

RECORDING MADE BY ELIZABETH ANDERSON – 1981

[Words I'm unsure of, or was unable to decipher, I've put in square brackets in blue, with either a question mark, or ellipsis highlighted in yellow. More than three dots highlighted means two or more words are missing. NL]

A = Elizabeth Anderson

ED = Ethel Devilbiss

A: This tape was made with Ethel Devilbiss on April 9th, 1981

ED: . . . our own corn, our own wheat and we raised buckwheat and we ground it ourselves and made buckwheat cakes.

A: What did you do? You mean you raised corn and field corn?

ED: Field corn then we made it for roasting too you know. And we had apples.

A: Did you make your own flour out of the wheat?

ED: Oh yes.

A: Made your own flour?

ED: But I don't know what they did to it. Then they took it somewhere else and had it finished up.

A: You had some fruit trees?

ED: We had fruit trees. We had apples you know and we canned our apple sauce and then we'd take apples you know and canned the quarters – we never threwed nothin' away. And we had our cherries, because if you didn't have that you wouldn't have nothin' during the winter. And then we raised our gardens and canned all of that. And raised our own potatoes. You had to raise everything.

A: There were a lot of children in the family weren't there?

ED: Yeah, there were nine of us.

A: And if you were sitting down to a meal? What would you usually have on the table?

ED: Well we didn't have meat all the time – very seldom meat. Now that was a great occasion when we had meat you know, but we always had potatoes. We had potatoes if we didn't have nothing else. Then of course we had our canned goods – our corn and green beans. We'd go out and pick berries. We had those, and huckleberries. We'd go clean up in the mountain you know and pick our huckleberries.

A: What about pigs? Did you have your own pigs?

ED: Not all the time. Sometimes we had 'em, but we had chickens all the time. We didn't have pigs all the time.

A: And you used the chickens for eggs and for meat?

ED: Yeah we used them for meat and our eggs. And if you didn't have them eggs from them chickens you didn't have any. We raised our own corn; we could feed them you know. Then we kept a horse sometimes.

A: Where did you live?

ED: Ah I think a Lewis lives over there now [. . .] from here – about a half mile.

A: You just had a small amount of land?

ED: We had nineteen acres. Bu now it wasn't all cleared. There was some woodland. But we had some nice big fields.

A: Did your father work away? Or did he just work here on the . . .

ED: Very little. He was sickly. He didn't work too much away. Now of course my mother she worked away a good bit. You know goin' around Thurmont cleanin' houses, you know and things like that.

A: I imagine you did have a time feeding nine children and that with no regular income.

ED: Yes you had to put away in the summer what you needed to keep you alive during the winter. Of course he died when I was about six years old, see – seven. He learned me to make bread and all. He set the pan on the chair and I made up my bread and I baked. He stayed around the children most of the time you know and did help to do the farming. It was hard.

A: How did you make the bread? And what did you use?

ED: Well then we used the old time 'east. I don't how exactly how they first was made but I know we raised hops – what they call hops, and them was scalded with potatoes and flour you know. We took potatoes and mashed them up you know – and hot water off the hops you know and scalded flour and somehow they made it that it would raise.

A: You know hops are what they used to make beer.

ED: Yes, the same thing. They were all about an inch and a half long.

A: We used to have a hops vine at home but we never used it that I remember it just grew. It grew up on a shed we had and they always said that was the old hops barn. I guess in the old days they used it for something.

ED: They used it to start their 'east. Each time we'd make the 'east then we'd save a quart jarful and put that away and keep it until we made bread again then we made our 'east up at night we'd pour this out of the quart jar you know and that would cause it to raise. I guess it was more like sourbread to me when you think about it today – sour 'east.

A: What would you add to it to make more at a time?

ED: Why, we'd take . . .

A: That's what they a called starter right?

ED: Yes. They made it out of hops and that was your starter I don't know all about what they did, but I know when we made our 'east and the next time to bake we'd put a little flour in a gallon crock, and we'd cook a potato or two and we'd scald that flour with the potato water then we'd mash these potatoes up good and fine you know like mashed potatoes and that would go in it. [Put it in]that flour and let it set it and cool then pour 'east in that we'd saved from the time from before, and that would raise.

A: And then each time you made the bread you'd take some of that out and put it with the bread?

ED: Every time we made our bread we'd save our jar of 'east, and make up the bread and take flour and salt.

A: You added flour salt to that?

ED: And made up your bread.

A: And shortening didn't you put some lard in – no lard?

ED: No. That was poor times.

A: And that would really make bread?

ED: Oh yes! it made wonderful bread. It was delicious. Back in them days it was delicious. Well I made it even after I was married. I made the same thing.

A: And all you needed was yeast, flour and water?

ED: I don't know them hops in some way – but scaldin' them and then puttin' them in this flour and it would raise.

A: Of course the potatoes in it, that added something to it too.

ED: But we never put no sugar in it and no shortening. I know I remember people would come – 'cause very few people came – people came from Harrisburg and [. . .] and they were just crazy over that bread.

A: And then after you'd worked it, you'd let it raise and then shape it into loaves and let it raise again – raise twice?

ED: Yeah. Make it up in this pan and then when it raised, some people used to work it down, but I never worked mine down. Then work it, put in your pan, let it rise, then put it in the stove.

A: That's pretty interesting. First time I've heard about making it right from scratch you know from the hops and everything.

[laughter]

ED: We had a little hop vine out here and they could tear that hop vine down.

A: I don't doubt that. What is it on the hop vine that you used? Just the leaves or is there a . . .

ED: There's a little bud comes down about an inch and a half a long. That's what you would take. That was the hop.

A: Well you didn't have them the whole year round though. They only took . . .

ED: Well you had to take 'em up and save a piece for during the winter if you had to. Now you didn't have to make new 'east very often, but we always saved some if we had to make it during the winter.

A: Did you grind those little things up or . . .

ED: No. just threw them in whole.

A: In the water? And cooked them?

ED: Let them come to a boil and set 'em back just like you would tea and let 'em draw.

A: And that's what started it off?

ED: And I'll tell you there's something I'd love to have that I used to do then. I used to take a loaf of this bread after it would rise. And take a pan of water and let it come to a boil and pour syrup in that water; then put one of these loaves of bread down in it and boil it. Now you talk about something good to eat – that was out of this world good.

A: Boil a loaf of bread in syrup water?

ED: Before it was baked now.

A: Oh, before it was baked.

ED: Yeah. After it raised good you know and just dropped that down there. Oh, that was out of this world good!

A: And then bake it?

ED: No, no, no.

A: Never bake it?

ED: No, no, no no. It would get kind of slippery on the outside of it. But oh, you picked that up. Your best way way was to have always a nice clean piece of cheesecloth to lay your loaf of bread in and put it down in the water. Then pick it up in this piece of cloth and lay it out on a plate and take your fork and pull it apart – oh, that is out of this world good – then eat it with milk on.

A: Did you ever make what they call shortbread just in a pan on top of the stove like a frying pan?

ED: I know what you're talkin' about shortcake, yeah. I always bake mine though in the bake [oven].

A: Oh you always put it in?

ED: I never baked it in a frying pan on top of the stove.

A: You know its nothing but flour and water and I guess a little lard and a little salt.

ED: No, you didn't put lard in it. No, you don't put lard in shortbread.

A: Oh you don't put lard? I thought they were putting lard in it. But I guess they weren't.

ED: No, if you didn't have your own hogs you didn't have that lard and you couldn't afford to buy it. So whatever you could do without, you done without.

A: Well then it's just flour and water and salt?

ED: And a little baking powder.

A: And it raises to about that thick?

ED: Oh yeah, yeah!

A: It's good!

ED: Yes I still like it

A: Well so do I, but I wish I could make it because we're great biscuit eaters at home and I often think by golly if I knew exactly what to put in that doggone stuff I could

make the kids some of that 'cause they've never never tasted it. My kids have never tasted it.

ED: Now that's all we put in it, was baking powder, salt and flour and water, and rolled it out nice [. . . .] had an old woodstove you know.

A: We always put it on top in an iron skillet with a lid on it and then you'd turn it over and let it cook a certain amount just like you'd fry a big pancake and then turn it over and they'd turn the whole thing in one big sheet.

ED: Well, you see I never baked mine that way. Now I don't know, I don't remember if mom never did it. She might have did it that way too, but I don't remember that. But I know when I baked them, I always put it in the oven. Because it baked them better

A: Yeah I guess it would I don't know why we did it on top of the stove. Well I guess the oven maybe it wasn't always that hot because you know in the summer time particularly.

ED: We always run our own woodstove, you know . . .

A: Yeah well this was a woodstove . . .

ED: Sorry, I'm just gettin' up.

A: Getting up?

ED: [. . .] in the morning

ED: But I liked my bread dumped in the pan . . .

A: Did you make chicken corn soup then too? I mean did you know about chicken corn soup and make that at home?

ED: I never made that at that time. I never made it at home. Now mostly what I learnt at home to do was you know cook potatoes. I cooked green beans, and of course, when we could afford 'em, we bought dried beans you know and I made – we were always crazy about pot pie. Made a lot of that – see that was cheap – just a few potatoes and we didn't have meat to season the broth. We just took bacon grease and put some potatoes in and you make your pot pie.

A: You can put pot pie in with most everything. Potatoes or with chicken . . .

ED: Or beans or anything – anything you had.

A: Oh you put it in with beans too?

ED: Oh bean pot pie is delicious. I still make it now.

A: Just green beans and pot pie?

ED: No I didn't use the green beans. I used the dried beans.

A: Oh the dried beans? Oh, I've never tasted that.

ED: Oh I've made the lima beans and pink-colored beans to make it. Oh that makes delicious.

A: Just the beans – soup beans in pot pie?

ED: Yeah that's what we put in it yeah. That's easy. You don't need no meat to make it taste good you know. You use beans. Anything you we could pick up to make pot pie with we did. And flour was cheap; it went a long way. We had our own flour . . .

A: That was flour – with pot pie it's just flour and water and salt.

ED: And salt – yes.

A: Yeah I know how to make that!

[laughter]

A: My girls love pot pie. Lizzy and Melinda both. They love pot pie.

ED: Sometimes you know – now we don't care too much for it.

A: Jerry and Joel are not much for it, but the girls always just love it. Mother used to make it so much.

ED: Another great thing we made when we could afford to buy dried beans, colored beans why then we'd put rivels in 'em you know that would stretch it further.

A: And rivels are eggs and flour?

ED: Eggs and salt and flour. You whip 'em together and crumble 'em up. And that was good.

A: How about soup? Did you make much soup of any kind?

ED: No mostly when we made our soup was in the summertime – we made that with things in the garden – whatever we could get out of the garden.

A: Trouble with soup is you've almost got to have a meat to start it.

ED: Yeah but we made it up many a time without meat. As I said we used add a little meat drippins'.

A: Potato soup. I bet you made potato soup.

ED: Oh yes. Made potato soup an awful lot.

A: Did you have milk to put in that or did you . . . ?

ED: Lot of times no. You blocked the potatoes, and cooked them and seasoned them with your – you know. And we took just flour made a thickening. We always had parsely that always grew in the garden. We didn't have milk . . .

A: 'Cause you didn't have a cow.

ED: No.

A: Did you make any particular kind of cakes or pies with chicken or anything?

Ed: Yes my mother always baked berry pies galore. See we had the berries from the summer and we ate berry pies galore. As I say we had our own flour – plenty of that.

A: Cherry pie too I think

ED: Oh yeah, we had cherries and canned cherries

A: And apples.

ED: We had our apples you see snits with the apples you know and take them and [. . .] them in there because they were soft. Put a little sugar on and cinnamon and we had our apple pies.

A: Did you boil Appple butter

ED: Oh yeah, we boiled our apple butter

A: And that made your spread for your bread all Winter?

ED: And you know in the wintertime if you didn't have, or ran out of spread, well maybe you could afford a little sugar then, you see, as you could make up some, taking the jar of cherries you know and make your own jam. We did that.

A: When you made apple butter what did you add to it then, just plain white sugar?

ED: Yeah, just plain white sugar and – no! We always had brown. If you had the money to buy the white sugar, you had the money for the brown and we'd divide it up. Mom always used brown sugar. Brown and white sugar.

A: What? About twice as much white sugar as brown sugar? Or half and half or . . .

ED: About half and half.

A: And then you'd put a little cinnamon in it;

ED: Yes. We had cinnamon. Mum always put cloves in hers.

A: That makes good apple butter.

ED: Yeah I like to put cloves in, makes it dark.

A: Did you ever make pear butter.

ED: Oh Yeah. Peach butter.

A: Are they done the same way?

ED: Done the same way, but I don't know whether you put the cloves in the peaches and pears. But I know you put the cinnamon in and I won't say about the cloves because I don't know.

A: But you used both kinds of sugar in those too? And just cooked them up just like you do apples. I guess they really cook up fast. Specially peaches.

ED: Peaches do, and that is just delicious. If you like peaches, you'd just love that butter.

A: Do you have to peel the peaches?

ED: Oh yes. Peel them and halve them like you do your apples.

A: I make peach preserves.

ED: Yeah I like that. Preserves I love that too. But we always had a pear tree, as I say, and a couple of peach trees. You know – if you didn't have the money for the sugar to boil for the butter, why you canned them.

A: How about going out and getting greens in the summer time?

ED: Yeah we'd go out and get water cress field greens and I'll tell you something else we got and I know you're goin' to laugh. I don't know if I liked it or not; but my mother used to go out 'n gather sour grass. Do you know what that is?

A: No. What's sour grass?

ED: It's a little bulb that grows . . .

A: Is that what they call rock salad?

ED: Oh no, no . That's a lot different. I love that. I still eat that.

A: Where the devil do you find that? Everybody's been telling me about rock salad and I don't know which one it is really.

ED: I get some up here on the hill. There's some down here along the railroad. There's one [. . .] but I still get it and that is delicious.

A: We always got what we call land cress, or field cress . . .

ED: Yeah I love them . . .

A: And water cress is pretty hard to find. You've got to go on streams . . .

ED: Helen has a good place for that at her house. Today I don't care for the water cress, I like field greens not the water cress. There's a different taste there.

A: But I don't know the rock salad at all; that's one that

ED: That is delicious I love that. You'd take and make a hot dressing for that you see, take bacon and fry it up and take some eggs and flour you know and sugar. That is delicious.

A: But this sour grass? Now that's

ED: Well that grew like plantain leaves. Oh, the leaves was just so tiny, you know, but they were tall. And oh, it is sour you picked off a leaf and chewed it. It's sour. And my mother used to gather it up and make a pie.

A: Is that right? What would she put in the pie besides that?

ED: Just sugar. And I don't know, but I imagine she had to put the least little bit of water round it to cook that.

A: Where did she find this? Is it out in the . . .

ED: Out in the woods – out anywhere.

A: Do you know what it looks like?

ED: Oh I know what it looks like – but you see very little of it any more.

A: Did you ever eat poke? Young poke is good.

ED: No, I dont care for it. But my mother used to . . .

A: If it gets older It's not so good.

ED: Yeah she'd go out and get her poke, plantain leaves, murdoch, lambs quarter take all of that and mix it up for greens

A: Dandelion?

ED: No, she never put dandelions. Now when we got dandelions, she made that like scald the dandelions with that hot dressing that you put on dandelions.

A: That also makes wine.

ED: Yeah that's the blossom you use for wine.

A: How do you do that?

ED: I never made no wine – there was never no rations . . .

A: Never were a wine maker! You weren't involved in hard drink. [Laughter]

ED: Yeah. We never made wine or anything like that like that Grace down on the corner. But I know you take the blossoms somehow and you scald them and let 'em set and then you drain them and you put oranges and lemons in it and then top up. It makes a good [drink].

A: Yeah I've drunk good – Theo used to make good wine. And that was very [...]

ED: Well [...] he made dandelion wine. Now I'll tell you my brother-in-law used to make what you call rose wine cause of the roses he took off of the bushes and he made it.

A: You know you can make wine out of a lot of things – really – a lot of different things.

ED: If I had to drink any, I'd rather have blackberries than any other. Then grapes. Grape makes good wine.

A: Yeah it does.

ED: My father-in-law made it by the barrel. He had terrible [... ..]

A: Was it still good?

ED: Oh yes [...] in them great big wooden barrels!

A: [Laughter] Why did you pour it out. Why didn't you just sell it or keep it or . . .

ED: Well, my husband wasn't into that and he took it and carried all of that out by the bucketsful he poured it out and it was delicious. His father when he got company on Sundays [... ..] and they could go and get a big pitcher of wine – put it up on the table and they'd set and drink their wine.

A: Just like beer today, you know how people sit around and drink beer

ED: But we were never into drinkin' you see.

A: I mean you go to France for instance and they sit around with a glass of wine just like people here go and drink beer.

ED: My family wasn't in to drinkin'. Herb never got into to it. He never cared for it. We never had no wine drinkin' around at all.

A: Did anybody ever do any hunting?

ED: Ah yes, the boys used to hunt rabbits and squirrels, but nothing else. You know, there was nothing else. Rabbit season was a great thing.

A: And then they'd bring them in and skin 'em and – meat on the table . . .

ED: Meat from the squirrel, pot pie. A lot of times Mom baked her pot pie. She cooked the squirrel off and potatoes and put a dough in a pan and put potatoes in there and her squirrel meat, you know, put layers of salt and dough and she'd fill her pan up. She'd bake that up.

A: How about rabbit? Did they fry the rabbit?

ED: Oh, yes. They'd fry the rabbit. That was a meal. You got two rabbits and had 'em at a meal, boy you thought you had somethin'!

A: That's true. It's just like chicken.

ED: Yeah? I didn't mind that – I didn't mind that. And squirrel – there's nothing to them. Unless you cook 'em and pick the meat off the bones.

A: Well, there'd be enough there to flavor a pot pie.

ED: Yeah, yeah that's why we'd put 'em in a pot pie. But the rabbit, my mother always soaked them in salt water and then she boiled them a little bit, and then fried them.

A: When they planted the garden did they have any particular thoughts about planting certain things at certain times like in the down sign and the up sign?

ED: Oh yes! You always go for the up and down

A: How do you know when they are?

ED: Well, you look at your almanac. You can still buy almanacs you know. But I guarantee you if you take a plant like pole beans. Lot of people has time for them to set, you know. And we used to always plant them in among the corn to grow up the corn instead of stakes.

And you would plant them in the down of the moon, and I'll guarantee you – you tied them buggeries up. You had to tie 'em up.

A: How about carrots and beets? If you plant them in the down sign that makes them get bigger and fatter?

ED: Yeah, yeah. There are certain things they plant in the down and certain things in the sign of the up; Oh yes they always had their almanacs.

A: Always had to follow them? The Hagerstown Almanac I guess.

ED: I guess it was.

A: Or The Old Farmers Almanac.

ED: I think it was Hagerstown almanac.

A: They still put that out I guess just for that purpose; I guess that's what's wrong with my garden, I guess. I don't follow that. I've got to start buying Hagerstown Almanack and following it.

ED: Yeah like Herb does. He always – I bought him one at the [...] sale some time ago and gave to him so he has it. He follows all the signs. And the best days to plant corn and the best days to plant potatoes you know.

A: Is that the one that lives down the side of Bradley?

ED: Mm hm. He's puttin' out Brad's garden.

A: How is Bradley, by the way?

ED: Well he was in church on Sunday and he was pretty good.

A: Oh he was in church?

ED: But he's weak.

A: Father Shaffer said at nine o' clock they found out that he had Legionnaire's disease.

ED: Yeah, that's what he had. I said it had to be something pretty bad or it wouldn't have put Brad down.

[Next couple of sentences unclear – voice pitch changes] Let me tell you he doesn't listen because he was up at the [...] the other week and the things he ordered . . . was not [...] was not dying and he just won't listen.

ED: No he's a hard head. But maybe when Helen has him home she can [...] But he's not good at all. Even his voice is not right.

A: I bet from watching Bradley eat, I bet I know something that you used to make a lot of and that was pancakes.

ED: Oh my, yes. and I'll tell you now how we made pancakes. We took eggs, flour and salt and baking powder. It was called flannel cake and made 'em up and put milk in 'em and baked them.

A: How about buckwheat? Did you use the soured buckwheat? Make the soured buckwheat cakes with the yeast . . .

ED: . . . at night the hops And let 'em rise overnight and git up in the mornin' and bake your buckwheat cakes.

A: Put a little tablespoon of cinammon or molasses in them – blackstrap molasses?

ED: No I couldn't tell you. I don't know about that if they put that in it or not.

A: Did you have molasses? You didn't raise any molasses cane or anything like that?

ED: No. Now we had more syrup you know than butter. In them days you didn't have much butter. We had the molasses and made our own spread.

A: Well as long as you had syrup, you didn't really need butter if you had cakes you could get by with that.

ED: Maybe that's why people, I think a lot of them, were a lot healthier.

A: It could be. You were eating natural sugar too. You were eating molasses and things like that and not so much white sugar, which isn't too good for you either.

ED: My mother was a de'il for greens. She loved her greens.

A: Well they were good for you. Plus they were free if you went out in the woods and got 'em.

ED: Oh yes, uh huh. In the summertime like that. And do you know you can greens too? You can can 'em.

A: I freeze spinach.

ED: We used to have to can ours.

A: Tell me something, did you ever fix peppers did you stuff them and put them away?

ED: Oh my yes the gallon jars.

A: Yeah, and pour lard over them or something?

ED: No, vinegar!

A: Vinegar?

ED: Vinegar with peppers. You'd take and cut up your cabbage you know and put whatever spices you wanted in you know

A: And you stuffed them?

ED: And you stuffed them, yes. Packed 'em in there took all the tops off . . .

A: You didn't put any meat in them or anything? You didn't stuff any hamburger or anything like that?

ED: No, no, no – just pickled them. We never did the other thing. Now what we did when we had hogs, you know, we'd fry our sausage and put them in gallon crocks. They covered with lard; same thing with tenderline, liver. Boil your backbone off and your spare rib off and then cover it with grease you know. We did cold packing. You couldn't do too much with backbone 'cause it was too big. Spare rib you can.

A: We used to call backbone, chine. I guess that's what they called chine, as I remember it.

ED: What?

A: They spoke of that as the chine, that part of the pig, the backbone.

ED: Well your backbone – your chine is up here at the head.

A: Oh is that what that is.

ED: Uh huh. It's just from the head down just a little ways, like between the shoulders because it's a piece that's maybe that wide you know, and the backbone only runs like that.

A: Well, you see I've heard these things, but unfortunately I didn't write them down or listen to them too carefully and that's why I guess . . .

ED: You had tenderline and the fish all like . . .

A: Which is the fish?

ED: Well it's a little piece of lean meat just about that long. It's just about that wide and maybe that thick.

A: Where's it come from? Up along the back?

ED: It has to come from along the back somewhere with the tenderline meat along the backbone somewhere there. And there's two fish in each hog and have to be on each side And the hog's stomach, Oh my, that used to be delicious.

A: You'd stuff that?

ED: Uh huh. Then you'd clean it. Clean the hog, skin it you know out the inside and all.

A: That's what they call hog maw.

ED: Mm hm. But that's around today a lot.

A: Yes. Oh I know a lot of people fix them. You . . .

ED: Back them days people didn't stuff too many you know. They didn't care for that.

A: Stuffed it with cabbage and . . .

ED: Well mom used to take – and what I have done – used to take bread and make a dressin' and stuffed mine with it – now that's what I like in mine – and the [. . .] might take cabbage and sausage and potatoes sometimes. But I never made too many of them. Mom didn't care for them. We didn't at home. And take the lights you know most [. . .] the lights as well. But now mum would take them and lay 'em out on a board and she'd slice them and then she'd take – you know they are so full of little veins – and she'd cut every little vein out.

A Good gosh!

ED: Yessir, that we sliced them and every little vein would come out and then she'd chop it up and cook it and make what she called hash out of it. I don't know how she did it.

A: I bet it was kind of like kidney stew – you know you can take the kidneys and chop them up and put them with potatoes and all that kind of stuff and make a kind of a stew out of them.

ED: I never did

A: They re not too bad if you like kidneys and you know you've kinda got to have a taste for kidneys.

ED: Yeah, well I never did like them.

A: And they used to stuff the bladders too didn't they?

ED: Oh yes. Sausage in the bladders. Then you could slice them. But you know to me everbody could never clean a bladder or casing like I would clean them. I was always learnt to turn my casing before you cleaned them because if you clean 'em without turning 'em you scrape all the good clean part away that's to the hog and kept the dirty inside part. We always turned ours and scraped them from the inside out. I never believed in scraping them on the right side.

A: I can understand that.

ED: So many people never turned their casings.

A: What did they do then? How did they get 'em clean?

ED: Well they just scraped 'em from the right side there.

A: And sort of forced out everything that was in there?

ED: What they could get out. But to me I was never learnt that way. I was learnt to turn 'em. You know. Put 'em in warm water after you dump 'em and hold them like

this. And just keep puttin' the end down through there and that's the way you turned 'em.

A: I can see how that would work. I remember them doing that when I was a kid, but I don't remember . . .

ED: We had a wooden tub special for that and a little board about that wide and that long and kept it special for that – cleaned your cases and bladders and all. Bladders are good if you smoked them then you know – they were delicious.

A: Did you have a place to smoke the meat?

ED: Had a little shed that sets right out there yet. It used to be my smokehouse.

A: You don't light a fire and put the wood in there?

ED: Yeah we always put it either in – ah, we'd cut off these tin barrels you know – big barrels and make a fire in 'em in a piece of that and set it in there on the cement floor. We used nothing but Birchwood.

A: Birchwood?

ED: Mm hmm we used nothing but Birchwood.

A: Okay, let me think. Can I think of anything else We've kind of covered the whole menu from meat right on to bread and everything else. How about breakfast? Did you ever eat pudding and hominy and . . .

ED: Oh heavens forbid, yes! We just had – you see in them days you could buy a whole bag of hominy for two cents and cook it on the stove and we just had plain hominy. We didn't have pudding or anything. Or if we could afford it we'd take and get soup beans to put with the hominy.

A: Did you make mush?

ED: Oh heavens yes – mush galore that was an art . . .

A: Tell me how you made mush.

ED: Well, we'd put water on the stove let it come to a boil and if you had a little sugar you'd put a little sugar in your water and just take your corn meal and sprinkle it and keep stirring like this you know, to keep the lumps out and let it get it as thick as you want. Let it cook for a couple of minutes and you had good mush.

A: Then what was left over did you pour that in a pan and let it set up and fry it the next morning?

ED: Yessir! Let it set up and fry it. Do you know a lot of times we had oatmeal and if we didn't want to have that boiled for breakfast Mom would boil it at night, you

know, and make some oatmeal – put that in a pan and fry it for breakfast. That's good. I still like that. I don't go too much for your mush.

A: I eat mush fried, but I don't like the other so much.

ED: I don't want it with milk.

A: No. That's just a bit too much for me.

ED: No I don't like that. But I do like it fried.

A: How about clabber? Of course you never had that much milk.

ED: That's eatin' sour milk?

A: Yeah.

ED: I've heard of people doin' that but no, I never . . .

A: No well, you had to have a cow and have extra milk to do that.

ED: But people now – I know one farmer would give us cheese a lot that he made from sour milk.

A: Yes – what we always called schmeer case.

ED: Yes and it's got a lot different taste to what you buy today. It was good. And I loved the buttermilk they used to have. Oh we used to go to a farmer every year and get schmeer case like that and buttermilk and he'd give it to us. Same way with meat drippins'. We didn't make half of our own meat drippins' other people you know. You'd buy it for two or three cents a pound or you know a lot of people or farmers that we knew would give it to us you see.

A: After your father died what did your mother do with all those kids?

ED: Well, she worked when she could and as I say put everything away and had gardens and stuff like that and sold the fruit. But I have to say we never went hungry. You mightn't have had much but you had enough to keep going. Make your own bread you know. If we didn't have nothing else we had bread and gravy. Make a pan of gravy you know.

A: What did you make that out of without meat?

ED: Well, just take it and brown your flour and put water in

A: Is that right? You mean just brown the flour?

ED: Just brown your flour with a little bit of grease you know. That how you brown your flour. You can't brown it without grease – and add water.

A: And use that for gravy?

ED: Mm hm, that was your brown flour gravy.

A: And you could always use that over bread if necessary . . .

ED: Yes, if you had nothing else. We had that many a time for supper and it was the same you were saying about your shortcake. We had gravy and shortcake if we had nothing else.

A: Did you go out and get sassafras for tea?

ED: Oh yes – root. You had to dig the root up. The best time to do that is in the spring when it's tender. Take the bark off of it and make tea. Yeah, you had to have that every spring. That cleans your blood. We had to have our sassafras tea. Then there was two other things out in the woods that we got: wood betony – made tea. Did you ever hear that?

A: No.

ED: It grew to about that high and ohh, it smelt so good and made the best tea. Called wood betony. And then there was another one, but I forget it now.

A: Wild cherry?

ED: No. There was another one. But I remember the wood betony – oh, that was . . .

A: Well, birch bark will make tea.

ED: I never used that.

A: Birch-bark tea.

ED: But wood betony, it was a – some kind of a – it grew about that high. Oh we'd go out and bring armfuls in and make tea and we dried it and put it in bags for winter. I wonder if that was stuff we used to chew when we was kids – you took a tree . . .

A: Birch?

ED: Birch. We chewed it, pushed it around on your tongue and then spit it out.

A: It'll make good tea. Or pretty good tea.

ED: I never tried that. We used to chew it; I remember when we was kids.

A: How about coffee. Did you use any kind of coffee plus the tea?

ED: Yes what you'd call essence. Did you ever hear that?

A: No.

ED: You brought your little box like that high and that big around, the little box, and you'd get a spoonful of coffee where you'd put in this essence and that made you a big pot of coffee – strong! Or you could use it by itself. It wouldn't taste as good, but it took the place of coffee and it was called essence. Black stuff, real fine – like coffee powder.

A: How about root beer. did you make root beer?

ED: Oh yes. Mom made root beer since I was a little girl.

A: Did she make her own? Did she buy the flavoring?

ED: Yes she'd buy the bottle extract. She'd buy the sugar and the 'east cake. We always had root beer.

A: I haven't found anybody yet who went out and got their own roots for it. There's a root that you get to make that out of you know. That's where they get that essence from. But I don't know, it may not grow around here. I don't know about that.

ED: And everything has been destroyed for so many years, you know – building and all. Maybe there ain't nobody around that knows anything about it.

A: That's true.

ED: Because I do know, way back, mom always bought hers with extract. But we used to get root beer, birch beer and sassafras, there were three kinds of it. [...] root beer now.

A: Yeah, well that's the thing. Sassafras was used to make tea. It's the same stuff. It's just the flavor – stronger. That's where it comes from.

ED: Some kind of a root? But you know I never heard of it.

A: I don't know, because it comes from a root. Definitely where it comes from. Even the name, root beer you know. Comes from a certain root.

ED: You can buy sassafras roots you know. They have that part to sell them now.

A: And even birch that you were talking about. You can buy that. You can buy that in health food stores.

ED: Oh you can?

A: Yeah. Chopped up or shaved off. How about ginseng? Did you ever go out and hunt ginseng? You get that around the watersheds. It's a root they make medicine out of

ED: Now I know we used to get a root that was called snake root and went out to get it.

A: What did you use it for?

ED: And they used to put in with whisky. They said it was good for the digestion. Now I took that. It's called a snake root.

A: Yeah I've heard of that.

ED: I don't know what stuff it is. Then they put it in the whisky. It helped to settle the digestion.

[Unclear]

ED: It would make you [. . .] It would help you! Just take a spoonful whatever. But [. . .].

A: [Laughter] The cure was worse than the disease.

ED: Oh yes! Now my father-in-law every Sunday mornin' had to have dried eggshells, and had to have them pounded up good and fine and he ate his spoonful every weekend.

A: For a medicine?

Ed: He said it was good for his stomach.

A: If he was a chicken I guess . . .

[laughter]

ED: He liked to have a cup of cream. He'd dip his bread in it for breakfast a lot of times. He always used to eat meat. He had plenty of meat and eggs and bacon. He had him a big piece of ham and his cup of cream. I'll never forget him eating his eggshells.

A: Well that helped to grind up that meat and cream.

[Laughter]

ED: I'll never forget that though.

A: Did they live here? Was this Devilbliss home ?

ED: Yes. They owned this house. It's at least a hundred and fifty years old part of it. This part and that part are very old – that is, the inside shell of it. I've lived here for fifty two years. And they lived in it fifty seven years before daddy died. I don't know how old when they got it yet. They bought it, had it roofed somehow and poles or somethin'.

A: Oh that's great and it's good that it's in good shape and everything.

ED: Yes. It's pretty crooked. But you couldn't straighten it all up.

A: If you think this is crooked, you ought to see mine. There isn't a straight wall in my house. My house is so crooked it's unbelievable. You know it's kind of a joke! When we had to do some work in the living room and one end of the living room ceiling is like this much lower than the other end. But it's always worked out and it's very old. Of course it's log behind the brick.

ED: I tell you you just can't straighten 'em out

A: They didn't really bother, and now of course they settle too and I'm sure it's settled now, but they didn't really bother with them that much, you know. They just put them up. Specially those old log houses and it was a log house – or is a log house.

ED: Oh yeah. That part out there was log. Because they had an awful time to get between them logs and knocking out the stones and stuff to get through. There were certain places they had to get through there.

A: I know how that is. We got great big logs like this and oh they had a heck of a time. We cut a door through and fixed a new kitchen on there and everything. Of course then they put bricks. The brick's been on there about a hundred years and the rest of it is, I guess, at least two hundred years old – the log part.

ED: Oh yes. They took the logs out of here too and sawed them up for wood.

A: We found a wooden waterpipe in the basement.

ED: Did yer?

A: Because they had a cistern you see they didn't have any other water in the house just a cistern, and they'd use a hollow pipe that they made out of trees to run that water through. It's very – well I use a piece of it for a door stop, and it's about so big square, the piece you know. It's long. I just saved a section and they bored a hole through it. It was in a great long piece. I guess the piece we found was as long as from me to that chair and I guess the rest of it rotted out. And this was where they used it in the cistern. To run the water either to the cistern or from the cistern to where they washed, or got water or whatever. They used the cistern for wash water is what they did. But They had a well out in the yard with a pump on it. You know – a hand pump.

ED: Ours had a dug-out well and wound it up with a bucket.

A: We used to have a neighbour who did that. Seems to me that was the best water that I've ever tasted.

ED: It is! It's the best water you ever got. I never realized it 'till . . .

A: Especially to drink out of the bucket. That was the greatest thing. That bucket was all – it was a wooden bucket and was all covered with moss. That was the greatest treat in the world.

ED: And had your dipper in there and dipped right in there and get it. Yes! But my, was that a job when you got a laundry.

A: I bet it was.

ED: Mm – wind and wind and wind and wind!

End of CD