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1998

### Oral History Interview: Betty Napier

Betty Napier

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# RELEASE FORM

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I, Betty Napier, do hereby give to the Oral History of Appalachia Program of Marshall University the tape recordings and transcripts of my interview(s) on 11-15-98.

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Okey J. Napier (Agent of the Oral History of Appalachia Program)      Betty Napier (Donor)

11-15-98  
(Date)

MS# 606

**Summary of Oral History  
Betty Napier  
Conducted 11/15/98**

- Bibliographical information
- Home life
- School life
- Remembering History
- Love Life
- Marriage
- Family Life
- Pregnancy/Children
- As a Womyn
- Opinions on the world and things going on
- Appalachian or not?

**Tape #1**

**Subject: Oral History**

**An Oral Interview with: Mrs. Betty Napier**

**Conducted by: Okey J. Napier, Jr.**

**Date of Interview: 11/15/98**

**Transcriptionist/Typist: Okey J. Napier, Jr.**

Okey: This is Sunday, November 15, 1998. Okey Napier. I'm in the home of Betty Napier in Wayne West Virginia conducting an oral history with her for the Oral History of Appalachia Program at Marshall University. This interview will attempt to examine her ideas of her ethnicity as an Appalachian woman.

Okey: Where were you born?

Betty: Huntington

Okey: What year were you born?

Betty: 1925

Okey: What was your mother's maiden name

Betty: You want her maiden name?

Okey: Yes

Betty: Maude Mae Bradshaw

Okey: What was your father's name?

Betty: Okey James Dean

Okey: How many brothers and sisters did/do you have?

Betty: How many I have now?

Okey: How many in total?

Betty: Altogether, Five brothers and four sisters.

Okey: Have some of them passed away?

Betty: five

Okey: What was your relationship like with your brothers and sisters?

Betty: A good relationship

Okey: Did you fight more with one than the others?

Betty: Well, one, one brother. Donald, he was kindly hard to get along with more than the rest of them.

Okey: But typical brother sister kinds of stuff?

Betty: yeah, oh yeah.

Okey: Who was the power figure in the family — who held the family together. Who gave it moral support, strength? Was it your mother, your father, your grandparents?

Betty: Well see, I guess, my mother, because see my daddy see he got burnt up when I was 6 or 7 years old so I guess mommy was.

Okey: That was kind of uncommon wasn't it? For the time wasn't it uncommon for a woman to be in charge of the family?

Betty: Well, I know it, but there wasn't anybody else she had to.

Okey: Was it rough for her?

Betty: yes. It was rough.

Okey: Did you have to do chores around the house?

Betty: Yes (laughs)

Okey: What did you have to do?

Betty: Well, we had too... You mean in the house?

Okey: Just whatever you had to do.

Betty: Well we had to do housework and we had to work out in the fields too.

Okey: What do you mean working out in the fields?

Betty: We had to hoe corn.

Okey: So you had to hoe corn?

Betty: Yeah, had to go up in the hills and drag in wood for the stove to cook on the cookstove, had to carry in firewood out of the hills to burn in the fireplace.

Okey: Did you raise all of your own food is that how y'all lived?

Betty: Everything but just you know like flour, meal, salt, sugar, and stuff like that.

Okey: Did your mom work?

Betty: No

Okey: She stayed home?

Betty: Yeah

Okey: How did you earn money to buy things?

Betty: I don't remember, well now, Homer worked on a job what they called the WPA. But I don't think he made very much.

Okey: Did you have a strict home? Rules, were you all required to eat together, etc.?

Betty: Yeah, usually the whole family they always eat together.

Okey: Did you get punished? Did you all get whippings or timeouts?

Betty: No, I can't remember any of us getting any whippings?

Okey: What kind of rewards did you get?

Betty: We never got no rewards.

Okey: Did you get something sweet or cookies or...?

Betty: No...back then...back then we never got no cookies. About all you had was some popcorn or something like that. Mommy you know she'd sometimes make homemade candy. That's all we had.

Okey: Do you consider your family poor, middle-class, wealthy or did you just not think about it?

Betty: We just, we just didn't pay that much attention to it. We didn't really have that much. You take a family that big — 8 children and a mother to raise them children.

Okey: So nobody paid any attention to it.

Betty: no, no.

Okey: What was the highest grade you completed in school?

Betty: 8th

Okey: What kind of school did you go to?

Betty: It was a little country school, one room school.

Okey: Did you walk or ride a bus?

Betty: walked.

Okey: Did you take your lunch?

Betty: Yeah, we always took our lunch.

Okey: When you were a little girl, what did you want to be when you grew up?

Betty: (pauses) I can't remember (laughs).

Okey: Did you want to be a nurse or a doctor or if you can't remember that is ok.

Betty: no, I just can't remember what I wanted to be (laughs).

Okey: In school, did you get any special awards or achievements — did you ever win a spelling bee or...?

Betty: No, I don't think I ever did (laughs).

Okey: Is there anything special from school that you remember?

Betty: Yeah, I can remember that I got one whipping when I was going to school and they was a lie told on me then

Okey: You didn't (laughs)

Betty: yeah, and they was a lie told on me then (laughs) one whipping was all I ever got. What it was you know, the kids was bringing hazelnuts on the inside of the school and cracking them on

the legs of the desk and they told that I did it too but I hadn't done that and so I got a whipping too. They whipped all of us.

Okey: That's pretty rough isn't it?

Betty: yeah

Okey: Where you involved in the church or community when you were a child?

Betty: no, I went to church a lot when I was growing up.

Okey: Did you have any jobs when you were growing up? Did you baby-sit for anybody?

Betty: Yeah, I used to back you know, I just don't know how old I was I stayed with people and babysat. I stayed with one schoolteacher who had five children.

Okey: How old were you?

Betty: I don't remember just how old I was. Maybe about 16 or 17.

Okey: What did you do to have fun as a kid?

Betty: Got out and made play houses.

Okey: Outside?

Betty: Outside, yeah. Fixed things out of rocks, covered them with moss and played with pieces of broken dishes. That's all we had to play with.

Okey: You've seen a lot of things as you have grown up. What were you doing when WWII broke out?

Betty: no (laughs).

Okey: Did you have any brothers to go to WWII?

Betty: Yeah, let's see, yeah, now what year was that?

Okey: 1941

Betty: 1941, I guess that was probably the year that all of my brothers was in the services.

Okey: So you had all your brothers in the service all at one time. Was it scary?

Betty: Well, I didn't pay too much attention to it, but I know mommy probably did. Four of them was in the Army and one in the Navy.

Okey: Do you remember when President Roosevelt died?

Betty: no

Okey: Do you remember when the Korean War broke out. . . Vietnam war began?

Betty: Seems like I can remember something about Vietnam.

Okey: Do you remember when Kennedy died?



Betty: Yeah

Okey: Where were you when you found that President Kennedy had been assassinated?

Betty: I was living here.

Okey: In this house?

Betty: Yeah

Okey: Were you shocked and upset?

Betty: Yeah

Okey: Did you pay a lot of attention to it?

Betty: Well, I didn't pay too much attention to it.

Okey: But it was big news?

Betty: Yeah

Okey: Who was the 1<sup>st</sup> person you had a crush on?

Betty: Raymond Adkins (laughs).

Okey: How old were you?

Betty: (pauses) I imagine I was about 18.

Okey: Did he know that you had a crush on him?

Betty: Oh yeah!

Okey: Did you date?

Betty: No we really didn't date.

Okey: Who was the 1<sup>st</sup> person that ever courted you?

Betty: The first one that ever walk me home from church was Thomas Sweeny.

Okey: So was that a big thing back then, to have someone walk you home from church?

Betty: Oh yeah!

Okey: What was courting like then? Now days they zoom up in front of the house honk the horn, and the person runs out of the house and they are down the road.

Betty: A lot different back then. Back then they didn't even come into the house.

Okey: They were not allowed to come in the house?

Betty: They didn't even come in the house back then and usually they just, like where you were dating someone regularly, they just come to see you on Sunday and usually one night during the week — usually Wednesday.

Okey: So there was a type of system to this?

Betty: yeah.

Okey: Who is the 1<sup>st</sup> person you ever fell in love with?

Betty: I guess probably, I don't know, Mose, Probably, I guess.

Okey: Tell me about your decision to get married? How did it feel when the question was popped.

Betty: Well, I was kinda shocked, I really didn't know what, you know, what to do.

Okey: So you were not expecting it then?

Betty: No.

Okey: So how did it happen? Where did he ask you?

Betty: Probably down there in the holler where mommy lived.

Okey: What did your mom think about it?

Betty: Well, really I don't think mommy wanted me to get married.

Okey: What was your husband's name?

Betty: Mosie or Mose Napier

Okey: After you got married did you work outside the home?

Betty: No I never did work outside the home.

Okey: How did you feel the 1<sup>st</sup> time you found out you were pregnant?

Betty: Well, I guess I was probably really tickled and proud.

Okey: How did you find out? Did the Doctor tell you or. . . ?

Betty: No, No I never, went to a Doctor a time before Okey was born.

Okey: So it was just your regular monthly cycles — that's how you knew?

Betty: Yeah

Okey: Who is the 1<sup>st</sup> person you told that you were pregnant?

Betty: Probably mom

Okey: How did you feel when you found out you were pregnant the 2<sup>nd</sup> time? Was it different?

Betty: No, no there wasn't any difference.

Okey: You had your first two children at home correct?

Betty: Yeah

Okey: Was there a Doctor or Midwife there?

Betty: yeah I had a, well with Okey I had a Doctor, he had quit practicing, but Mose got him some way another to come and take care of me. And then when Joyce was born and that is when lived in the coal fields and I had a company doctor. Then Brenda, she was born in the Williamson hospital. Brenda was the only one I had in the hospital.

Okey: Were your pregnancies difficult for you?

Betty: (pauses) no

Okey: I mean any pregnancy is hard, but. . .

Betty: Yeah it's hard, but you know it wasn't too bad.

Okey: Did you have people there who held your hand and guided you along?

Betty: Yeah, I did, with both of them I had at home. They was some women you know that lived around you know that come and was with me.

Okey: I'm sure it was pretty scary the first time when you had your baby.

Betty: Yeah

Okey: That isn't exactly something that you can prepare for.

Betty: Yeah, that is when we lived at Stiltner. That's all covered over with water now. We'd been living in the coalfields three weeks when Joyce was born.

Okey: Were there any complications with the pregnancies?

Betty: No, it wasn't too bad. We'd took when we moved in the coal fields we took Betty Ramey with us so I would have somebody to stay with me. I'd just been home from the hospital two or three days and this girl she had to go back home and I had to start doing the work myself.

Okey: Now is that with your first one or your second one?

Betty: That was with the last, after I had Brenda that I had to start doing the work myself.

Okey: So you have two girls and a boy?

Betty: Yeah

Okey: Did you consider not having the children? Was that even a consideration back then?

Betty: No, nope

Okey: Did you ever have any children who was drafted or enlisted in the military?

Betty: no, oh, any children?

Okey: did you have any children in the military?

Betty: no, none of mine.

Okey: What about dad (laughs)

Betty: Oh yeah (laughs).

Okey: How did that feel?

Betty: It really it hurt me when he went in. I didn't want him to go in.

Okey: What was it like for wimmin back when you were a young adult?

Betty: Well, it wasn't very easy. I was trying to think if that was Joyce when Betty Ramey came up to stay with me. It was when I had Joyce instead of Brenda.

Okey: What was it like for wimmin back then? Did they have any say-so in what went on?

Betty: Oh yeah, but usually, I think the biggest part of the households, the man was the one that was the head of the house.

Okey: In your relationship with your husband, do you think it was like everyone else's household?

Betty: You mean who. . .

Okey: Was it a 50/50 kind of thing or did he tell you what to do?

Betty: Well I think it was more he told me what to do.

Okey: Was that standard or typical for back then?

Betty: Yeah, I think it was. I don't think it is like that now (laughs).

Okey: What do you like to do for fun?

Betty: What do I like to do for fun, well I like to go places. Shop.

Okey: Do you like to read?

Betty: Yeah, I like to read and when it isn't cold I like to get out and walk.

Okey: Are you involved with the church or any kind of volunteer organizations?

Betty: No, I just go to church, but I'm not involved in anything.

Okey: There is a lot of stuff going on in the world — what do you think about all of that?

Betty: Well,

Okey: Do you think it is worse than it usually is?

Betty: I really think it is worse. You mean worse than it used to be don't you?

Okey: I can't put my opinions in on it

Okey: There have been a lot of social changes so let's talk about them. Do you remember when they de-segregated schools? You have to remember that black children had to go to separate schools and a decision was made that children should go to the same school and get a good education. Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. and the civil rights movement, and he was assassinated and the civil rights bill passed which protected black folks and allowed them...gave them some other opportunities they didn't have before. Welfare is a big issue. Social Security. The environmental movement and the women's movement. We talked a little bit ago about the fact that men were the head of the household and men told women what to do and that is not the case any more.

Betty: I guess that's the world changing.

Okey: How do you feel about that — do you think it is good, bad, some of it good, some of it bad, neutral?

Betty: Well, really I don't think that women should take over. Because I go by what the bible says and the bible says that the man is the head of the house. And when Mose was living he was the head of this house.

Okey: But when he died, you became the head of the house?

Betty: yeah

Okey: You are the Matriarch of this house and the Matriarch of the family, you are the oldest person in the family and that has some weight. What you ask and what you say carries some weight with your children and your grandchildren.

Betty: Yeah

Okey: What do you think about all of these social changes and social movements?

Betty: Well, some I think is alright and some of them I don't think is alright.

Okey: Which one's do you think are ok?

Betty: I can't remember stuff like that I know I've heard stuff along.

Okey: Tell me what you don't think is right other than the women stuff because you have already told me how you feel about that. How do you feel about civil rights.

Betty: I don't know that much about it.

Okey: Well, it basically says you cannot discriminate against someone because they are black.

Betty: I don't believe in it. I don't believe the blacks should be treated any different than the whites.

Okey: What about the environmental movement?

Betty: What do you mean?

Okey: Well, there are groups out there who are saying that we are polluting this planet to the point where we are poisoning ourselves. I'm a member of the environmental movement and I'm going to a protest march and could very well be arrested in June.

Betty: Are you?

Okey: Yeah, it is a misdemeanor and will just have to pay a \$50 fine.

Betty: Well there are a lot of people who are for the pulp mill and then there are a lot of people who are against it.

Okey: The people who are for it need the jobs and money and the people who are against it are fighting because it will pollute the river, the air, and land. Thirty years ago we didn't have a big environmental movement. So what do you think about it.

Betty: I've not really paid that much attention to it.

Okey: Do you consider yourself to be an Appalachian? Why? Why not?

Betty: Well, I guess I do. I hadn't really ever thought about it.

Okey: Do you feel proud to be from West Virginia?

Betty: yes, I love it here.

Okey: You know, there is two generations between us there's your children and then your grandchildren. Have things changed between you, your children, and your grandchildren and when you were a kid? Has it gotten worse, better, etc?

Betty: I think it has gotten worse.

Okey: What do you think has gotten worse about it?

Betty: Well, the young people I don't know, there are just so many things that they get mixed up in. Like when I was raising my kids up they never had all this stuff like they've got now. Back then, you know, they just never had as much, and they never had as many places to go and all this other stuff you can buy, games and stuff.

Okey: So things have gotten really materialistic - -do you think that is good or bad?

Betty: Really I don't think it is that good.

Okey: Let's talk about technology. Obviously when you were a child growing up they didn't have microwaves.

Betty: no

Okey: or they didn't have electric lawn mowers.

Betty: no

Okey: They didn't have gas powered lawn mowers as far as I know I think it was push mowers.

Betty: Yeah, that's all they had just the push mowers.

Okey: Things have advanced so that it is a lot easier

Betty: Yeah, I know it.

Okey: Do you think it is good or bad or a little of both.

Betty: I'd say a little of both, you know it would really be bad to have to go back like it used to be you know where you had to use a wash board to do your washing on and heat your irons on the stove to do your ironing and cook with a wood stove and everything like that, now that would really be hard after you get used to all this other stuff.

Okey: Makes it easy now doesn't it?

Betty: Oh yeah!

Okey: We've got a world now where if you want to talk to somebody in Hong Kong, you can pick up the phone and you can dial them up and talk to them (snaps fingers) just like that.

Betty: You can?

Okey: You can talk to people across the world by just dialing the phone. We can keep up now, we know a lot more about what is going on. Do you think that is good or bad?

Betty: I don't think it is good — you can't give your opinion (laughs).

Okey: How do you think things have changed for wimmin in three generations?

Betty: I really don't know how to answer that question

Okey: What would you say your biggest satisfaction is and your biggest disappointment is as a womyn? Having seen all these things happen and take place, you are 70 years old you have seen a lot happen. What makes you the happiest, what things make you happiest?

Betty: Well, I think it is to just have all my family around me and all of them to get along. That makes me happy.

Okey: What disappoints you?

Betty: Well, what disappoints me is when my family doesn't get along

Okey: Was family important to you as a kid growing up? The role of family more important then than it is now. Do you think people found family more important when you were growing up than they do now?

Betty: Back used to, family they seemed more close. You know the families seemed more close to each other than what they do now.

Okey: Why do you think that is? What do you think happened to change that?

Betty: I don't know what made it change like that, but I think that back used to they just seemed more close than what they are.

Okey: Lets move one step out from family. Lets move to community a group of families. Do you think community was more important then than it is now? If families aren't as close it stands to reason that probably communities aren't as close.

Betty: Back used to the communities and families are more close than what they are now. Because used to families and around your neighbors they would visit each other and see they don't even do that now hardly ever. Every once and a while somebody will visit you, but not very often. I can't remember the last time that anybody just came and visited me. You know, one of my neighbors.

Okey: What makes you the happiest?

Betty: What makes me the happiest?

Okey: yes

Betty: Well, what makes me the happiest is to have all of my family and all of them to be in as good a health as what they are.

Okey: So family is very, very important to you?

Betty: yeah

Okey: So you haven't lost that, family is still very important in your life?

Betty: Yeah, my family is the most important thing to me, besides the Lord, he's the one that is most important to me more than my family. Don't you think that is the way it is supposed to be?

Okey: I can't give my opinion

Betty: You can't give that either.

Okey: Do you think that families in the country are a little closer than in the cities?

Betty: no, now I think they are more close in the country than they are in the city.

Okey: What about wimmin in the country and wimmin in the city are they different?

Betty: yeah, I think they are. I think, I don't know whether it is because they live in the country or what, but they are just different.

Okey: Well, you've mentioned church two or three times. Church seems to be a very important part of your life.

Betty: It is. Church is really important to me.

Okey: Why is that?

Betty: Well, because I just really enjoy it (laughs).



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11-15-98  
(Date)

**Tape #1**

**Subject: Oral History**

**An Oral Interview with: Mrs. Betty Napier**

**Conducted by: Okey J. Napier, Jr.**

**Date of Interview: 11/15/98**

**Transcriptionist/Typist: Okey J. Napier, Jr.**

**Summary of Oral History  
Betty Napier  
Conducted 11/15/98**

- Bibliographical information
- Home life
- School life
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- Love Life
- Marriage
- Family Life
- Pregnancy/Children
- As a Womyn
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- Appalachian or not?

Okey: This is Sunday, November 15, 1998. Okey Napier. I'm in the home of Betty Napier in Wayne West Virginia conducting an oral history with her for the Oral History of Appalachia Program at Marshall University. This interview will attempt to examine her ideas of her ethnicity as an Appalachian woman.

Okey: Where were you born?

Betty: Huntington

Okey: What year were you born?

Betty: 1925

Okey: What was your mother's maiden name

Betty: You want her maiden name?

Okey: Yes

Betty: Maude Mae Bradshaw

Okey: What was your father's name?

Betty: Okey James Dean

Okey: How many brothers and sisters did/do you have?

Betty: How many I have now?

Okey: How many in total?

Betty: Altogether, Five brothers and four sisters.

Okey: Have some of them passed away?

Betty: five

Okey: What was your relationship like with your brothers and sisters?

Betty: A good relationship

Okey: Did you fight more with one than the others?

Betty: Well, one, one brother. Donald, he was kindly hard to get along with more than the rest of them.

Okey: But typical brother sister kinds of stuff?

Betty: yeah, oh yeah.

Okey: Who was the power figure in the family — who held the family together. Who gave it moral support, strength? Was it your mother, your father, your grandparents?

Betty: Well see, I guess, my mother, because see my daddy see he got burnt up when I was 6 or 7 years old so I guess mommy was.

Okey: That was kind of uncommon wasn't it? For the time wasn't it uncommon for a woman to be in charge of the family?

Betty: Well, I know it, but there wasn't anybody else she had to.

Okey: Was it rough for her?

Betty: yes. It was rough.

Okey: Did you have to do chores around the house?

Betty: Yes (laughs)

Okey: What did you have to do?

Betty: Well, we had too... You mean in the house?

Okey: Just whatever you had to do.

Betty: Well we had to do housework and we had to work out in the fields too.

Okey: What do you mean working out in the fields?

Betty: We had to hoe corn.

Okey: So you had to hoe corn?

Betty: Yeah, had to go up in the hills and drag in wood for the stove to cook on the cookstove, had to carry in firewood out of the hills to burn in the fireplace.

Okey: Did you raise all of your own food is that how y'all lived?

Betty: Everything but just you know like flour, meal, salt, sugar, and stuff like that.

Okey: Did your mom work?

Betty: No

Okey: She stayed home?

Betty: Yeah

Okey: How did you earn money to buy things?

Betty: I don't remember, well now, Homer worked on a job what they called the WPA. But I don't think he made very much.

Okey: Did you have a strict home? Rules, were you all required to eat together, etc.?

Betty: Yeah, usually the whole family they always eat together.

Okey: Did you get punished? Did you all get whippings or timeouts?

Betty: No, I can't remember any of us getting any whippings?

Okey: What kind of rewards did you get?

Betty: We never got no rewards.

Okey: Did you get something sweet or cookies or . . . ?

Betty: No... back then... back then we never got no cookies. About all you had was some popcorn or something like that. Mommy you know she'd sometimes make homemade candy. That's all we had.

Okey: Do you consider your family poor, middle-class, wealthy or did you just not think about it?

Betty: We just, we just didn't pay that much attention to it. We didn't really have that much. You take a family that big — 8 children and a mother to raise them children.

Okey: So nobody paid any attention to it.

Betty: no, no.

Okey: What was the highest grade you completed in school?

Betty: 8th

Okey: What kind of school did you go to?

Betty: It was a little country school, one room school.

Okey: Did you walk or ride a bus?

Betty: walked.

Okey: Did you take your lunch?

Betty: Yeah, we always took our lunch.

Okey: When you were a little girl, what did you want to be when you grew up?

Betty: (pauses) I can't remember (laugh).

Okey: Did you want to be a nurse or a doctor or if you can't remember that is ok.

Betty: no, I just can't remember what I wanted to be (laughs).

Okey: In school, did you get any special awards or achievements — did you ever win a spelling bee or . . . ?

Betty: No, I don't think I ever did (laughs).

Okey: Is there anything special from school that you remember?

Betty: Yeah, I can remember that I got one whipping when I was going to school and they was a lie told on me then

Okey: You didn't (laughs)

Betty: yeah, and they was a lie told on me then (laughs) one whipping was all I ever got. What it was you know, the kids was bringing hazelnuts on the inside of the school and cracking them on

the legs of the desk and they told that I did it too but I hadn't done that and so I got a whipping too. They whipped all of us.

Okey: That's pretty rough isn't it?

Betty: yeah

Okey: Where you involved in the church or community when you were a child?

Betty: no, I went to church a lot when I was growing up.

Okey: Did you have any jobs when you were growing up? Did you baby-sit for anybody?

Betty: Yeah, I used to back you know, I just don't know how old I was I stayed with people and babysat. I stayed with one schoolteacher who had five children.

Okey: How old were you?

Betty: I don't remember just how old I was. Maybe about 16 or 17.

Okey: What did you do to have fun as a kid?

Betty: Got out and made play houses.

Okey: Outside?

Betty: Outside, yeah. Fixed things out of rocks, covered them with moss and played with pieces of broken dishes. That's all we had to play with.

Okey: You've seen a lot of things as you have grown up. What were you doing when WWII broke out?

Betty: no (laughs).

Okey: Did you have any brothers to go to WWII?

Betty: Yeah, let's see, yeah, now what year was that?

Okey: 1941

Betty: 1941, I guess that was probably the year that all of my brothers was in the services.

Okey: So you had all your brothers in the service all at one time. Was it scary?

Betty: Well, I didn't pay too much attention to it, but I know mommy probably did. Four of them was in the Army and one in the Navy.

Okey: Do you remember when President Roosevelt died?

Betty: no

Okey: Do you remember when the Korean War broke out. . . Vietnam war began?

Betty: Seems like I can remember something about Vietnam.

Okey: Do you remember when Kennedy died?

Betty: Yeah

Okey: Where were you when you found that President Kennedy had been assassinated?

Betty: I was living here.

Okey: In this house?

Betty: Yeah

Okey: Were you shocked and upset?

Betty: Yeah

Okey: Did you pay a lot of attention to it?

Betty: Well, I didn't pay too much attention to it.

Okey: But it was big news?

Betty: Yeah

Okey: Who was the 1<sup>st</sup> person you had a crush on?

Betty: Raymond Adkins (laughs).

Okey: How old were you?

Betty: (pauses) I imagine I was about 18.

Okey: Did he know that you had a crush on him?

Betty: Oh yeah!

Okey: Did you date?

Betty: No we really didn't date.

Okey: Who was the 1<sup>st</sup> person that ever courted you?

Betty: The first one that ever walk me home from church was Thomas Sweeny.

Okey: So was that a big thing back then, to have someone walk you home from church?

Betty: Oh yeah!

Okey: What was courting like then? Now days they zoom up in front of the house honk the horn, and the person runs out of the house and they are down the road.

Betty: A lot different back then. Back then they didn't even come into the house.

Okey: They were not allowed to come in the house?

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Betty: They didn't even come in the house back then and usually they just, like where you were dating someone regularly, they just come to see you on Sunday and usually one night during the week — usually Wednesday.

Okey: So there was a type of system to this?

Betty: yeah.

Okey: Who is the 1<sup>st</sup> person you ever fell in love with?

Betty: I guess probably, I don't know, Mose, Probably, I guess.

Okey: Tell me about your decision to get married? How did it feel when the question was popped.

Betty: Well, I was kinda shocked, I really didn't know what, you know, what to do.

Okey: So you were not expecting it then?

Betty: No.

Okey: So how did it happen? Where did he ask you?

Betty: Probably down there in the holler where mommy lived.

Okey: What did your mom think about it?

Betty: Well, really I don't think mommy wanted me to get married.

Okey: What was your husband's name?

Betty: Mosie or Mose Napier

Okey: After you got married did you work outside the home?

Betty: No I never did work outside the home.

Okey: How did you feel the 1<sup>st</sup> time you found out you were pregnant?

Betty: Well, I guess I was probably really tickled and proud.

Okey: How did you find out? Did the Doctor tell you or...?

Betty: No, No I never, went to a Doctor a time before Okey was born.

Okey: So it was just your regular monthly cycles — that's how you knew?

Betty: Yeah

Okey: Who is the 1<sup>st</sup> person you told that you were pregnant?

Betty: Probably mom

Okey: How did you feel when you found out you were pregnant the 2<sup>nd</sup> time? Was it different?

Betty: No, no there wasn't any difference.

Okey: You had your first two children at home correct?

Betty: Yeah

Okey: Was there a Doctor or Midwife there?

Betty: yeah I had a, well with Okey I had a Doctor, he had quit practicing, but Mose got him some way another to come and take care of me. And then when Joyce was born and that is when lived in the coal fields and I had a company doctor. Then Brenda, she was born in the Williamson hospital. Brenda was the only one I had in the hospital.

Okey: Were your pregnancies difficult for you?

Betty: (pauses) no

Okey: I mean any pregnancy is hard, but. . .

Betty: Yeah it's hard, but you know it wasn't too bad.

Okey: Did you have people there who held your hand and guided you along?

Betty: Yeah, I did, with both of them I had at home. They was some women you know that lived around you know that come and was with me.

Okey: I'm sure it was pretty scary the first time when you had your baby.

Betty: Yeah

Okey: That isn't exactly something that you can prepare for.

Betty: Yeah, that is when we lived at Stiltner. That's all covered over with water now. We'd been living in the coalfields three weeks when Joyce was born.

Okey: Were there any complications with the pregnancies?

Betty: No, it wasn't too bad. We'd took when we moved in the coal fields we took Betty Ramey with us so I would have somebody to stay with me. I'd just been home from the hospital two or three days and this girl she had to go back home and I had to start doing the work myself.

Okey: Now is that with your first one or your second one?

Betty: That was with the last, after I had Brenda that I had to start doing the work myself.

Okey: So you have two girls and a boy?

Betty: Yeah

Okey: Did you consider not having the children? Was that even a consideration back then?

Betty: No, nope

Okey: Did you ever have any children who was drafted or enlisted in the military?

Betty: no, oh, any children?

Okey: did you have any children in the military?

Betty: no, none of mine.

Okey: What about dad (laughs)

Betty: Oh yeah (laughs).

Okey: How did that feel?

Betty: It really it hurt me when he went in. I didn't want him to go in.

Okey: What was it like for wimmin back when you were a young adult?

Betty: Well, it wasn't very easy. I was trying to think if that was Joyce when Betty Ramey came up to stay with me. It was when I had Joyce instead of Brenda.

Okey: What was it like for wimmin back then? Did they have any say-so in what went on?

Betty: Oh yeah, but usually, I think the biggest part of the households, the man was the one that was the head of the house.

Okey: In your relationship with your husband, do you think it was like everyone else's household?

Betty: You mean who. . .

Okey: Was it a 50/50 kind of thing or did he tell you what to do?

Betty: Well I think it was more he told me what to do.

Okey: Was that standard or typical for back then?

Betty: Yeah, I think it was. I don't think it is like that now (laughs).

Okey: What do you like to do for fun?

Betty: What do I like to do for fun, well I like to go places. Shop.

Okey: Do you like to read?

Betty: Yeah, I like to read and when it isn't cold I like to get out and walk.

Okey: Are you involved with the church or any kind of volunteer organizations?

Betty: No, I just go to church, but I'm not involved in anything.

Okey: There is a lot of stuff going on in the world — what do you think about all of that?

Betty: Well,

Okey: Do you think it is worse than it usually is?

Betty: I really think it is worse. You mean worse than it used to be don't you?

Okey: I can't put my opinions in on it

Okey: There have been a lot of social changes so let's talk about them. Do you remember when they de-segregated schools? You have to remember that black children had to go to separate schools and a decision was made that children should go to the same school and get a good education. Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. and the civil rights movement, and he was assassinated and the civil rights bill passed which protected black folks and allowed them... gave them some other opportunities they didn't have before. Welfare is a big issue. Social Security. The environmental movement and the women's movement. We talked a little bit ago about the fact that men were the head of the household and men told women what to do and that is not the case any more.

Betty: I guess that's the world changing.

Okey: How do you feel about that — do you think it is good, bad, some of it good, some of it bad, neutral?

Betty: Well, really I don't think that women should take over. Because I go by what the bible says and the bible says that the man is the head of the house. And when Mose was living he was the head of this house.

Okey: But when he died, you became the head of the house?

Betty: yeah

Okey: You are the Matriarch of this house and the Matriarch of the family, you are the oldest person in the family and that has some weight. What you ask and what you say carries some weight with your children and your grandchildren.

Betty: Yeah

Okey: What do you think about all of these social changes and social movements?

Betty: Well, some I think is alright and some of them I don't think is alright.

Okey: Which one's do you think are ok?

Betty: I can't remember stuff like that I know I've heard stuff along.

Okey: Tell me what you don't think is right other than the women stuff because you have already told me how you feel about that. How do you feel about civil rights.

Betty: I don't know that much about it.

Okey: Well, it basically says you cannot discriminate against someone because they are black.

Betty: I don't believe in it. I don't believe the blacks should be treated any different than the whites.

Okey: What about the environmental movement?

Betty: What do you mean?

Okey: Well, there are groups out there who are saying that we are polluting this planet to the point where we are poisoning ourselves. I'm a member of the environmental movement and I'm going to a protest march and could very well be arrested in June.

**Betty:** Are you?

**Okey:** Yeah, it is a misdemeanor and will just have to pay a \$50 fine.

**Betty:** Well there are a lot of people who are for the pulp mill and then there are a lot of people who are against it.

**Okey:** The people who are for it need the jobs and money and the people who are against it are fighting because it will pollute the river, the air, and land. Thirty years ago we didn't have a big environmental movement. So what do you think about it.

**Betty:** I've not really paid that much attention to it.

**Okey:** Do you consider yourself to be an Appalachian? Why? Why not?

**Betty:** Well, I guess I do. I hadn't really ever thought about it.

**Okey:** Do you feel proud to be from West Virginia?

**Betty:** yes, I love it here.

**Okey:** You know, there is two generations between us there's your children and then your grandchildren. Have things changed between you, your children, and your grandchildren and when you were a kid? Has it gotten worse, better, etc?

**Betty:** I think it has gotten worse.

**Okey:** What do you think has gotten worse about it?

**Betty:** Well, the young people I don't know, there are just so many things that they get mixed up in. Like when I was raising my kids up they never had all this stuff like they've got now. Back then, you know, they just never had as much, and they never had as many places to go and all this other stuff you can buy, games and stuff.

**Okey:** So things have gotten really materialistic - -do you think that is good or bad?

**Betty:** Really I don't think it is that good.

**Okey:** Let's talk about technology. Obviously when you were a child growing up they didn't have microwaves.

**Betty:** no

**Okey:** or they didn't have electric lawn mowers.

**Betty:** no

**Okey:** They didn't have gas powered lawn mowers as far as I know I think it was push mowers.

**Betty:** Yeah, that's all they had just the push mowers.

**Okey:** Things have advanced so that it is a lot easier

**Betty:** Yeah, I know it.

**Okey:** Do you think it is good or bad or a little of both.

Betty: I'd say a little of both, you know it would really be bad to have to go back like it used to be you know where you had to use a wash board to do your washing on and heat your irons on the stove to do your ironing and cook with a wood stove and everything like that, now that would really be hard after you get used to all this other stuff.

Okey: Makes it easy now doesn't it?

Betty: Oh yeah!

Okey: We've got a world now where if you want to talk to somebody in Hong Kong, you can pick up the phone and you can dial them up and talk to them (snaps fingers) just like that.

Betty: You can?

Okey: You can talk to people across the world by just dialing the phone. We can keep up now, we know a lot more about what is going on. Do you think that is good or bad?

Betty: I don't think it is good — you can't give your opinion (laughs).

Okey: How do you think things have changed for wimmin in three generations?

Betty: I really don't know how to answer that question

Okey: What would you say your biggest satisfaction is and your biggest disappointment is as a womyn? Having seen all these things happen and take place, you are 70 years old you have seen a lot happen. What makes you the happiest, what things make you happiest?

Betty: Well, I think it is to just have all my family around me and all of them to get along. That makes me happy.

Okey: What disappoints you?

Betty: Well, what disappoints me is when my family doesn't get along

Okey: Was family important to you as a kid growing up? The role of family more important then than it is now. Do you think people found family more important when you were growing up than they do now?

Betty: Back used to, family they seemed more close. You know the families seemed more close to each other than what they do now.

Okey: Why do you think that is? What do you think happened to change that?

Betty: I don't know what made it change like that, but I think that back used to they just seemed more close than what they are.

Okey: Lets move one step out from family. Lets move to community a group of families. Do you think community was more important then than it is now? If families aren't as close it stands to reason that probably communities aren't as close.

Betty: Back used to the communities and families are more close than what they are now. Because used to families and around your neighbors they would visit each other and see they don't even do that now hardly ever. Every once and a while somebody will visit you, but not very often. I can't remember the last time that anybody just came and visited me. You know, one of my neighbors.

Okey: What makes you the happiest?

Betty: What makes me the happiest?

Okey: yes

Betty: Well, what makes me the happiest is to have all of my family and all of them to be in as good a health as what they are.

Okey: So family is very, very important to you?

Betty: yeah

Okey: So you haven't lost that, family is still very important in your life?

Betty: Yeah, my family is the most important thing to me, besides the Lord, he's the one that is most important to me more than my family. Don't you think that is the way it is supposed to be?

Okey: I can't give my opinion

Betty: You can't give that either.

Okey: Do you think that families in the country are a little closer than in the cities?

Betty: no, now I think they are more close in the country than they are in the city.

Okey: What about wimmin in the country and wimmin in the city are they different?

Betty: yeah, I think they are. I think, I don't know whether it is because they live in the country or what, but they are just different.

Okey: Well, you've mentioned church two or three times. Church seems to be a very important part of your life.

Betty: It is. Church is really important to me.

Okey: Why is that?

Betty: Well, because I just really enjoy it (laughs).