

Marshall University

Marshall Digital Scholar

0064: Marshall University Oral History
Collection

Digitized Manuscript Collections

1974

Oral History Interview: Wilcie L. Pierson

Wilcie L. Pierson

Follow this and additional works at: https://mds.marshall.edu/oral_history

Recommended Citation

Marshall University Special Collections, OH64-73, Huntington, WV.

This Book is brought to you for free and open access by the Digitized Manuscript Collections at Marshall Digital Scholar. It has been accepted for inclusion in 0064: Marshall University Oral History Collection by an authorized administrator of Marshall Digital Scholar. For more information, please contact zhangj@marshall.edu.



MARSHALL UNIVERSITY

HUNTINGTON, WEST VIRGINIA 25701

JAMES E. MORROW LIBRARY

ASSOCIATES

ORAL HISTORY

GIFT AND RELEASE AGREEMENT

I, Wilcie L. Pierson, the undersigned, of
Kanawha Co. So Charleston, County of Kanawha State
of West Virginia, grant, convey, and transfer to the James E.
Morrow Library Associates, a division of the Marshall University Foundation, Inc.,
an educational and eleemosynary institution, all my right, title, interest, and
literary property rights in and to my testimony recorded on April 4, 1974,
to be used for scholarly purposes, including study rights to Reproduction.

WLP Open and usable after my review
initial

 Closed for a period of years.
initial

 Closed for my lifetime.
initial

 Closed for my lifetime unless special permission.
initial

Date April 4, 1974

Wilcie L. Pierson
(Signature - Interviewee)

Kanawha Co. So. Char. W. Va.
Address

Date April 4, 1974

Betty Neely
So. Char. W. Va.
(Signature - Witness)

MARSHALL UNIVERSITY LIBRARIES



1170324871

INTERVIEW OF MRS. WILCIE PIERSON

This interview is taking place on April 4, 1974 in the home of Mrs. Wilcie Pierson who presently resides in Kenna Homes in So. Charleston.

Interviewer- Mrs. Pierson have you lived in W. Va. Most of your life?

Mrs. Pierson- Yes the biggest part of my life we've spent in West Virginia.

Interviewer- Where were you born?

Mrs. Pierson- In Gassaway West Virginia in Braxton County.

Interviewer- Gassaway, where is that from Charleston?

Mrs. Pierson- It's up Elk River about 80 mile.

Interviewer- Was this in a rural area where you were born and raised or is this in a populated area?

Mrs. Pierson- It was Gassaway and it is just a small little town and we lived about a mile below Gassaway town right on the main road.

Interviewer- Then your home was right on the main thorefare in the area.

Mrs. Pierson- Yes

Interviewer- When were you born?

Mrs. Pierson- April 1913

Interviewer- April 1913, Is your parents originally from West Virginia or are they from some other area?

Mrs. Pierson- Yes my Mother and Father were both vorn and raised at Gassaway.

Interviewer- Were they born and raised in the same house you lived in?

Mrs. Pierson- No, Mother lived next door to my Father they were neighbors all their school age years, they went to school together buty they weren't either one born at these two houses, they lived in other houses but it was near this same place.

Interviewer- Are you an only child?

Mrs. Pierson- No, I have one sister who is 6 years younger than I am.

Interviewer- What is her name and where does she live?

Mrs. Pierson- Her name is Virginia Rawson and she lives at Tornado, W. Va.

Interviewer- Are your parents still living?

Mrs. Pierson- My Father still lives. He lives with my sister now. My Mother expired 4 years ago.

Interviewer- The place where you were raised, was this on a farm?

Mrs. Pierson- Yes it was a farm.

Interviewer- Pretty good size.

Mrs. Pierson- Well where I lived it had been a big farm. My Grandfather and Grandmother came back from Parkersburg when Dad was just a baby. My Grandfather had bought a big lot of acreage probably hundreds of acres of it, right where the town of Cassaway is now but he had sold it off to firstone and then the other but, they got down until they had around about 25 acres that was the original home spot that they kept down through the years.

Interviewer- What was the occupation of your Grandfather?

Mrs. Pierson- Well he was mostly a farmer. I think he did thrash wheat for other farmers around. He had farmed the whole town of Cassaway back in his younger days so Grandmother said. There was only a house or two in that little town when they moved there. They had it all farmed and they tended it but his occupation was mostly a farmer.

Interviewer- What was the occupation of your Father?

Mrs. Pierson- Well my Father worked on Public works some. I don't know what all he did but I do know he went to Detroit before I was born and worked there for a sign company in Detroit, and after he and Mother married we all went to Detroit for 4 years then and then we came back to West Virginia.

Interviewer- Why did you move back to West Virginia?

Mrs. Pierson- Dad had a Brother who worked in Detroit too and his wife got homesick and she came back to West Virginia and bought a farm of 50 acres and it had two houses on it and after he bought it he got sick so he ask my

Daddy if he would buy half of the farm which my Father did, he bought half of the place which was 25 acres and thats when we moved back to West Virginia.

Interviewer- Why did you move back to West Virginia?

Mrs. Pierson- Dad had a brother who worked in Detroit too and his wife got homesick and she came back to W.Va. and bought a farm of 50 acres and it had 2 houses on it and after he bought it he got sick so he ask my daddy if he would buy half of the farm which my father did, he bought half of the place which was 25 acres and thats when we moved back to West Virginia.

Interviewer- Did your father farm when he came back here or what did he do as a livelihood?

Mrs. Pierson- No, they didn't farm much. There was quite a few smaller coal companys in that area within 3-4 miles of our home and they both worked in the mines and they worked several years before my father was hurt in the mines when I was 8 years old. He didn't work in them anymore after that but we moved to a coal camp after we had been back to W.Va. a while until he got hurt and after that we had to move back to the farm. He didn't get any compensation out of the injury and he wasn't able to work for a long time so naturally we moved back to the farm and between mother and the children and Dad what he could we did raise a garden and some chickens and a cow and we did have a horse after he got able to plow and things but we raised a garden and truck patches and of course we raised about everything we had because people them days didn't go th the store every week or day or two just once a month to get staple items about like coffee, sugar and soda and baking powders and of course flower, we didn't raise any wheat or anything like that. We raised corn and soy beans for the horse and cow and chickens and in the fall after the corn was gathered we took corn to the grists mill to have it ground for meal, which we always had our own corn bread like that.

Interviewer - What kinds of crops did you raise on the farm?

Mrs. Pierson - Well more or less just truck patches and a big garden.

Beans and lots of vegetable, potatoes and something for the animals to eat in the winter time. Mother canned everything that she could that we could raise and they preserved things and they picked berries and things like this that she could can for the winter.

Interviewer- What all kinds of things did you get from the wild that you canned or preserved besides berries?

Mrs. Pierson- Black berries and Huckleberries and occasionally you'd run into a raspberry batch but that was about all you got out of the wild to can.

Interviewer- How did you go about preserving meat?

Mrs. Pierson- Well they sorta salted it down. Of course you never killed hogs until late in the fall near Christmas time because back then it was real cold in the winter. We had no freezers or electric or anything you could freeze it. You either had to can some of it or salt and cure it with a special kind of salt you could treat the meat. I don't know what all it had in it. You put it in around the bone to cure it or some people smoked their meat in a smoke house. They had something they lite and it made a smoke and it would smoke the meat but I don't know just what it was I was younger then. The meat would freeze when you put it in the cellar house or in the smoke house and it would freeze solid because it was so cold back then. Its not like it was now the winters were cold.

Interviewer- Did you have many other kinds of meat besides pork?

Mrs. Pierson- Not to much besides the wild meat. The rabbits and squirrel or once in a while in the spring you'd kill a groundhog. A few neighbors once in a while would have a beef to kill and that's about the limit of the meat. If you didn't have your own you didn't go to the store and buy it. Chicken we raised those.

Interviewer- Did you and your Mon have your own cow and did you churn your own butter?

Mrs. Pierson- Yes when we had a cow we always took care of the milk and skimmed the cream off and churned the cream and had fresh butter and butter milk. Mother would make it out in the butter mold and make it look real fancy.

Interviewer- How did she make her butter?

Mrs. Pierson- You just let your milk sour until it clabbered and you have to know what your looking for when you fix milk. The milk has to sour before you can churn it and then you put it in the churn with a dasher in it and you churn it up and down for a half hour and that cream turns into butter. It comes to the top of the milk. You dip it out and wash it with water.

Interviewer- When did she salt it?

Mrs. Pierson- After you get all the water out of it to get the milk out of it. If you don't the butter will soon get old. But you put a little salt in it after you get all the water and milk washed out of it.

Interviewer- Can you rembember the first time you ever saw an automobile?

Mrs. Pierson- Well when we lived lived at Gassaway, after my Daddy was hurt in the mines there was some years there that he wasn't able to work in fact he didn't work any for quite a long while they was putting the state road up Elk River and I don't know how he got connected with it but anyway we moved back to Gassaway to the old Rawson home place sight along where the road was going through. DAd night watched on the steam shovel but you know as tthey was digging out the road with the steam shovel to make a road he night watched on that so we lived there a few years while they was putting the orad up the river and the first car that I can remember seeing was when I was at Gassaway when I was lets see about 12 or 13 years old. Them the first cars that I can remember seeing infact my Daddy bought an old roadster that just had 2 seats in it and Didn't even have a top on it from bome body

while we lived there and I expect it would make 20 mile an hour but we thought we were flying when we went out on that. He worked on it half of the time because it was broke down most of the time/

Interviewer- What did you think when you rode a car the first time?

Mrs. Pierson- Well we was really flyin and my Mothers brother bought a new car of course he lived with my grandfather, he hadn't married and he was up in years, but he bought a new car and it was one of those touring cars that had side curtians that you hooked on, you know it wasn't glass windows. But that was the fanciest car in town. He bought it because it was a new one Grandpa had the money to buy it with that was the fanciest car in town but before that Grandpa had horse and buggy and that house had really tried it he was really a I don't know watch call him but he could really travel but she hooked him up in that buggy and the buggy of course had a top on it and we came down highway. After he came and got some of us and a whole buggy load ya know he get three or four of us on there and then we'd just thought we was making about 90 but I expect we's making about 10 miles an hour. Then after we got to the car we was really flying. But I never forget that day any body ever rode him on. But now that was a thrill. It really was then cause I was travelin then. Because then going down the river in the boat was as fast as you could travel. There was a river right out in front of our house. Mother would never let us go down to the river but Dad had a boat once in a while we'd get to go out in it. That wasn't very ofte. We didn't dare go by ourself.

Interviewer- Can you remember the firsttime you ever saw an airplane?

Mrs. Pierson- I don't know, I can't remember when I was close to one. After we moved back to the farm I was 13 years old there used to be a man what they called a mail train. Hw saw a plane go over. One went toward Wilkins and one coming toward Charleston twice a day we coul see it up in the sky but I can't remember when I was ever close to one. After I was Married I'm sure

for a long time cause there wasn't many airports around there where we were at.

Interviewer- Can you remember the first time you were photographed with a camera?

Mrs. Pierson- Well I had some pictures made when i was only two weeks old. Mother took me to the studio at Cassaway we had our picture she and I with my dress that came clear down to the floor babys then wore big long dresses two or four feet long. Longer than the baby. They always hung clear down to the floor. I did have some pictures taken in Detroit while we was there. I was 4 years old then and I can't remember that.

Interviewer- How old were you before your family had a camera?

Mrs. Pierson- We didn't have one at our home in the country. We didn't have one till after I was married. I bought one after I was married and had a baby. You could give a \$1.98 for it. It was a good little camera.

Interviewer- How good was the mail in the country?

Mrs. Pierson- Well there was two trains that went out every day. One went up and two came down the river. Now this was two miles from where I lived. When we lived in the country. It was two miles from our house to the post office and the mail came on train. They'd throw it off there wasn't any stop right where the post office was at this time, they'd throw it off in a bag and they had a mail crane of a thing i think what they called it where they put the mail out and as they went by the man in the train he would grab this mail that was going on in their lever of a thing and caught it so it was just thrown off in the mail bag and the post master she would take it in and sort it out. That's the way we got our mail/ It costs 2¢ then to send a letter.

Interviewer- Did you live close to the Post Office?

Mrs. Pierson- Two miles down the creek to the railroad.

Interviewer- Is this at the same place where the store was?

Mrs. Pierson- No, there wasn't any store there. later on this post office this lady died that run the post office and they moved the post office about two miles further away up the road so we had to walk about two mile to the railroad and two mile up the river then on the railroad to get to the post office.

Interviewer- What was the name of the post office?

Mrs. Pierson- Dorphee

Interviewer- Do you remember the person who ran it?

Mrs. Pierson- Ninna tansman. She ran the post fffice there at bottom of the creek. I lived there I lived there close enought to the creek.

Interviewer- Did you our Mother or even your grandparents have any special home remedies that you might have had in your fanily? Maby say to get rid of say the worms? Do you recall any special remedies they may have used?

Mrs. Pierson- Well tehly used something out of a store for the wroms when people were wrmmy its Frys Vermfuge. Thats the nastiest tasting stuff that was put in a bottle. I'm sure. You'd taste it for three days after you took it. You couldn't eat anything before you took it or day after you took it. It was so nasty. They cñaimed it there was any grease or anything it done somethin to your insides if you had any grease or anything after you = took it. They made teas snake goot tea I don't know what all these things were for. Yellow root tea I think was for a sore throat. Mullin tea they made that for coughs

Interviewer- You ever make mullin tea?

Mrs. Pierson- No you just boil it well some fo the things you made it out after you just boil it down into a tea then you put sugar in it. Some of these things were for some things some was for others I don't remember all the remedies were for but I do remember some of the name they used.

Interviewer- What did your Mon use when you got a burn?

Mrs. Pierson- Well you just wet it and put some soda on it and that will draw the fire out of it. Mostly if you put some molasses on it would

draw the burn out.

Interviewer- Have you ever heard of or used in your family an asfitity bag?

Mrs. Pierson- No, there was a few children out to school where I went that wore those but we never had to where one. I don't know how come some people thought that if you wore one of them little hicks around your neck you didn't get sick. I don't know what happened but we didn't get in on that we didn't but they was the dirtiest little things . They hung around your neck all winter. The kids that had them of course we went to a company school about as old as we were and nobody went to doctor unless you was dying cause nobody could afford it and it was twelve miles to a doctor and there was no hospitals closer than Charleston. So nobody went to the hospit al unless they was just about dead. They had to get Dad to the hospital when he broke his back, but that was one of those things. That was something pretty bad.

Interviewer- What did you all do for headache or earache?

Mrs. Pierson- Well, I don't know. I know they used oil, but I don't know what kind it was. You heat some kind of oil, for one thing, but I just don't know what that was.

Interviewer- Do you remember any remedy for consipation?

Mrs. Pierson- No, No I don't

Interviewer- Did your family when they were planting gardens, plant by signs?

Mrs. Pierson- Oh, Yes. Everybody ha almanac. They went by the signs. They didn't plant by the signs for somethings because they didn't turn out right they said. So everbody went by the signs, the moon and wheter it was light moon or dark moon, you didn't plant in one or the other because when you planted it in the ground it would come to the top and get sun burned on them. I don't know why but I believe that was the light of the moon was when the moon was comeing up. You didn't plant anything that was under the ground, like potatoes because when they come up and get sunburned. for on the other hand if you planted them when the moon was going down, the grew so deep you couldn't hardly get them out from under the ground. we followe this too. not

only pur parents but, my husband, when we planted our garden and things. And we done it cause we thought there was a lot to it.

Interviewer- Have persons ever talked you out of this belief?

Mrs. Pierson- No, because I still believe in it. I believe it still holds true course a lot of these younger people bout like some of you younger people you don't believe that way. You can't convince the older falks that it isn't right the way they thought it was.

Interviewer-Did your family or you have any way of forcasting the weather by certain signs?

Mrs. Pierson- Yes, most of the old people liked to go out and look at the sky and look at the moon and they are pretty good weather profits they thought and which they still do.

Interviewer-Remember some of the things they looked for?

Mrs. Pierson- Well, the big halo around the moon and if the moon was hanging at a certain angle when it was in the quarter it was going to mean certain things corse I don't know to much about the weather forcasting I could tell when it was cloudy and when it was clear. But now they could tell, I mean, seem like something about it by watching the sun and hearing the frogs and things. But I'm not to up on that myself.

Interviewer- How did your family wash their clothes?

Mrs. Pierson- We didn't have any electric or washing machines, we lived on a big creek and we'd take the two washing tubs, a wash board and a big cake of soap and the lye, and we took these down to the creek. We had a place there and a bench and we'd take all these things to the creek and we'd build a fire under one of the tubs. And heat the water and then we'd wash the clothes and rub the clothes on the board. Then we got all the white ones washed and put a little bit of lye, a spoonful of lye int tub of water that was on the fire, and then we'd boil the white clothes in the lye water to get them white because we had no bleaches the at all. But we had a piece of a broom stick or something that we punched these things down in there and we kept turning

them over till Mother thought they was clean and we picked them out of there. We run them throught the other wash tub and then we would rinse them in two or three tubs of water to get that out but we , oh we had blueing to put in the last rinch water, put alittle blueing in the water to they said to help make them white which I've used blueing until the last 15 years my self in the wrench water.

Interviewer- Where did you get your soap?

Mrs. Pierson- Well a lot of people made soap. Mother never did make soap but some of our neighbors did. They made their soap out of thing well when they killed hogs or had the rinds off of the meat they saved that and old lard the put this in a kettle with lye and wood ashes.

SIDE TWO

Interviewer- Mrs. Pierson did your family go to church much?

Mrs. Pierson-Yes we went to church and Sunday School. we only had church about once a month a circut rider would come through a preacher about once a month to preach. We always had Sunday School in the school house we went to School in. Didn't have any churche there but all the things that happened there we went to the school house

Interviewer- What kind of church services did they have?

Mrs. Pierson- Well just plain old country singing and if somebody wanted to sigg a song he sung it and people shouted and we had some of the tounges people in that area and always had big service . Sometimes you'd get in a ^(sp)revical that would last for 6 weeks and you didn't get home by 9 O'clock, you was lucky if you got home by 120'clock and sometime they'd last for a month or more the revivals, but they really did a lot of good, a lot of people would get saved. If they got saved and wanted to be baptised in the winter they just went out and chopped a hole in the ice in the creek and baptised them. I've seen it done more than once. and We'd go to church

other places. There was another school house over a big mountain. A bunch of us would get together and walk over this mountain to the other school house. Which we called Beechwood. To revival and it would go on just like our school house did for weeks an end. Sometimes we'd go every night for a week and it would be three or four miles over there but we'd go. Sometimes the snow would be a foot or two deep but we'd go anyway. No body knew any difference. Nobody had any other way to go except o walk so every body went together.

Interviewer- What kind of light did you use when you were traveling at night walking? Did you have any lights?

Mrs. Pierson- Well the men that worked in the mines, they usually had carbide lights which that was a good light, corse you had to know how to work those carbide lights but some people had lanterns an oh the up to date ones sometimes would have a flashlight, But that had to be somebody up in the world because a flash light were expensive. I have seen a few of the older people would have a piece of pine that would have rasin in it you can set that on fire course if there was much wind it will blow it out but I seen him go along with that lite for light course it was dark in the country, there wasn't anything but the moon and if the moon was gone then you didn't have any light.

Interviewer- Did the church that you attended believe in healing? Did you ever see anybody healed.

Mrs. Pierson- Not particularly, No, I guess some believed in that but most several around therespoke in tounges, You know the unknown tongues they would speak in those quite often some of the people, not all but some of them did. There was a family or two around that spoke in the unknown touhge but I cant remember of them having a healing service back the.

Interviewer- What happened when somebody got real sick in somebodys home? Did they ever have a group of people get together and pray for them?

Mrs. Pierson- WELL yes of course there was always some christians around, corse my parents back when I was young , they were not christians but they

were good to go sit up with sick folks. everybody in the country then they looked after their neighbor if anybody got sick everybody went in and took turns and sit up with them and let the family go on to bed. I remember when one of our neighbors had typhoid fever one of the sons, two died before it was over but he was sick, well he looked like death warmed over and they didn't know whether he was going to make it or not but my Mother and Father was there and set up and set up and set up with him because he was real bad off and they didn't know but what he was going to die. But they was real good to help each other

Interviewer- Where did you go to school?

Mrs. Pierson- Well I started to school when we lived in a coal camp on Middle Creek. I just got old enough the to go to school, but then after D^Ad was hurt we moved back to the ocuntry and I had a mile to walk to school to the school house this one little one rooms school house thats where me and my husband both got our education. and it was they had grade school and it was first grade up to the eighth and I don't know there was probably 30 or 40 pupils there from the first grade up to the 8th grade. One teacher did all the teaching and they had one bench up front and when it was time for your class to have their lesson the teacher would call you up and you'd discuss your lesson with him of course the whole school was hearing it you know just one big room not to big at that but surely not like it is now.

Interviewer- How long did you attend school?

Mrs. Pierson- I went to school until I was 15 years old. I quit when I was 15 I went to work. I didn't finish grade school quite, I was in the seventh when I quit

Interviewer- Why did you quit before you finished the 8th grade?

Mrs. Pierson- Well things were pretty bad at hour house, I mean financially. Didn't have anything much to go on and DAd didn't have much work and I quit school one day at noon, o course we knew that this was coming up, one of our neighbors at the time was keeping a boarding house at one of the coal camps

up the railroad. I was telling a little while ago, He kept a boarding house for the miners stayed some of the miners lived out of town Oh I guess they had 15 men stayed there and boarded there so I went to stay with them for a while I made \$3.00 a week. I got up about 5 O'clock in the morning to help pack all those lunch buckets and wash all the dishes and cooked a big breakfast, back them days you cooked big meals for the miners course they worked hard.

Interviewer- How Old were you when you were married?

Mrs. Pierson - I was 20 when I got married.

Interviewer- How long did you date before you got married?

Mrs. Pierson- Well I met my husband when I was 14 years old. Of course we wrote more or less the most of the time because he was older than I was 9 years. He worked away from home. His home was there in the same vicinity but he was done gone from home and was on public works so he come back once in a while but then later along I went away to work but kinda just hit and missed each other but we did write for 6 years before we got married.

Interviewer- Tell me about your wedding day or the day preceeding your wedding day

Mrs. Pierson- Well he was working then in the coal fields over on big coal river at Hicoal and of course prior to this his father had died and left him with three of his brothers and sisters to kinda finish out their education and look out after his mother so he moved. well he took care of his Mother up until she passed away and took care of these three children well that was one reason we didn't get married any sooner because he was obligated to them or felt like he was until she finally remarried an old fellow but she didn't live to long after that buty anyway he had gone back to the mine after she had died and uh he was working there so he wrote and ask me if I wanted to get married I was back home then I had been away working but had come back to my mother so we decided we would get married it was on the 3rd of July so he came home on the 3rd or the 2nd well it was about 5 mile form my home to where there was a minister lived at Elkhurst so that morning we was going up there on the 3rd

to get married we got up pretty early because we had about 5 mile to walk. Two down the river and almost 3 mile up the railroad to the preachers house and we didn't even know if he has home or not you just took a chance he was. And it was sprinkling rain that morning and I was all dressed up in my new outfit but he me and him and mother. Mother went with us to get married. It sprinkled rain on us all the way . We looked like three little drowned rats when we got almost anyway. We got there just about they had dinner on the table of course they ask us to eat we knew them He was one of the preachers that came by and preached at our little schoolhouse once in a while so they was ready to eat and they had a man and his wife there they had dropped in. well tjej was going to eat with tem so they invited us to eat, course I wasn't one bit hungry but my husband he never turned down food so he went in and eat with them before we got married so he ate his lunch with them and we waited tell he got through and he married us. We had to walk all this way back but it had quit raining . we looked so pretty it had quit raining. We walked back home she had prepared quite a bit of stuff but I was so excited I didn't know whether we were going to have anything to eat when we got back home or not. She fixed up a real good supper and of course I still wasn't a bit hungry. I was living on love then but by husband sit down and eat a big meal that evening but his sister lived out on the hill at the old home place where he was raised so she was going to have a party that night if you didn't have something special they always seranaded you or belled you so she thought if she'd cook us up a party and invited all the young people in that they wouldntseranade us so thats what she did. He gave her some money and she made some cakes and had some drinks and invited all the young people and some of the old, they was in on it toosome of them were pretty young so she had had us a party and they played games course we was already worn out we had $2\frac{1}{2}$ miles to walk back to mothers old home place after we'd already walked 10 mile that day. So we was really fresh for the party. We stayed at his sisters that night and we walked back down to mothers the next morning and he

had a guy coming to pick him up the next day to take us to Highcoal in a car. Course my husband had no car but this guy was supposed to pick us up that was we had 3 mile to walk the next morning to get to the car so you had to have good walking material or you didn't make it back in them days. No body had a car in them areas. Course this was in the coal camps, this was over on coal river, where we moved, but no body around there owned a car in the country where we lived. Nobody could afford one to start with.

Interviewer- What was your husbands name?

Mrs. Pierson- Stanley Pierson

Interviewer - Was there much moonshining back in those days in the mountains there?

Mrs. Pierson - Well I guess there was, some people made it. I didn't know to many of them back before I met your daddy. My husband I know made moonshine but that was back before I almost knew him. Back during the depression a lot of perple made it which we got moved about the time of the depression or about time the depression was over and everybody was hard up with no jobs and no money they'd do anything for a little bit of money so my husband did make some whiskey because like I say they was people that would buy it if they could get it.

Interviewer - Did the family have it pretty rough during the depression?

Mrs. Pierson - Yes we did we had it real rough and my daddy wasn't too able to work at that time and there just waan't any work. I know he got a job on the WPA back while I was still home while I was a teenager and he walked 11 miles to work to the job that he was on he was a time keeper on the WPA. It was over beyond Clay at Maycill and Ma'd start way before daylight of a morning and get home way after dark at night but it was a job, I don't remember what he made. It wasn't much but it was a job.

Interviewer - As kids what did you do as leisure time activities as games, what did you play, things like that?

Mrs. Pierson - Well we lived on this creek and it was cold and the creek stayed froze over all winter and we skated in the winter time, they was big holes of water that would freeze over. You could have a peck of fun with that. One family they lived in front of us across the creek, they had about 12 children, didn't take long to gether up a gang of people to go skating or sleigh riding cause we didn't have boughten sleds. They'd make us some sleds out of some wood you know but we had just as much fun as if they'd come out of the store. And in the summer time of course we'd go in swimmin in these big holes of water and we'd go mountain tea hunting, go to the mountains and find the nountain tea that had these little berries on it. In the fall there was lots of Chestnut trees back then, big chestnut trees dozens of trees 3 foot through you know and in the fall a whole bunch of us, would gather up and go back on these ridges to gather up chestnuts, cause some of them would be in the burrs yet and some of them would be out of the burrs when they hit the ground. You could pick up all you wanted to stamp out of the burrs or all you wanted to carry home, course there was lots of hickory nuts then so we didn't have any movie to go to then, about the only place to go was to church and sunday school and once in a while they'd have a singing school. They was several people in the neighborhood that could sing pretty well that knew some music and they'd try to teach some of us dumber ones how to sing some music.

Interviewer - How many children did you and your husband have?

Mrs. Pierson - We had two children, a boy and a girl.

Interviewer - What were their names?

Mrs. Pierson - Weldon and Oleta - Our son went to the service for 4 years, enlisted in the Air Force and spent a year and a half in Germany and came back and then went to college and finished up with a masters and at this time he is Vice - Principal of a school and the daughter she went to business college and worked in an office and worked for several years until after

she got married. Oh another thing we did back when times were so hard, they was lots of huckleberries back on some of the rigges way, they were 3-4 miles from our home and you did most anything for a little bit of money and of course money was scarce back in the depression times and me and mother and dad and my sister we'd go to the huckleberry fields to pick huckleberries and we'd pick all day and carry these about 3-4 mileshome and the store keeper, the one that owned the store that we went to she bought just about all we could take to her and we sold them for 25¢ a gallon. It was, lets see it was about 4 miles from our house to the store and 3-4 mile from our house to the huckleberry patch so we walked about seven to eight miles to carry those berries for 25¢ a gallon and anybody thats never picked huckleberries doesn't know how long it takes to pick a bucket full especially a 2½ gallon bucket but we did that because there was just some things that you just had to have. We did this for a little bit of money. If you had very many chickens you could take some of your eggs to the store and she'd give you somethings out of the store for the eggs. We usually had one pair of shoes a year course it was always cold in the winter. Well everybody men and women wore long underwear in the winter time and grand mother she lived at our house part of the time, she made her home supposed to be with her daughter in Michigan but during the summer she'd visit her children which she had 6 and my father was the baby one of the family of her family and she seemed like she wanted to spend more time with our family and we were the poorest ones of the family really but she'd knit us mittens for winter to help keep us warm she did a lot of hand work she was a beautiful seamstress. She knitted and crocheted and did all kind of embroidery work she could make toboggans and things like that, just small things, piece quilts, she at time of her death she was at our home. She wanted to come to her sons for Christmas and she died the week after Christmas. Just so be that she was

at our house in the country.

Interviewer- What was some of the special foods that your mother or perhaps your grandmother cooked?

Mrs. Pierson - I never did eat any of my grandmothers cooking because she just visited with us. I can't remember anything special that mother fixed, of course she baked light bread, we never bought light bread in the store, but she made light bread in the summer when it was warm and course she baked cakes and cookies and things like that for us, sweet cakes she called them. We didn't have any fancy foods because we were poor people. Very poor people because for years dad just didn't make much money, for a long time he really wasn't able to be on the job. We just go along. I don't know how we really did make it at times during the depression, so thats one reason I went to work and help out a little bit at home.

Interviewer - What kind of heating stoves and cooking stoves did you all have?

Mrs. Pierson - We just had a cooking stove in the kitchen we just burned wood in it. Mother wouldn't burn coal in it because she said it got her pots and pans so black so she always wanted to burn wood in the stove, we had no gas we had oil lights, we didn't have a chimney in our house. We had just a heating stove in the living room. It wasn't a burnside stove it was a smaller stove than most of the old big burnside most of the people knew about but we had some seams of coal there in the hills there close my home and the men they'd open up little drifts there they'd call them, little coal mines back in the hill and the neighbors would go in and shoot this coal out with dynamite and dig it out and furnish the neighbors then their own coal and then you'd saw the wood and mix coal and wood then together to have the heat in the homes. Course people that had fire places would saw big logs and put in their fire places but we didn't have a chimney in our house.

Interviewer - Did they make sorghum around where you lived?

Mrs. Pierson - Yes we raised, we didn't have cane every year, no body hardly raised a patch every year but it was pretty hard to tend to, anybody that planted cane always dreaded it because when it came up it always looked like grass and its hard to thin and hard to hoe the first time around ewpecially. Its a lot of work to getting cane ready to be put into molassas but there was one of our neighbors that had some molassas making pans and the mill that he took from place to place to make it for people, so the neighbors would go into gather when molassas making time would come and they would haul their cane to the mill whenever he had it set if it was around within a radius of a mile or two and every body got theirs made up at one time, I mean each family separate of course. But that was a fun time when molassas making time came although it was a lot of work you had to strip the cane after it was raised, take the blades off and then you had to cut it and haul it into the mill and then it had to be ground through the mill to get the juice all out and then it had to be boiled down in the pans. The molassas maker, he knew how to do that but it was a big time in the fall for everybody to go to the molassas making. It uaually lasted unill they had ground up all thay had for that day and then they'd have it the next day.

Interviewer - Did you make a party out of it?

Mrs. Pierson - Yes, we always had a lot of young people and a lot of old people too. It was all lit up with pans with the fire under them and it was lit and of course the poor old horse he went round and round and round course there was nothing by motor, it was just poor old horse had ground all this mill work, put all the cane through to grind the juice out of it.

Interviewer - What kinds of beds did you have?

Mrs. Pierson - Well I think everybody had a feather bed or two we had only

one at our house, me and my sister slept in it but it had came down through the family. We had had it ever since I can remember. But they were good and warm to sleep in in the winter. Course it got cold when the fire went out at night and you froze nearly in the morning, maybe the snow would kinda sift through on you but we had plenty of covers but we'd get up in the morning, and we had a water bucket of course, we had no running water in the house, we got water from a couple of springs there on our place but the water bucket would be froze over by morning, course you had no heat in the house after the fire died down in the stove, it had a little fire in it but it wouldn't keep the house warm, and you couldn't stay up and keep the fire going all night, if you did you didn't ge any sleep.

Interviewer - Did you or your parents make quilts or have quilting parties or things like that?

Mrs. Pierson - No mother didn't , mother was too particular, we had some neighbors who couldn't quilt atoll, they could put them together but she wouldn't let them piece her quilt, she made some of her own but some of the neighbors did make quilts some of them that had big families, one quite close, she had about 12 children and they could kick out a few quilts every winter, course she didn't care as long as they were sewed together, you could go and help her quilt any day in the week you wanted to but now when in the fall when it came time to make apple butter and things the neighbors would get together when you was getting ready to make apple butter the next day, course you had to peel up 3-4 bushel of apples to make a kettle of apple butter, so the neighbors would gather in and help each other peel the apples and get them ready for the big day of making the apple butter. Sometimes they would make 2 kettles of apple butter at the same time but it took all day to stir up a big kettle of apple butter. You cooked the apples and dumped some in and cooked the apples and add some more apples and when it

got so far along you could put the sugar in. You had to stir it constantly with fire under the kettles of course. The same way with bean stringens. They raised lots of beans and they'd gather in and string beans, jut bushels of them, in them days they didn't seem like theres any bugs on them like there is now so they would string beans and make leather britches, you know they dried the beans to make leather britches or fodder beans course a lot of them was canned and lots of them was pickled, now the big families like this one in pasticular they would pickle nearly a 30 gallon barrel of corn or beans or kraut for winter, it would take them that much to last them through the winter, maybe it wouldn't last them, course my mother didn't put up that much cause there was just 2 of us children. We didn't eat that much but she always pickled some.

Interviewer - I want to thank you very much for the interview. This interview was made on April 4, 1974 by Weldon Pierson.