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Emma Reip Hanger

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ORAL HISTORY

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Date May 11th 1976

Emma R Hanger
(Signature - Interviewee)

R.I. Vincent Ohio
Address

Date May 11th 1976

Irma Hanger
(Signature - Witness)



PERSON BEING INTERVIEWED

Emma Reip Hanger

Seventy six years old

Born January 4, 1897

Place of birth--Calhoun County, West Virginia

Husband--Richard Hanger (died-1964)

Reip--German (von Reip)

Downy--Irish (mother)

Transcript of Interview

C. My name is Christine Fitzer. I am here in Washington County, Ohio, Barlow township, interviewing Emma Reip Hanger who is seventy six years old. She is going to tell us a little about herself. Where were you born, Emma?

E. In Calhoun County, West Virginia.

C. What year was that?

E. 1897.

C. Now tell us how long you lived there.

E. Twenty two years.

C. And where did you go from there?

E. Roane County, near Spencer, W. Va. I was married and moved there.

C. And how long did you live there?

E. Three years.

C. And then you and your husband?

E. Moved to Washington County, Ohio in 1922.

C. And you've lived here in Washington County...

E. Ever since.

C. How did you meet your husband?

E. Well, he had two sisters who married cousins of mine and I guess I had been to his home and met him there..going with my cousins there.

C. Did ~~he~~ live close to you?

E. About twenty five miles from where I lived.

C. And what was his name?

E. Richard Hanger.

C. You met him through your cousins, then?

E. Yes.

C. Did he come to call on you when he was courting you? Would you tell us a little about that?

E. He rode horseback and come to see me.

C. He did? Twenty five miles?

E. Yes.

C. That's great!

E. Came on Saturdays and go back on , maybe on Monday. Too far to go for just a little bit.

C. Did he have to ask uour father's permission or your family's permission to come calling?

E. No.

C. He just came and you knew why he was coming.

E. Yes.

C. How long did you date before you decided to get married?

E. Not very long.. Three months.

C. Could you tell us a little about your wedding?

E. Just a home wedding. With a very few nearest relatives. It was a noon wedding.

C. You were married by a minister.

E. Yes.

C. What church did you go to?

E. Baptist. It was a Baptist minister that married us.

C. Did he have a church near where you lived?

E. Yes. He preached at our church only we didn't have a church. We had church in a school house.

C. You had services every week?

E. Un-huh. He didn't live too far away. He came on horseback.

C. Did he have other areas he preached in? _____

E. Yes. He didn't come only once a month, but we had services.. Sunday School every week.

C. You did?

E. But the preacher didn't come only once a month.

C. You went into the schoolhouse and had Sunday School?

E. Yes that's the only way. People colmdn't afford churches. We were all too poor.

C. But you kept trying.

- E. Yes. Really they might have been churches in the towns but we were out in the country quite a ways. Twenty five miles from the nearest town.
- C. You were telling me about a breakfast you cooked when you were eight years old. Would you tell us about that?
- E. Well, I cooked the meal for thrashmen who came to thrash wheat. They come the evening before and stayed all night and my mother was called away in the night, what should I say?.. for the delivery of her first grand daughter.
- C. Her first grand daughter? She went to help.
- E. My dad and I had to get breakfast. Dad woke me up and said that Mom was gone so I'd have to get up and get breakfast. So I wanted to try biscuits for breakfast but dad said I was good with cornbread so I had better stick with cornbread. So I baked cornbread and fried potatoes and fixed meat, maybe ham, maybe bacon and we had butter and coffee and probably apples, cooked.
- C. You told me you cooked on a wood stove.
- E. A wood stove yes. We had nothing else but a wood stove.
- C. Was this hard for you to manage?
- E. No.. I guess I was used to it.
- C. You watched your mother make biscuits. Tell me how she did it.
- E. Well, she had a big tray, I'd say it was a half a yard long, and hollowed out. She had her sifted flour on it..made a hole in it, added the buttermilk, soda, and shortening, then stirred it with a spoon and then lifted it out on a board and kneaded it a little then rolled it out, cut it, and put it in a pan and baked it.
- C. In the wood stove.. stove that burned wood.
- E. Yes, that's what we had.
- C. What were some of the other foods that you had? Describe an evening meal for us.
- E. Well they were all about the same as far as that goes. We had lots of different things of course. We never had like pickled beans or sour kraut for breakfast but we did for lunch, we called it dinner, and supper. We had fruit, dried apples, and dried peaches..anything. Most everything that way was dried.
- C. How did you dry the apples? Do you remember?
- E. Well, they were strung on strings and hung up behind the stove, or took out on the roof when the sun was real hot, put there on a cloth on the roof.
- C. Then did you store them in bags?

- E. After they were dried they were put in bags and stored.
- C. Did you have a special place to store them?
- E. Well we tried to keep them in a cool place. In a room where ~~there~~ wasn't no fire.
- C. And you were telling me you fixed the green beans this way too.
- E. Yes, we picked the green beans and strung them on strings and hung them up behind the cook stove where the flue went up and it was warm. And sometimes put them on the rack in front of the fireplace in the living room.
- C. Did you take part in this as a very young child?
- E. Oh, Yes.
- C. How far back can you remember that you helped?
- E. Oh, as far as I can remember. At eight years I could cook cornbread fry potatoes, cream tomatoes, make coffee, things like that. We had our own milk and butter. I could milk cows from the time I could get hold of their teats.
- C. Did you churn butter also?
- E. Yes. We churned butter in a stone jar with a wood lid, with a dash, up and down til it come butter.
- C. About how long would this take?
- E. Oh, it depended on how the milk was, how warm, if it was cold it wouldn't churn fast. If it was just right it didn't take long. And if it was the right sourness. That made a difference.
- C. Tell me how you pickled the beans.
- E. Well, we cooked them outdoors in a big kettle, brass or iron, and cooked them tender, then carried them down to the basement or cellar, we had a cellar, an outdoor cellar. And we would put a layer of beans and a layer of salt in the bottom then added more beans and salt 'til the jar was full then put a weight on it.
- C. Why would they want to weight it down?
- E. To bring the brine up over it or it would spoil where the brine wasn't on.
- C. How long would it take for the beans to pickle?
- E. Oh, maybe three weeks. Wouldn't take too long if the weather was warm.
- C. Did they need any care before the three weeks were up?
- E. No. And then when you wanted some you just turned it back and dipped some out and covered it back over.

C. How did you cook them afterwards?

E. Well we just put them in meat drippings, or meat gravy.

C. Sounds good!

E. They were good!

C. I have heard rumors that there were certain times when women would not fool with pickling beans. Is this true?

E. Yes, it was.

C. Would it bother you to tell us about it?

E. Well, no, I guess not. It was at menstruation period.

C. Why did they say this?

E. Well, they would.. the beans wouldn't pickle right. I know on one occasion when I just carried the beans in a bucket from the kettle to the cellar and the beans spoiled.

C. They did?

E. Yes.

C. So you didn't bother them after that, when you were in your monthly period.

E. No My mother didn't think that would hurt but it did.

C. That's very interesting.

E. Yes and some women can't can tomatoes at that time. But some can.

C. So it just depended on the person.

E. Yes, they was some that could so it while others couldn't.

C. What about sour kraut?

E. I never tried that, so I don't know. It probably would. Of course sour kraut was never cooked. It was put in raw in the jar with salt, and we had a wooden maul and pounded it down in the jar and the brine raised on the kraut and then when we got the brine raised we covered it just like the beans. And that was it.

C. And boy! does it taste good. What about the dried apples, did you make anything special from the dried apples?

E. Nothing special. We made pies or just cooked them.

C. Was there any special way you made the pies: Did you make them like regular pies?

E. We made them just like regular pies. Course we soaked the dried apples before we put them in. If we put them in dried they would never get done.

C. Did you ever fry any apple pies on top of the stove?

E. No, we never fried any apple pies, but we fried apple lots of times.

C. Were these the dried apples?

E. No.

C. Fresh apples.

E. Yes, Summer apples. They were awful good. We had one special tree that was extra good.

C. What kind of tree was it?

E. I don't know, we never had no name for it. Just summer apples, Probably grafted by somebody. Just specially good apples.

C. Do you remember any entertainment when you were around eight years old, when you were very young? Did you have special parties?

E. NO, not many. One time when I was seven, there was a show, a puppet show, came to the school house.

C. But other than that you didn't have parties or go anywhere special.

E. No, not when I was that young. Later on when in my teens we had some parties, but we went to visit, stay all night with other girls and they stayed with me all night. And on Sundays nearly always we had company or went somewhere. We didn't make any extra preparation for Sunday dinner either. We came home from church and cooked as usual but we'd maybe have two or three tablefuls of people. We'd ask them or if they couldn't come maybe we'd go to someone else's house.

C. Then you visited other people.

E. Yes.

C. About how far did you travel?

E. Not over a mile and a half.

C. Then you had neighbors fairly close to you.

E. Oh yes. My dad and my uncles weren't more than half a mile away. And when I'd go to uncle Ira's there were five of us of an age. Two girls, two boys and myself. And my aunt would turn over the kitchen to us. We had the dishes to wash and then we could play, whoop and holler..anything.

C. What kind of games did you play?

- E. Oh, blind men, all kind of silly games. The table was home-made of wood so we'd climb on top of it, play hide and seek, and we made taffy too.
- C. Tell me about making taffy.
- E. Well, we took these cane molasses.. we grew cane in the summer.. it was ground.. the juice was boiled down and made cane molasses and we'd take the cane molasses in the iron skillet on the cook stove with a wood fire and cook them down, turn them out to cool and pull them 'til kinda white, then lay out someplace where it's cool and it got hard and we'd cut it up and eat it.
- C. Oh, sounds good.
- E. That was one of the things we kids could always do.
- C. Did you make your own applebutter too?
- E. Yes.
- C. Would you tell me about that?
- E. Yes. We started the applebutter in a big kettle, kept peeling and adding as it cooked down, sweetened with cane molasses. ~~XX~~ Couldn't afford to buy sugar so sweetened the applebutter with cane molasses. Later on when I was up in my teens we got so we made it with sugar, but when I was growing up we had nothing but cane molasses applebutter. And it was good.
- C. Oh, I imagine it was.
- E. Even the punkin butter.
- C. The what?
- E. Punkin butter.
- C. Now what's that? I never heard of that.
- E. Never heard of punkin butter? Well we used big round necked ~~xx~~ squash and just cooked them down and seasoned them like applebutter.
- C. Well isn't that interesting? And you used it on biscuits?
- E. Yes. I never liked it myself, but I had one brother that was just crazy about it. He'd rather have it than applebutter. We'd even dried punkin, you know.
- C. You dried it like you do apples?
- E. Yes and cooked it later on.
- C. Let's see, what are some of the other things you ate? You told me about the pickled beans. You ate mostly pork?
- E. Yes, for meat. Mostly. Sometimes we would have a mutton, and also sometimes a beef. A small beef and divide it up with the neigh-

bors. Back when I was young we went to a Baptist church and we had a Baptist Association and a Fifth Sunday meeting which was divided around with a certain amount of churches and when it came to our turn we had to cook a lot and people would come for miles to these meetings. And there was just about three families to do all the cooking for these dinners and we would have stacks of applepies, fruit pies, cakes, and Mommy would bake lightbread for days ahead and at that time we would maybe, kill a beef or a mutton and divide it between the families that were cooking. And we had two days of that. And we didn't have ways of serving..didn't have silver to hand out to people.. we didn't have cups or anything to hand out, so the food had to be fixed in a way that would give them a slice of bread and a piece of meat. And then they come for a piece of ~~xxx~~ pie or cake. We just had to take things that would be handed out. We killed lots of chickens, and Mom would make dressing in patties for them to hand out and they'd just stand around the wagon or sled and eat. We had eight-ten poeple go home with us and stay all night. For supper and breakfast and another dinner so you know it kept us busy. For days before and after.

C. Right!

C. About how many poeple would be there?

E. OH, a hundred or better.

C. They came from how far?

E. Well they didn't come over ten miles, but they came on Saturday for dinner and stay for the Sunday doings.

C. What were the Sunday doings?

E. They called it the Fifth Sunday meeting and Association.

C. This was not a regular preaching service?

E. No, it was more of a business meeting. They had preaching too. I usually didn't go in the school house.

C. What did you do?

E. Played with some of the others.. or maybe talked with boys!

C. Oh! You played outside?

E. Yes. The poeple couldn't have gotten in the school house, anyhow.

C. Did you go to school there?

E. Yes.

C. Was it what we here of as the "one room school house?"

E. Yes.

C. How many grades did you have? Do you remember?

E. Well we didn't go by grades.

C. What did you do?

E. First readers, second readers, third readers, fourth and fifth reader. Primary arithmetic, etc., Primary Geography, advanced Geography and History.

C. You went on when you were ready then?

E. Well when the teacher said you were ready.

C. Was your teacher a man or woman?

E. We had both.

C. Did they come from around that area?

E. Yes, not too far away. Sometimes they stayed and boarded.

C. Were they pretty strict teachers?

E. Well, sometimes they were pretty strict. With some I was a little bit afraid to cut up.

C. Were you a "cut-up"?

E. Well, sometimes. A cousin and me would get tickled awfully easy, over nothing, and when we did it was hard on us, with this strict teacher.

C. Was it a man or a woman?

E. It was a man that was so strict.

C. What did he do when you cut-up?

E. Oh, I don't think he'd of done anything, we just were afraid he would. Well the teachers then whipped them with a whip.

C. A whip?

E. From a tree.

C. Gave them a good switching, then?

E. Yes. I never got one. Not that I maybe didn't need it.

C. What type of clothes did you wear to school? Long dresses or short dresses?

E. We went according to style. Never as short as they wear them today. My dresses when I was young were below my knees and then they got to the "hobble skirt"..real narrow at the bottom. And very long.

C. Did your mother make your clothes when you were a child?

E. No. She never was very good at sewing. My aunt made clothes for me.

C. Did you ever go to the store and buy a dress?

E. No.. I learned to sew when I was young. My sister learned too, then I did my own sewing.

C. Could you remember how old you were when you made your first dress?

E. Probably my early teens.

C. Did you ever have a doll when you were little?

E. Yes, I had dolls..dish dolls..the head and arms and legs were dish and the rest were stuffed. They were real pretty. I often wish I had kept one of my dolls.

C. It would be a real prize.

E. I'd say they were china. Hair was done up like a color but not real hair. Just dish, china, whatever.

C. Did you get these dolls for Christmas, birthdays?

E. Christmas. We never got a lot of toys for Christmas.

C. What kind of Christmas did you have?

E. Well we had plenty candy..no Christmas trees, no big Christmas dinner, just a regular dinner.

C. Did you decorate the house at all?

E. No..but always had plenty of candy. And if someone was going where they could get them Mommy got some oranges. And of course we always boxed up a big box of apples to keep for Christmas. Nice ones..wasn't supposed to get into them until Christmas.

C. Did you ever make popcorn balls?

E. Yes, we made popcorn balls with molasses taffy.

C. Raised your own popcorn?

E. Oh yes! We raised everything. We never had the money to buy. We always had some chickens and eggs that we could buy some sugar, oats, and rice...something like that.. but not like we go to the store today. Our transportation was the road wagon or horseback or shank's filly..that's walking.

C. Shank's filly? That's good!

E. That's what they called it.

C. You said something about a sled. Was it different from a wagon?

E. Oh yes, you take a sled in the snow. Of course when we were taking the dinners on the sled it was in the summertime and we had to drag it. It was heavier than a wagon but it was handier.

C. It was a large sled.

E. Yes, it was a big sled. We made smaller sleds for riding down the hills on when we were growing up.

C. Then you rode sleds down the hills.

E. Oh yes, Anything. One time we were at school..when I was transferred, They were just about the same distance apart.. the first three years we went to school..no first two years.. we went to school in the room of someone's home..just in a room.

C. Did you have a regular teacher?

E. Oh, yes. Regular teacher, and then when we built a school-house and that school house was built in 1910..first school. It was 1909 and 1910. And we had lots of fun when we went to this home and that's where we had lots of fun. They took down the stair steps and one was nialed like a step and we set on one and held to the other side of it and down the hill we'd go. And the bigger boys made what they called a "go-devil". It was made different from others. It just had one Bog split and then had rungs put up from the runners into the log and then one would sit on the front end and guide it and the rest would sit on the back end.

C. Did it go faster than the others?

E. No.

C. Wonder why they called it the "go-devil".

E. Oh, I don't know. It was a new sled they invented and they called it the "go-devil".

C. Speaking of logs, that reminds me, you were going to tell me how your house was made and how many rooms you had in it.

E. Well it was an old house, and it had been logs , before I knew it, weather boarded and sealed inside. The logs were sealed. Five rooms in a log house and the kitchen and dining-room all in one..was called a lean-to..built on. It was just lumber.

C. You told me about your mother weaving rugs, didn't you?

E. She didn't weave them, she had them weaved and we carpeted the living room in the winter. She would sew the strips of woven carpet together and put straw on the floor for padding under it and in the Spring take it up, rip it apart again and wash it. Of course take the straw up..then the dirt.. take it out and scrub the floor with soap.

C. You rode horses when you were little?

E. Oh, my, yes. I rode a horse since the time I could get on one.

C. You had horses, then, on the farm. About how many?

E. Well not more than two or three.

C. And cows?

E. Yes, we had cows. Of course we had our own milk and butter and hogs and chickens.

C. You told me that you were married in your home, in your living room.

E. Yes.

C. What about when you would have funeral, about the earliest you can remember. Did you have services in the home?

E. Yes, sometimes, but most of time the services were at the cemetery if it was not in the winter time. My grandmother Reip, that has stuck in my mind. As I said I was five years old when she died and it was winter and they didn't have any services. I was too young and I don't know if there even was a minister at the cemetery or not. But I know they had her funeral preached the next summer.

C. Was she in your home when she died?

E. No, she was in my uncle's home, because that was their original home. Grandma and Grandpa both stayed with uncle Ira. He was the youngest of that family 'til they died.

C. Then did the other members of the family go to their home?

E. Yes, that's what I remember. That's one thing I do remember. They had the casket on something on the floor layed down and another cousin of mine about five years older, she always looked after me when I was little, Roxy was her name, she took me by the hand and she walked with me up to the casket.

C. Was this the first that you can remember?

E. Yes, the first that I can remember.

C. How long did they keep her there?

E. Oh, they didn't keep them very long. They had to get a casket or get it made. She had a boughten casket but most of the people even long after that made the caskets right after they died, right there. Out of lumber and lined them inside with white and put a padding in the bottom and black on the outside. And you could buy the handles and a plate for the top.

- C. Then they took her to the cemetery and you didn't really have a service for her...
- E. That is what I don't remember, but I do remember they did have the funeral the next Summer at the church or the school-house.
- C. Can you remember what it was like?
- E. Oh, it was just a sermon like today, similar, I don't know.
- C. It was more like a memorial service?
- E. Probably.
- C. Did this happen very often, that they...
- E. Would have the funeral later? That's the only one I can ever remember.
- C. And you don't really know why this happened.
- E. Only that it was bad weather.
- C. It was bad weather. People couldn't get there.
- E. That's right, I reckon that's the reason, as far as I know that's the only one I can remember. Grandfather Reip died in the Summertime. I can't even remember that cause I was only a year and a half old, but my Grandpa Downy all the services they had for him was right at the cemetery and that was in the early Spring.
- C. But they had the service for him.
- E. Un huh.
- C. Were most of your family members buried in the same area there?
- E. You mean..?
- C. Did you have a family cemetery?
- E. My mother and Dad, they have a cemetery on their old home place and them and my oldest brother and his first wife are buried there. There's just four there. I wish they had put them on the main home place where my grandfather started.
- C. But you did have a family cemetery.
- E. That's where my grandfather and grandmother is on the old home place. My folks, instead of being taken on there and I don't know why they didn't, I wish they had of now. Because that's kept up and where they are now I can't keep it up anymore.
- C. Hard to get back to it?
- E. Yes and same way with my other uncle out there, they started a cemetery on their place instead of going to the regular cemetery.

C. What about your family life, Emma, did you have a ..was your daddy the head of the house? Can you remember?

E. Well, I suppose you'd say that.

C. Men and women had their own special things to do?

E. Yes, usually Dad was a, I'd say, a very easy goingman, I never heard him ever have a word, and as far as I'm concerned, he was the best dad ever had.

C. Did he do the disciplining in the family if one of you kids got out of line or did your mother do it?

E. No, I think Mom did it.

C. She did?

E. Most of the time. This brother who had been one of the last brothers, I don't know what he did, I can't remember that, but he was running and she was running around the house and she went through the house and caught him.

C. Sort of headed him off.

E. He said to her, "You didn't do it fair." So I don't think he got a whippin. She couldn't of whipped him after he'd say that.

C. Then whoever was there at the time...

E. I expect that was it, I don't remember any of us just getting any whippings.

C. When you were at home...

E. That's at home or at school..any of my family. ~~XXXX~~ I've seen the kids get whippins at school but not too many. One whipping was about all they wanted.

C. Pretty bad huh?

E. Well Kinda humiliat@d them when they were in front of the kids. Teachers would crack them over the head with their pencil or ruler sometimes.

C. They didn't act up too much in school, then.

E. I don't figure they did as much as they do today in schools.

C. Do you remember.. how many did you have...?

E. In school? Oh, maybe thirty, forty.

C. All in one room?

E. All in one room.

C. That's a good sized group, isn't it? And all different ages?

E. All different ages down to first grade.

C. How old were you when you quit going to school?

E. About eighteen, I expect when I quit.

C. Did you sort of taper off?

E. Yes, I'd go back again just because of nothing to do.

C. So you were about eighteen before you..

E. About that I expect.

C. Could you go when you wanted to or quit when you wanted to?

E. Yes you could go when you wanted to or quit when you wanted to.

C. Just had your own say so...

E. Well, I think you had to go until you were sixteen, and after that you could quit whenever you wanted to. But they had truant officers if you didn't go to a certain age and I think it was sixteen. When I first went to school I don't think they had six months. I think it was only about four and then up to six.

C. What time of year did school start?

E. Oh, along in the last of September, middle of September to October.

C. And it went through the winter?

E. Unhuh.

C. Did you get out on a Christmas vacation? Or anything like that?

E. We had Christmas day off if it came on a school day, that's all.

C. Then went back the next day?

E. Unhuh, they didn't have any holidays like they do now.

C. You didn't go on Saturdays, though.

E. Oh, no, just five days a week.

C. I really appreciate your telling me about this. I've used up about two or three hours of your time.

E. My time's not worth much now a days.

C. I really do appreciate it.