

Interview with Perry Meale

Interviewer: Frances King

April 4, 1976

Q: Now, let's see, you're Perry, is that all just Perry Meale?

A: R. A. Meale, that's the way I sign.

Q: Perry A., what's the A.

A: Albert.

Q: Albert, and where were you born Perry?

A: In Union Township.

Q: And what year?

A: 1893.

Q: 1893.

A: May eleventh.

Q: Are you the youngest of the...

A: The second.

Q: The second?

A: Yeah, I have a sister Ida who is older than I am, and my sister Ethel is younger and then I have brother named George.

Q: That's right, George was the baby. And where did you live as a child? Where was your home?

A: Well, it was two doors south; it was the second house south of King Road off [Havishen] Road.

Q: And was that land homesteaded by your people?

A: Yeah, it was.

Q: About what time, do you remember? Can you remember, give a year?

A: No, I can't do that.

Q: Well, you said, you told me once that your father had told you when you came down, when your folks came down on the river?

A: 1829.

Q: Can you remember, can you tell anymore about that?

A: No...well, there was Kings and I don't know Frances, but it seems to me like there was [Barkers] in that pocket too. We were related to [Barkers].

Q: [Affirmative mumble]

A: Old Uncle Sam [Barker], I think he was in there. That sounds about right.

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Q: And your father, your father's name was John, right?

A: Yeah.

Q: John Meale.

A: Yeah, John Albert Meale.

Q: And he was the one who told you about your people coming down on a flat boat from Virginia.

A: Right.

Q: Which probably was West Virginia.

A: Well, it was west. Like you said a while ago, I came around [Portsmouth]...

Q: [Portsmouth]?

A: [Portsmouth], yeah.

Q: [Parkersburg]?

A: Yeah, [Parkersburg].

Q: And nobody knows how they got there, to [Parkersburg]?

A: Oh, no, no...

Q: That's where I'm lost, at [Parkersburg] right now. I can't get beyond that to find out where they came from.

A: Well, I don't have, we got a history that Cousin Anna fixed up, you know, done like you're doing...

Q: Really?

A: And my people, she's traced them back to the 1600s in Ireland.

Q: Ireland?

A: Yeah.

Q: So, you're part Irish, huh?

A: Part Irish.

Q: Oh, wouldn't that be great. Yes, because if you can locate precisely where the [Neals] where in West Virginia, I could probably go there and find out or locate some information about the Kings. But I don't know what city to go to particularly.

A: Well, Frances, I don't know. It's been a long time since I read this, but I don't know why they came, does it matter? She was fixin' to find out more than me.

Q: Right, but what I mean is if she had pinpointed where in West Virginia your people came here, if my came with them, I could go back to the same place and probably find some information where they came from. Because the records I find only say that my great, great grandfather James wasn't born in West Virginia or Virginia. So, and he was a middle-aged man when he came here with your people and his sons were, you know, young men. But of course, they were born there too. But, you know, I have some records on them, but I can't find out anything on him, who his parents were or anything like that. But you have to do it piece by piece, if you find out a little bit of information like this, you know, that leads you back to another place...

A: Sure!

Q: It's kind of fun. Okay, you lived down there then all of your life, Perry, or when did you...

A: I lived there until I was 26 years old.

Q: And then what happened?

A: I got married.

Q: Well, then you didn't live in Union Township anymore?

A: No, well, yes, I did. But I come to town and I stayed in town, um wait, I'm telling you all wrong...

Q: Well, that's alright.

A: I worked for the family for two years and then I left the town to work at the dam and I went to farming and I think that was about five years...

Q: Do you remember when that dam was built?

A: I do.

Q: Well, do you remember the year? Cause I don't have that.

A: Oh, it took eleven years to build it.

Q: They were?

A: Yeah, they had a lot of trouble.

Q: They did?

A: Yeah.

Q: You didn't help build it?

A: Oh, no. It went into operation in um, 1922 or '23. I'm not too sure.

Q: I didn't realize that. And it took eleven years to build it?

A: Yeah, from the time they started to when it went into operation it took eleven years.

Q: Then it would have started before the war.

A: Well, it did.

Q: And it was probably held up, in the building during the war, perhaps. Do you remember that?

A: It might have been held up, I know, well, I just know it took eleven years to build it, I can remember that.

Q: How did it...

A: Well, bless your heart!

Q: How did you happen to get a job working there, Perry?

A: Well, Bob [Adcock] talked me into going there in the first place. If we could get on and I don't know, he knew someone that got us on. And Bob [Border] stayed at our house for a long time. Before he got out on his own. And then I cut weeds and Gerry put cement down to the river and that was about all I could do...

Q: I bet it was [laughter]

A: And then finally when we got it all done, they sent the thing into operation and Bob and I was on duty at the same time one night. And I wasn't used to staying up at night, it was my time to watch, see? And I went to sleep [laughter] And Joe [Hartman] whistled and Bob wasn't awake, I don't know. Anyway, I jumped up and looked down at the end of the wall and it looked like a whole city there, all lit up [laughter] And we got the gate back and locked it through alright, but that was the first bolt that went through after it went into operation.

Q: Hmm, well that's interesting.

A: So, I was a lock man; that was about all I done was lock the bolts closed for about two years. And I had a chance to go to farming, so I went to farming.

Q: What did you, what was entailed in lock one of those bolts through? What did you have to be careful about, you know, to do it? It always impressed me as a rather awesome operation when I was down there.

A: Well, you had to open some valves in the wall and if the lock was full, you had to be sure that you emptied the lock before you pulled the gate back, you know, you didn't want it to run out. If the lock is full, yeah...if the lock was empty, of course, you closed the valves on whichever way it happened to be and the build it up, open some valves and build it up. And you can open the other gate and let it, you know, in and out, whichever happened to be...

Q: What was the same, um, the dam as I knew it as a kid was it finished off, you know? Was everything there when you first took over or did, they add things to it through the years?

A: Well, not the dam itself they didn't have anything else...

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Q: It was the same operations, the same...

A: It was the same thing, of course they had [wickets], and you know what they are also.

Q: Right.

A: We raise them above water, above the water mark.

[Unidentified Woman's Voice in background]: They started to build that dam when we were teenagers.

A: And there were eleven engineers building that dam up, about 1912 it started, I'm not sure.

Q: I would think so, more than that. Was that a big, did you go watch them working on it?

A: Oh, yes. I used to go down there every summer pretty near and watch them. We'd right down there

Q: You know, that wouldn't be much of an operation to build now, but I suspect in that day and age that was quite a job. Do you remember what they had trouble with; was it in the building of it that they had trouble?

A: Well, no, I don't know actually. In fact, I think money was one thing. I forget the man who, one fellow went broke and he [inaudible], but I forgot his name.

Q: Well, weren't they built for the government?

A: Yeah, the government, well, they contracted.

Q: Oh, I see. Were you married at the time that you were working?

A: Yeah...

Q: On the dam?

A: Yeah, yeah...

Q: Where did you live then?

A: At the dam.

Q: You lived at the dam? Were all of those houses built at the same time the dam was built?

A: Yeah.

Q: They were?

A: Yeah.

Q: Over there?

A: Yeah, there were seven frame houses and four brick houses.

Q: And now, they're all sitting there empty.

A: Ain't that awful.

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Q: It is awful.

[Unidentified Woman's Voice]: They're building greenhouses over there.

Q: Oh, are they?

A: Well, yeah. They tore the frame houses down eventually and built...

Q: When?

A: Oh, several years ago.

Q: Oh, there are still frame houses.

A: Well, now if there is, they've built them lately because they've torn those down, Frances, and built brick house in their place.

Q: Well, I think now, my memory may be playing tricks on me, but as I remembered; the houses closest to the power house are all brick houses.

A: Yeah.

Q: And then there were some other houses on down the road that were frame houses.

A: Yes, and they tore those down and...

Q: And they're all brick now?

A: They're all brick. I don't know.

Q: Well, they lived in frame houses then. And the [Cooks] lived in a frame house, cause I used to go see them. But you mean those houses have been torn down?

A: I'm sure they have.

Q: Well, anyway, it's a shame, those were all nice houses. I hope somebody does something with that, as a recreation spot or something, you know. So, after you finished with that then you went to farming.

A: Right.

Q: Where did you farm?

A: [Barker]

Q: [Barker], so where would that be?

[other woman speaks]

A: Yeah, right by the old school house where you went to school.

Q: Would that be where [Mr. Melborn] lived when I went to school?

A: On the other side of the school.

[Other woman]: He lived on the [inaudible], on the far side so we lived on the other side.

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Q: Okay, where [Moreheads] would get you there.

[other woman]: [inaudible mumbling]

Q: [Barker's] land was expensive.

[other woman]: Yeah...

Q: How was farming different then, Perry? What did you start out with?

A: Well, I had one tractor and I believe three [teams].

Q: And how much land was in the farm?

A: About 120 acres.

Q: And that was pretty much for one guy.

A: Yeah.

Q: You did it all by yourself?

A: No, I hired help.

Q: Where did you get your black people to help? Where did they come from?

[other woman]: Henderson.

A: Yeah, over in Kentucky somewhere...

Q: They came across the river?

A: Yeah.

[other woman]: [inaudible]

Q: How did you locate them though?

A: Well, in those days, Frances, people would walk the road and...

Q: And ask?

A: Yeah, just ask for a job.

Q: Perry, do you remember the gypsies? Do you ever remember...?

A: Oh, my goodness, yes. I hoped to tell ya...

Q: Were there many? When did they come?

A: Every spring of the year mostly.

Q: Where did they camp? Or did they camp down there?

A: On the side of the road.

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Q: I mean any particular place down our way in Union Township? Did they stay in any particular spot?

A: No, not that I know of...

[other woman]: We always thought about [inaudible]

A: Yeah, they'd camp anywhere before sundown caught them. On the side of the road. In those days, they didn't have that [inaudible] They had tents and wagons.

Q: Oh?

A: And if you had any wash hanging out on the line you had to take them in.

Q: [laughter] Did you ever lose anything?

[other woman]: Yes.

Q: What did you lose?

[other woman]: [inaudible] but we never did. That's what they would do, if you had laundry at home or wash on the line or something...

A: Yeah, they would. We never lost anything either, but some people did.

[other woman]: They'd steal milk and eggs...

Q: Now, how could you tell the difference between the gypsies and the hobos?

A: Well, the gypsies, they all ganged together and the hobos, there were only one or two at a time, you know. But you know, after they done away with their wagons, they went in a truck. And one year, I don't remember what year it was; did you know Eddie [Melborn]?

Q: Yeah, mm hmm.

A: Well, you know he was riding a bicycle one day, down below where Perry school used to be. And they run over him and put him in their truck and crossed the river and somehow somebody over there caught them. And he was almost dead, I guess.

Q: Well, was it an accident that they hit him or what were they going to do with him?

A: I don't know. I don't know what they intended to do with him.

[other woman]: [Inaudible mumbling]

A: Well, I don't know.

Q: How old was he? He must of just been a kid.

A: He was about twelve, eleven or twelve years old.

Q: I've never heard of that.

A: Well, he had a time, I'll tell ya. They thought for a while he was out of his mind. But he got over it alright. I wondered, just wondered whatever become of him.

[other woman]: [inaudible]

Q: Probably, I haven't heard anything of it...well, let's see, with the highway coming through there, do you remember when the 41 Highway was built? The big concrete road?

A: Oh, yeah. That's when I worked at the dam.

Q: Oh, you were working at the dam at that time?

A: At that time, yeah.

Q: Now, was that highway built because of 41 going through there or what? Do you remember?

[other woman]: Yeah, I think [inaudible]

A: Yeah, that was called the [Dixie Bee Highway].

Q: [Dixie Bee Highway] from Chicago to the south, wherever that went.

A: Yeah.

Q: [laughter] Oh, were the days. And then the hobos, you know I hadn't thought about the hobos until you started talking about the gypsies. Um, the hobos didn't come through until the Depression, is that when they really got to ride in the freights?

A: Well, that's what you're talkin' about, ridin' in the freights. That's what we always called a hobo, riding the freights. But we didn't bother with them.

Q: Really?

A: No.

Q: Well, my mother used to have people come through begging. Of course, we were close the railroad there, you know.

A: Yeah, that's right.

Q: But you weren't that much farther away.

A: About a half a mile.

[other woman]: Well, I don't know. I know when I was a kid and when hobos used to come all they wanted was a handout.

Q: All they wanted was a handout, yeah.

[other woman]: And I don't know where they come from, but they [inaudible] I guess they just drive along the highway.

Q: I don't know. People didn't try to hitch rides in those days, did they? You know, see them out thumbing? I don't remember that?

A: No, no. I don't recall.

Q: I don't even remember seeing a lot of them walking, but I guess they did.

[other woman]: Sometimes those people go down on the corner, trying to go someplace...

Q: I can remember, every time we'd see a strange car, you know. Everybody knew everybody's car down there, but when you see a strange car come or a group of people that you didn't know, especially if they looked a little outlandish, they were the gypsies. But I was never, ever sure that I ever saw a real gypsy because Lu used to tease me.

[other woman]: The gypsies knew that nobody could get at them, I guess.

A: Not a what?

[other woman]: Indian?

A: Well, I don't know about that.

[other woman]: Well, they had such long, black hair and they should loud clothes...

Q: I don't think they were American Indian, I think they come from; I think they're really foreign. You know, from the Balkans or somewhere. Some European country along the Mediterranean where they do have that long black hair.

A: Some of them were Egyptians. That's all they done, that's...

Q: That was their occupation.

A: [inaudible mumbling]

[other woman]: And they talked funny too.

A: Yeah, I know they did.

[other woman]: They had some trouble [inaudible]

Q: But did they play the guitar?

[other woman]: No, I don't think.

Q: No music? They couldn't have been real gypsies, could they? They had to play to be gypsies.

A: They could tell your fortune.

Q: Could they?

A: If you'd let them [laughter] I never did fool with them myself.

Q: Did you ever get your fortune told?

[other woman]: No, not down there.

Q: [laughter] so, you farmed on [Barker's] farm for nine years.

A: Yeah.

Q: Okay, and then after that what did you do?

[other woman]: He had kids! [inaudible]

A: Well, that was nine years, more than nine years. Oh, and I worked with my brother, I guess what, and your dad, for about two years. And then, in the '37 flood, we went on to the [Simmons] place. Yeah, I just started working for [Sarge]

Q: That's where you worked. What did you do there, Perry?

A: Well, I was on unsettling mounds [inaudible] most of the time. But when I first went to work, I done everything. I did hard labor.

Q: Are you an electrician? Are you electrically inclined?

A: No, no...

Q: Just mechanically inclined?

A: Um, settling.

Q: I see.

A: Construction welding. I'm afraid of doing that after a while.

Q: Why?

A: I'm too old.

[other woman]: [inaudible mumble]

A: And that too. In 1932, I went to work on [votage].

Q: You mean you've been working on voting machines that long?

A: I missed one election [inaudible]

Q: Oh, Perry, not really.

A: And I'm on them today.

Q: Are you working on these fancy, uh...

A: Yeah.

Q: Oh, that's fascinating. What has to been done to them?

A: Oh, there's a whole lot more work than you realize.

Q: Oh, I'm sure that's true.

A: And it's getting' more complicated every day, Frances. Cause they got so many different discs and I can hardly explain it to you. But, like say, we're in ward one here, we're in ward one, I think. Or ward six and district 49 and 71 and 72. And the seven precincts in 46. You've got to keep them separate or they won't be right. And those little cards, you've voted on them, haven't you?

Q: Yeah, you mean the new punch system?

A: Yeah.

Q: Yeah.

A: Well, those yellow cards, you don't see that. Underneath what you punch, they've got to have that hole in that spot see. If it's not there, then we can't punch the card. So that's what I'm doing today.

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Then after we get all them cards punched the little pages from the printers, then we have to crimp a hinge on them and then we'll send them to vote. But that takes time and...

Q: Oh, I bet it does.

A: We check and double check and still you find ones wrong.

Q: But those old voting machines, the automatic, you know the first ones we had.

A: Yeah, yeah.

Q: Did you have to take them apart and fix them if there was something wrong with them and all that.

A: Yeah, if they weren't working right, we had to...

Q: Find out what was wrong?

A: Yeah. Like yesterday, they had an election at the Executive Inn, all cards. And we kept; they swapped the voting machines in on the new punch types. But we kept two new ones out and let them count in case they wanted to elect a chairman or something like that. And yesterday, I went to set the thing up and it wasn't working. So, we finally set it up so they could use it, but it wasn't right. It wouldn't count for a general election or something like that. But for this outfit it's alright. It's got to be worked on before it can be used right?

Q: Well, now are those punch systems, are they all over the county now?

A: Yeah. They got 600, I believe 650 more.

Q: Do you think they are better than the first ones.

A: Far better, I sure do, yes.

Q: Even though they're more complicated.

A: Well, they're not as complicated as a machine.

Q: They really aren't?

A: No.

Q: I guess that's true. Those machines were complicated, you know.

[other woman]: All the votes with that thing [inaudible] it's a wonder people didn't get killed.

Q: How many did we have? How many machines?

A: How many voting machines?

Q: Yeah.

A: Well, we wound up; when we got rid of them, we got 200.

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Q: [Affirmative mumble]

[other woman]: Which ever which township would have them.

Q: Yeah, some of them still have ballots. The ballots were the best way, Perry.

A: I have no idea.

Q: You know when you had to X 'em and you remember the good old days when we used to have them down in Union Township? How much fun the election boards could have with those?

[other woman]: Counting all night...

Q: Countin' all night and changing them and making some of them illegal.

A: [laughter] Yeah, I remember it. But you know, the thing about those voting machines, they were square and honest as they could be. What that vote put on there is there.

Q: Which ones?

A: The old time.

Q: The old ones, yeah. There wasn't any horsing. How about this new system, is as fool proof?

A: Well, yeah...

Q: If the computer reads right.

A: That's right. Unless the computer goes wrong it's just as good.

Q: I don't really trust all these computers though.

A: Well, I don't know much about the computer. I don't have much to do with that and I don't want to.

Q: [laughter] Well, now see here's where I think you would be right in the middle of the computer because I think that would be right up your alley, you know. If he had been a young man in the computer age, he would have been right in the middle of the computer bit, I bet. Because that's what I remember about him, you know, there were a few people down home who were different from the others because they weren't just the farmer, they did other things and they knew how to do other things. And that's what I remember about Perry. I couldn't remember it, but it was the [Luce Ira Erie bit] that I was remembering, because you were a welder.

A: Yeah.

[other woman]: Forty-five years.

Q: Where did you learn how to do that?

A: Out there.

Q: They taught you?

A: Yeah. Well, during noon hour when we teach, you know, I had time. Did a whole one of them things, I learned myself, you know.

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Q: Well, bless your heart.

A: When I first went to work there, I run a bus [inaudible]

Q: [Affirmative mumble]

A: And I didn't like that. Finally, a fellow wanted to swap with me, and he run a train, an overheard train. Your dad run one of them too out there.

Q: My dad worked there with [Silas Erie]? I bet he didn't last very long.

A: He didn't stay. I was in the wintertime when I was asked to do it.

Q: Uh, huh.

A: I don't know how long he worked there. Maybe six years, I don't know, but that's what he did. But I ran that train and it took me a year to get out of there. And when I got out of it, I went to a [inaudible] and a fellow named [Cyrus Troy], he taught me how to set them gages and all. And I was on that tarp I get a couple of three years, steady. I had no idea. And then they made it; I was on settling and maintaining. I took care of the torches and they had two great big generators that generate the gas and I took care of them and then they were cutting for people out on the floor, for welders. And that was my job.

Q: Sounds like a big job. What do they do over at the [Silas Erie] now? Do they still make the big machinery?

A: Oh, yeah, but they don't make them like they used to. They have to get one; they have to take orders before they'll build it now. So, I understand, but I'm not sure. They have awful trouble getting those big castings for those shovels.

Q: It used to be at one time though it was quite an operation over there, wasn't it?

A: Yes, it was.

Q: They had stuff all over the world.

A: Well, they send to England to get their castings now. They used to get them out of Milwaukee.

Q: You know, someday, somebody should write a story about you. And the election machines. I'm going to tell somebody about you.

A: No [laughter]

Q: Please, will you? Mary Lou Berry would love to do it. I'm sure, if you've been in that election business for 1932.

A: I missed one election since 1932.

Q: Isn't that fabulous?

[other woman]: Yes, I would have though Perry, when you retired and all of that, but you still...

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Q: I know that, but how old are you Perry?

A: I'll be 83 eleventh of March.

Q: You know, 83 and at that and still doing it. I think that's wonderful.

A: Your dad is nine months older than I am.

Q: Well, he's not working on election machines and he couldn't even...he gets so mad, he can't see. Your eyes are good, aren't they?

A: Yeah.

Q: See, daddy can't see anything...

[other woman]: Perry used to get up and around that spot up there on [inaudible] and get off at two...

A: Now, I get off at three.

[other woman]: And come right home and grab a bite and take his lunch over to [Silas] over until 7:30 and then home sharp. And when he was farming, he like to leave and work the afternoons, when the crops where getting in and out.

Q: Are you at heart, are you really a farmer at heart, Perry or did you like to do other thing better?

A: Well, I liked farming an awful lot...

Q: Did you?

A: But I just...

[other woman]: We had a lot of difficulty. Uh, it seems like season would be so dry.

Q: Uh, huh.

[other woman]: And early frost.

A: We lost two crops. As far as farming is concerned I just, I liked it, but I wasn't cut out for that kind of work.

Q: Well, that's sort of what I mean. I mean, somebody who's got this kind of talent or this kind of, yeah, it's a talent. Um, I was just thinking someone might get bored with the farming. I can't see my daddy doing anything else, maybe he could. You know, it's just as difficult. He was telling me about when he was on the telegraph, he did that for a while. Well, this was all fine for the winter months, but when Uncle Barney and some of the others were out running the trot line and going squirrel hunting, the heck with that, you know? He had to go be with them. I think that part, the seasonal part of farming appealed to him. So that he could go do something [laughter]

A: Well, it's a wonder your dad wasn't a railroader or engineer or something.

Q: He was too independent.

A: He used to [inaudible] about it.

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Q: Yeah, he said he loved it.

A: Yeah, he did.

Q: He just loved that. But again, that was Bob [Adcock] wasn't it? Bob and [Chaney], Bob [Chaney], that's right.

A: Well, Bob [Adcock] worked for a while too.

[other woman]: Yeah.

A: At the telegraph company.

Q: Daddy said the other night, he said, "I could still send a message." He said, "That's just as clear in my mind as anything, if I just had something to do, I could still do it."

A: Does he still pick the guitar?

Q: Yeah, yeah.

A: You know Frances; I tried to call at your house. You live there don't you?

Q: Yeah.

A: For two weeks, wasn't it though, I tried to get a hold of you, but I just couldn't do it. I wanted to come and visit, and I had a letter from a friend of Ethel [Marcus], you've heard of her?

Q: Yeah, uh, huh.

A: Well, she had an attack, she's in a wheelchair and this woman wanted to know if she was born in Union Township. Well, I bet she was, but I wasn't sure, and I wanted to ask you. But I couldn't get a hold of ya.

[other woman]: And if she had been married before.

A: Yeah, if she had been married before. Well, she hadn't, I'm sure.

Q: Did you ever get what she needed?

A: No, I couldn't.

[other woman]: [inaudible mumbling]

Q: Well, they don't hear it. See, daddy usually goes downstairs and sleeps in the basement, so he doesn't hear it. And mother doesn't hear as well as she thinks she does.

[other woman]: [inaudible mumble]

Q: Well, yeah it was after she broke her hip.

A: Yeah, it was. I think she was in the hospital too at that time.

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April 4, 1976

Q: But if you want to call us, it's best to call in the evening or about 12:30 at noon because that's about when they eat and when they're up there. But in the afternoon, he may be outside, or he may be in the basement asleep or just not hear it. But we're always there in the evening, some of us. So that's...if I could help, could she still use that information?

A: Oh, I don't imagine she could.

Q: Cause I'd be happy to try, and look see if I could help.

A: [inaudible mumbling] I even forgot the woman's name, Frances.

Q: Okay, did you go back to the station where daddy worked as a telegraph operator? Do you ever go back there?

[other woman]: He used to hang out there [inaudible]

A: I used to go there, yeah. I don't know whether I went there while he was working or not.

Q: Well, was it a kind of hang out for the [laughter]

A: No, it was just kind...

Q: You had to know somebody?

A: Had to know, oh, yeah. I went out there twenty years ago. That's the only reason I know. And he went and finally get on to the [inaudible] whatever you call it. Was it Harry [Clark]? Yeah, Harry [Clark], they were awful good friends and he had nothing else to do out here but go out there. But finally, I went out to his house and he left home [inaudible]

Q: How did you guys get around, did you walk?

A: Walk most of the time.

[other woman]: Well, they had bicycles.

A: Well, they these [inaudible] to where he was. And I had my club out and they back, one of them had hold of my legs and someone had a hold of my arms. That's the way they got him out, drug him to the ground. So, I...

Q: Where you skating with skates or?

A: Just skates.

Q: Some of those kids had a good time.

[other woman]: Yes, they did [laughter] especially [inaudible]

Q: Right, what else did you do, Perry?

A: That's about it.

[other woman]: Played baseball.

Q: Oh, yeah, how bout this baseball. Were you on the baseball team? My dad was tellin' me something about a baseball team. Surely you were on it?

A: Yeah...

Q: Buck and Bob...

A: Buck and Bob.

Q: And the lower end played the upper end.

[other woman]: [inaudible]

A: Well, I was on the other side. I don't remember.

[other woman]: [inaudible]

Q: On Sunday or what?

A: Sunday.

Q: Sunday afternoon, just like they still play down in Dog Town.

A: That's right, yeah.

Q: Do you remember anything about Dog Town?

A: Oh, yeah, [inaudible] you mean?

Q: Do you remember when it was a saloon?

A: Yes, I do.

Q: Who owned it then?

A: Joe [Schenk].

Q: When did it cease being? When did he quit operating during the Prohibition or what? Or did he fold up before that? See, I don't remember it being a saloon cause when I was a kid...

[other woman]: Never did cease to [inaudible]

Q: Not...when I was in school and yes, when those kids lived there, there was no saloon there. They lived there, but there wasn't a saloon. You know, [inaudible] when it was just a [inaudible].

A: Well, that must have been back in the Prohibition days. I know, Joe [Schenk], I think he died before, that was John [Schenk] and it belonged [Schenk's] dad. And after he started back, then John run it, John [Schenk]. I don't remember too much about it, but I never did fool around there.

Q: It seems to have been kind of the [flat point]. When I was a kid, I always thought of that, because the post office was there, when I was a kid I always kind of thought of that...

A: Yeah.

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Q: Although, there wasn't any [inaudible] there. Except that blacksmith shop.

A: That was Nell [Kamp].

Q: Yeah.

[other woman]: By that old church there and it was [inaudible] And that's were, I went to confirmation school there.

Q: That's how, now I begin to understand why so many people there belong to the west side, they call it the west side now.

[other woman]: [tape skips around at this point]

Q: As a matter of fact, you know, when daddy tells about the so called "mean thing" there's nothing malicious in it.

A: No.

Q: Let's talk about [Barker] school. Did you go to the same [Barker] school I went to or was it another one?

A: Another one. Yeah, I went to a one room school. The one your dad went to.

Q: Was a log one or was it?

A: No, it wasn't log, weatherboard. Built up off the ground about that high. Oh, higher than that wasn't it? It was about 7 or 8 steps off the ground.

Q: To keep it out of the water?

A: Yeah. So, I wouldn't wear a coat in the fall of the year. They said it was cold, but I didn't think so. One day the teacher said, "Got a coat?" I said, "Yeah, I got one at home." And he said, "Well, you wear it to school one morning, you bring it to school one morning." So, I did, and I hand it to him, and he said, "Well, put it on!" [laughter] Then I got a switching, he switched me.

Q: How old were you?

[other woman]: Twelve maybe?

A: Well, I was eleven or twelve.

Q: Well, that wasn't anything...

[other woman]: He was a pretty little kid, kind of small and the bigger girls....

A: Yeah, that's the reason I didn't like school. I didn't used to like school.

Q: Really?

A: When I first started there was Jessica [Tharp] and Jessie [King], [inaudible]. Then Sadie [Davis]. Those four at recess at noon hour they'd get after me, pick me up, you know. Kiss me. They finally they put me down and another one would chase me and pick me up [laughter]

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Q: Now, wait a minute. Let's get this age bit. You were just a little kid in the first grade?

A: Yeah.

Q: But the big girls were picking you up because you were cute?

A: Well, I don't know, but I just...

Q: I just want to get straight what kind of girls were picking you up and kissing you! [laughter] You know, later on that might have been alright if they were your own age.

A: Yeah, it wasn't that [laughter]

[other woman]: He always enjoyed the last day of school.

A: Oh, yeah.

[other woman]: Had those big swings put up, you know. And the basket dinner. And we'd have a program too.

Q: Did you go to the same school?

[other school]: Yes, yes, we did. The school house there the boys used to play on, get on a fallin' tree up in there. And play baseball, we had such a good time at recess. Perry always liked school at recess time like he say.

Q: Well, Perry did you ever get over that bit of not liking school? I mean, after you got to be a little older the girls still didn't pick you up and kiss you?

A: No, but I never forgot it and it just turn me. In school, I guess I never did care too much about school. I didn't like to be in the house all that time. I would rather be out hunting ducks or fishing.

[other woman]: Playin' tag.

Q: You had all eight classes in one, all eight grades in one room?

A: Right.

Q: Did you have a man teacher all the time?

A: No, no [inaudible]

[other woman]: [Birchbee], [Hinkle]...

A: Well, I think I went to about three grammar teachers, they were men.

Q: And did they have a graduation ceremony or?

[other woman]: I don't think we did, I think when you kids come along...

Q: We did. We were glad when it was all over with. Was that the only whipping you ever got?

A: Oh, no, my dad used to spank me...

Q: Oh, I meant at school.

A: Oh, at school.

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Q: That wasn't a very big one.

A: No, I got another one, another whipping that I forget. Her sister, [Ferry], sit in front of me. Someone throw a paper wad, I don't think much about. And it fell on the floor and I picked it up and I held it. I didn't throw it, but the teacher saw me pick it up. And she said, "bring that up here and put it in the coal bucket." Well, it missed the coal bucket and then she hit me with the switch.

Q: Aww....they used a switch?

A: Yeah.

Q: Never a paddle?

A: Not on me.

Q: Well, when I was a kid, we had those great big paddles. Yeah, they were wicked. Daddy used a switch on me, when I was a kid. It seems to me, that every time I did something bad, it was always a peach tree or a cherry tree right beside...I can still see him, you know, strip off those leaves and leave two or three on the end. Did you get switched?

[other woman]: Yeah, he had a paddle.

Q: Paddle you or switch you?

[other woman]: Switch ya.

Q: On the legs? Bare legs? Of course, boys didn't have bare legs.

A: I did!

Q: What did you wear? Short pants?

A: Short pants.

Q: You mean you didn't wear overalls to school? Good lord...dressed up, huh?

A: Well, boys didn't wear 'em when I went, Frances. They all wore short pants.

Q: You mean boys didn't wear overalls on the farm? To work in?

A: They might have on the farm...

[other woman]: When they got old enough to work on the farm...

A: To wear 'em to school they didn't.

Q: You mean, you wore knee pants or short pants?

A: Knee pants.

Q: Knee pants. What were called knickers then?

A: Well, knickers they had a pocket on the bottom of 'em. These I had were just short pants, that's what all the boys wore in them days.

Q: Did you wear a tie then too?

A: No.

Q: Dress shirts?

A: Dress shirts.

Q: Well, what were your pants made of? Were they heavy or?

[other woman]: I guess they were more [inaudible]

A: I guess they were...

Q: Because the winters were colder then. They had to walk? You walked didn't you, to school?

A: Yup.

[other woman]: No, we didn't walk.

Q: You rode your horse.

[other woman]: My parents would drive us down in the horse and buggy most of the time. We had farther to go.

Q: You know, Lula May was telling me...