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### Oral History Interview: Florence Price McNeel and Nancy McNeel Currenee

Florence Price McNeel

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Date April 29, 1974

Nancy McNeel Currence  
(Signature - Interviewee)

407 - 41st St Apt 102  
Address

Charleston WV - 25304

Date April 29, 1974

[Signature]  
(Signature - Witness)



ORAL HISTORY

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Date April 29, 1974

Florence Price McNeel  
(Signature - Interviewee)

1316 Virginia St.  
Address  
Charleston, West Virginia

Date April 29, 1974

Rebecca [Signature]  
(Signature - Witness)



1

INTERVIEWER: I'm Becky Tokarcik, a graduate student in history at Marshall University. I'm about to interview Mrs. Florence Price McNeel and Mrs. Nancy McNeel Currence about their early experiences in Marlinton, West Virginia. Mrs. Currence is, or has been until a few years ago, a life-long resident of Marlinton. Mrs. McNeel lived in Marlinton for the first twenty-six years of her life before moving to Charleston with her husband. Both have been school teachers. Mrs. McNeel found that teaching school was not her bag so she is presently a social service supervisor for the Division of Crippled Children's Services. Mrs. Currence is a retired school teacher, but she loved it. We are doing the interview in Mrs. McNeel's apartment in Charleston. Today is April 29, 1974.

INTERVIEWER: Now, Mrs. Currence, you want to tell us about the history of Marlinton?

CURRENCE: Uh, the best place to find out about the history of Marlinton would be in the Price history. Mrs. McNeel's great-grandfather wrote the history of Pocahontas ... hmm?

McNEEL: Grandfather.

CURRENCE: Oh, grandfather (chuckle), wrote the history of Pocahontas. Uh, the first people, the first white men that were ever in Marlinton, came in 1749, ... uh, two men from Virginia named Marlin and Sewell. Uh, they had heard that a stream flowed toward the west, and they came out to look for that stream. Now, uh, do you want me to tell about the ....

INTERVIEWER: I want to check it first.

[pause to check mechanical problem]

CURRENCE: Well, these two men stayed there for a year or so, or a year and ...uh, then supposedly fell out over religion. Marlin went back to Virginia and Sewell, uh, went on down through Greenbrier and to the mountain that bears his name and supposedly was killed by the Indians on Sewell Mountain. Uh, but the name, Marlin's Bottom, was given to the village. There were two people who lived there: two farmers named Yaeger and McLocklin. And then, uh, after the timber industry opened up in Pocahontas County, the uh, uh, railroad was to come in. Whether it was the C&O or the B&O they didn't know which one. But the, uh, some promoters from the northern part of the state decided to establish a new town, and, which was Marlin's Bottom. Later they changed the name to Marlinton. And, uh, uh, they bought the farms and laid out the town - it's laid out beautifully in streets and avenues, like most little towns aren't. And then they gave the land for the, the courthouse and for the hospital. And the railroad came in sometime in the late - around 1900; wasn't it, the railroad? The courthouse was moved to Marlinton from Huntersville, the county seat, about 1897. And then the railroad was built through there which opened up the county to the lumber industry. And, uh ....

INTERVIEWER: You said earlier that the courthouse didn't exactly get close to the railroad?

CURRENCE: Well, the courthouse was built ..., they thought that the railroad would, uh, would, the B&O would come in and would be

following Knapp Creek. And the uh, so that they gave the land for courthouse, and it is in ... in the upper end of the town instead of the business section, ... because the railroad that came in was the C&O which came, followed the Greenbrier River instead of ....

INTERVIEWER: The one that comes up through Ronceverte?

CURRENCE: Uh huh. From Ronceverte ... to ... Durbin.

McNEEL: From Ronceverte up to ... Durbin; follows the Greenbrier River.

CURRENCE: It's a scenic railroad now, or it carries freight but it doesn't ....

INTERVIEWER: The one that goes up past Shaver's Fork, er Shaver's Mountain. Up through there?

CURRENCE: That's the Cass track.

McNEEL: Well, that's the Cass Railroad. But this is the, this railroad just follows the Greenbrier River all the way from Ronceverte up to Durbin, ... follows the river. And the last couple of summers they've had scenic cruises - you know, tours periodically that you can take up.

CURRENCE: It's a beautiful, uh ....

INTERVIEWER: Well, the reason I was asking was because we were hiking up in that area and we were hiking along a railroad bed, and I was trying -

CURRENCE: Oh no, no.

McNEEL: Well, that's your old log trails.

CURRENCE: They're log trains.

McNEEL: That's your old log trains.

CURRENCE: See, it was big lumber industry through there.

McNEEL: Uh huh.

CURRENCE: The -

McNEEL: And if you take, ... I guess it's the long trip up the Cass Railroad goes up to Shaver's Fork, doesn't it; up to the top of the mountain, isn't that -

CURRENCE: Yeah, but I don't think that's - it goes up to uh, what was Spruce.

McNEEL: Was Spruce, right.

CURRENCE: But there were log trains all over through there, but then they were all taken up after ... logging industry folded.

INTERVIEWER: That what made Marlinton a big town? Is it all gone now, all the logging? Don't they do any ....

CURRENCE: All the tim-, all the timber, no. No there's, there, there've been two tanneries in the county and there used to be the West Virginia Pulp and Paper Company up at Cass. But there's no industry much other than ... never has been much industry in Pocahontas County.

INTERVIEWER: Coal?

CURRENCE: Oh, we don't have any coal mines.

McNEEL: Un uh, no, no.

CURRENCE: We're not in the coal fields.

McNEEL: No, no coal mines, no ... no industry of anything, really.

INTERVIEWER: Maybe that's why everyone went to school?

CURRENCE: Possibly.

INTERVIEWER: Now, I asked you a while ago who was the oldest

family? Which one of your - you said the Prices?

CURRENCE: Well, the Prices came - now, my ancestors came from down in the Southern - which are her ancestors, too - in the Southern part of the county in ... uh, oh, seventeen .... When did they live ... these people were there in forty-nine. Sixty-five, seventeen sixty five. It was ten, about ten years before the Revolution that they came. And they were McNeels that came.

INTERVIEWER: 1765 -

CURRENCE: And that's her married name.

McNEEL: I don't re- .... You remember the date that the Prices came over? Course, they lived there a while and then -

CURRENCE: They lived there and then he went back to uh -

McNEEL: Then he went back to Virginia.

CURRENCE: Mount Clinton.

McNEEL: Mount Clinton, right.

CURRENCE: And then came back.

McNEEL: Uh hum. And, uh, but when he came back was when they were all ... young people cause -

CURRENCE: Yeah.

McNEEL: Cause they all ... as I told you the tale that they came across the mountains with three wagons, but two of them were full of books and one full of children.

INTERVIEWER: Right.

McNEEL: And, uh, so they already had their family established when they came ..., you know, before they even came back, and I suppose that's when he came back as a circuit preacher.



CURRENCE: And her grandmother was a Randolph of Virginia.

INTERVIEWER: She told me that and was telling me something about one of her ... cousins, was it? ... the one that went to Philadelphia ... to school.

McNEEL: Yeah, that was Grandma Price.

CURRENCE: Oh, that was-

McNEEL: Uh huh, that ... the, yeah. She ... she went ... I think she went to school in Philadelphia, I'm pretty sure she did. And that uh, uh, then they had ~~all~~ lost their money by then and, uh, were sitting around, quietly, hungry, and Grandma thought it would be more sensible to teach school than to starve to death. But they practically disinherited her because school teaching was not a very high-up profession at that time. But, uh, ....

CURRENCE: And any woman working was ...

McNEEL: And working, right. You were, uh, you just sat at home and were a lady, and she thought that it was better to go out and work rather than sit at home and starve. And uh, that's what she did.

INTERVIEWER: But you all went to school. You all worked.

McNEEL: Oh yeah, by the time, by the time we ... this is my grandmother.

CURRENCE: This is her grandmother.

McNEEL: But by the time we came along ... and were going away to college, and anybody uh, asked you what you, what you wanted to be, and Daddy said you can be anything you want as long as you teach school. So there wasn't much choice there. You went away

and you took ... took the course preparatory to teaching school. Because my older sister was very talented in music and wanted to do something with her music, and Daddy said, "All right, you go ahead and finish college and get your teacher's certificate, then you can go on to do whatever you want to." But of course ... at that time then, you uh, just went ahead and taught school, you didn't go any farther. But, uh ....

INTERVIEWER: But you -

McNEEL: You, you, you had, uh, you had your choice of what you wanted to do so long as you taught school ... is what it amounted to.

INTERVIEWER: I'm not getting confused on all the family and people. (laughter) but, course, I can't even keep my own straight. You say, his sister was a doctor ... is that the one? Yo-

McNEEL: Oh. In my father's family.

INTERVIEWER: Your father's sister?

McNEEL: Right. There was uncle .... There were three doctors: Doctor Jim Price, Doctor Norman Price, and Doctor Susan Price. And a brother, Andrew, was a lawyer; and Calvin, my father, was the editor of the Pocahontas Times.

INTERVIEWER: So did Susan have, your Aunt Susan, have to get her teaching certificate first before -

McNEEL: No, no, no -

CURRENCE: That was different.

McNEEL: No, no, that was before -

CURRENCE: This was in her generation and -

McNEEL: In my generation.

CURRENCE: That's the generation before her.

McNEEL: Now in her generation, my generation was the one that had to all teach school because we had uh ..., although several of them were nurses, too. But everyone of them - Agnes and Margaret taught school, Helen taught school; Frances and Jean and the others were all nurses - Julia - were all nurses so that you either ... They either taught school or were nurses in that ....

INTERVIEWER: Wonder what changed things?

McNEEL: Well, that's another generation. It wasn't ... it, it, It was all right to teach, ...t- ... teaching profession -

CURRENCE: Before the Civil War and immediately after the Civil War, ladies didn't work.

McNEEL: And they didn't teach and uh, ... teaching -

CURRENCE: And they certainly didn't teach. Well, they didn't do anything.

McNEEL: And, and nursing was a, was a lower profession. You didn't -

CURRENCE: Oh yes, yes.

McNEEL: You just didn't uh, ... just didn't do it.

INTERVIEWER: Weren't most of the nurses male at that time?

McNEEL: No.

INTERVIEWER: Way back, I mean, before the -

McNEEL: No, I don't -

CURRENCE: No.

McNEEL: Never heard of a male back then -

CURRENCE: No, I never heard of a male nurse.

McNEEL: No, they were all women.

INTERVIEWER: O.K. ... I still think its odd that every woman in that family, or all the women went to college? Not really? Strikes me funny .... Now, you went to college. Would you tell us... how you ... what you told me about getting on the train -

McNEEL: To ride down -

INTERVIEWER: - because that's interesting.

McNEEL: Well, I went to Flora McDonald College in Red Springs, North Carolina, which is a woman's college. And to get there you left Marlinton on the four o'clock train and went to Ronceverte. And then you could get the train out of Ronceverte later that night for Richmond, and you spent the night on the train and you got to Richmond the next morning early. Then you spent all day in Richmond and could get a train out of Richmond the next night down the Atlantic ... what's that, uh, Atlantic Coast Line, Atlantic Coast Line, ... to Fayetteville, North Carolina. You got there on about ten o'clock in the next morning. Then you got off at Fayetteville and took a, another train to Red Springs, which was just thirty or forty miles away - but it was a branch line - so that it took you about two days to get from Marlinton to Red Springs, North Carolina.

INTERVIEWER: What did you study when you were in college?

McNEEL: Oh, I majored in Latin and Chemistry and minored in English and Math.

INTERVIEWER: You had two majors and two minors. Did you do the same?

CURRENCE: Well, I had English and History, and French and ..., I

don't know what my other (chuckle), I only had French ,,, uh ...  
the minor.

INTERVIEWER: And this was when you finished up at Morgantown, the  
University. Was that common, to have two majors and two minors?  
Or is that something you just did?

CURRENCE: Well -

McNEEL: Well, if you had enough hours, I mean, you know. You just  
have to have a certain number of hours.

CURRENCE: If you had a certain number of hours --

McNEEL: And --

CURRENCE: - would give you -

McNEEL: You had to have special permission to take that many hours.  
And normally you took, I forget what, sixteen hours or something.  
I always took eighteen or twenty. Wasn't anything else to do at  
this girls school except go to class.

CURRENCE: Well, I went to a girl's school in Virginia, but really  
it was easier to get there than it was to get to Morgantown, you  
see. But I got tired of the confinement.

INTERVIEWER: Did they lock you in after dark?

CURRENCE: Oh, we had a --

McNEEL: Oh yes.

CURRENCE: - list of boys that we could write to, ten. You couldn't  
see any of them, except on very special occasions, un- ... with a  
chaperon. And, uh, they were very .... You couldn't even go down  
town without, unless you went with a group.

INTERVIEWER: What was the name of that -

CURRENCE: Mary Baldwin, in Staunton.

McNEEL: In Staunton.

INTERVIEWER: Was that a -

CURRENCE: Girls' school.

INTERVIEWER: All church schools, church-oriented?

CURRENCE: Church-oriented.

McNEEL: Yes, they're church-oriented. But Flora McDonald, you could go downtown. It was in a town of about 2000 people, I reckon. Red Springs was a small town. And you could go down on Monday afternoon. Now we had Monday the holiday because they didn't want us studying on Sunday for Monday classes. So we didn't have any classes on Monday, and we started classes on Tuesday. Right. And Monday afternoon you could go downtown and ....

CURRENCE: I don't think we could go to the library on Sunday. I think it was closed.

McNEEL: Uhh. Oh no, you didn't do any kind of studying.

CURRENCE: You weren't supposed to be studying.

McNEEL: No, no.

INTERVIEWER: What did you do on Sunday?

CURRENCE: Rested. Went to church and rested.

McNEEL: You went to church Sunday morning and then -

CURRENCE: And Sunday night.

McNEEL: - then Sunday afternoon you walked around the campus, is all I know.

CURRENCE: Well, we went to our church Sunday night.

McNEEL: But, uh, then, uh, you never went off the campus any other

time and you could have a date by special permission. But I was so many hundred miles from home, I didn't know anybody. So I never had any ... any dates. And there was two or three girls I knew ... sneaked out of the window after dark and went riding ... with the boys.

CURRENCE: And these were college people.

McNEEL: And uh ... yeah. And if they had gotten caught, they would have -

CURRENCE: Shipped out.

McNEEL: They would have been sent home.

CURRENCE: Well, when I went to Morgantown, I left in the morning at ten o'clock on the train. The roads were so bad you couldn't drive. I ... we went as far as - that was about ten and at noon we were in Durbin where we ate lunch and then we got a train for Elkins. And arrived at five o'clock in the afternoon - and this was sixty-five miles from Marlinton. And then the next morning, after spending the night, we'd get up and get to Morgantown about noon. Later we found out we could take taxis to Grafton and get there in one day, which was remarkable. It ... (laughter), to school.

INTERVIEWER: Cost you more money in the taxis?

McNEEL: When they ... they pooled resources.

CURRENCE: We combined. There would ... there would be at least four taxis.

McNEEL: See, cause a lot of people were going to the University from Pocahontas County, so that you have, uh, you could have several taxis. Four or five of you split the taxi fare; it didn't

amount to much.

CURRENCE: Well, it wasn't any more than spending a night at a hotel.

McNEEL: Oh no, it couldn't ... amount to that.

CURRENCE: And because of the poor roads they didn't have too many cars, but they had cars as early as 19- oh, at least by 1910, they had cars in Marlinton. But I can remember it was such a novelty, I'd dash to the front gate to see a car go by. And then I also lived when it was a novelty to see the, the airplanes.

McNEEL: Oh heavens yes.

CURRENCE: I don't suppose we saw any of them until after World War I.

McNEEL: No. (pause.) But I, I don't know why, uh, but every Sunday night everybody went to the station to meet the train.

CURRENCE: Everybody went; that was part of the tr-, social life of the town.

INTERVIEWER: You went to the trai-

McNEEL: Sunday night. It was just Sunday night.

CURRENCE: Train. Well, your papers would come in.

McNEEL: Was that it?

CURRENCE: Yes.

McNEEL: I, I never .... But every Sunday night almost everybody in town -

CURRENCE: Everybody in town.

McNEEL: - went up town and, uh, waited until the train came up that night. And uh, and that was the, that was just, just routine.



CURRENCE: Uh huh.

McNEEL: Uh huh.

CURRENCE: High spot of the -

McNEEL: Every Sunday evening. And then of course, Saturday night everybody came, went to town. Everybody came to town on Saturday night. And from all over the county, they'd come. (laughter)

CURRENCE: That's been the custom up until this year, And now the stores are closing on Saturday.

McNEEL: They're closing on Saturday?

CURRENCE: On Saturday night.

McNEEL: I ... well, they ....

INTERVIEWER: What do they do?

CURRENCE: They have another night during the week. Well, people just don't come into town like they used to.

INTERVIEWER: As a matter of fact, when I was up there two years ago they had the stores closed. That must have been -

CURRENCE: Well, the little town did-

INTERVIEWER: - that was Friday night.

McNEEL: Oh, sure. Saturday night was the night that they used to stay open, but, of course, at that time people couldn't just ... didn't have the cars. They just didn't come in every day in the week like they do now. They, they'd come in -

CURRENCE: They'd come and do all their shopping.

McNEEL: - on a Saturday and do their shopping -

CURRENCE: And visiting.

McNEEL: - and visiting and everything. And Saturday was the big

day. Now they can just come in anytime and its, uh, so that ...  
uh, its ....

CURRENCE: Uh hmmm.

McNEEL: But I, I didn't realize that they were closing them on  
Saturday.

CURRENCE: It's one other night, maybe Thursday night, they're  
open.

McNEEL: They're open.

INTERVIEWER: Oh, they're getting "big city" on you?

CURRENCE: Yes. They're closed on Wednesday.

INTERVIEWER: All right. You girls got out of sch-, college -  
you, what?, graduated in 1930?

McNEEL: 1930, I graduated.

CURRENCE: 28 ... 28...

INTERVIEWER: 28?

CURRENCE: 27? 28? 28?

McNEEL: Yeah, that's about right.

INTERVIEWER: And you started teaching at Richwood?

McNEEL: I taught two years in Richwood, uh huh, when I graduated.

INTERVIEWER: And Mrs. Currence, you said -

CURRENCE: I started teaching right in Marlinton High School.

INTERVIEWER: Marlinton High School, In history.

CURRENCE: In history. And had a marvelous principal by the name  
of Mister Douglas McNeel who was no kin to us. There are two  
families of McNeels that uh, lived there. And both came before the  
American Revolution. And Louise McNeel Pease, the poetess, is of

the other family from Buckeye.

McNEEL: She's his daughter.

CURRENCE: She's his daughter.

McNEEL: The, our principal, G. D. McNeel's daughter is -

CURRENCE: Is a poet.

McNEEL: - Louise McNeel Pease.

INTERVIEWER: Oh, -

McNEEL: Who is -

CURRENCE: Very well known.

McNEEL: Right.

INTERVIEWER: Is the same high school still standing, or do they have a new one?

CURRENCE: No, they've consolidated.

INTERVIEWER: They've consolidated, so it's now -

CURRENCE: It's now the Pocahontas. I, uh, taught .... There were three little high schools in the county; one at Hillsboro, one at Marlinton, and one at Greenbank. But they've put them all together now.

INTERVIEWER: You taught Marlinton-

CURRENCE: I taught at Marlinton.

INTERVIEWER: -all of that time.

CURRENCE: Uh huh. Before I was married, and then I didn't teach til after, I mean, til after my husband died. I taught -

McNEEL: And I taught -

CURRENCE: I taught the children of the people I taught before.

McNEEL: And then I taught two years in ... Richwood, and then I

came to Marlinton to teach, and I taught four years at Marlinton. And then I was married and I came to Charleston.

CURRENCE: Well, I didn't teach the years of the, most of the years that I was married. We had two children in college at the same time, and I went back to teaching. But I quit again and then I, uh, after my husband died I uh, started again. They're always in the same room at the ... (laugh), same subject.

INTERVIEWER: Did you have to have a degree to teach then?

CURRENCE: Oh, yes.

INTERVIEWER: What about all those stories where all you had to have was a high school diploma or - ?

CURRENCE: That's, that's the generation before us.

INTERVIEWER: That's , uh.

MCNEEL: Well, now, they could teach in the grade school with just like two years or whatever.

CURRENCE: Yeah.

MCNEEL: You know, two years of -

CURRENCE: But they had to go to school, summer school.

MCNEEL: They had to go away. Now, uh, but, uh, I can remember when they had the normal course that they gave in high school.

CURRENCE: Yeah. In high school and they could teach anything.

MCNEEL: And they could teach when they finished high school. But by the time we got to high school, they no longer had that normal course, and you had to go away to school. For grade school you could go like two years to a ... teacher's college or something and then teach; but for high school you had to have your degree, back,

even back then. And ... oh, I started out at an exorbitant salary of \$150 a month, for nine months, But two years later that was cut to \$90 a month for nine months, which made -

CURRENCE: Oh, it was in the period of the Depression.

McNEEL: - \$810 a year.

CURRENCE: I went from a hundred-fifty, then the next year a hundred seventy-five, and then I dropped back to ninety.

INTERVIEWER: You were, everybody I guess at that time was -

McNEEL: During the Depression they were re-organizing and re- , what'd they .... But that's when they put in that county - what was that?

CURRENCE: The county unit.

McNEEL: The county unit and, and they just slashed everything, and, and started everybody out at ..., got \$90 a month. Besides, they would give you your check, but lots of times you couldn't cash it. Lots of times there wasn't any, wasn't any way to cash it cause there weren't any funds. But you could use it to pay your taxes. In other words it was more like barter. You could, you could hand your check in at the courthouse to pay your taxes and things like that, but you couldn't always get your money.

INTERVIEWER: Was there a bank at Marlinton?

CURRENCE: There is a bank at Marlinton and it's weathered the storm (laughter).

McNEEL: It's one of the few banks in the country that -

CURRENCE: One of the few banks that's never -

McNEEL: - did not fail during the Depression, right. The Bank of

Marlinton did not have any problems, didn't -

CURRENCE: Been there since 1899.

McNEEL: Yeah.

INTERVIEWER: In the same hands as it was?

McNEEL: Well, the trustees -

CURRENCE: Yeah, the same names, the McNeels are -

McNEEL: Still the trustees.

INTERVIEWER: Oh, they've got it too, huh?

McNEEL: The, uh, if they had the history, ... I sent it to John.

Uh, I, ....

CURRENCE: I believe it's in my car, there.

McNEEL: The history of the Bank of Marlinton and, uh, the Prices,

McNeels, Prices, McNeels, Prices, McNeels -

CURRENCE: Pr-, Pr-, Prices and McNeels.

McNEEL: Presidents and vice-presidents, and so on.

CURRENCE: That's all that there've ever been.

MCNEEL: Uh huh.

CURRENCE: Because Dick McNeel is now; Doctor Jim was; Uncle Andy before that. Doctor Jim was ....

INTERVIEWER: What else do the McNeels and Prices run?

CURRENCE: Well, we don't really run things, we just, we're just old families -

McNEEL: Uh huh, n-

CURRENCE: - that have been there for a long time.

McNEEL: Most of the McNeels were, really had land. I mean, it -

CURRENCE: Yes, land in the levels.

McNEEL: Land in the levels. And, uh, but, uh, but the Prices don't have that much, don't do that much farming or anything. But, uh, Grandpa Price was the minister and uh -

CURRENCE: Presbyterian Church.

McNEEL: And, uh, most of the people in the county were married by him back in those days, and even after he retired they'd all come there to get him to marry them. They'd drive up in their buggies and -

CURRENCE: And be married right in the buggy.

McNEEL: Just drive up to the door and he'd come out and marry them there. Because, I think he retired when he was about sixty, wasn't he?

CURRENCE: Oh, I think so.

McNEEL: Yeah, sixty. He retired and he lived to be ninety-three or something. So people, even after he retired, would come to get, be married by him, and, uh .... And they'd just drive up the road out there in front of the house, and he'd come out and marry them right then; and then they'd drive off. Probably back home - I don't think they went on any honeymoons in those days.

INTERVIEWER: Did you have to work when you were growing up?

CURRENCE: I had to do chores. I didn't have to really work.

INTERVIEWER: I mean, to get money to pay your way through school or anything like that? Or did that just come falling down?

CURRENCE: Oh, no. They always -

McNEEL: They, uh, now, uh ..... We were in school really just before the Depression, yes. But uh, but, and money, there wasn't

much money, But, uh, when we were at college, we offered to, you know, have jobs or something, wait on tables or do something; but Daddy always, he wouldn't let us. He said he could manage and there would be other people -

CURRENCE: That needed it worse.

McNEEL: - that needed it more. So he wouldn't, he wouldn't let us wait on tables because he thought we were depriving somebody that maybe couldn't get there any other way. But in the sommertime we'd pick blackberries, and sold them and got money for clothes. And, uh, oh goodness - we'd just pick hundreds of gallons of blackberries. Up on the hill and you picked them in - not in buckets, cause that squashed them. You picked them in quart baskets, and you put those in the crates, and then you carried those down the, the hill to the Ford, Model T, that was waiting down there. And then you delivered them in town and you got sixty cents a gallon ... for them. (laughs). But we made enough money for clothes, for our clothes to go to school.

CURRENCE: I did chores around the home, but I don't ever remember ... doing anything else.

McNEEL: Well, that, uh, I mean, I'd .... Course we always did chores around the home, But Daddy had these big ideas, and he planted all these berries and all these things, and he planted ... apricot trees. And ... I don't know, just everything up there on the hill. And the summer of the drought, that real hot -

CURRENCE: That's when -

McNEEL: - that's the only year that the apricots ever (laughs).



Yes, we had apricots that year, because its the only time, I guess, that we ever had a long, hot --you know -- long enough summer, and that was that real, real drought. I guess that was ..., I guess that was in '30, before I went to teach in Richwood, because when I went to Richwood you could only have the water turned on about an hour a day or something. That must have been. We had --

CURRENCE: We had a horrible drought! Why I had a cousin that visited with his little boy from Chicago duringthat time, and the little boy had never seen stairsteps, so up and down the stairs he went. Nor had he ever seen a hose. And he kept the hose on in our back yard and garden all the time. We could not get him to turn it off. Then the drought hit -- they realized that there was going to be no more water -- and we had the most luxuriant garden in town because (laughter). And everybody thought we were watering during the (laughter). But we got so soaked -- he'd lived in an apartment all his life, never had seen the things like that.

INTERVIEWER: Was that part of the nationwide drought that --

CURRENCE: Yes, it was a nationwide --

McNEEL: Oh, it was -- yes, it was, it was terrific. And, uh, I'm sure that's when it was because that fall when I went to Richwood the, the water was turn-, you could turn it on for a little while in the morning and collect some in the bathtub, you know, just to have, and ... you couldn't bathe but once a week, and oh, there were many restrictions.

CURRENCE: River was almost emp-, dry ... creek.

McNEEL: Almost dry, uh huh. And it was ... terrible.

INTERVIEWER: Would you like to talk about your father's newspaper?

McNEEL: Well, Nancy knows more about it than I do.

INTERVIEWER: You said your grandfather, you told me your grandfather bought it --

CURRENCE: The grandfather bought it. Dr. William T. Price --

McNEEL: Yes, William T. Price.

CURRENCE: -- for his sons.

INTERVIEWER: For his sons. He never, he never bought it with the --

CURRENCE: I think he ran it for a while, that was before we could remember, but, uh --

McNEEL Yeah, he was, I'm sure, figuring on more --

CURRENCE: I'm sure he was.

McNEEL: He saw to it, but the, but the boys did most of the work.

CURRENCE: And of course, its the only hand set, uh, newspaper east of the Rockies, the only one. What radio program was your father on one time? Because, it was one of the radio programs, national radio programs.

McNEEL: They, they had uh, a debate or a ... I don't know, a kind of a .... But he went to New York and the, the, uh, and they had acountry editor and a city editor. And, and they were, they were to have a kind of debate or something, discussing newspapers. And Daddy won. Now how was it? I, I --

CURRENCE: I don't remember. I just remember that he went.

McNEEL: He went to, he went as representing the coun-, the small town editors, and then, he was, uh, the , the ed-, he met, or confornted the editor of -- there was a New York paper, American something. It wasn't the New York Times; it wasn't the --

CURRENCE: No, the World, I think. I can't remember.

McNEEL: And, uh, they had uh, it was more or less an interview or something, but they, they interviewed the, the small town editor and the big city editor. And, uh, cause I remember we were at a dance at the tennis club, across from the Kanawha River, the old tennis club, so when it was time for their program we stopped the dance and turned on the radio and we went and listened to Daddy and the other editor.

INTERVIEWER: And when was that?

McNEEL: I can't remember.

CURRENCE: In the days of radio.

McNEEL: Oh, I can tell you exactly when it was. It was in 19 -- when was Bill born? 1930? 1940?

CURRENCE: Well, that would be later than that -- forty.

McNEEL: Yeah. I say, forty. He was, it was when Bill was a baby, when he was less than a year old. So, uh, that's when it was, cause he'll be 34. About 1940.

INTERVIEWER: Well, do you want to take a break and stand up and stretch your legs or something?

CURRENCE: I have to stretch that leg.

Note: The ladies kept talking, so I turned the recorder on again.

McNEEL: Then, of course, we had a house up in Minehaha Springs with a golf course up there --

CURRENCE: And a swimming pool up there.

McNEEL: -- and a swimming pool up there, and uh --

CURRENCE: It was ten miles away -- nine miles.

McNEEL: Yeah, yeah. And we had a cabin up there, a log cabin, and we went every summer for two weeks. And I first remember going up there -- we went in a horse and buggy and it took quite a while. And then later, when we had cars, it, uh, didn't take quite so long to go up. And we went every summer, but we'd just go two weeks in the summer. That's the only time we used that log cabin.

CURRENCE: This, uh, uh, there's some woman here in Charleston -- Stanton -- what's her name?

McNEEL: Carolyn Stanton.

CURRENCE: Yeah. Hill, isn't it? Any how, she was a patient of my daughter's up at the hospital. And she said that, uh, they lived here in Charleston and her father built a summer home up on that hill and they had to pack up, go in a horse and buggy and drive up there. And then they staved. And then they never could get back down here. Oh, but her friends sympathized -- going to the country.

McNEEL: Going to the country.

INTERVIEWER: Tennis, golf and everything else --

McNEEL: Right.

INTERVIEWER: -- you really lived a hard life.

McNEEL: At the clubhouses, they had this, our, our cabin was just down over the hill from the clubhouse and we could use the, the tennis courts. There were dances at the clubhouse, you know, most every night. There -- a wonderful pool up there. There was -- uh, I could always find a horse to ride and uh, it was, it was great. And, but most of the people that came, came up -- I guess a lot of

them stayed up there all summer at the clubhouse, didn't they?

CURRENCE: Clarksburg people.

McNEEL: Uh huh, come and spend the summer at the clubhouse.

INTERVIEWER: Clarksburg people came all the way over --

CURRENCE: Yeah, they had one on Cheat and one at Minehaha that -- groups of them would -- that's how it started. They came for hunting and fishing, and then they brought their families along.

McNEEL: Yeah, and then, they, of course, they had the springs. If we had a car, we could go to, we'd go over to Minehaha Springs quite often just to swim.

CURRENCE: That was when you were older, though, You weren't little.

McNEEL: Well, I mean I was fourteen. Well, I'm still growing up, and I was fourteen when I was -- still growing up. And we used to, coming back from up there, we'd have races. You ever raced on a road that's just barely wide enough for two cars? Tearing down there to see who could get down to Marlinton first.

INTERVIEWER: Well, I couldn't drive when I was fourteen years old so I don't know. When I grew up there were laws against that sort of thing.

McNEEL: Well, might have been laws against it then, there just weren't any -- well, there, we had state police then.

CURRENCE: Oh no, not, not too early.

McNEEL: Well, uh --

CURRENCE: We had state police in the twenties, but not in the--

McNEEL: As I say, in the twenties. Well, that's when I was doing most of my driving. And uh, they lived just a block from our

house. Daddy would come home every day at noon and he'd say the state police, uh, as I passed their house up there, they said to tell you to quit driving down this street so fast.

INTERVIEWER: Were they related to you, too?

McNEEL: No

CURRENCE: No.

McNEEL: No, they were foreigners. They usually came in from some place else. And then, then, then for entertainment, like in high school, we had a, a hop, as we called it, every Friday night. We had a dance at somebody's home. So along about Thursday or Friday we'd all look around and say where will it be this week, you know. We'd kind of take turns. We'd uh, it was a large enough group that if wasn't too often that any one person had it. But you had, every Friday night you had a dance someplace.

CURRENCE: Well, we had a movie house before uh, World War I, which was called the A-M-U-Z-U, the Amuzu.

INTERVIEWER: Clever.

CURRENCE" Is this thing on or are you --

INTERVIEWER: It's on, go ahead. You're doing very well. You said you got your radio --

CURRENCE: Oh, that wasn't until the 1920's; this was before World War I.

INTERVIEWER: Do you remember World War I?

CURRENCE: Oh, sure.

McNEEL: I was in the fourth grade.

CURRENCE: I was very patriotic, I sang songs like "Canning the KAISER" --

McNEEL: Well, I knitted these --

CURRENCE: We were very --

McNEEL: -- what was it?

CURRENCE: (unintelligible) squares.

McNEEL: Yeah, squares, that's right. Everybody knitted squares in school.

CURRENCE: You could knit in school so that was lots of fun.

McNEEL: You could knit in school and everybody --

CURRENCE: Course, they didn't come out in squares, but --

McNEEL: Well, that's what I say. Mine, I think, didn't, but everybody knitted, everybody. I can remember, was it everyday at noon that everybody stopped and prayed for the war to be over?

CURRENCE: I think so.

McNEEL: And everybody did it. I mean you -- wherever you were, whatever you were doing, you stopped.

CURRENCE: To pray for the war to be, be over.

McNEEL: To be over, right.

CURRENCE: And then, of course, that, they started the draft and I can remember them sending the soldiers, sending the draftees away on the train.

McNEEL: Oh yes, yes.

CURRENCE: Everybody went to the train.

McNEEL: Everybody went to the train, right.

CURRENCE: Of course, the train was a center of activity. We met the train, watched the train leave, (chuckle).

INTERVIEWER: Was there anyone of German descent up there during

World War I. Did they get --

McNEEL: Oh yes. Don't you remember the tailor?

CURRENCE: Yeah, he --

McNEEL: He had his tailor shop across the railroad tracks there. I cannot remember his name, He was a German. He was, uh, had always been a very popular citizen. And people were really very, very, you know, cool, pretty cool to him at, at, during the war and Victory.

INTERVIEWER: Did they ever get hostile or anything?

McNEEL: Well, now, not, I mean, just --

INTERVIEWER: Did he stay there?

McNEEL: Oh yes, he stayed. He stayed there but people were, were not very, very nice to him, really. And, uh, I cannot remember his name but he was a tailor and I remember where his shop was. Uh, just all of a sudden, you know, he, uh, -- before that he'd been a very liked, well-liked citizen.

INTERVIEWER: I suppose he was well-liked after the war ended?

McNEEL: After it ended, I'm sure he was accepted again but --

INTERVIEWER: Went back to the same --

McNEEL: Uh huh, yes. But it, it was the --

CURRENCE: There are few people of foreign, uh, descent in the county, that's all.

McNEEL: Yeah, very few of -- and I can't remember his name, but he was a German.

CURRENCE: We have some Negroes.

INTERVIEWER: Well, what is Price, is that, what?



McNEEL: Price is Welsh.

INTERVIEWER: McNeel?

CURRENCE: Is Scotch-Irish.

INTERVIEWER: Then, so, and everybody is --

CURRENCE: And the Scotch-Irish, of course, came into that section. They were following the mountains and getting away from the eastern Virginians that, uh, looked down on them. And so they came, that's how they -- the Germans and the Scotch-Irish, mostly, and Welsh. They liked the mountains, partly.

INTERVIEWER: That's mostly what makes up Pocahontas County?

CURRENCE: Uh huh. And they came quite early. They came, even though it was mountainous. Of course, after the lumber industry opened up in Pocahontas County, Marlinton was the county seat. That's what I, they had at one time at least ten lawyers in a town of not over 1500, which is a lot of lawyers. But there was a lot of business, too.

INTERVIEWER: In settling logging disputes or what?

CURRENCE: Oh yes.

INTERVIEWER: How much has Marlinton changed since you lived up there? Has it changed any? Is it still the same old town?

McNEEL: Well, its about the same size, as far as population.

CURRENCE: It's not bigger.

McNEEL: Huh?

CURRENCE: Maybe a little smaller --

McNEEL: It's a little smaller --

CURRENCE: -- than when we lived there. Uh, but it has not changed

very much, uh, really. Main Street has changed just by the new bank building. That's about the only change on Main Street. Everything else is the same. Size of the town, I'd say, is a little bit smaller.

INTERVIEWER: Still have all of the fairs and stuff?

CURRENCE: No.

McNEEL: No. Hasn't had a fair now for a good many years. After they started the, after the fair at Lewisburg became the state fair, I don't think they've had any since then

CURRENCE: No, they haven't had any.

McNEEL: And then, just as we said, about seven years ago is when they started having Pioneer Days. It started that year, kind of when they were having the celebration, what was it, hundredth anniversary of West Virginia, yeah.

CURRENCE: Yeah, West Virginia, uh huh.

McNEEL: The Centennial, that was in --

CURRENCE: In '63, that's when it was.

McNEEL: That's when it started.

INTERVIEWER: That's eleven years.

McNEEL: Is it? No, it can't be.

CURRENCE: Well, I wouldn't think so, do you --

McNEEL: Only seven or eight years --

CURRENCE: Because Tommy's only, uh --

McNEEL: But it was not long after that, because, well, when did they start the museum? Because it was, well, it can't have been longer.

CURRENCE: I can't remember things that happened recently.

McNEEL: But anyway, I was thinking it was, was an outgrowth of that, or kinda like that, but anyhow --

INTERVIEWER: It's your aunt's house they made into a museum?

McNEEL: Yeah, um hum, They bought, bought Aunt Anna's house and that's the, the museum. But the Centennial Year that Pearl Buck was there and broke the ribbon, wasn't that the Centennial Year? Isn't that when her picture is? Yes.

CURRENCE: Well, Barron was governor.

McNEEL: That was the, that was the year, right

CURRENCE: Yes.

McNEEL: -- that they dedicated the museum. So maybe it was a year or two after that, that they started having Pioneer Days. But uh, --

INTERVIEWER: I do want to talk about your father's paper. She talked about him being a big conservationist --

McNEEL: Yes, see, uh. Daddy was a conservationist long before most people even, back when you didn't think that things would ever run out and, uh, you know, that you have to save wildlife or timber or anything else. And he fought for conservation years before it was such a popular subject as it is now.

INTERVIEWER: Do you think that not going to college made him a con-, conservationist? Do --

CURRENCE: He made him-. He had a great desire to learn. He had this, and so he read, and studied, and studied nature.

INTERVIEWER: But he was the only one who never went to school.

CURRENCE: He was the only one in our family --

McNEEL: He's the only one in the family that didn't. He was the youngest boy and by the time he got all his older brothers through school he decided he was too old to be going to school.

CURRENCE: And he was working on the paper in Marlinton.

McNEEL: Yes. Right. And he --

CURRENCE: And didn't, he didn't want to be a doctor or a lawyer.

McNEEL: He didn't. He, he stayed on it and, and, before too long he was, the other brothers got out, and he was the sole owner of the paper. The editor.

INTERVIEWER: Calvin --

McNEEL: Calvin.

CURRENCE: Calvin Price.

McNEEL: Calvin Price. He was always called Cal Price. Just not long ago in the paper -- who was talking about him? Some article, every once in a while you'll see it and they always talk about Cal Price. Seems like, I, I cut it out and sent it to the boys.

CURRENCE: Well, wasn't , didn't your father help start that wildlife magazine? Or wasn't he an honorary president or something?

McNEEL: I expect. I don't know.

CURRENCE: That, they, it's a big magazine now. But I think Mr. Price had, he, uh, he may have just been an honorary one in it.

INTERVIEWER: Now, the paper came out weekly, right?

McNEEL: Published weekly, and was simply to, mainly to tell local news and tall tales and different things.

INTERVIEWER: 'Painter' stories?

McNEEL: Panther stories and the bear stories and, uh, and uh, and about as wide a circulation, I expect, as any paper.

CURRENCE: Any county paper in the, I'm sure.

McNEEL: Any county paper because there're subscribers in every state and a great many foreign countries. Every state in the union and a great many foreign countries have subscribers to it. Guess its what, about 6000, 5000 subscribers to it?

CURRENCE: And she doesn't want any more and --

McNEEL: No.

CURRENCE: -- of course, in the county . How many? There, we have one of the smallest populations for the size of --

McNEEL: Oh yeah. There's just, uh, what, a few thousand people in the county. 1500 in Marlinton, that's the biggest town, but --

CURRENCE: Well, I think that's stretching it a little.

McNEEL: That's stretching it. Well, 1200 then.

INTERVIEWER: Including the suburbs.

CURRENCE: Yeah.

INTERVIEWER: Well, he published, like, weekly, and then he did editorials on conservation. Did he kind of agitate for anything? Or were there any special causes? Was he just --

CURRENCE: He wasn't that kind of a person. He didn't promote causes. He'd do it in such a way that you'd want to do what-- but he didn't, he wasn't a preacher.

McNEEL: No.

CURRENCE: And yet he was one of the most religious men I ever knew, sincerely.

McNEEL: He was sincere, sincerely religious and --, no he didn't agitate at all.

CURRENCE: No, he didn't agitate.

McNEEL: But he just believed in certain things and, and he --

INTERVIEWER: Maybe bust be writing about panthers made people aware of it, sort of.

McNEEL: But, uh, Oh yes. He, I mean, he wrote definitely about conservation and the need for it and everything like that, I mean he was definite in his editorials about that. And he always wrote about the candidates and all, but it was just that he, uh, supported all the Democrats running. You're O.K. if you're a Democrat.

CURRENCE: Just something wrong with the rest of you.

McNEEL: That's right. But, uh, but he, and I mean, he was a person who, the only person I knew that could really stick up for his convictions. And he didn't approve of smoking and whiskey so he never carried an ad -- there has never been a whiskey ad in the paper. I mean he turned away hundreds of dollars in advertising simply because --

CURRENCE: Of his beliefs.

McNEEL: -- of his beliefs. He didn't feel he should be putting temptation in anybody's way so he just didn't. There's never, there's never been an ad in that paper.

CURRENCE: And he was very diplomatic in the way that he wrote up any death or any -- If someone killed themselves, that wasn't stated. They had died suddenly. He was a respecter of other

people's feelings.

MCNEEL: Right. And that woman with illegitimate child, that was funny. How did he do it down there at Hillsboro? You'd never guess she'd never been married.

INTERVIEWER: Well, do people like, you know, reading the little things, the little paper, because, like you said, they get their news out of the Baltimore paper, or now the Charleston --

MCNEEL: Oh, no.

CURRENCE: Oh, no. This is local news.

MCNEEL: This is purely local news. And they want to know what their neighbors were doing, and how many bears had been killed, and how many, uh, how much rain had fallen in the county, or how much snow during the winter, and, I mean, it's just --

CURRENCE: I have a daughter whose husband's in the Air Force. And she's been stationed in New Hampshire and New Jersey, and Arkansas and California and various other states. And she's not one to write letters much, but if the, the Pocahontas Times fails to get to her, I know that I'm going to hear from her, because she wants that subscription. She wants to have it at her new address.

INTERVIEWER: Well, it looks like the people who live in Marlinton would know the news before it comes out in the paper.

CURRENCE: No, you don't. And I grab it as fast as I can. Everybody else does. I mean, I was visiting in Marlinton when it came out last week. Practically had to take it away from my hostess, so I could see what the news was.

MCNEEL: Right, and when Cuzzie used to visit down here --

CURRENCE: Oh, Cuzzie called it THE paper.

MCNEEL: THE paper. So she was, she would visit here --

CURRENCE: Her son.

MCNEEL: Her son. And uh she'd come in and say has the paper come, and they'd hand her the Gazette or something. She'd say I meant the paper.

CURRENCE: THE paper, the paper.

MCNEEL: The paper. See if the Pocahontas Times had come.

INTERVIEWER: Like your experience up at the University with --

MCNEEL: Yes.

CURRENCE: Yes. Did I tell you that?

MCNEEL: No. Go ahead. That's right, talk about the paper. 'And speaking of the paper --'

CURRENCE: Yeah. And speaking of the paper, while I, while I went to the University my paper didn't come, my Pocahontas Times didn't come one week. So I went to the library and I looked for it and couldn't find it. So I went to the head librarian and he said, "My dear young lady, don't you know that you can't get that paper un-, until its a week old? All the professors are reading it."

INTERVIEWER: That was in Morgantown.

CURRENCE: That was in Morgantown.

INTERVIEWER: That was a Yankee school, wasn't it?

CURRENCE: Well, they, those professors did think a lot of Mr. Price. They knew him quite well. He was state wide, practically na-, nat-, nationwide.

MCNEEL: Yes, he was, he was known in, I mean --



CURRENCE: And yet he was, uh, an humble, country editor, that stood up for what he believed in.

INTERVIEWER: That's why he had the state forest named after him. Now, how long ago was that? Was that during his lifetime? Did --

CURRENCE: Yes.

McNEEL: Yes, that was before he died. Uh huh. Not too many years before he died, but, let's see. How old were the kids when we were up there?

CURRENCE: Yeah. What?

McNEEL: But anyway --

CURRENCE: They, they.

INTERVIEWER: Well, I just thought that it was nice that it was done in his lifetime.

McNEEL: Right, right. It was, it was named --

CURRENCE: The tree at the court house was planted after his death. Course, you all were there.

McNEEL: But the, uh, yeah. Cause Daddy was out there the day, you remember, that we were all out there at the, at the park, and, and the, the dedication service and everything. They named it for him. But he, he, he was the kind of person though that, funny, wherever you went, and he would come up to you, and he would say, "I am Calvin Price." And you would have the feeling that if you didn't know who he was, you should. You know?

CURRENCE: Yeah.

McNEEL: I mean, he, he just came up and said I'm Calvin Price and, and you, an, and I mean it, but he was not, he was humble.

But you would get the feeling, well, I don't know who he is, but I expect I should, so you would pretend like you knew him.

CURRENCE: The Gazette had a full page, uh, article on him with his picture. They just made him come out of the printing office and they just took his picture just with his shirt open and --

McNEEL: Yeah, that's --

CURRENCE: That's that one, right there. That was a feature story.

INTERVIEWER: What did, did your father, was --

CURRENCE: My father was a lawyer. My husband was a lawyer.

INTERVIEWER: No wonder they had ten in --

McNEEL: And her father was Summers McNeel, and my father-in-law was Winters McNeel.

CURRENCE: And they were twins.

McNEEL: And they were twins. Winters was a doctor and Summers was a lawyer.

CURRENCE: And they went to Washington and Lee, and later to the University of Virginia for their professional degrees. Because it was easier to go to Virginia than it was to --

INTERVIEWER: Evidently, it --

McNEEL: Oh, yes, much easier to get across.

INTERVIEWER: I was going to ask you if there's any kind of, well, of course, all of your playmates weren't all lawyers' daughters, nor newspaper editor's daughters. Was there any kind of social stigma attached to --?

CURRENCE: The Hills, and Sue, and Alice, were all lawyers' daughters. And Miller, he was a lawyer.

McNEEL: He was a lawyer.

CURRENCE: Uh, all of them --

McNEEL: And there, well, let's see. Babe, but her father was a, well, he was a doctor.

CURRENCE: He was a lumberman.

McNEEL: I know, but he --

CURRENCE: He was a doctor.

McNEEL: -- had been a doctor, but he was a lumberman. And now Pearl and Gertrude, well, Gertrude's father was a, Richard Yaeger, he was a doctor.

CURRENCE: Doctor, yes.

McNEEL. Uh, Liz Dunlap, her father was a --

CURRENCE: Farmer.

McNEEL: -- farmer.

INTERVIEWER Did you get the --

McNEEL: We didn't go with any, we didn't go with anybody that wasn't professional.

INTERVIEWER: Did you get the feeling you were upper class or anything in Marlinton?

CURRENCE: I don't think we had it. I don't know what the other people -- . It's a democratic town.

McNEEL: Well, you didn't grow up with Aunt Lilly.

INTERVIEWER: What's that supposed to mean?

CURRENCE: She remembered who you are and what you represented.

McNEEL: My golly yes. You just didn't associate with everyone.

Now she just preached, preached family at me til I swore I'd never

tell my kids that they, that they had ancestor one. But, but it wasn't, it was-, we were not denied to, associating with anybody. I mean, Daddy was very democratic. But he didn't like us to go to the Brattons or to Caddy's or places like that. But it was not because of family, it was because of reputation of other kinds. And, but as I say, we had these dances every Friday night, but we had to go home at ten o'clock. And if we didn't go home at ten o'clock, Daddy was there to see that we went home. And all the other kids' in town would say now you all go home when the Price girls have to leave.

CURRENCE: Yeah.

McNEEL: Well, the Price girls went home; the rest of them stayed on.

CURRENCE: My husband carried that on to our children. They had to be in at ten o'clock, no if's, and's, but's, or maybe's.

McNEEL: And, and if we, if we weren't, Daddy'd walk up and uh --

CURRENCE: Oh, my husband did, too. I think he copied your father. I'm not sure. Now one of the exciting things that we had in growing up in that town, was, we had a firebug one time. And, uh, in the mid-, at three o'clock in the morning, suddenly the fire alarm would ring. And we had volunteer firemen. Our fathers were, they had long black rain coats, and black hats that they put on. I don't know, and then they'd have to run to the fire in these long -- . But anyway, first it was a restaurant that burned, and, uh, then, I can't remember in the order that this happened, but it, it was so often that the town was panic-stricken. Men were afraid to leave their families at home at night. You didn't know what was

going to happen. Enough houses burned that, I mean, caught fire and burned considerably. Finally, one night this one woman, uh, evidently got up and screamed for a brother-in-law; her husband was gone. And when the brother-in-law got there, there had been piles of kindling all over the house. And blankets over the windows. And she was in the house. Of course, that one didn't burn. And finally, uh, one of the lawyer's houses was, uh, this, uh, the daughter of the house couldn't sleep. And she lived at the front of the house. The bathroom was in the back of the house and she had been down to get a drink of water but she went to the bathroom and thought she'd left a light on downstairs. So she ran down and here was the man, setting the fires, right there in the pantry it was. She screamed and he jumped out the window. And, uh, they, they got the bloodhounds.

McNEEL: Bloodhounds.

CURRENCE: And they went to I don't know how many houses in town. The bloodhounds would go up to her, you husband's uncles, they put their paws up and looked in a window. They came to our gate. And they went to any number of gates that were in the town. And, uh, uh, the man, during the day, had gone to the woman who had come down the stairs, and said, "Would you recognize that man if you'd see him again?" She said, "No, he had a cap pulled way down over. I wouldn't know him at all." Well, he went to the jailer and said he was a detective working on her, the case, and he wanted to spend the night in jail. So that night, when the bloodhounds, they trailed him to the jail.

INTERVIEWER: And they caught him in --

CURRENCE: They caught him.

INTERVIEWER: Did they have fire engines then?

CURRENCE: Oh no.

INTERVIEWER: This was all drawn by horses.

CURRENCE: Drawn by hand, lots of times. But they kept fires down pretty well. But the man was off and --

McNEEL: Oh, I've never, I, I, cried. I've never been as afraid in my life.

CURRENCE: Everybody was afraid.

McNEEL: And, and Daddy slept with a gun under his bed.

CURRENCE: Everyone was panic-stricken. Every man had a gun --

McNEEL: Had a gun under his bed.

INTERVIEWER: How old were you at the time? Were you little or --

CURRENCE: I must have been a --

McNEEL: We were just kids.

CURRENCE: Yeah. I must, oh, she was --

McNEEL: I was just real young.

CURRENCE: She's younger than I am and I must have just been, hmm.

McNEEL: I don't think I was even five or six.

CURRENCE: I can't remember what year --

McNEEL: I just barely remember it, but, oh, I've never been as frightened of anything.

CURRENCE: I can't quite remember it too.

McNEEL: It was horrible.

CURRENCE: You were, and, uh, if you went out, everybody went

together, and they locked the house up so well. And we never locked a house in Marlinton. And afterwards, we never did again.

McNEEL: Uh huh. Never did. One time we were going to Virginia or somewhere and we had to hunt for hours to find a key. We felt like we ought to lock the house up, you know, when you're going away for a week or two.

INTERVIEWER: Has that changed, do people lock their houses up now?

CURRENCE: Yes, they lock theirs.

McNEEL: Yes, I guess. But you didn't ever lock --

CURRENCE: You didn't lock anything.

McNEEL: -- anything. Nothing.

CURRENCE: Your car, you left the keys in the car.

McNEEL: But we do, no, I didn't even know. And as I say, we couldn't, we couldn't find a key, literally. We didn't know where it was; it had been so long since the family locked the.

INTERVIEWER: The old Marlinton was better, when you didn't have to worry about keys.

CURRENCE: Oh, this was early, though, that we had the firebug.

McNEEL: Oh, that, that. I mean, that was the only --

CURRENCE: That scared us.

McNEEL: But that was the only thing of that type that I ever remember happening up there. And I say now you don't really have much vandalism and much stealing or anything compared to other places.

CURRENCE: But I think that people do lock a little more.

McNEEL: But most people lock --

CURRENCE: A little more.

McNEEL: -- but not too tight.

INTERVIEWER: Are the same old families still up there?

CURRENCE: No, it's changed.

McNEEL: Uh huh.

INTERVIEWER: The McNeels, the Prices, all moving out? To Charleston, maybe?

CURRENCE: Well, no, there're McNeels down in Hillsboro --

McNEEL: They're, they're still, still in Hillsboro, but, but, uh, the McNeels are --

CURRENCE: And Julia and Jan are about the only Prices.

McNEEL: Well, and Jean has moved back.

CURRENCE: And Jean's moved back, yes.

McNEEL: Jean Price moved back. Uncle Norman's daughter moved back and has built a house --

CURRENCE: On the site of the old home.

McNEEL: Right beside the old home. And, uh, as they, as people, more and more want to return, may more of them come back.

CURRENCE: I'd love to return, but it's too cold in the winter time.

McNEEL: But, I mean, all over, people are looking for that type of life now. I don't mean more people are looking for. Land in Pocahontas--

CURRENCE: Is out of sight.

McNEEL: It's just, it's just out of sight. It, it costs so much more to, you can buy land in Greenbrier County and the other counties--



CURRENCE: Even cheaper than Pocahontas.

McNEEL: Much cheaper than Pocahontas.

CURRENCE: Course, Rockefeller bought up all those farms and built the nice home.

McNEEL: But, uh, land there is --

CURRENCE: And then, the, uh, Snowshoe operation's up there, ski resort, which is putting the land way out of sight. And it's mountain land.

INTERVIEWER: Well,

McNEEL: That's about it, isn't it?

INTERVIEWER: Are you tired of talking?

McNEEL: Oh we don't ever get, how about a cup of tea?

tell my kids that they, that they had ancestor one. But, but it wasn't, it was-, we were not denied to, associating with anybody. I mean, Daddy was very democratic. But he didn't like us to go to the Brattons or to Caddy's or places like that. But it was not because of family, it was because of reputation of other kinds. And, but as I say, we had these dances every Friday night, but we had to go home at ten o'clock. And if we didn't go home at ten o'clock, Daddy was there to see that we went home. And all the other kids' in town would say now you all go home when the Price girls have to leave.

CURRENCE: Yeah.

McNEEL: Well, the Price girls went home; the rest of them stayed on.

CURRENCE: My husband carried that on to our children. They had to be in at ten o'clock, no if's, and's, but's, or maybe's.

McNEEL: And, and if we, if we weren't, Daddy'd walk up and uh --

CURRENCE: Oh, my husband did, too. I think he copied your father. I'm not sure. Now one of the exciting things that we had in growing up in that town, was, we had a firebug one time. And, uh, in the mid-, at three o'clock in the morning, suddenly the fire alarm would ring. And we had volunteer firemen. Our fathers were, they had long black rain coats, and black hats that they put on. I don't know, and then they'd have to run to the fire in these long -- . But anyway, first it was a restaurant that burned, and, uh, then, I can't remember in the order that this happened, but it, it was so often that the town was panic-stricken. Men were afraid to leave their families at home at night. You didn't know what was