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### Oral History Interview: Lou Holley

Lou Holley

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ORAL HISTORY

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Date August 13, 1973

Lou Holley  
(Signature - Interviewee)

Milton W Va  
Address

Milton, W, Va.

Date August 13, 1973

Paul F King  
(Signature - Witness)



Lou Holley

PFK: My name is Paul F. King and the following conversation is with Lou Holley at Holley Brothers' General Store, Milton, West Virginia. Today's date is August 13, 1973. And, uh, this is Lou Holley.

LH: Yes, whenever you start it why you're here in Holley Brothers' Store and then we'll start out with when we opened up the store and started in business you see. And then get back on this other stuff later on.

PFK: Okay.

LH: Is is on now?

PFK: Yes. Well how did you run it and how did you get into it? You and your brother were in this weren't you?

LH: Yeah, there was three of us. We started in 1921. And, uh, very small, just very small amount then. We didn't have too much money. Just boys you know.

PFK: Was it always in this building?

LH: It was another building beside this. It was a big frame building. A wooden building. Old man Ervin ran a store in this building for years.

PFK: In otherwords it was this same building, or a different building?

LH: No, a different building. And, uh, he run a store here for several years and, uh, he died so, uh, Mr. Reynolds bought it. I'm just trying to think of his first name. And, uh, it was open for rent. So I was working down to Robertson's Store, just a boy. I was I think about seventeen or eighteen years old.

PFK: When was this?

LH: It was nineteen and nineteen.

PFK: That was about, along when Woodrow Wilson . . .

LH: Yeah, well Woodrow Wilson was president. I was in the army at the time he was president see and then I got back out of the service and went down there to the store to work. So I quit down there one Friday afternoon and I loafed around here a while here, you know, and I got tired of loafing. So I just told my brother, he worked at Emmonds' and Hawkins Hardware down there in the sales department.

PFK: Where was that?

LH: Huntington. And then I went down to see him to see if he wanted to go into business see, open up the business. And he said, "Well," said, "I'll tell you," said, "We're liable to go broke." "And," said, "Uh, I hate to quit this, this job cause I'm getting pretty good salary here." But he finally made up his mind, so come up and we rented this old plain building. Old Dave (inaudible). So, uh, he, uh, come up and we opened up. And we just had a very little amount of money, I don't know, \$600 a piece something like that, you know. I remember the first customer we had. Old Spide Glenn over here in New Milton. He came in and bought a quarter's worth of pinto beans. Well we run the business there a while. And, uh, course I knew all the country people, all the old farmers, you know, so they came in. Boys they went to patronize us. We done good there for a while. Then we had a fire in 1927, burnt out.

PFK: The whole building?

LH: Whole building. Fellow, boy burnt up over here in the restaurant beside of us. The fire started at the restaurant, you know. And this boy was sleeping upstairs. It was about twelve o'clock on a Saturday night. And, uh, he burnt up. Didn't get him out. Somebody said, I got down here in time. But, uh, somebody said, uh, asked about the boy. And some fellow said, "I seen him going up the alley without his clothes." So, we quit looking for him, see, people knew then. Well everything burnt up. So, uh, we lost a big amount of money right at that



time because we had the fall merchandise in. And, uh, so . . .

PFK: What kind of stuff did you have?

LH: We handled general store. Yeah, everything, food.

PFK: Food?

LH: Food, clothing, hardware, farmers' implements, supplies, everything a farmer wanted to buy, mowing machine parts and everything. Well, we done pretty good with that. So, uh, in 1928 we put this building up, this brick building here.

PFK: You put it up yourselves?

LH: Yeah, we built the building ourselves. And we had alot of carpenters traded with us, customers, you know. And they all wanted to work. So I said, "Boys, bring your hammers and come on down." I didn't turn one of them down.

PFK: When was this again?

LH: 1928. So, uh, I remember they was twelve carpenters here one day, and they, they sheeted this whole building here in one day. Put the sheeting on top of the roof here. So, uh, we had, uh, an old fellow name of Hensley, called Old Man Hensley. You know, Woodrow, uh, this Hensley's (inaudible).

PFK: Yes, does he live up here?

LH: He live up, that's where you all was raised, up there. Woodrow, that was Woodrow, wasn't it?

PFK: I don't know his first name but I remember an Old Man Hensley (inaudible).

LH: Well he was an old man. Course it (inaudible) him and his brother I think. He lived over, stayed over to old Miss, uh, what's the name of the restaurant here. Rowsey, Old Miss Rowsey. Well he, he was a

good carpenter and he knew how to do it see. And he said, "Tell you what I might do," said, "Just like to come over and show these fellows what to do and I won't charge you much." I said, "How much you want to do it, Mr. Hensley?" Said, "One dollar a day, just to show these fellows what to do." But he, uh, I said, "Come on, get you a chair up there and set down and tell the boys."

PFK: When was this?

LH: 1928. So, uh, we built the building and then we restocked it and we've stayed in here ever since. Well, uh, then we, uh, we done pretty good, you know, and so, uh, in nineteen and thirty, that's when that dry season came, everything was bad, no money you couldn't get no money at all. So the only thing the farmers had to buy groceries with, you know, stuff they had to have was eggs, butter, country butter, and maybe a little well off farmer he might raise tobacco see and sell his tobacco. We'd give him credit from one year to another till he sold his tobacco.

PFK: In otherwords he'd come in and get, uh, . . .

LH: Get whatever he wanted up till he sold his tobacco then he'd come in and pay us see.

PFK: For a year at a time.

LH: Yeah, we have had accounts as big as \$1200 to a farmer. Course he'd bring his eggs, country hams, and chickens, and butter, and eggs in, trade 'em out. And then we started on this pro, we called it chips. Made 'em out of aluminum. Had 'em make aluminum. Well if a fellow'd bring in his eggs and butter, chickens, maybe he had fifteen or twenty or twenty five dollars worth of stuff. Well he would trade out what he wanted while in the balance we'd give him back these chips for money. He could bring 'em back, trade 'em up with us. Well we run it that way, aw, for a long time. Well the WPA

come out. And then they'd let 'em work maybe one fellow would work one day or two days a week (inaudible). He could get maybe a dollar a sixty cents and maybe the big you could get would be four dollars and eighty cents. Well now they'd pay him off. Well they'd bring in these WPA checks to us. And that's where they got money. Then they had, uh, finally the government come out with commodities. I don't know what year. It was about the thirties. You know, they'd give you maybe a, they'd have this imported meat, (inaudible) you know, come from, imported in. Well we had to issue it out to 'em. We didn't get nothing extra for ourselves, we just issued out to our customers, you know. He would get maybe a can of beef or something like, you know, and maybe a dozen eggs or whatever they had to give away.

PFK: And this was the commodities?

LH: That's what they called commodities then. Well then finally come on along up, you know. They come out with the stamps, you know we get now.

PFK: Oh you mean food stamps? This must have been under FDR. It sounds like it.

LH: Yeah, FDR was one started it, yeah. And then after we give these, traded these stamps out you'd just have certain things you could buy with them. You couldn't buy washing powder, you couldn't buy soap, you couldn't buy imported meat on those stamps at all. You can't yet. You couldn't buy tobacco or cigarettes. Just certain groceries that, you know. And then, uh, let's see, at one time there, you know, cigarettes was rationed. Early back there. I don't know what year it was now but it was back in the thirties. And then you know what we had to do with that? They, even the people would watch that cigarette come up here. And they knew when it come. And we knew when we was gonna get cigarettes. We had a terrible time by golly issuing them things out. One time in there they followed the truck, a bunch of them, and, uh, we got the cigarettes in. I bet they was store was full. People all wanted a pack of

cigarettes. They run over top of one 'nother. So we just stacked the cigarettes under the counter. And we had us a change box there to make change, you know. And we'd just hand them out and they'd just throw the, and they'd be people standing way over across from one side of the building to the other. And he'd throw his money over top of these fellows heads. And they got so rough we just had to quit it. I said put your money box away and no more cigarettes today. Had to stop, they got rough, you know, boy they'd run over top one 'nother.

PFK: Was it usually that packed in here? Course, you know when the cigarettes come?

LH: Oh the store was full of people. Why you couldn't hardly walk through the front door hardly to come in.

PFK: Was this just when the cigarettes came?

LH: Well ordinarily it would be worse then than at any other time. But still though before anything like that went on a Saturday. The old farmers would come in. And, uh, they'd come in about nine o'clock and tie up the horses and wagons out back here. That's the way they traveled. Well they'd stay all day. An old farmer'd come in and he'd buy his balogna and crackers and cheese for his lunch. Stay all day about four o'clock and he'd come around and say, "Lou, get me my groceries." "I gotta go home now and do up the chores." And he'd just loaf all day, you know. Well there was Saturday off all day, that made his off one, you know, (inaudible) why we've had 'em in here you couldn't hardly walk through here. Saturday night front street would be full of people. You couldn't hardly get up the street without shoving your way through. And now you can come down here on Saturday evening, five o'clock, the restaurants all closed, you never see a soul maybe at all. Maybe one or two people.

PFK: Why do you think that is?

LH: Huh? (At this point a woman came into the room in which we were having our conversation and entered into a discussion with Mr. Holley. After this, I repeated my question to Mr. Holley.) Well it's just the times change. See that's couple three generations back. And today, at the present time, they have automobiles and everything and they're going here and going yonder you see. They don't stop no place very long. They just keep going, you know what I mean? And the older people is just dead and gone. And the young generations you see has changed the times all together. Just to tell you what the difference and change, I just can't tell you because it's just the generations change. Generation change what it is they, uh, they, we could count on 'em ever week. If he didn't come in today he'd be in some day this week (inaudible). And if you ever had a good old customer, he'd stay with you. He wouldn't go from one store to another. He'd come right here and trade with you. When we started out, you know, we was just young boys. And, uh, we didn't know what we was going to make it or not see. We had this big Heck and Griffith up here. This Robertson's stayed here on this side. The Parrish building (inaudible) had groceries at that time. Parrish wasn't running it at that time, but he had what used to be, they used to be what they called a farmers' store there. Just for farmers alone, see. You know, not just for them but they called it the farmers' store. And they'd (inaudible) they'd sell stock in the store. And the farmer'd take out stock. Well he'd go there and trade you see, supposed to. (Inaudible) and, uh, it didn't last very long. I don't think it run over maybe couple years, something like that. It went out.

PFK: I would have thought what with all the farmers . . .

LH: You'd think, but all of them didn't join in. They didn't take no stock, alot of them didn't. Just a few. And then after it was traded a while, you could trade your stock out. And that broke 'em see. Farmers come here and got tired of it, you know. They couldn't buy no cheaper than you could

anywhere else. You was supposed to get it wholesale price and all that. He couldn't, he got tired of it. So he just went and traded stock out. And that broke 'em see. They had to quit so, uh . . .

PFK: Robertson's was a general store like . . .

LH: Oh yeah, that was a big store (inaudible). They had like a merchandise and Heck and Griffith up here. Heck, Griffith, finally it was Heck and Griffith. It was old man Heck alone, you know, and his boys.

PFK: Is that where the Heck . . .

LH: Funeral Home is now. So, uh, we just went to battling with them. So we had old farmers come in. They'd trade with us. Yeah, come in with their wagons, you know. Bring in a big load of stuff, apples, potatoes, all that stuff and trade us for groceries. We wouldn't put out any money on 'em because they could keep their chips back, you know. Trade 'em out as they wanted to.

PFK: Was it all in this building, this front here?

LH: Yeah, all along this front.

PFK: And was it the same size as it is now?

LH: Yeah.

PFK: Well where did you keep all of your chickens?

LH: Well we had a big coup built from here out to the alley there you see. On this side of the building there you see?

PFK: Now you were saying, I thought it was a good thing you just got into before the tape ran out. It was describing the streets.

LH: Yeah, sidewalks. Wooden sidewalks for the street. Front street.

PFK: And all the roads were . . .

LH: Mud. No paved street. Not a pavement in town no where. Just all mud, ever street. And you had, uh, the marshall of the town had to, uh, they had gas lights on poles. And he'd go and turn 'em out of a morning and light 'em of the evening for the night see. The marshall, town cop (inaudible). And, uh, he had to clean the corners where the water'd run off, you know. He'd have to take his shovel and go out there and do it. Just had one town cop. They didn't have a whole bunch like they got now.

PFK: Do you remember who it was?

LH: Bill Conner. He served for years and years. George Shannon one time, Bill Conner, George and Pat Morrison. Police then, they stayed on the job. They had to work. Then maybe he got fifty dollars a month.

PFK: Back then was that good pay?

LH: Good pay at that time. Yeah, good pay. And then finally they got so rough by Jacks I'm telling you this town used to be rough. Why on Saturday night brother people, alot of them would get drunk and just tear up the patch. And one man couldn't hardly handle it, you know. And that's whenever they got so rough, fellow name of Dansford he had to quit, fellow name of Hatfield he had to quit. They run him out. And finally they put old Hanley Cooper on it. Old Hanley was a rough one himself now he used to drink and get drunk himself. Before he was cop. He went over and told them over there said now listen boys, said I'll take the job. Said if I don't suit you, you won't have to fire me. I'll just quit, turn in my badge. Listen boy he straightened 'em up: And whenever he went after 'em he got 'em too. And brother they didn't resist him. Bunch of kids or something might follow him along, you know. He'd say get away. He take 'em right to the jail himself. He wouldn't let nobody follow him out there. Well let's see now, there's alot more to tell but, uh, maybe you want to ask a few questions.

PFK: About the town being rough. What kind of things did



they get into?

LH: Oh, they'd, uh, they'd get drunk and fight. Yeah, have all kinds of fights. And they'd be some rough ones. And they'd be hard to arrest, you know, lots of them. And one of these cops, I think, when Pat and Hatfield and them fellows was the police, why they'd wrestled a man maybe for hour and a half, two hours before they'd get him out of jail. Knock him in the head, fight him.

PFK: That would be earning a living, wouldn't it?

LH: Yeah, but whenever Cooper went on he didn't have no trouble like that. Boy he'd crack 'em over the head with that billy. He'd just say now listen, "come or your top your head'll come off." And he didn't have no trouble with it. Oh he used to be rough. Them people from back on Hurricane Creek, them Gibsons and all them people from back in there, they'd come down here and they was rough. And up at Hurricane. He soon cooled 'em all off. They'd go to these beer joints and get drunk, you know. Tear up the patch and he'd have to go down and get 'em.

PFK: Where was the beer joint?

LH: Well they had one, uh, well mostly down at Malcom Springs. You know where Malcom Springs is? They had a rough one there. Then they had one, uh, was none in town. They hadn't been given license to sell beer in town then. They had to go out and come in you see. Yeah, that was tough times for policeman at that time.

PFK: Well let's see, uh, did you grown up in town?

LH: No. I was raised out in Mason County, next to Glenwood over there. And we moved over in town in 1915. And, uh, I was just a boy then. And then I'd just go around and went to work in Robertson's Store, then opened up one ourselves. My dad always told me said if you can make money for the other fellow why you'll make it for yourself. So that's



when we started in business.

PFK: What did your dad do? Was he a farmer?

LH: He was a cattle man. He owned farms but he never did work on 'em. He just traded in cattle, bought and sold.

PFK: That's pretty uncommon around here now isn't it?

LH: Oh it is, yeah. He had a fellow name of Bob Frazier over on Frazier's Bottom on Kanawha River. He'd say Mr. Holley, go out and buy me 75 head of cattle. Say you know what I want. He'd go back in (inaudible) County and trade for a whole week at a time. Then come in. Next week we'll go get 'em. Bring 'em in. Then he'd take 'em over and he'd weigh 'em up there. Had a pair of scales, you know.

PFK: Did he have alot of cows?

LH: Oh yeah, man he's had as high as 50, 90 head at a time. Cows, steers, heffers and bulls, all kind.

PFK: And he made a good living out of that?

LH: He made it. He made money at it. Yeah, he raised his family. And he bought real estate, traded in real estate, sold property. We moved over here in town. The lot that I got my house on now, there was a two story house. Old Aunt Jane Rowsey out here. Bill Rowsey, she used to run a hotel, you know. And, uh, she lived there. And he bought that house, two lots, well it was 66 feet wide, each one of 'em. That was 132 feet front. Nine hundred dollars. And it had a house adjoining them with the same size lot. We could've bought at that time for \$300. The house and lot. But \$300 then buddy was a worth five or six thousand now or something. You couldn't get the three hundred. Nobody had it. No money. At that time you couldn't get a day's work. If you did it would be fifty cents a day, something like that. That's what made people so hard up, you know. They had to make it the best way they could. Oh it

was rough. What would happen though if, uh, had to go back to them times?

PFK: I suspect alot of people wouldn't . . .

LH: They'd go crazy, why they'd be holdups, break ins. They ain't raised that a way you know. And you hardly ever seen an automobile. Just one or two fellows would have one. Maybe Back Roberts would have one. A Ford. Bill Johnson had a station right up there. He sold gas and cars. Earl Owens was in with him. And they sold Fords. Well they was the first Fords that come into this town. I remember we, uh, were going down to Ona to take the teachers' examination one time.

PFK: Who was?

LH: I was. Well, five or six of 'em. My wife. So, uh, the first car I was ever in, we went and got old Bill to run us down there in his Ford. He run us down to Ona. We take the examination. And then he come down after us. We was Thursday and Friday of the week. I taught school one year.

PFK: Where did you teach?

LH: Oh in Mason County in a little old schoolhouse name of Beach Grove. Course I didn't have no education. Only just country schools, eighth grade, you know, was all they had then. We never had no high school. So, uh, last day of school the teacher come out and she said, uh, I was just seventeen years old, you know, sixteen or seventeen. She said, uh, I want you to come up to my house. She live over there in Ashton. And, uh, stay all night on Wednesday night and go up to Point Pleasant and take the teachers' examination. I said what do you expect me to do that for? You know I couldn't do no good. Said you come over. Well I was an old country bashful boy, you know. I couldn't have went over there and stayed with the teacher all night. I said tell you what I'll do. I'll be on that train Thursday morning. And we walked into Glennwood and got on the train. And, uh, bring us up

to Point Pleasant. And we couldn't get a place to, hotel was all full. So we had to get a (inaudible) place to sleep, you know. So we never saw a gas light. We didn't know what a gas light was or nothing. Just an old country boy. So we went up there and went down to (inaudible) place there and a little old lady said to Bill Keaton. So we had to sleep upstairs. And, uh, they was I believe five of us. Two of us and three of us in one bed. So I didn't know any better. When bedtime come I said to old Timothy Holley, that was one boy was with us, I said blow out the lights. (Inaudible) he blowed the mantles off of 'em.

PFK: What kind of lights did you have?

LH: Lamp lights. Oil, oil lamps.

PFK: Where did you get your oil?

LH: Well we'd buy it at the stores. You know we used to sell kerosene here. People, farmers. We've got a tank out there now. I expect it's got about three hundred gallon of oil in it. Broke this pump. We never did fix it. Couldn't get it fixed. And still has oil in there yet. And, uh, so we taken the examination. So, uh, it wasn't so hard. I remember one question was said name four soil agents. I'll never forget that. And I said four soil agents? The county superintendent, he come through there and he said, I said hey, come over here a minute, you know. And I said I just don't understand that question. "Why," he said, "you know as much about that as I do." I said well I just can't get it in my head. "Why," he said, "you know what heating coal does, don't you?" I said thank you ever so much. Well you see in the wintertime, you know, it freezes. That's a agent, soil agent. See? And he gave me an idea (inaudible) asked the question, Well you know I made a second grade, I mean certificate You had to have an average of eighty for a second, ninety for a first. And seventy you got a third grade. Well I didn't attend the teachers' institute. You had to attend the teachers' institute if you, uh, taught school. I didn't go up to it, I didn't think I'd

ever make anything. Hadn't ever heard. So I got a letter from my teacher thanking me for the new job I was going to get on. Still I didn't realize, you know. And I went out to the mailbox the next morning and had a big long envelope like that. There was my certificate.

PFK: And you never went to the institute?

LH: No, but I was supposed to. Well it didn't hurt. So, uh, I run back to my dad, just an old big boy, you know, tickled to death. And I said well I'm going out and look for me a school. And he said, "What?" And I said yeah, I got a certificate. So he said, "Get on that old gray faced horse there, I mean blaise faced horse and hunt you up one." Well I got to thinking . . .

PFK: Hunt you up a school?

LH: Yeah. They had trustees. You had to go see three trustees to, uh, sign up for your school. And I got to thinking now and I said well now boys I don't want to get in one where the pupils be ahead of the teacher. I didn't want 'em to be too bright. Well I went over on (inaudible) next to Beach Grove. And I went and saw one of them trustees and he said, "Well go over and see the other two and if they say so we'll be ready for you, sign up." I went and see those. Saw those two. And they said, "We'll meet down schoolhouse on Saturday morning." "We'll sign you in." I went over. We got fixed up. And the first day of that school I went down there and I had fifty five kids, grown ups practically for the first day.

PFK: How big a school was it?

LH: Just a ordinary schoolhouse. Just like you see these old country schoolhouses around through here. One room.

PFK: Where was it, Mason County somewhere?

LH: Yeah, Mason County. So I stayed there with 'em (inaudible). They told me at first. They said, "Now we're gonna sign you up but," said, "you won't stay here all winter." Said, "They run the teachers out here." I said, what? "Yeah." I said I'll be with 'em. I'll be here the six months. I'll stay with 'em. Well we had boys, girls there bigger than I was. Older. Going to school.

PFK: And how old were you?

LH: Seventeen. So, uh, we got along fine. I'd go out and play ball with 'em at noon, you know, and have a big time with 'em. I said now boys we'll play good for one hour here and I said then we're gonna have to study the rest of the day. Look at our books. I didn't have no trouble. So they was six boys got into a fight one Friday evening going home. And those trustees, you know, they come over at Fairfield churches on Saturday night and said, "My Lord, Mr. Holley, you'll have to see what you're gonna do about that." Boy they just tore up the patch. And I said just forget about it. I'll take care of that. Well on Monday morning I cut me three big hickory whips going down the road. I laid 'em on my desk that day. Never said a word to none of 'em, kids and all. We just had school all day. And four o'clock come. I dismissed them all but the boys that got in a fight. All of those kids went home. I begin questioning them old boys, you know, what started it. Well one said he shoved him over in the creek. The other one said he hit him side of the head with a rock. And I don't know I said well boys you must have all been into it, wasn't you? Yeah, we was all fighting. Well I said I'm sorry boys but the rules here is whenever you do a thing like that you're gonna have to take a licking. Take a little whipping. They never said nothing. So I called out one boy. He was a relative of mine now and, old Holley boy over there. He, bout run out ain't we? (Referring to the tape). Well I was gonna tell you about whipping this boy. And he come out and I was laying the lash on him. House right close over from and

he said my lord if those licks don't sound awful going out the schoolhouse door. Said don't kill those children. Why he wasn't even a flinching. So I thought well I'll just get down a little lower, below his britches legs, you know. You know what he had on? He had two pair of pants under his overalls.

PFK: He expected it didn't he?

LH: Yeah, he expected it. Well is there any question you wanta, I've told of things maybe shouldn't been in it.

PFK: No, really everything is relevant. What I was going to ask you is, now the way I understand it from people telling me how property was owned, I get the impression that a few people owned most of the property.

LH: Well now you take out in the country there they had log houses. Built out of logs. And they used wood for fire. And maybe, they didn't buy any coal then because it wasn't able to buy. They had to chop their wood, do their cooking. Wood stoves, cook stoves, wood fireplaces, and the houses made out of logs. Chinked with mud see, between the logs there to keep the cold air out.

PFK: What did they do for windows?

LH: Well they would get, they would put in a window and get these big glass, you know, maybe they'd have two glasses, one up and one below see in the winter. And that, they'd make a frame, you know, put this glass in it. And now that's the way they lived and they lived off of chickens and garden stuff and what little stuff they could raise. Hogs, had their pigs and had, growed their meat you see. And then they'd have cow and they'd live off of that cow, sell the butter. And have, uh, for supper of a night they use, uh, mush. Take a big old iron pot. And put meal in there and stir it up with water. Make a mush out of it and get it thick. And they'd sit down and eat



their supper. And that's about what they'd have for supper.

PFK: What kind of flavor did . . .

LH: It would taste like meal, you know, corn meal. You had your corn meal you see and you'd stir it in there. And they'd then they'd have their milk you see. Then they'd eat milk and mush for supper. I've done it, we've done it ourselves out there when we were kids growing up.

PFK: Was it good?

LH: Best you ever tasted. And the mush was left over, they didn't use, why they'd fry it that morning for breakfast see. Fritters out of it, you know, and it was good. Boy take good old country butter and them hot fritters buddy corn bread fritters, buddy why make you slap your grandpap right in the face. And, uh, then they'd have, uh, and they didn't have no refrigeration. They didn't have no deep freezers or refrigerators. They didn't know what they was. They never saw one (inaudible). And, uh, they would put their butter and milk in a bucket. Drop it down the well. Not put it in the water but put it down in the well to keep it cool see. And now that's how they refrigerated their stuff.

PFK: You couldn't keep a whole lot could you?

LH: No. And then, uh, they had maybe have a celler. They'd put the stuff in the celler. And then they'd have these gallon crocks they put their milk in. And they'd let it, uh, some of it would clabber, you know, and they'd skim that cream off and churn it see. Make their butter. And I've had, uh, why many a time I'd take a big old spoon and go in mother's celler, and uh, skim that back and eat that clabber milk. It was good. You just eat with a spoon see. Yeah, that's the way we was raised back there then. I remember one time they was a poor family lived out close to us. And she come up to here and his wife come up to our place and asked my mother said if you

can just give a meat rind so I can grease the pan to make the bread. You know that's how poor they were. Yes sir. And my mother give 'em an old meat rind and maybe a piece of bacon. They always killed hogs there in the fall, you know. Why it was a hard way to going (inaudible). Cricket isn't it? (A cricket ran across the floor and Mr. Holley stepped on it). And, uh, yeah we stayed out on the farm I don't know it was till 1915 and we moved to Milton. My dad come over here and bought this property.

PFK: How much property did he get?

LH: Well he owned at that time he bought this house and two lots up there. Where I built my house. Then when he passed away why he give me half of one lot and he give my brother, Johnson out here, give him the other. So I've built my house on mine.

PFK: By the way when were you born?

LH: When? 1896. And my brother he was born in 1892. I was four years younger than him. But now, now you ought to, just can't imagine what the old farmers went through. Hard times. Nineteen thirty was a dry season. He couldn't raise nothing. There wasn't no rain. And I'm a telling you it was rough. Why I'd hate to see it again even if I live long enough to do it.

PFK: But he managed to survive somehow.

LH: Yeah, that's it. It was hard for him to. Yeah. Then they was, people won't go to church now. They'd have their church and they'd go and you'd see save some girl, religious song, son you know, and a shouting. Tearing up the patch (inaudible) shouting. Knock the stove down.

PFK: That' interesting. There are some still like that out in the country.

LH: Out in the country, yeah. But you take, uh, over there at Fairfield on Guyan Creek. Why they'd get



so happy there. They had at the church there then what they call "amen corner." These old religious fellows, you know, they'd get up there on "amen corner" and, uh, preacher would go to preaching. Why they'd holler amen, you know, ever so often, you know. "You're right, amen."

PFK: What did the preacher preach on? Did he preach on fire and brimstone? Did he talk about the way people behaved?

LH: Yeah, you know the last time that, I was a boy, went to church there at Fairfield the preacher his subject was Noah's Ark. And he preached on that Noah's Ark and building his ark, you know. And he said I can remember he went back there, you know, and started with that ark, you know. And he would, uh, say here they nobody'd believe him that they was ever gonna be a flood. He was a good preacher. And he'd say well the people would get out and they'd look and couldn't see no clouds. Dry as (inaudible). Then they'd just a little speck of black cloud maybe they'd see it coming at 'em. You know he had it lined up there boys it was good. It was interesting to a boy like me, you know, just a young kid there. And, uh, you know, we set there and listened to the way he brought that thing out. But you don't hardly ever hear of that anymore, preaching the Bible.

PFK: Did they have certain times, say on weekends or maybe once a year, when people would get together and have a . . .

LH: Homecoming? Yeah, well they used to have dances in the country. Yeah, they'd on the weekend. Maybe on, start on Friday and maybe they end up on Saturday. Oh yeah they had regular old shindig. Dance, country dances.

PFK: Now a homecoming is this like a reunion?

LH: Yeah, that's what they call a homecoming. They'd have that in churches, you know. It'd be something

like a reunion. Yeah, that's a old farmer boy now listen he enjoyed himself alot of times. You know what I mean? He had some rough times but he'd have them old shindig dances. And they'd go out and they'd dance, you know, all night.

PFK: Did they get somebody to play?

LH: Yeah, they'd have music. Oh them old farmers back then they could play a violin listen. Them old Glenn boys over on (inaudible).

PFK: Violin, is that what you called it?

LH: Well they had fiddles and violins too. They's two, you know, what I mean they was different. One would play on the fiddle, you know, and the other would play on the violin, you know. Why they was good listen. Them old Glenn boys listen they could make a violin talk. Yes sir, boy they was good. Then have ice cream suppers. Ball games. Just like, you know, country ball games and they'd play. Teams used to come from Milton. They used to go out there and help them play ball. Then they'd have ice cream supper on a Saturday night. And you could buy a great big cone of ice cream. Three dips on it maybe something like that, country made, you know, for a nickel. Well if you can think of anything else just mention it.

PFK: Okay, well how did people dress?

LH: Well at that time you'd be surprised they had long dresses, the women, below their, their ankles.

PFK: When was this, back in . . .

LH: Back in the thirties and forties. And then they had high top shoes the women wore then. We'd call 'em you know, shoes like, the top come up about like that. And if you saw a woman's ankle you seen something.

PFK: That was a big thing, huh?

LH: Yeah, that was a big thing then.

PFK: What do you think about the dresses they wear now?

LH: Well now they's a big difference, isn't there? Yeah, they had long dresses come clear down here. Long dresses, long sleeves. And, you know, uh, wore corsetts women then, you know, they wore corsetts. Filled 'em out you know. I remember when I went to work in Robertson's Store down here I was a old country, I didn't know what a corset was. I'd seen 'em but I didn't know what they was. I didn't know where they was in the store. And the first customer I had come in. I happened to be a standing right over the corsetts. They come in long boxes like this, you know, narrow boxes bout that long. And this lady said, uh, "I want to get a corsett." Why I didn't know what, really knew, why I knew what they was but I didn't know where they was. So I didn't even ask nobody to help me. And I saw 'em in these square boxes. I said what size lady? She said I want, I believe it was a forty. I just reached down there and picked up one and it was a forty. Yeah, they had high top shoes then and stockings. They didn't have anklets then. You didn't know what a anklet was. They only come up to along here. They was come up here to our knees. Ladies' underwear. They had winter underwear then as heavy as men would wear. Union suits made all together. We sold 'em here at the store. Ladies' underwear.

PFK: Did they have any trouble getting around in these long dresses?

LH: No sir, they could get along good. If they wanted to cross a creek (inaudible) they just reached down and grab 'er up like that. Take off. And then another thing the old ladies in the country had a petticoat underneath. They made a pocket to carry their money in. In that pocket. And they'd put their pocketbook in there. And I've had 'em come in the store here, and uh, they'd go over behind the counter and pull up their dress and get their

pocketbook out and pay me. They come out see. Yeah that was, and they had ladies' hats then. Oh its an awful experience a fellow ever went through with if you know.

PFK: Now we've talked about how the dresses changed, but how have people changed in the way they act?

LH: Well there's a big difference, big change there. You take back there in those days they people was just tickled to death to see you come and eat with 'em. You know what I mean? They'd cook you a big fine dinner. They'd have plenty too. They had these old women they was good cooks and they could just fix up anything and they had good fine meal. But today you don't ever see nobody. You know they don't even cook like they used to. You know what I mean? Just sandwiches maybe. But back there then they them old people now listen they enjoyed their living.

PFK: In otherwords they were friendly. . .

LH: Oh friendly as they could be. They'd want you to stay all night. Come out, they'd say don't go home tonight. Stay all night. Stay all night with us. Yeah. But today it's different. You know you don't, you're not invited that a way. But your living today is in your automobile isn't it? You know people just runs here and they're going yonder. They travel, on the go. They don't stay no time when they get to where they're going and then they're going again. And it's really why people enjoyed themselves back there. Why I don't believe they do today like they did back there. They have a good time but it's different, you know what I mea? They, they're on the go. You know about that you see for yourself. That's it. And you know if you're going someplace you don't stay there long when you get there, do you? You know what I mean they just get in a car and they're going again, night and day. People travel.

PFK: In otherwords people years ago took their time . . .

LH: Well you know that's the reason they lived to be old people. Because they went to bed early and they got up early. They went to bed with the chickens and when they went to crowing of a morning they got up. And they got up and done their day's work. And they enjoyed it. And they lived. And didn't have no, you didn't see nobody nervous then. They didn't know what nervous was because they would just take their rest. They didn't have anything on their mind much. Just live and work.

PFK: Did they work hard?

LH: Yeah they'd really work hard. They'd farm you know to raise their stuff. They'd get out there and sweat. But they enjoyed it. They'd come in and maybe have a big good old country dinner and he'd eat a great big meal. Maybe take out to the farm, I mean out on the farm. Hoeing the corn, cutting corn, cutting wheat and, uh, oats. They would, uh, come back in and have a big supper.

PFK: Then what? What would they do after the work was done?

LH: Well they'd work till dark. Stay right on the farm and have a late supper. And they would, uh, after come in and eat supper they'd sit down and rest. Take it easy, go to bed early. Get a good night's rest. And they're feeling good the next morning.

PFK: Do you think people had more stamina back then?

LH: I believe so, don't you?

PFK: People work an eight hour day now and they get tired.

LH: Well now they worked by golly daylight of a morning to dark at night. That would be at least twelve hours or fourteen. They called it a day. That was a day's work then. But this eight hour system. A lot of them can't take it that way, you know. But still though the factories are different from the old farm work, you know. (Here a question had

been asked as to belief in ghosts). You'd be by yourself. And you'd come through. Maybe you'd been to church or maybe you'd been to ball game or something late at night. And you could see something in the road. And the longer you, you'd think it was a ghost. And the longer you looked the surer he was. By then you could practically see his arms. And the longer you looked by golly there it was. Scare you. That's what you call a ghost, wouldn't it? And they had people at that time they'd put on these big white sheets. And get out and scare people. Looked like a ghost, you know. And they'd scare 'em. Buddy I'm telling you right now you'd pat 'em down pretty fast to get home. I don't know about that ghost business in the house. Where they had people lived there, you know, and they left and there was ghosts there, you know. But I never did think too much about it.

PFK: Did people believe it more than they do now?

LH: Yeah. Back there then the people believed, you know, that maybe something happened at this house and ther'd be an old ghost come there to remind you of things, you know. But I never did think much about it.

PFK: Well since we seem to have run out of subjects as well as tape, I just want to thank you Mr. Holley. It's been real interesting.