it used to be that women were in the home, and now about 90% of the women I know hold a job of some kind.

A: They are, that's true. And, just seem like they would rather help pay for somebody else to take care of their parents or grandparents as to try to take care of them theirself.

M: I have noticed that tendency a little bit. What do you think of women working? Do you think that is good or what?

A: Well, if the children is all big enough to look after theirself, it is all right; but I think when their children is little, their place is in the home. I always will think that. I couldn't have done my work and left my children with somebody. I wanted to raise them and look after them myself. Seem to me that was what I was for. I wanted to take care of them myself. I even hated to leave them long enough to go to the store.

M: I have even heard some women say that they can't wait to go back to work to get away from their kids.

A: I know it, but now I never did feel that way, Millie.

M: Well, you shouldn't.

A: That satisfied me and seem the happies time in my life. They never run me crazy.

M: How many children did you have?

A: Four—three sons and one daughter.

M: That was what I was thinking. And how many was in your family whenever you were a girl?

A: Well now, there was eleven children born, but there was two died before I was born and two younger than me. Two older and two younger. They died you know, when I was a little girl and before I was born. Two older than me and two younger than Ava.

M: What about—you notice now people seem to be having smaller families than they used to have. Do you think this makes families closer or were they closer when they had the larger families?

A: Well, I don't know. That is just something I couldn't answer. I don't know. We was happy and there was a big family of us. And, we children at home, we always had good times, fight sometimes, but that is part of growing up.

M: Wouldn't be natural.

A: Absolutely, but I do think that people ought to have more than one child. I really do, I think they are all happier.

M: I think so. One child gets kind of lonely sometimes and gets kind of spoiled.

A: And they see a lonesome life in a way.

M: Yes, I think so. Of course, now, it isn't very practical for people to have ten kids or eleven kids.

A: But, you know, sometimes that is all right and sometimes it isn't. You know, it all depends. If they are able to take care of them and feed them right and teach them right, educate them, and things like that. Of course, years ago education wasn't as important then as it is now to peopel. It didn't seem like.

M: No, I think that has come lately. Well, when many people started wanting jobs, when they started moving in.

A: Now, if they don't have a lot of schooling and a good education, they can't get a good job. And, a lot of them has got and can't get it anyway.