

Conversation with 60 year old white female, White Pine, Tennessee (Transcription)

<unintelligible text>---W292 VIII3-1 Start M57 B(3)

M: Well, do you remember there used to be so much snow?

W: Not too much here. Not too much in uh Tennessee, but in North Carolina I remember going to school and uh my mother used to knit stockings for herself, (uh-huh) wool stockings. That's back when I was a child, you know. (uh-huh) And that was way before people quit doing things like that. Well, she, after the feet begin to wear out, but they'd just make good leggings for children, you know, (uh-huh) those stockings, those wool stockings just turned the snow, and I remember going to school and the snow's so deep that she'd put those wool stockings on every one of us, so that it, it'd be, make like leggings, you know, (uh-buh) turn the snow off. It was bad up there. 'S real snowy and bad in North Carolina, up at Asheville. See, right there in the mountains.

M: Uh-huh. And how deep would it get?

W: Oh, it'd get up to our knees.

M: Hmm

W: Yeah, just every so often we'd be knee deep, and the schoolhouse wasn't too far away from us, but it was far enough that we had to be protected, you know. (uh-huh) And we'd

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get out in it. I can remember that. But now down here, they's just been a few times, when my children was little, we had a sled, and my husband and I'd get out with them early in the morning and, and ride down the hill, <gap> to the barn, and uh the snow, uh the snow would be four or five inches, you know, four or five inch, but we didn't, we never did have such big heavy snows here. (uh-huh) My son lives in, in Ohio now, and he tells me that they's three feet of snow on his roof for a month, a month at a time, you know, up there.

M: Uh-huh. I know. I've only seen that much snow on the news. (uh-huh) I've never seen it here, but I don't think I want to either. (No.) You never got out of school though, did you, when it snowed that much?

W: Huh?

M: Did you ever get out of school like the children do now?

I didn't hear you.

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M: Did you ever get out of school when you were young and it snowed that much, like the children do now?

W: Oh. Oh, <gap> snow days?

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M: Uh-huh.

W: No, they didn't have such a thing back then. They just taught straight on and, and if you could get there, you got there, and if you couldn't, you just didn't. Uh I remember uh, uh the ne-, our teacher lived close to us. She was ari-, an aristocrat, (uh-huh) and they'd come from up in New York or somewhere and they were highly educated, all the sisters. They's three sisters, (uh-huh) and a brother or two, and they were highly educated (deleted) and they came, they came to Asheville to live because there's milder climate, you know, from New York. Well, they all just worked into schools, you know. They were smart and they taught school, and uh the children would manage to get there. I don't know how. I, I remember that, wading through that snow, but they didn't have snow days up there as, as I remember it. And, of course, that was a long time ago. (uh-huh) I was ten years old when we moved down here, so that was when I was between six and ten, you see, that uh all this stuff that I can remember about the country school.

M: What would you do, would there be some games or other recreation you'd have when it snowed. Say the children in the neighborhood, what, would you sled or what would you do?

W: Yeah, my, yes. One boy got his back broken. A neighbor of ours got his back broken sledding. It was a big steep hill behind our home and uh they, they'd take sleds up there and, and uh sled. And this boy got his back broken and for years he was, was crippled, you know.

M: Uh-huh. I can remember L#22-4 is telling about <unintelligible text> death.

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W: Well, now, we had a <unintelligible text> boy that they, he was sledding down off that hill, and he was, he was a twin. They were twin boys, and they were just real cute boys, you know. And he was sledding, and they, and he was, got too fast and he went into a, a water

M: Hydrant?

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W: Hydrant, yeah, and crushed his brain, you know. Killed him.

M: Hum. They can go pretty fast sometimes.

W: Uh-huh. His twin brother's still living down there, <unintelligible text> boy.

M: Children play dangerously. I can remember a couple of weeks ago, when they had all that snow, almost every other night, there was a story in the paper about someone getting hurt. Uh-huh.

W: Getting hurt.

M: Getting hurt bad.

W: Yeah, I know it. That's right. That's the truth. Well, we always, my husband and I were with our children, and the man on the place. We, we usually had a, a farmhand on the place. And they would all be right there with these children when they were riding the sled,

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so we took care of 'em ourselves, you know, (uh-huh) so they didn't get into any trouble. But Law, kids do so many wild things. I remember we had an old buggy out there, and they got to pulling it up on the hill and riding down and, and that was a dangerous thing, you know, cause that thing could have run away with 'em. But they'd steer(??) it up to the side and keep it from going too far, you know.

M: Uh-huh. What all did your parents do?

W: What did my parents do?

M: Yes.

W: Well, my father, after he moved to Tennessee, why, he was a, he built ro-, roads. (hmm) He was a contractor, road contractor. He built roads. He, he worked for the railroad. Built railroad beds for a long time. But then moto-, then he got to working, making highways, and uh that was what he did. But uh, and my brother was working with him, and he, he <gap>, he's <unintelligible text> father. My brother is, you know. (uh-huh) And uh they were road builders. That was what they did. Contractors. And my husband was a farmer, and for twenty five years I was County Director of Public Welfare here in the county.

M: Here in Jefferson County?

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W: Uh-huh. Yeah.

M: What kind of work did that involve?

W: Hmm?

M: What kind of work did that involve?

W: Well, you know, you know what public welfare is, don't you?

M: Well, I know what it is today.

W: Yeah. Well, that's the same thing. 'Stwenty five years I worked with 'em and I retired in fifty, in uh, uh fifty eight, I believe. I had worked with 'em from the beginning of the program until (uh-huh) that, in ninety fifty eight. But uh it, it's entirely, it's outgrown what we had back in those days, you know. 'Sa lot of, a lot of, they's quite a difference in the way the investigations are made about the families and all.

M: Uh-huh. What was the most difficult part of it?

W: Well, uh proving eligibility was mainly it, you know. (uh-huh) You'd have to get out and visit the home and, and find out about their income and so on like that, and uh that was the main thing that you, and we were very cautious back then cause the, the state didn't have that much money, you know, and they had the, the government backed up the state to half and half, I think. (uh-huh) I believe they gave 'em half of it. But there was no investigation, Uh we didn't, we were so thorough about our investigations that they <gap>, they didn't,

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the state didn't send people out to investigate us, you know. So it, it was entirely different then from what it is now.

M: Uh-huh. Nowadays it doesn't seem like they have time or enough people to really investigate.

W: I know. I know. I know that's what they claim, but they's things go on right around, you uh, people will tell you things if, if you know how to get their confidence. They'll tell you things. Now they, they's a man that came here and painted my house and he was telling me about uh a woman that lived in a trailer, or uh lived next door to him. I believe it was next door to him. And her husband, ex-, he was supposed to be uh, uh

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gone from home, but he spent the nights in her trailer and, and lived in, he spent the nights in her home and lived in a trailer just a little piece away. (uh-huh) Well, now we would have found that out back in our, when we were investigating, (uh-huh) cause we'd uh, we, we were ta-, ta-, taught to dig in (uh-huh) until you found things out, you know.

M: Uh-huh. Do you remember when TVA came and put in Douglas Lake (uh-huh) what the reaction of the local people was?

W: Well, they, they blamed it on Roosevelt. Hahaha. These Republicans down in Dandridge (uh-huh) just got rich from what the, they paid 'em for their land, the farms. (hmm) All those people along that lake just got gorgeous sums of money, and uh oh, they

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just blamed it on Roosevelt, though. Blamed it on Roosevelt, the whole thing. But they hauled, I saw 'em go by our office, they hauled uh springs from that spring factory over Jefferson City (uh-huh) to put in a cave down there when they were building that dam, to catch the concrete, those springs back in there? (uh-huh) If that ever did break loose, it would be something else. It, they did, that cave, the caves on each side of that dam down there (uh-huh) were filled with springs, and I guess concrete, you know, and when the springs caught the concrete, I don't know how it was done, but just truck-load after truckload of springs went by while they was fixing that dam. (hmm) And I, I don't know. Uh I just wonder sometimes if it'll ever, if it'll ever break loose and. Be an awful thing, wouldn't it, all this water that's backed up there, you know.

M: It would. It would. I've heard there was a lot of resentment, though, toward TVA back during tha t time.

W: Uh-huh. Yeah.

M: Was there?

W: But the, but the ones that were, were grumbling bout it were the ones that got rich from selling their property to the government. They just got fantastic prices for their land. (hmm) And they, poor old Roosevelt was blamed for everything, you know. Ha! And this is a very Republican county now. I don't know whether you know that

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or not, but it is.

M: Oh, I know it. And so is Knoxville.

W: Yeah, yeah. Very, very Republican county.

M: I don't think there's any way #64-8 <unintelligible text> and about Republicanism. But someone was telling me there are about as many Democrats in White Pine as there are REpublicans.

W: Well yes. We've had a, a Democrat, my father was the first mayor of White Pine and uh he had an awful time trying to get the town incorporated. (hmm) You know, a town's not worth anything unless it's incorporated and, and so he just kept trying that, he was from the city of Asheville and, and he had been in politics in Asheville, (uh-huh) and so he was the first mayor in White Pine. So uh we've always, it's always been about half and half up there, half Republican and half Democrat in the city. (uh-huh) Now, we've had uh, oh, I guess we've had, nearly all our mayors have been Democrat. Uh this Ballance boy, who retired last, uh resigned, (uh-huh) he was a Republican. But Mr. <unintelligible text> was re-, was uh the mayor for years and, and he's a Democrat, (uh-huh) and uh, we, we've uh we've had several Democrats. I think mostly Democrats have been the mayors of White Pine. White Pine itself is Demo-, Democratic, I believe.

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