

Oral history with Betty Willard

Interviewer – Anne Comer

Elizabeth Comer – participant near end of interview

[Anne Comer]

Today is Tuesday, March 31st, 2026. My name is Anne Comer, and could you please give me-

[Betty Willard]

(Indistinct)

[Anne Comer]

Sorry, could you please introduce yourself a little bit? Just give me a little bit, your name, where you grew up.

[Betty Willard]

If I say the wrong thing, go like that, and I'll-

[Anne Comer]

Okay.

[Betty Willard]

My name's Betty Willard, and I was an elementary teacher for 40 years. And when it was time to go to high school, we lived next door. There was no bus transportation for high school children.

So, my mother had it all made out. The school that I went to for- Well, for grade one, I went down to Catoctin Furnace, but then my father built a house, and we moved up here in 1941. So, then there was a one-room school across the field, and that's where I went to school. Anyway, when it was time for me to go to high school, my mother had it made up. That since I had no transportation down, that I was going to go out to Thurmont during the week and there was a woman out there that had two little boys, and I was going to stay with the two little boys while their mom went out to work. Well, I didn't want to do that, I wanted to go to high school.

So, my grandmother, Annie Anders, and she lived in that house directly across from Fraley's store. I was crying to her and she said, 'Stop crying,' she said, 'Come and stay with me.' So, then I got to go down there. That's how I got involved with Catoctin Furnace.

I lived with my grandmother and grandfather and Uncle James during the week, and then on weekends, my father would come down and get me, and the main reason to come home was mom always had a bunch of clothes to iron and always had to clean, and you know, I was the oldest of seven children, so she didn't have all that time to do all that other stuff. So, anyway.

[Anne Comer]

And what were your grandparents' names?

[Betty Willard]

My grandfather's name was Howard Jonathan Anders, but everybody called him Dick, and my grandmother was Annie Anders. Howard was her second husband. Her father and mother came down from Pine Grove, Pennsylvania, because his last name was Roof, R-O-O-F, and he was a Pennsylvania-Dutch person. But the reason he came down to Catoctin Furnace was he wanted to get a job at the furnace. You know, they still call it the furnace, don't they?

[Anne Comer]

They do, yes.

[Betty Willard]

Is that what they call it?

[Anne Comer]

Yes. And what did he- What work did he perform at the furnace?

[Betty Willard]

What?

[Anne Comer]

What work did he perform at the furnace?

[Betty Willard]

I don't know.

[Anne Comer]

Okay.

[Betty Willard]

I don't know. But I do know, while I was down there going to high school, my grandfather, Howard, used to talk about working up at the furnace, and he drove a team of mules up into the mountain this direction, in all the other directions it's fields and farms. But come up the mountain. I don't know what route he took, I don't know, all I know is he drove a team of mules up in the mountain to these places where they would burn wood and make charcoal. He called them charcoal pits. And they would- He'd haul that down. I don't know- That was his regular job, I don't know what his pay was, but whenever he'd say something about that, Grandma would say, 'Oh, don't talk about that again, I get sick of hearing it.' So, you know, he'd try not to say too much about it.

But anyway, my grandmother- And the thing that amazes me, everything I see in the newspapers that your mother has, when there's something in there about Catoctin Furnace or something she's involved, I always read that because I want to see how it's changed down there, I'm interested in it. And I'm trying to think, I want to get this in the right order. My grandmother used to say, she said, 'You know, this used to be a lively place down here in the furnace.' I said, 'What do you mean?' Anyway, she said that at night, I don't know how many nights a week it would be, but some nights when that, I guess, iron ore in the furnace,

I don't know too much about that. But anyway, when it was melted and ready to come out, they would make like little, she called it ditches, trenches or something, this liquid iron, I guess you'd call it. When that would be ready to come out, they'd let it come out at night, and it would flow into these ditches. The ditches weren't very big because she said it was the most beautiful sight because it was solid red. And she said they would do it after dark and they let people know down in the furnace when they were going to do it. And Grandma said she and most all the mothers with their children by the hand, because you could really hurt yourself, they'd go up and stand across the road and watch this iron come out. And she said it would be beautiful, red and steam. And then by morning, she said it would solidify into big pieces of iron.

[Anne Comer]

Wow!

[Betty Willard]

But you know what? I read in the papers; they talk a lot about the black people that were involved down there. I can truthfully say I never heard my grandfather or my grandmother say anything about black people. I'm sure they were there, but I think they probably just all worked and did their job and didn't matter whether they were black, red, or white.

[Anne Comer]

There were different- There was a shift in the worker population in the 1830s-1840s, so it could be that.

[Betty Willard]

I don't know, I don't know.

But my grandfather was not my grandmother's first husband. She was married when she was younger, she was married to a man named James Benner and he got killed. A lot of people around the furnace, when they first made the trolley track, got on the trolley and went to Frederick, and some of them went to other places, but they worked on the railroad. And this man, I don't remember how it was, but anyway, it wasn't a trolley, it was a train, it jumped the track and a lot of the men from around the furnace were killed and her first husband was killed. And she had a little tiny girl just walking and pregnant with another one and lost her husband. So, she lived with her mother and Mr. Roof that I told you, the grandfather.

And then I don't know how courtship came along, but anyway, she married my grandfather. And since her mother- And she had lived in with the grandparents and when she got married, it was time for her to move away, her grandmother said, 'Oh please, keep them here,' she said, 'They're just like my babies.' and they cried and didn't want to go either. So, it worked out well.

So, after she had the baby, her mother raised Aunt Beulah and Aunt Henny, which was all right. And then my grandmother and grandfather had Aunt Evelyn, and my mother, Mary, was the baby, and Uncle James.

And I'll tell you one thing, I don't know if you've ever heard your mother talk about it or not, but there's a house, when you go through the furnace, through Catoctin Furnace, everyone just says furnace. When you go through the furnace all the way down, there's a big hill and a house that's up there, that's the Renner. That was the Renner property, and I think it still is. Well, my grandmother said after- Well, then I think when the furnace stopped working, they sold those houses and that's how my grandfather bought that house. And his brother, Baker Anders, bought the one next to it. And then the one on down from my grandmother's house, that was Uncle George Baker. His wife was my grandfather and Uncle Baker's sister. So, they had three houses there that they bought. I'm not quite sure who owned those houses, I've heard people say the name Lancelot Jacques, but I don't know if that's true or not. I think he owned the ground and sold a lot. Maybe he owned the ground that they took the charcoal off of, I don't know. But the name Lancelot Jacques kept up. He was a landowner or something down there, and I'm not quite sure. But the house, I don't think, was that expensive. It was just like four or five hundred dollars. Of course, in those days, that was a lot. It's like a penny. Nowadays, it's a dollar's worth, you get about a penny's worth.

[Anne Comer]

We don't even use pennies anymore.

[Betty Willard]

And the store, your mother said they're restoring Franklin Fraley's store?

[Anne Comer]

They are, yes. We just got electricity into the F.W. Fraley store.

[Betty Willard]

You want me to tell you my first experience inside that store?

[Anne Comer]

Yes, please.

[Betty Willard]

I was six years old when I was ready to go to first grade. And Grandma Anders said, 'Did you get your school supplies yet?' Well, I wasn't quite sure what she was talking about. But anyway, she gave me a quarter. And my mother and father and some of my brothers were there, but I was the oldest one, so I was ready for school. So I went, and Grandma stood at the gate. You know, she's right across from the store. I had a quarter in my hand; I was going for school supplies. I didn't know really what it was, but I was going for school supplies. Anyway, she stood at the gate and she looked up, she looked down to make sure there were no cars coming and when she didn't see any cars, she said, 'All right, run across now.' This was on Sunday. We always went down there for dinner, my mother and father. If we wouldn't go, she'd been angry and I mean angry, because she'd always fix a big dinner.

Anyway, I went over, and I walked up to the counter up front. Here hangs a big stick of Lebanon smoked bologna. It hung there all the time and when you wanted to buy some, they'd pull it down and hunk it off. Anyway, I walked up there. Grandma said, 'That's where

you go.' And when I walked up, Frank Fraley looked down at me, and he said, 'What do you want, little girl?' And I said, 'I came for school supplies.' He said, 'well, they're back here.'

So, halfway back in the store, going in the door, it was on this side, there was a big case with a glass top, and I had to- He said, 'Get up on the bench.' There was a bench there where people sat, and I'll tell you in a minute who was sitting there, not that day, there wasn't anybody there, but that used to be packed with people having a hoedown, and I'll tell you about that in a minute.

So, I stood up on that bench, and he said, 'Now let's see, what do you want?' And first of all, he said, 'How much money do you have?' And I showed him my quarter. He said, 'Well, what grade?' I said, 'First grade.' 'Well,' he said, 'I think you're going to need a tablet and some pencils and probably a box of crayons.' So, he picked out a tablet for me, and he picked out a box of crayons and he picked out two pencils, and I think that was what the quarter was for. He said, 'Well, this is what your quarter will pay for.' And he said, 'If you take it over and show your grandmother, and if Miss Annie-' they all in the community, they all called her Miss Annie. 'If Miss Annie thinks this is okay,' he said, 'All right,' but he said, 'If she wants you to have something different,' he said, 'You bring it back, and I'll give you back some of the money.' It was a quarter.

Well, Grandma thought it was great, and I'll tell you why everybody on that little village, everyone called Grandma Miss Annie or Aunt Annie, and my pappy was Uncle Dick. And I'll tell you the reason why; In the spring, he'd go to some farmer and buy pigs, three or four little pigs, and he'd raise them, and then by fall, they'd be ready to butcher. And my Uncle James worked across the road at Fraley's Meat Shop, and it's still there, Rocko Meats, he was the head butcher. And my daddy and mother, and we'd all go down, and Aunt Evelyn, and the whole family would come, you know, to help to do the work. But anyway, the next day, pappy would say, well, he said, 'It's time to take a taste around,' a taste.

So, he and Grandma would go out where they had all this stuff laying, and he'd take a little pan of pon haus and a string of sausage to every house. He'd take it to this house, and he'd come back. He didn't want to carry it all at one time, might spill it, well, he couldn't. And then he'd go down the street and give them out, 'Here's your taste of my butcher.'

Everybody in that community got a taste of the butcher, that's why he butchered three or four hogs, because there was more than they were going to eat, but it was mostly so he could give a taste, that's what he called it to everybody.

And the reason they had benches inside the- Are they going to put benches in there now? Maybe some of them are still there.

[Anne Comer]

We certainly should have benches. We don't have them at this time, but it'd be wonderful to have them.

[Betty Willard]

Bill Renner, that house that lives up on the hill at the end of the lane, at the end of the road, he had a fiddle. Grandma Anders told me this, he had a fiddle. And, in those days, there wasn't much entertainment in the evenings for the community. So, I don't know how many

days a week it was, but Bill Renner would bring his fiddle, she didn't say violin, she called it a fiddle. And my grandfather and his brother and a lot of the other men that lived in those houses would go up to the store. They'd go in the store, Bill Renner would play his fiddle, and all the men would dance.

Now, they didn't have a partner, it wasn't a slow dance, it was just fast like a tap dance or a clog. And she said then 'After we got married,' she said he wanted to go over there just about every night, but she said, 'I put an end to that.' But no women were allowed, the men just did it. They all sat on the benches, and they got up and they danced. Well, Fraley's liked it because they would sometimes buy something, you know, before they left, and it worked out really well. But that was the entertainment.

There was another entertainment for the people of the community. And on down the road, before you get to Shuffs Cut-Off, there's a- Like up a hill, there was a big house, and they called that- Everybody down around the furnace called it the Big House. But its name, I think, was Auburn, A-U-B-U-R-N. And when it came Christmas time, Grandma said that the McPherson's lived down there, and they would come up and tell Fraley's store, the people, 'Day before Christmas, come down, we're going to have a belsnickeling party.' You know, that's the old-time Christmas word. And Grandma said they'd all go down. Everybody would, she said it would be so crowded in that house, you could hardly move. And she said they'd have homemade root beer, that was the drink, and homemade sugar cookies. And then they'd stand around and eat and sing. They'd sing Christmas carols and then drink the root beer, it didn't cost them very much to make it, and eat the cookies. And then after it got late, well, they all come walking up the road.

[Anne Comer]

And did they dress up?

[Betty Willard]

I don't know. I don't know if they dressed up or not, they might have, she never said anything about that. But then she always made homemade root beer, until she had the lid screwed on too tight one time. One blew up, so that ended that.

Did you ever have homemade root beer?

[Anne Comer]

I've heard about it, could you describe how-

[Betty Willard]

It doesn't have much effervescence; it's just sort of flat.

[Anne Comer]

How often, when she was making root beer, how often would she-

[Betty Willard]

Mostly on holidays. Because she'd have it when we'd go down there.

[Anne Comer]

And this is when you would go to Catoctin Furnace?

[Betty Willard]

And I'll tell you a funny story about Catoctin Furnace, that was when I was just- I mean, she didn't go after we were born. I mean, it was just when she first got married, they would go down at Christmas. But when I was staying down there, well, and then before I went to school, every summer she'd want me to come down and spend a week. Not my brothers, they never got an invitation, but she would invite me down. And she's the one that taught me how to use the treadle sewing machine. And I wasn't very big; I could hardly reach the pedals on the treadle machine.

Well, one time we were down there in the summertime, and all of a sudden, we heard a big, loud- We were sitting out on the front porch, and all of a sudden, we heard a big, loud crash. And I looked down towards, well, the Nunemakers, I think still live there now, it's the last house down on the left. Pretty white porch and everything. It's a big ditch right in front of the house. But when I looked down, I said, 'Oh my goodness, Grandma, come quick, come quick, a truck fell over.' But the man must have been in too close to the ditch, and his wheel went down, and it tipped him over and he almost touched John Noodlemaker's porch, but he didn't. His truck was loaded with loose heads of cabbage; not in crates, not in boxes. I guess they didn't have them in those days. But anyway, loose heads of cabbage and they were all everywhere. All over the road, all over the porch, everywhere. So, I think I called Pappy and Pappy came in, and he was working in the garden, and he said to Grandma and me, he said, 'Well, I'm going to walk down and see what's going on.'

So, he walked down, some of the other men walked down, I guess to make sure the man wasn't hurt. Well, the man wasn't hurt, but he was out walking around, and he said, 'Tell all your neighbors to come and get all the cabbage they want, because once it hits the ground, I can't sell it.' Well, Pappy came up and got the wheelbarrow, and all the other men got wheelbarrow or bushel baskets, and it was a parade. I walked down with Pappy, and Grandma said, 'Well, don't you get in the way.' And there was cabbage in the ditch, John Nunemaker's porch, all over the road, everywhere. And Pappy said, 'Help me fill the wheelbarrow.' All the other men had wheelbarrows or bushel baskets with two people carrying them. I bet you it didn't take long. Well, when we left, I think, I don't know if Pappy got two wheelbarrow loads or not, but I know the next day Grandma made sauerkraut.

[Anne Comer]

I was going to ask if she made sauerkraut.

[Betty Willard]

Oh, I know she did. Yeah, she made it. Well, all you had to do was just peel those outside leaves off and then wash it good, it didn't matter whether it was in the dirt or not.

[Anne Comer]

Do you remember what else was made with the cabbage, or did you just have a large portion of sauerkraut after that?

[Betty Willard]

Oh, you want to know how they did it?

[Anne Comer]

Yeah, sure.

[Betty Willard]

I have one of these down in the basement, it's about this big around. Crock and it's about that tall.

[Anne Comer]

About two feet?

[Betty Willard]

Yeah. And then when I got married, my mother, we made sauerkraut and then when Lee and I got married, we made sauerkraut, we did it the same way. You have to have a slaw cutter, slice it up real thin. And my grandmother, she didn't weigh the salt, she would just put so much cabbage in and then just sprinkle but I have a recipe like the Pennsylvania Dutch. I think for every five- Don't write this down, it might not be accurate. But I think it was for every pound of cabbage, Lee would shred it and I'd weigh it. I don't know, it was so many tablespoons of salt. And it would get good every time, you didn't have to worry about it being too salty, it would just be really good. And then you kept it down in the basement where it stayed cool. Grandma had hers outside in a building and it didn't freeze because of the- Well, at that time, she didn't have a freezer to freeze it and she didn't bother to can it. I've canned it already, but then it gets kind of dark. If you freeze it, it's just like you put it in there. It's white, you know, just like it's fresh.

But I know Grandma used to say, 'Betty, go out and get some cabbage, some sauerkraut for dinner.' And I'd go out and then you have to- You put a white, well, she'd put a big plate on it, spotless clean, and the plate would weight it down in inside the broth, that way the salt covered all the cabbage. And then she'd take a brown paper bag and cut it and put a brown paper bag over it. And then on top of that, she'd put a white cloth, so it was spotless clean. And then all you had to do was go out there and make sure your hand was clean and just reach down and feel the pot.

[Anne Comer]

So, you've mentioned before the cabbage incident, were you learning how to use a sewing machine, or were you helping with sewing?

[Betty Willard]

Now say it again.

[Anne Comer]

Before you described the cabbage, you mentioned a sewing machine and the pedals of the sewing machine. Could you tell me more about that?

[Betty Willard]

Oh, well, my grandmother, and not just my grandmother, but quite a few women around the furnace had what you call a cottage industry, did you ever hear of that? Well, she had

her own sewing machine, and a lot of the women, this involved a lot of the women around the furnace. She said a truck would come up to Fraley's store and each woman that was a seamstress would go the day they knew they were coming and they would pick up parts of, what did she call them? I think she called the top a midi and then there was a bottom, like a skirt, and each woman would pick up a bundle of the parts and they'd take them home and they'd sew them together and make clothes.

And then the next week when the truck came, they would take the things in that they had made, and they'd exchange for parts. And she never told me how much money she made, but I know that, you know, that way she made a little money.

[Anne Comer]

Wow.

[Betty Willard]

But she said she wasn't the only one. She said a lot of women around the furnace sewed, and that's why she had a sewing machine, and she taught me how to sew. And what she taught me to sew was- I wasn't very old, I know mom got a little upset about it because she said, 'You get your finger under that needle,' she said, 'It's going to really be bad.' But grandma said, 'Don't worry about it, I'll take care of her. I'm going to teach her how to use that sewing machine.' In those days, when you bought a hundred-pound sack of hog feed, it wouldn't be just a plain, ordinary white sack. It would have a nice floral border around there at the bottom where you opened it up. So, after the hog feed was emptied, my grandmother made sure it was spotless clean on a rubber washing machine, she didn't have a washing machine until much, much later. And then she would pick out all those stitches because they were kind of heavy, ugly looking stitches where the bag was made. And then she'd iron that down nice and smooth, and then around the front where the cover was, she'd fold that back and press it with an iron. And then all I had to do was just sit there and make sure I got close to the edge and I took those feed sacks and made nice pillowcases. The size was perfect, but she taught me how to do that.

[Anne Comer]

Wow. Do you still have any of the pillowcases?

[Betty Willard]

No, they're wore out.

[Anne Comer]

Makes sense, yeah.

[Betty Willard]

No, I don't have any. I'm seeing in antique stores where you can buy them, but they weren't made into pillowcases, they were just the feed sacks.

[Anne Comer]

Yeah.

[Betty Willard]

It wasn't smooth percale now, it was, you know, like the ones I make nowadays, it was feed sack material, but they were white and they were nice.

And when we went down to my grandmother's house, Pappy would- They'd always get a hundred peeperes, and they'd raise them in a little chicken house. And then when we'd get down there, they'd keep some to lay eggs. Grandma would say, 'I'll be looking for you next Sunday.' And we'd go down there and Pappy would get up early in the morning and kill a bunch of chickens, they were fresh. And he'd always- I don't know, must've been about two extra. Anyway, when we came home, we'd give us two chickens that we could bring home and have. I guess they thought maybe we didn't have much to eat but we had plenty. And they gave us loads of hog meat until our hogs were ready to be killed.

[Anne Comer]

And how many hogs would your family have?

[Betty Willard]

Grandma Anders would have three or four. And we would have about three or four.

I know one time, when we lived up here, I must've been about 10 or 12 years old, we had these pigs and we went up to help feed them, we helped to feed them. My brother and I were taught how to make the slop, how much feed to put in, add the water. Yeah, we had to help to do jobs. And the pigs weren't there. We came down and told mom that daddy hadn't come home from work yet, we said 'The pigs aren't up there.' 'Well,' she said, 'You're going to have to go looking for them.' So, we went down and walked down towards Thurmont.

And it was, when you go down, it was Paul Lewis' house but there was an old log cabin and then when you go on down a little bit farther, on the left-hand side, there's two cabins, one was Gardners cabin and one was Hovers cabin. The second one down was Hauvers cabin and when we got down that far, I don't know why, my brother and I, we just weren't all that old. We looked over Hauvers cabin and we saw these pigs, they were in the yard, and the cabin now is open in the front and those pigs were back in there, we could see them squealing and doing that. And Junior said 'Well, let's go back in there and get them.' So, we got big, long sticks and we poked at them and they started coming back up the road. There wasn't cars then on the road. Anyway, we got them up to the house and we kept going like that and we waited until daddy got home, we had them in the thing.

I'll never forget, we didn't know how we were going to get them in because we had a long enclosure and my brother said 'Well, I'm not afraid to pick them up' and he picked them up all he could do and landed them down.

[Anne Comer]

And did your dad ever find out about the pig incident?

[Betty Willard]

Did what?

[Anne Comer]

Did you dad find out or did you just pretend like the pigs were there the whole time?

[Betty Willard]

We told daddy as soon as he came. And he went up to see if they were alright. I don't know how they got out, I think they dug a hole under the fence or something and squeezed out. But he fixed the fence. But, oh my.

And we walked to school, mom wouldn't let us go out the road or down the road, she made us go across the field. She said it was safer that way. You know, when I think about it, she never mentioned snakes. We never saw any snakes. I guess kids hooping and hollering, I don't know, but mom would stand on the front porch and she'd watch us go across the field and then when we were right there at the road, we went up and then there was the school. And when we got to the point where we couldn't see her anymore, we'd wave and she'd wave back and then we'd go in and then, at lunch time, we ran home. A lot of the kids went home to get their lunch and they'd run home and run back; it didn't matter how much it was raining or how cold it was. And then always when we were coming home, the first thing mom would be saying, and she knew when we'd be coming, she'd be standing on the porch and she'd wave and we'd wave and then we'd run across and she'd give each one of us a big hug and we'd go in and she'd have our lunch.

[Anne Comer]

And what was a typical lunch? What would she make?

[Betty Willard]

Oh. Let me see. Sometimes it would just be a big skillet of fried potatoes or a big bowl of homemade soup. It was never a sandwich. I mean, we had hog meat in the- Well, we didn't have a refrigerator then but we had hog meat and ham would keep just in the cupboard. It would just be there but, you know, we didn't eat a sandwich. But we had homemade bread. And sometimes, when we'd get in the door, she was baking homemade bread. That smell would be so good.

And then, this is the truth, you won't believe this. Bill McGill was the teacher and we'd eat our lunches as fast as we could because we wanted to get back in time to have some recess. Well, after most of the kids got back to the school house, guess what Bill McGill would do? He'd come over to my mother's house, he'd knock on the door and Mr. McGill would say 'Well, Mrs. Woman, do you have anything for a hungry man to eat?' His wife would never pack him any lunch. And mom would say 'Well, Mr. McGill, all I have is some extra fried potatoes.' He said 'I'm hungry, I'll eat anything.' And said he would come in, sit down, she'd get him a clean plate and whatever was left, he'd put that on his plate and eat it.

[Anne Comer]

Wow.

[Betty Willard]

It's hard to believe.

[Anne Comer]

And do you know where he was commuting from? Did he live really close by to the school?

[Bett Willard]

Mr. McGill?

[Anne Comer]

Yes.

[Betty Willard]

He lived in Thurmont.

[Anne Comer]

He lived in Thurmont? Okay.

[Betty Willard]

And you want to know how he got up the mountain?

[Anne Comer]

Yes.

[Betty Willard]

Guess.

[Anne Comer]

The trolley?

[Better Willard]

He didn't have a car. A bicycle.

[Anne Comer]

Bicycle? Wow.

[Betty Willard]

He came on a bicycle but he'd park it in the schoolhouse because he didn't want any of the boys to be riding on his bicycle. But mom didn't mind giving him some food to eat. But she used to say, 'I wonder what Mrs. McGill is- Why she's so busy that she can't pack that man a sandwich.' He never went to anybody else's house; he just came to my mother's house. So, she had to feed the teacher too.

And one time, this is telling tales out of school, his wife made plum jelly. That's what she called it. And he brought a jar. He said, 'My wife made some plum jelly and she said,-' he told Mom, he said, 'I think you might like it.' He said, 'I think it's pretty good.'

Mom said, 'Well, I'll put it out at suppertime.' And when she put it out, guess what? She made the plum jelly, but she didn't take out the big seeds. Daddy said, 'I wonder what that woman was thinking.' I can still hear him saying that. He said, 'Now I know why Bill doesn't have any lunch packs.'

[Anne Comer]

She might not have been a good cook.

[Betty Willard]

Maybe she didn't know how.

[Anne Comer]

Maybe she didn't know how. Yeah, it's possible.

[Betty Willard]

I've heard of people canning peaches. And before they put the peaches in, they put like, my mother never did it, Edna Lewis always did, put maybe like three seeds in the bottom of the jar. And she said that would give them more flavor. But Mom would never do that, mom said, 'I'm not taking up space for something you can't eat.'

[Anne Comer]

Yeah, I've never heard of keeping the seeds in.

[Betty Willard]

Patton McAfee used to say her mother put the seeds in all the time, said it would give them better flavor.

Well, I just read in the paper not too long ago that something about health tips. Apples are very good for you, but don't ever chew on any of the seeds because it said- This sentence said that it has a certain amount of cyanide inside of an apple seed. So, I would- You know, Johnny Chapman was apple seed man that walked across the United States and planted apple trees.

My grandfather- You know, this land here? That used to all be a peach orchard. He took peach seeds and planted them in his one garden; he had two gardens. And I can remember when those little trees were about this tall. And then he brought them up here, this was when I was just a little tiny kid, and planted them in that whole field, the one that has wire around it, that was nothing but peach trees. And when the peaches were ripe, guess what they'd do with them? Grandma would can as many as she possibly needed, but he'd take the back seat out of his old automobile and put the bushel baskets in there, or boxes. You could stack boxes, but you can't stack the baskets. And he'd go down through the furnace and he called peddling peaches. That's how daddy met mom.

[Anne Comer]

Oh!

[Betty Willard]

Because Grandpap Willard was selling peaches to everybody in the furnace. He'd knock on the door, 'Would you need to buy peaches?' And they might say, 'I'll take a bushel,' and then they'd can them. Everybody would buy apples or peaches, whatever he would- And he'd take Daddy along. Daddy saw Mom, and my mother became his wife. It's funny, isn't it?

[Anne Comer]
It's funny, yeah.

[Betty Willard]
I guess it was to be that way.

But then the trees got old and cut them all down. You know that that ground all over there is mine? 130 acres.

[Anne Comer]
It's a large amount of property. It's large.

[Betty Willard]
The farm area is 101, and then there's a 29-acre lot on the other side of the bridge.

[Anne Comer]
When did the peach trees, when did they die?

[Betty Willard]
Oh, I don't know. I guess maybe when we first got married. You know, trees don't last forever. But he'd spray them and do all kinds of stuff to them.

[Anne Comer]
What else was grown up here on the mountain? Were there other agricultural crops on the mountain as well besides the large peach-

[Betty Willard]
Potatoes and wheat. That field out there in front of my brother's house, he always planted wheat in that field. And then you know how he'd cut the wheat? Nowadays they run a great big combine machine through it. He would take what you call a scythe, it's S-Y-C-T-H-E, I think, and he'd cut it by hand. And then after so much laid on the ground, then you'd take a piece of tar rope, that yellow- It's not yellow, but some kind of a string, and tie around it, and then you'd stack it up into a sheath, like six or seven in a little bundle, and then haul it in. Put it down here in this big building, hayshed they called it, and then after he had it all cut, then one day we'd hear a chug-chug-chug coming down the road, and it would be a big tractor, one of those that steam kept flying out the top, and it was called the threshing machine. And they'd put that in there, and the wheat would come out down at the bottom, and the straw would pop up another place. And they'd stack the straw up on a pole, a great big tall pole, and then he'd take the wheat to the mill and get it ground and get flour.

And my grandmother, well, they hardly ever bought anything from the store, maybe coffee, or he didn't even buy sugar because he had honeybees.

[Anne Comer]
Oh! Okay, and where were the honeybees? Where were the hives?

[Betty Willard]

Oh, the hives?

[Anne Comer]

The hives, the bees.

[Betty Willard]

Below the house, he had about 60.

[Anne Comer]

60? Wow!

[Betty Willard]

Little houses, and the bees would be in there. And when you had bees, you had to make sure you let some honey in there because they needed that to eat during the winter.

I saw him sitting there with these squares of wax, and he'd heat that with an iron, some kind of a hot thing, and then he'd put the wax down, it would stand up, and then put that little box around it and put it back. And you had to have a smoker before you picked up the honey because the bees would sting you. Sometimes they'd swarm. Have you ever seen a bee swarm? That's scary.

[Anne Comer]

I've seen it from a distance.

[Betty Willard]

I used to walk down just to talk to grandma. I must have been about eight, nine years old, not very old. And right there was an apple tree; There's a little stream before you walk up to the porch. And one time I saw this, I thought it was a sack of bees, but it was on a branch. It was about this big around and about that long. It's just solid bees coming in and out, it was a swarm. And I think pappy said something about when the queen bee decides she's going to leave that box, she'll go and all the others will follow behind her, and that's what makes the swarm. But he never got stung. But he had a big cap that came down and tied here with a mesh around it.

And then they'd take that honey in there and put it on the stove and heat it. Wax comes to the top and put it in jars and people would come here and buy it. That's how he made a living, selling honey and selling potatoes and peaches and apples. He never sold any of their hog meat because they kept that for themselves.

[Anne Comer]

And going back to the school, I understand there was another school on the mountain as well, the African American school. Did you know about that?

[Betty Willard]

I never heard of it; it's not in this area.

[Anne Comer]

Okay.

[Betty Willard]

And where's the graveyard? I hear them talking about the graveyard. When I lived down there with Grandma and Pappy, I never heard either one of them ever say anything about the black graveyard. Where is it? How do you get there? I'm not interested in going because I don't want to walk that far.

[Anne Comer]

You know where the Museum of the Ironworker?

[Betty Willard]

The what?

[Anne Comer]

The museum. So, here at the furnace, the furnace stack.

[Betty Willard]

Is it up on the hill?

[Anne Comer]

It's up on the hill.

[Betty Willard]

Is it across from Route 15?

[Anne Comer]

Route 15 goes through. It's right on the village side; it's between the village houses and Route 15.

[Betty Willard]

Now where's the graveyard?

[Anne Comer]

So, it's about here. It's next to the road. So, where the trolley line was. It's like up above the trolley.

[Betty Willard]

Is it on the upper side of Route 15? Or just between Route 15 and the houses?

[Anne Comer]

Between Route 15 and the houses.

[Betty Willard]

Well, whose property is it on?

[Anne Comer]

Well now it's DNR, I'm having trouble remembering the name-

[Betty Willard]

Who owned it before?

[Anne Comer]

It was privately owned, but I'm forgetting the person's name, the family's name.

[Betty Willard]

Was it Miller's? Stitely's?

[Anne Comer]

I think they had two sons. I'm sorry, I'm forgetting the name completely at the moment.

[Betty Willard]

But it's between- Like going down through the furnace- Show me where the store is.

[Anne Comer]

So, the store is here. Chapel's here. Catoctin Furnace Road is here. There are houses, trolley, or the old trolley tracks and it's about here. It's between where the trolley was, and then it's up. And then the road is there. So, it's between the trolley, where the trolley track used to be and the road.

[Betty Willard]

Huh. How close to the trolley track is it?

[Anne Comer]

Not super close, it's a good walk up. You know how it slants?

[Betty Willard]

It's a big bank.

[Anne Comer]

Yeah, it's the bank, it's the bank going up. I feel like I'm describing this badly.

[Betty Willard]

Well, I'm just wondering who lived- One of those people in the furnace probably lived there. I knew there was Stitely's and Clint Miller. But I don't know.

[Anne Comer]

Yeah, we'll have to get clarification. The name is going to come back to me; at the moment I'm completely forgetting the name of the family.

[Betty Willard]

Well, I knew there was Pappy's house, Uncle Bakes, Clint Miller, and then I think there was a Martin, Skinny Martin. That's what they called him, Skinny, he was Skinny, Skinny Martin. And then Stitley's, and then Bob Renner's up on the hill.

But you say it was between the houses and Route 15?

[Anne Comer]

Yeah, because Route 15 is that big- Is my thinking of this correctly, that's the big highway, right? The big road where all the big trucks go? And then, yeah.

[Betty Willard]

Often wondered about it. I wonder who sold the- They had to sell the house too because the land went down- And you know everybody that lived at the furnace, I know at least on that side of the road got water from a reservoir up in the woods. Grandma took me up there one time but to get there you have to go around, the path was just about wide enough for one person to walk. Here was a great big hill and you walked around this path and there was a deep ditch and I think she said that was an ore bank. Maybe that's where they got the ore from at the furnace, I don't know.

[Anne Comer]

It's possible.

[Betty Willard]

And then we go on up there a little bit farther and she said now this is where the water comes from. And all those houses that were down there, not the one this side, but on this side, they had pipes that led into their houses and that's how they got their water. Uncle Bake had a spring but Pappy always said it was on his property and Uncle Bake said, 'Well I guess it's on mine too because they're right close together.'

But they had a spring but they didn't drink out of that spring, they got water out of the spigot. And whenever something would happen to the water in somebody's house, well then, all the men would go down and they'd dig up the ditch to see where the water was leaking out or if a pipe needed to be replaced.

[Anne Comer]

So, everybody really worked together. If there was an issue in the village, everybody came?

[Betty Willard]

Oh yeah.

[Anne Comer]

Earlier- To go back to the F.W. Fraley store for a second. Earlier you mentioned the fiddles or the fiddle and the dancing that the men would do-

[Betty Willard]

I never saw Pappy dance. Grandma said 'You're not dancing.' Because I said, 'Well Pappy, what kind of a dance did you dance?' And he was going to do a couple of, you know, Grandma said 'Not here,' she didn't want to hear any part of it.

[Anne Comer]

What other community events or did the women also have something that they would do that the men were separate from?

[Betty Willard]

Are you saying did the women have anything to do for fun? Yeah, what did the women do for fun?

[Anne Comer]

Yeah. What did the women do for fun?

[Betty Willard]

I guess they stayed home, took care of the babies. When Grandma would go to the store, Pappy'd get his check from the railroad, Grandma would go to the store and pick up some groceries. And I can remember, I only ever got to go one time with her, I got in trouble. We walked up to the counter and she had ordered some things and, on the counter, there were cantaloupes and they were dead ripe, you could really smell them. And I always loved cantaloupes when daddy would grow them in the garden. That whole ground in front of Mom's house, that was all garden. Well, Frank Fraley said, 'Miss Annie,' he called her Miss Annie. 'Miss Annie,' he said, 'Would you like a cantaloupe?' He said 'They're almost too ripe for me to sell.' He said, 'I'll just give you one.' And then he looked down at me and he said, I don't think he knew my name. He said, 'Do you like cantaloupe?' And I said, 'I could eat a whole one.' And then Grandma said, 'Well, maybe I'll buy one.' And then when we got back over there across the road, she said, 'You should never have said you could eat a whole cantaloupe.' She said, 'That made me feel terrible.' She said, 'You're not going with me again.' And I didn't go again; she wouldn't let me. She was afraid I would say something that would make her feel embarrassed.

[Anne Comer]

How old were you?

[Betty Willard]

How old was I?

[Anne Comer]

Yeah.

[Betty Willard]

Oh, maybe seven or eight. You know how little kids will say anything. They're truthful and they'll just- It's an old expression, you know, 'I could eat a whole one.' And that's when I said I did like cantaloupe.

And my grandmother was strict. I wasn't allowed to go across the street to the store. She sent me over and she stood at the gate and watched. And she said- And there'd always be some men or boys, you know, sitting down on the porch on the store. And she said, 'If anybody says anything to you,' she said, 'Don't turn your head, you look straight ahead and no answers.'

[Anne Comer]

And did they ever say anything to you?

[Betty Willard]

No.

[Anne Comer]

No. Of course not.

[Betty Willard]

They might've said something and I was told not to turn my head. So, I guess the first time I didn't turn my head, but they didn't say anything to me again. And then the school bus, we used to walk- This was when I was in high school. When we, we had to walk up to what they called the tumbleweed, did you ever hear your mother talk about the tumbleweed?

[Anne Comer]

No.

[Betty Willard]

Well, going up the back way, I called, don't call 15. You know where that school is down there, that schoolhouse?

[Anne Comer]

Yes.

[Betty Willard]

And then the road turns up this way?

[Anne Comer]

Mm-hmm.

[Betty Willard]

Well, right here, before you get to the road that turns back to the Methodist church, there used to be- Grandma used to say 'They're a bunch of gypsies.' She said, 'Don't you ever go close to their door.' All the kids around the furnace would walk up to this place, the bus would pull in there and turn around and they would have bedspreads hanging on clotheslines, they sold them. And grandma would say, 'They're a bunch of gypsies, don't go near them.' And we never did.

So, then we walked up there one year and then the next year, one of the parents said, 'Why can't the bus come down and turn around the store? Because most of the kids come up past the store, they wouldn't have to walk so far.'

So, then Booby Riffle was the bus driver. Anyway, then they changed it, we didn't have to walk up there anymore. And grandma would stand at the gate and when the bus stopped, I would walk around and she made sure I got in that bus before she'd go back in. And when we came home, the bus would stop right in front of her house, in front of the store and grandma would be standing there waiting for me. And when I'd go in, she'd say, 'Are you hungry?' And I'd say yes. And she said, 'Well, I have something for you at the table.' She said, 'I don't know when Howard's coming.' Usually, the trolley was called the five because it came at five o'clock. And she said 'It's not time for him to get here.'

She'd always have a glass of milk and some cookies or a bun or a donut for me so I would have a snack before supper.

[Anne Comer]
Oh, that's nice.

[Betty Willard]
Yep.

[Anne Comer]
And so, they changed the bus route to pick the kids up in front of the Fraley's store because they didn't want the bus to turn at where they said the Gypsies lived?

[Betty Willard]
Well, they changed the bus route because some of the parents complained, especially like if it rained, you had to walk all the way up to where the tumbleweeds, it's not called that now, but you had to walk all the way up there and stand outside. There was no porch up there to stand, you just stood there in the rain. But down there when it turned around down Renner's Lane, I think, at the end of the village, and come on up, why, if it was raining, we could stand on the porch, but I was never allowed to go over there, I had to wait till that bus stopped.

And there'd be about 10 or 12 kids getting on, there was a lot of them. And then some days on Sunday, Grandma finally let me go, but all the rage was going up getting on the trolley at lunchtime, and the trolley track was right on up from the store. Ride the trolley up to Thurmont, get off, go down to the bowling alley and skate. I think it was about a quarter or fifty cents to rent skates, and you could skate all afternoon if you wanted to. I knew how to skate because I don't know whether mom or daddy or who bought me a pair of regular roller skates, and I skated on the sidewalk, and then I knew how to skate, and one time Patsy Renner- You know, it's going up towards, they call it the mine bank, going up towards the zoo. It's a pretty steep hill, and one time Patsy Renner and I carried our skates to the top of that hill, and when we came down through the furnace, I mean, we were going like crazy, and she was screaming, 'How can we stop, how can we stop?' I said, 'When I get down to the store, I'm jumping off,' and I jumped off the road and got into the ground and took a big thump, but boy, I was off the road.

[Anne Comer]
Oh my gosh! Were you hurt?

[Betty Willard]
No, no, no. Grandma said, 'How'd you get stopped?' I said, 'I just jumped off.'

[Anne Comer]
How did she stop? How did the other girl stop?

[Betty Willard]
She did the same thing. I jumped, and she jumped behind me.

[Anne Comer]
Oh good, okay.

[Betty Willard]
We never went up there again, because we knew we could come down the hill pretty fast, but oh my, it wasn't fast, it was terrible. You come past the tumbleweed, I mean, we were flying.

But I don't know who those people were, grandma said they were gypsies. Nobody in the furnace knew them, but they bought that building, and they sold these bedspreads. They could have been, you know, I don't know what they were.

[Anne Comer]
It's interesting to have a home or a group, you know, a family, maybe, that mentioned that are separate from the furnace.

[Betty Willard]
Well, now you know that big manor house up there, like here's the furnace, and there's this big house, and it's torn down now. I think they're fixing it back up.

[Anne Comer]
Oh, the furnace ruins? The ruins.

[Betty Willard]
What do you call it?

[Anne Comer]
Ruins? It's still, it's not- It's stabilized.

[Betty Willard]
I thought they were doing something to fix it back up.

[Anne Comer]
We're stabilizing it, so it won't fall down more.

[Betty Willard]
When we were little, going down to Grandma Ander's for Sunday dinner, it was still standing, a big building, and Grandma, one Sunday, she said, 'Let's walk up.' She said, 'I understand the doors are open, we can walk in.' So, mom and grandma and my brothers and sister, we walked up the street and you go past it and then there's a gate and we went in and she said, 'It'll be open,' she said, 'All we have to do is open the door,' and mom said 'I'm not taking the kids in there,' and she said, 'Well, we'll just look in.'
But she opened the door, or maybe it was a double door and when you looked in, it was a great big room, almost like a ballroom, and then she told us, she said, 'Now, my mother worked here.' She said, 'They used to take in boarders,' so it must have been like a hotel, and she said her mother would walk down from up close to the zoo, they call that the mine bank in those days, she would walk down early in the morning, maybe like past midnight,

but it was still dark, and she would go in there and she'd go in, and she said that her mother told her that she would go in the bedrooms where the people were sleeping, and each bedroom had a lamp, a kerosene lamp that was lit, and she'd blow out the lamp, and take it to the kitchen, and wash the globe, fill the oil and then take it back in, and she said the people that were in the bed sleeping never knew she was there. She did all that early in the morning, that was her job, she worked there.

Well, I couldn't believe- And I can remember, it had a board floor, there wasn't any linoleum and it was just real nice and shiny, it was beautiful in there, and Grandma said, 'Well, let's go in and walk around.' Mom said, 'No, I'm not taking my kids in there,' she said 'They might fall through.' But I can remember that, I wasn't very old.

But now, I know a couple of times my husband went by, he said, 'I wonder why they're letting that go down,' but I don't know who owned it. I think it was the state of Maryland, wasn't it?

[Anne Comer]

Mm-hmm, yes. It's not going to be rebuilt in the same way, but it is being stabilized now. My understanding is that it went into further disrepair in the 1970s, I think.

[Betty Willard]

Oh, to rebuild it would cost a lot of money.

[Anne Comer]

So much, yeah.

[Betty Willard]

And I don't know what they'd do with it anyway.

[Anne Comer]

Mm-hmm.

[Betty Willard]

Then they closed the road that comes up the mountain when they built Route 15.

[Anne Comer]

Mm-hmm.

[Betty Willard]

I know daddy used to come down to get me and we'd walk that hill past the furnace, and then go on up around. I think I must have been about 15 or maybe 14, and daddy would come down with his pickup and pick me on Friday night, and we got to the top of that hill, and daddy stopped the pickup truck, and I thought, where are you going? He got out, went around, opened up my side, passenger side, and he said, 'Slide over.'

[Anne Comer]

Mm-hmm.

[Betty Willard]

So, I got under the wheel and the motor was still running, and he just put his head over- I'll never forget this, put his head over against the window on the passenger side door. He said, 'All right, Betty, pull her back in high and take us home.' And he closed his eyes to make sure I was doing a good job. That's how I learned to drive on that dangerous road.

[Anne Comer]

Wow!

[Betty Willard]

Got my license when I just turned 16. Daddy knocked on the bedroom door one day and he said, 'I found a car for you today.' I said, 'You did?' He said, 'It only costs \$50.' He said, 'It's a 1929 Ford Model Coupe' with a rumble seat. But I had been practicing, I knew how to shift the gears, reverse. He said, 'You practice this when you go to bed at night and make sure that you get that.' He said, 'Because one of these days, I'm going to put you under the wheel and let you drive it.' and that's what happened. And they knocked on the bedroom door, and he said, 'Betty, I'm coming today to take you to Frederick to get your license.' He said, 'Learn to park today.' And he said, 'I'll put a log out there along the driveway.' So, I had to teach myself how to park.

[Anne Comer]

Mm-hmm.

[Betty Willard]

This is the funny part. We got in there, he drove the '29, it was an old '29, Pete Buzzard over in Sabillasville owned it, but it was in good shape. And we went into Frederick, and we pulled up and the police had got to get out. And the policeman stepped in beside of me, sat down. He said, 'Go up here to the light and turn left.' And I put it back in gear and pulled up and just as I went to turn left, it started to pour down rain. And the policeman, I guess he might have been maybe early 30s, he was just a young fellow. And I said, 'Would you please work the windshield wiper?' I said, 'I can't steer and put my hand out to signal I'm going around the turn.'

So, you know, those old vehicles, it was a thing up there and if you wanted the windshield wipers to work, you had to work them back and forth yourself with your hand and I thought that if I did that and didn't give the signal, I wouldn't get my license. I was smart enough to think about that.

So, anyway, as he kind of reached over, you know, he kind of laughed and I said, 'Well, I have to give the hand signal,] there were no signals. I had to give the hand signal to go around. And I said, 'I can't steer.' I had my other hand with the steer. I said, 'I don't have any way to do the windshield wiper.' So, he did that and laughed.

[Elizabeth Comer]

And you passed.

[Betty Willard]

Well, the funny part was after you made- It's Baker Park, that's where you did it, you had to go around three or four different times you had to do that. And he got out and daddy got in under where I was sitting and he took it all up. He said, 'I'll wait up here till you come out.' And then you had to run across to the courthouse and go in there and answer the questions. Well, nowadays you have a book. Those days it was a postcard and it had 32 questions. I'll never forget, 32 questions, short questions and short answers, the answer was right there. Well, I'm not bragging, but I can memorize pretty good, I had that card memorized. I could say the whole thing, daddy'd hold it and he'd say, 'Go ahead.' And I would, at home, he'd practice after supper. I could say the whole thing and not even have to look at it. So, when I got in there, the man told me to come in, the policeman. I sat down and he said, 'Well, let's see if you know the answers.' I said, 'I can recite the whole card.' And he said, 'You can?' I said, 'Well, you just say one of the questions.' And he said it and I only answered a couple of them because I knew them by heart, that didn't say I knew how to do all that, but I knew the answers. So, he said, 'We're going to let you have your license.' He said, 'If you can do it that well, you're okay.' So, I'll never forget, I had a little white dress with white pique and it had real pretty purple flowers all over it, I just thought that was the most beautiful dress, I had worn that that day. Well, I had to run across the grass and down the street to where daddy was parked in the car. When I got out on the grass, it was wet and slippery and I fell and my little beautiful white dress was nothing but mud all down the side of my dress. And I looked down and I thought, well, I'm going home now, it won't matter. I came down and Daddy said, 'Well, did you pass?' I said, 'I guess. The man said that I was okay.' He said, 'What happened to you?' I said, 'Well, I fell on the wet grass.' He said, 'Well, don't worry, mom will wash that out.' Then daddy drove home.

And you know, he would not let me drive anywhere unless mom or daddy was with me, even after I had my license. But I had the \$50 to pay for it and then one day he came home, he said 'I was over at Newman's Garage.' He said 'They have a real nice', this was before I started teaching. He said 'They have a nice car over there, it's a '46 Ford.' He said 'It's black and the seats look- It's never had anybody sitting on them.' So, we went over and that was \$800. And I had picked beans during the summer, two cents a pound, paid cash for that. Those days you didn't have to get insurance. Then when I started teaching, well, I drove that, but I still was not allowed to drive that- I could drive to church, I could drive to school at Foxville. I was not allowed to go to Thurmont or to anywhere else. Daddy said, 'It's just wasting your gas.' Isn't that awful?

[Anne Comer]
Parents.

[Betty Willard]
I've told you some stuff that was unreal, but it was true.

[Anne Comer]
It was amazing.

[Elizabeth Comer]
I can't wait to hear it. Well, shall we call it a day and continue another day?

[Anne Comer]

I think so. Is there anything else you want to share?

[Betty Willard]

I'm thinking of the same thing else down around the furnace. I told you about coming down that hill about 50 miles an hour on skates?

[Anne Comer]

You did, yes.

[Elizabeth Comer]

Is this the hill in front of the furnace, by the Ironmaster's mansion? That hill or Catoctin Hollow Hill?

[Betty Willard]

Down at the furnace.

[Elizabeth Comer]

At the furnace.

[Betty Willard]

Up at the zoo.

[Elizabeth Comer]

Up at the zoo, yeah.

[Betty Willard]

Up at the zoo. Patty and I decided we were going to take off our roller skates and walk up to the top of the hill and then put skates on and come down. And we came down that hill, I mean she screamed and she said, 'I want off.' I said, 'Well, when we get down at the store, we'll jump off.' And we got down to the store and I said, 'Here, I'm jumping!' And she said 'I'm behind you' and we jumped in the grass and fell over and, oh Lord.

[Elizabeth Comer]

Well, Mr. Fraley told me that that hill was so steep that when the Model T's would leave the store, some of them couldn't get up that hill. It was quite there by, going toward the snake farm.

[Betty Willard]

Well, I just told you a while ago, I had a '29 Ford and I never went up that. Well, daddy drove it home that day from Frederick, but we didn't have any trouble.

[Elizabeth Comer]

Betty, did you live in Foxville or when you grew up, where was the house you grew up in?

[Betty Willard]

Well, I was born in Grandma Anders house right across the road.

[Elizabeth Comer]

Right. Right across from the store.

[Betty Willard]

Right across from the store. And I'll try to explain. Mom and daddy weren't married, but after, but I tell a lie; Mom and daddy got married on December 31st, I was born in May. So, in five months I was- So, they were married. But Grandma Anders, I've told you some tales of me and she was a strict lady. She wouldn't let mom go with daddy, to live with daddy until after the baby was born, that was me.

So, after I was born, daddy still continued to live down here across the road with his parents. Then there's a log house after you pass Gidd's house, the first house down, that was a log house. Pappy Willard owned that and mom and daddy moved in there. That was the first house that we moved up in the mountain and I was maybe like one year old, no, I was just a couple months old. And we lived there for- I know my brother, he was two years younger than me, I'm sure he was born there. And then after he was born, then daddy bought down at Catoctin Furnace, going up towards the school, it's a nice-looking school, it's a church now. And then you turn that lane back towards the store, Bill Kelly's store, I don't know if it's a store now or not, and then you go down Brice Road? Well, about the second house down on the right, or maybe the third. I know Elmer Titman lived in one and our house was the next. But daddy bought that from George Baker, Pappy Anders' sister's husband, I think he paid a thousand dollars for it.

So, then in the meantime, he's building this house up here. He got the ground from Ross Stull and he built that house and in 1941, I think it was just me and my brother, and I don't know if my brother Gideon was born then or not, I think he was either down there or up here, it was pretty close. Then we moved up here and it was a new house; it was brand new and it was very nice and it was paid for when it was done because he did all the work. And then he rented that house down there for \$16 a month and then he upped it to \$20, to Fraley, I forget what the man's first name was. It wasn't Winston Fraley; it was his son. And then when high school started, I went down to Grandma Anders and stayed there on the week and then daddy picked me up Friday night and bring me back Sunday night. And then I still lived up here because when I came home on the weekends, like I said, I was the oldest of seven, so there was a lot of things that mom had saved for me to do. I could iron, I could do laundry and I would stop at the head of the steps and come down, wash all the floors and, you know, because she couldn't do it all. And then I lived there all my life.

[Elizabeth Comer]

So, the house that Gideon- This one that the gentleman just bought, Mr. Swope?

[Betty Willard]

No, I guess it's signed in the paper by now. No, not that house, the one next to me.

[Elizabeth Comer]

Oh, the one where Gideon's son lives?

[Betty Willard]

Yeah, yeah.

[Elizabeth Comer]

Oh, I see. The log house where you moved when you were just a few months old, is that the log house on the right here or the one on the left a little further down?

[Betty Willard]

On the right.

[Elizabeth Comer]

So, it's the one where the African American school was in what became the garden, right? Was there another log building there?

[Betty Willard]

She said something about that. I never heard my parents or my grandparents ever say anything about the school for the blacks. The only blacks- I don't know where they had to come from.

[Elizabeth Comer]

Well, they were gone by the time. See, they were all gone. They left and went to Pennsylvania. They left about 1890.

[Betty Willard]

Well, the only black people that I ever heard my grandmother- She lived in this farmhouse down here. The only black people that I ever heard them say about was Al Patterson and he, Alice's property, it was her father's, now I can tell you why they lived up there, too. It's three different lots; it's not one big lot.

And the reason I call him old granddad, because it wasn't my grandfather, it was my great-grandfather, Pappy Willard's father. Well, Alice, the mother, Pappy Willard's mother was Annie Hauver and she married William Kelly Willard, but his name was W-I-L-L-I-A-R. Back in those days, if the women didn't like the spelling of the name, they changed it, so she took the I out and put a D on it, and that's the truth. And the same thing happened with Lee's parents. See, I was a Willard and married a Willard, we were in no relation that we ever knew. Anyway, his great grandparents, were Wollard's, spelled W-O-L-L-A-R-D. And when Lee was born, his birth certificate said W-O-L-L-A-R-D.

Well, when his mother married his father, and when he went to school, she told the teacher that it was spelled W-I-L-L-A-R-D. And when he got to the age where he needed to sign up for Social Security, we had to take the birth certificate, we had to take the school certificate, a report card, we had to take a bank statement, we had to take property statements, about 10 different things that had his name, but we finally did it.

Now, what was I talking about before I ever got on that?

[Elizabeth Comer]

So, the African-American school.

[Betty Willard]

Oh! The only black person that I ever- Two of them, one that I ever heard of was Al Patterson, and he lived up here on the third lot down. And then Jeff said that when he sold that, he moved down to this log house where Paul Lewis and his family lived.

[Elizabeth Comer]

Mm-hmm. That's the one on the left as you go down?

[Betty Willard]

That's on the left. And then the other black person that I ever heard of was his wife. Her name was Bess, and if any of the women in the area were going to have a baby, Bess would come and be the midwife. They said she was really gentle and kind, Grandma Willard said she was a gentle, kind, wonderful lady, but I never heard anybody say anything about a school, a black school, because it was only Bess and Al, and they were- I don't know whether Al Patterson worked down there at the furnace or what he did.

[Elizabeth Comer]

He did. He was a collier, yeah, and but he-

[Betty Willard]

What's a collier do?

[Elizabeth Comer]

Making charcoal from the wood up here in the mountains.

[Betty Willard]

Well, I told you, my grandfather was the mule team that drug that stuff down to the furnace.

[Elizabeth Comer]

Yeah, yeah. But there was definitely a very- It was only operating for a couple years, but the Frederick County school records are very clear that they chartered a little school for African-American children right here at that corner.

[Betty Willard]

Where would black children come from?

[Elizabeth Comer]

They were actually- They were here, but by 1910, they're all gone. In the census, we can see them in the census and then by 1910, they all leave. They leave for Pennsylvania and other places, but they leave this area, and so you're right, when you were young, the memory even of anyone African-American here was gone.

[Betty Willard]

There was another school up here.

[Elizabeth Comer]

Mm-hmm, and that was all white. This was a school- And next time we come, I'll bring you the printouts from- You know, because Frederick County's school records are complete from about the 1830s onward. They're actually online, it's amazing, it's all handwritten, of course. And this school was chartered, but I think it only survived for about six or seven years, maybe not even that long.

[Betty Willard]

Well, Jess said that when Al Patterson sold this up here to Alice's father, he lived down in Oscar Lewis' house, that's that log cabin. He lived there, but he said he was only there for a couple months and then he moved, so that must be that, but I don't know, I never heard grandma or pappy ever say anything about black children.

[Elizabeth Comer]

They were all gone by then. I mean, by basically 1900.

[Betty Willard]

Because when I wrote my book, when I retired and got to go back to all the early records, there was one black person in the list of membership and her name was Amelia Patterson, but I don't- And I also know that one of the men that gave the ground to Bethel Church to build a church, their last name when they came from Germany was Poorman, P-O-O-R-M-A-N, and I think he had about 13 children, but anyway, all his children changed their name to Buhrman, B-U-H-R-M-A-N.

[Elizabeth Comer]

I went to school with a Buhrman.

[Betty Willard]

And he said he wasn't about to change his name because he was not a poor man and I read his obituary, and he had a couple farms back in the Mount Zion area, he had a factory, a store and all kinds of stuff, so he didn't have to do that.

[Elizabeth Comer]

That's a great story.

[Betty Willard]

But he had his oldest daughter Minnie, Minnie Buhrman. Oh, and then when they signed the property- Well, there was no Bethel Church when he died, when Mr. Poorman died, but then after his wife died, then his son went to our church, and then they all said, all 13, they gave land in for the cemetery, and all 13 of his descendants signed their name, and then the first to notice was Minnie, and I forget what Minnie's last name was, but anyway, it was her married name that I found, but she had a baby. She was pregnant, and her husband went off to war, and her husband got killed in the war, and then the baby was born dead, and she ended up down Sykesville Insane Asylum, and she never got home. But she lived long enough to, you know, sign that paper, but that's the only- And what I was going to say, this Poorman that gave the land, that quick I forgot what I was going to say, and it'll come to me, there's lots of things.

[Elizabeth Comer]

Did he have someone, an African American-

[Betty Willard]

Oh, it said that he employed many slaves.

[Elizabeth Comer]

Oh! And you said he had a store and a factory up-

[Betty Willard]

His farms, like when you go to Foxville, what I call the square. If you go straight through, you come down here to Pleasant Valley, go out Pleasant Valley Road, and then you hit the road that takes you into Waynesboro. And then after you get there, you turn, come back, and it's like a big farm, or a quicker way is to come to that square and go to the right, go around up past the other church, keep going out through what they call Shantytown, isn't that disgraceful? There are nice houses back there.

But anyway, there's a couple big farms back there and that's where this man lived. They call it Mt. Zion.

[Elizabeth Comer]

Is that in Frederick County?

[Betty Willard]

That's in Washington County.

[Elizabeth Comer]

Yeah, I was going to say that's in Washington County, okay. Interesting. But nobody cared about what county you were in back then, you know, whether-

[Betty Willard]

Well, the mother changed the spelling of the name, they wouldn't care about the company.

[Elizabeth Comer]

That's true. Well-

[Betty Willard]

And back to Alice, that's a sad story. Alice had three sisters, and I think she had brothers, my grandfather was the oldest, and then there was one named Ori, one named Cliff and one named George, I think. And then Clarence, Clarence died with TB when he was just a young man, and then Raymond, there's a big family.

And they lived, you go out here up to the crossroads, up Tower Road, and before you get to the end of Tower Road, that's where Peter Hauver came from Germany with his daughter Annie, and Annie was my grandfather's mother. Anyway, they had Alice, Amy and Annie, and then all those boys. And I don't know what old Granddad did, I think back in those days, he mostly did crops and pick berries and whatever you could to pay your taxes.

Anyway, Alice was the oldest, and she got pregnant. Well, back in those days, if you got pregnant and you weren't married, it was kind of like a disgrace to the family. The parents would become very angry, and sometimes they'd make you leave.

Well, her mother got really angry and the man that was the father, he told Alice he wasn't going to have any part of this new baby, he was leaving, he went out west and never came back. So, everything was on her, plus she had to rely on her mother and father.

So, I don't know, there was these three lots up there.

Anyway, old Granddad, I think he might have owned the first one, I'm not sure. But anyway, he came over here. I mean, old Grandma just got violent, so he left. He came over here and lived over here. I understand it used to be like a package shed for apples, I don't know whose apples. But then he fixed it up and turned it into that you could live in it. And then he took Alice over there because her mother wouldn't let her stay there anymore. But Alice had a hard life, that boy grew up badly and I don't know whether he made whiskey or whether Alice made it, but somebody did make it up there. It's true, somebody made it. But Alice had a hard life.

She would walk to Thurmont early in the morning and get on a bus that took her to, I think it's up to Hanover where there's all those apple trees are. And she'd work up there in the apple factory where they made applesauce and do all that stuff. And then the bus would bring her back to Thurmont. There would be a lot of other women on the bus too. And then she would walk from Thurmont up the mountain every day and that's how she made a living to raise that child.

[Elizabeth Comer]

Wow! It must have taken her more than an hour to walk.

[Betty Willard]

Hours.

[Elizabeth Comer]

Hours? Oh my! It was a different world, wasn't it?

[Betty Willard]

But now, I mean, if a young girl gets pregnant, all those that I know around the church and around the community, the parents welcome the baby and they do all they can to help them or they can go to the social services. And we had one woman and a girl in our church, they gave her a car, they gave her a cell phone, she gets a check every month. But I don't begrudge that, I think that's okay.

And then another bad example over at Mount Moriah, that church beyond Foxville, it's a Lutheran church. Patsy Wolfe used to be the organist, and she was really good at it. Well, anyway, she fell in love with one of the soldiers over at Camp David, got pregnant, and there was one family in the church, they decided that since she was pregnant, that was a disgrace not only to her family, but to her church and all this bunch of junk and they made her stop playing the organ. They wouldn't let her play the organ since she was pregnant.

So, she quit playing the organ, and then they didn't have anybody to play the organ. And they, you know, they made rash statements, like if you say something, you shouldn't have said it. So that family, they were the Testermans, they had a store down in Thurmont. So,

they left the church, and then they asked her to please come back and then she went back and played the organ.

And I forget who it was, somebody over at church said that everybody was so happy that when she was playing the organ, the ladies in the church would almost fight over who was going to hold the baby! But you know, that's nice. I mean, little children don't ask to be here, all you can do is love them.

[Elizabeth Comer]

That's true.

[Betty Willard]

But that was so funny. But that's how Alice got up there, and then she stayed.

And when my father was a little boy, that's when they lived at- Pappy Willard, and when daddy and the two uncles were just little boys, they lived out there in that first log house. And daddy said that old granddad would have the horse and buggy, and go to Thurmont for feed, and he'd stop and get daddy. Daddy would be just a little tiny boy, and he'd stop and get daddy, and they'd go down and get the feed. And those days, the men would stand around and talk, you know, and then they'd head home before dark. And daddy said after they got to leave 77 and get on Catocin Mountain Road, old granddad would take the reins of the horse and tie him around something on the buggy, and he'd say, 'Come on, Herb, let's take a nap.' And they'd always have a blanket, and daddy said he and old granddad would get under the blanket and go to sleep. And when they'd get out here, the horse would automatically know to stop and get him out. That's a smart animal.

[Elizabeth Comer]

That is a smart animal.

I've always heard that in the outhouse, the outdoor toilet at the log house where you lived as a very young child.

[Betty Willard]

I can tell you about a snake story, go ahead.

[Elizabeth Comer]

I can't wait for that one! But did you ever see that there was anything written on the walls? I've always heard that the kids wrote things on the walls of that wooden outhouse. Maybe not true?

[Betty Willard]

When I lived there, my little brother was in a high chair, my next brother. And those boys on down the road, in those days you'd take the rim of an automobile wheel, and you got some kind of a fork and stick and you'd run behind that and make it go anywhere; it was just a thing to play with.

And Leonard and Calvin Lewis would come up, and they'd run that thing around the house, and mom would put Junie up against the window in the high chair, and every time he'd see him, he'd stand there and clap when they'd go by. That's a long time ago.

[Elizabeth Comer]

That's a great story. Was there a snake?

[Betty Willard]

Oh, let me tell you about the apples first.

Behind that house used to be an apple orchard. I don't know, maybe pappy Willard started it, I don't know. But they'd come up and pick the apples and put them down in that basement. And then he'd come up to the house and get the apples in the fall and take them away and sell them.

Well, one fall, and I can remember this, I must have been not too old, I wasn't old enough to go to school. Anyway, he had put all these boxes of apples out on the porch, he was going to put them in the back of his truck and take them down through the furnace and peddle them, that's what he called it. That's how daddy met mom, when they lived down there in that house.

Anyway, Pappy Willard was down in the basement bringing up the baskets and my brother, Junie, could walk. He walked over to one of the boxes and he picked up one of the apples and when he picked up that apple, Pappy Willard said 'Put that apple down.' He said, 'I'm taking that to sell.' And mom heard him say that and mom came out on the porch, she didn't say anything. She took Junie by the hand and she took me by the hand, she said 'Come on inside.' And I'll never forget that. I mean, he was trying to tell that little child, he wasn't going to eat it, you know how little kids grab stuff. He said, 'Put that apple down.' Well, he could have given us a whole- I guess he figured we could walk over in the orchard and get all we wanted. But anyway, he got really nasty.

Now the snake. Grandma Willard told me this. When she and pappy and her little children lived out there- And then I'll tell you how they got this farm. They had an outside toilet and they also had a chicken house up back.

Anyway, my father was going out to go to the bathroom. I don't know what's number one or number two. Anyway, there was a copper snake out there and the copper snake bit him. He was not taken to the doctor, didn't go to the doctor in those days. But I don't know, I think Pappy Willard took a razor blade and cut and squeezed to get the poison out and stuff. But he got bit by a copper snake out there.

Now I'll tell you how this- There's 101 acres on the farm and then across Mink Farm Road, there's 29 acres where the stream goes through and there's big rocks.

When Pappy Willard died, grandma was already dead. Uncle Ralph was the one that was supposed to take care of everything. So, he and my father and Uncle Roy, the three brothers, one sister, they got together and they decided that they were going to take this 101 acres and section it into three lots and each one was going to take one.

Well, there was also a younger brother, Arthur, he lived in the house out there, that log house that we used to live in years ago. Not very long, but anyway, that's where he lived.

Well, Uncle Ralph went to the lawyer, forget what his name was, in Frederick, and he told this lawyer that they were going to divide it. He said, 'We're going to give our sister the 29 acres.' Well, the lawyer contacted Aunt Mabel, she lived down on the eastern shore. Well, she threw a hissy fit and she said, 'My brothers are not treating me fairly!' She said, 'They're taking the good ground and giving me the rocks.' So, she got herself a lawyer and how we got involved was like on Friday night, we got a phone call and it was from Uncle Ralph's lawyer and he said 'Your Aunt Mabel said that the brothers wanted to divide the land into three equal parts,' but he said, 'Your Aunt Mabel threw a hissy fit and she has a lawyer and she's not allowing it.' And he said, 'But she has agreed to one thing.' And the lawyer was telling this to me because I was the one that was involved with the name. Anyway, he said, 'Your Aunt Mabel said that she will not agree to what your uncles want to do, but-' and they weren't going to let Arthur have any part of it because they had already given him that log house. So, they figured that was his share.

So, the man said to me, he said, 'Your Aunt Mabel said the only person in the-' because she got mad, 'The only person in the Willard family that I will even consider allowing them to buy the farm is the oldest grandchild, and that's Betty.' That was me. And he said, 'She said she will let you have it at the appraised price, but there's one thing in the deed,' it's a title for an automobile. 'The deed must say that as long as Betty lives, the property has to remain in her name and never sold. Because if' the lawyer said, 'Because she feels that if you would buy it, and then you would sell it to one of your uncles, and then they would end up getting it.' So, that's why it's still there. So, Lee and I had from Friday night to Monday to decide if we wanted to go in debt, but we got it for the appraised price, I can't remember exactly how many thousand it was, but anyway, we had just been married and our house was paid for because daddy built our house and didn't charge us a cent, all we did was pay for materials. And we called, and I told him that we'll do that, but we had to agree not to sell it as long as I was living. So, that's the end of that story.

[Elizabeth Comer]

That's a great story.

[Betty Willard]

Oh, and how did Pappy Willard get it? Wasn't his in the first place. Grandma Willard was a Harne. Her father was James Oliver Harne, and he lived- You go up the farm road, there's a great big farm up there on the end of it, that was all of his property. He was county commissioner for several years, and I don't know too much about him anyway, he had quite a few children, but his wife died, and his children were married and gone, and he got sick. It was called amyloidosis, something like you get paralyzed or whatever and Grandma Willard invited him, or else he said, 'Can I come live with you?' So, he came down here, and Grandma Willard told me this many times, there's like a kitchen, a dining room, and then here was a little room and she said we made a bedroom back there, so she could go back to him during the day, and she took care of him until he died, and he couldn't talk, he was paralyzed. So, Grandma said she took a piece of cardboard and wrote the ABC's on there, and then she had a little stick that he could put in his- When he wanted to talk to her, like if he wanted to drink of water, she'd put that little stick in his mouth, and he'd touch the W and the A, he'd spell out what he wanted to say.

Well, she took care of him until he died, and he gave that ground to his daughter, but Pappy Willard always said, 'This is my ground.' It wasn't his at all, it was Grandma Willard's. Of

course, when you get married, you know, it's half and half, but a lot of people don't go around bragging about it.

[Elizabeth Comer]

That's a great story.

[Betty Willard]

So, Lee and I, we've had a lot of people come and want to, Dr. Damazo and Frederick wanted to buy that whole thing to make a Seventh Day Adventist camp. I mean, he offered us big bucks. Lee said, 'Well, don't tell him,' but he said, 'You know, you can't sell it.' I said, 'I know,' but he said, 'Well, just tell him we want the peace and quiet and we don't want all the noise and commotion.'

So, it's been very interesting, and then when my father died, mom was already- Well, yeah, daddy went first and then mom. I had to take care of all that. We had two big woodlots up here, and a house that Ricky's living in now, a big woodlot, and we took care of all that, I did it.

But then after mom died, I was determined not to- Well, Lee said, 'We better hadn't sell it the way it is, because someone will buy it for a low price and come in and let it go down.' He said, 'Let's just spend the money and fix it up.'

So, each one of us, there were four of us, got an equal share and I took my share, and I paid the appraised price, and then all new windows, all new doors, paint this roof, new floors, new bathroom. And then one day, Lee and I were sitting there eating our lunch, and Ricky, that's Gidd's boy, came in, and he said- My brothers always called Lee Boss, I don't know why, but anyway, he came in, he said, 'Well, Boss, you better decide what you're going to do with that house up there?' Well, he was married, and this is, you know, it's not a nice thing to tell, but he was living with this girl and they had Sarah, a baby. Well, when Sarah was first grade, the mother got cancer and died, and he had that child to raise all by himself. He was never interested in any women later, and I think at the time he was living, I think Sarah, I don't know how old she was, but anyway, Sarah grew up, and she got, went off to college, she became a nurse and she got married, has a baby, and Ricky said- And he was living in some room somewhere, like in a boarding house. He said, 'Have you decided what you're going to do with that?' and Lee said, 'Well, we're going to depend on divine intervention.' That meant, you know, God will tell us what to do, and Ricky said, 'Well, I'd like to move in.' So, Lee said, 'We'll think about it,' so he lives up there, and I only charge him enough rent to pay for the fire insurance and the property taxes, which is dirt cheap.

And of course, he takes me wherever I want to go, and after Lee passed away and I said, 'I just can't drive, I'm just too nervous,' and he said, 'Aunt Betty, anytime you want to go anywhere, just let me know the day before, and I'll take you.'

So, and then, I shouldn't tell this, nobody knows this but Lee and me, and don't you girls tell anybody-