

MARTHA LOWERY LONG  
First Interview

Interviewed by:  
Sam Schragar

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MARTHA LOWERY LONG

Kendrick, Culdesac, eastern Washington; b. 1903

extension specialist, teacher, homemaker

2 hours

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with Sam Schrager  
October 25, 1976

## II. Transcript

MARTHA LOWERY LONG

This conversation with MARTHA LOWERY LONG TOOK PLACE AT HER HOME in Kendrick, Idaho on October 25, 1976. Also present were MARVIN LONG and LEE MAGNUSON. The interviewer was SAM SCHRAGER.

MARTHA LOWERY LONG: How do you want this started? Do you want it to be just what I remember or family- my sister had a lot of family anecdotes in there that I just know real well, but I just know them from listening to the family tell them.

SS: Well, those that seem interesting I think, but really your own experience most of all. What you remember it being like there when you were a kid. You say it was rough.

MLL: There was no money in those early days, pioneer. They came out there and settled and a dollar was just a fortune. There was no actual cash. <sup>We got most of our food</sup> They raised what food they could and they had to buy a few things. And they brought what they had with them when they came to settle those homesteads. The fact that it was the Quincy Valley, which was a sagebrush country, you see then, a flat, sagebrush covered desert country, and later became this lush irrigated country that you drove through. That's why Quincy is interesting to a lot of people. They don't know what it was like in that early day when my folks- it was opened up for homestead- that's how they happened to go there.

SS: How was it that your folks actually happened to go there?

MLL: Well, they had lived in North Dakota and Dad was a carpenter, I guess. And North Dakota was a meadow and prairie country, level prairie country. And my mother believed that a family was better off growing up away from relatives rather than too close, although she was very devoted to her relatives. And so, this Quincy Valley in the Big Bend Country in Central Washington was opened up for homesteading. And you could go out and select a quarter section of land and if you made



Certain improvements and lived on it a certain length of time, I don't know the exact length of time, then you owned it. And that's what they did. Dad went out first and chose this- it was a mile and a half directly north of Quincy, the town of Quincy, there wasn't much town yet, but there was a town, small town with a store there then. And he chose the southwest quarter section. It was all square, it wasn't like this country where sections are irregular; they were all laid out square because it was level country. And he started to build a little house. It only had one room at first, one large room and it had board and batten, that's boards that go up and down and <sup>then</sup> the cracks are covered with another board, and a tar paper roof and a stovepipe. It had no chimney; there was no bricks. And when Mother first came in- he was there a year building this little house; getting started, and then Mother and the four older children came and these cracks were still open- my sister told that in that other story- how I'd been scared she was that somebody'd peek in with those cracks. scared too. Anyway- I was the first child born on the homestead. And I was the biggest and <sup>the</sup> healthiest and I still have the best health, and the others are all gone except two sisters- and I've always laid it to that virgin soil. They broke up this- and from my study of nutrition, I think this might have had something to do with it- my health, don't you?

MARVIN LONG: They found her one day out there-

MLL: Now Marvin! Well, let me tell it.

SS: What is the story?

MLL: Well, we had a doctor- my sister got this part wrong- his name was Dr. Widby, and he was an eye specialist in Wenatchee, later when I lived in Wenatchee I knew him. But at the time he was a young coun-

try doctor. And so, when the baby was- there were no hospitals or anything, and when it was time for the baby to arrive why Dad got on one of the plow horses, we didn't have a riding horse, you know, just work horses; got on one of the horses and rode to town to get the doctor. And the doctor borrowed a saddle horse from Jack Gaither, it was a bit lively, and they started out to our farm, and the horse stepped in a badger hole and threw the doctor, and the horse wasn't hurt but he ran back to town and the doctor's bag settled there, and the doctor picked up his bag and had to walk the rest of the way. So they always said the doctor got me out of the badger hole! And on the way to school later when I was school age and I walked to school through the sagebrush here was this big badger hole right by the trail, and I'd go around- I can still remember looking down it every time I went past thinking there must be another baby in that hole! I <sup>was</sup> sure that was the one. I never found any babies in that badger hole.

SS: Did he get there in time?

MLL: Yes, he got there in time and I was a ten pound baby. I had a good start, and I kept it up all my life. And I was healthy and I think it was because they were on virgin soil and that soil was producing good vegetables. I don't the badger hole had anything to do with my health, but the virgin soil might have. <sup>You</sup> know very well it could have although my mother's healthy condition, of course, did, too contributed. Anyway, years later, I was working in Wenatchee- this is going ahead in the story- but Dr. Widby went to Vienna and became an eye specialist. And Dr. Widby fitted my first glasses.

SS: In Wenatchee?

MLL: In Wenatchee. And one time- I was in extension work at that time, and the county agent belonged to <sup>the</sup> Rotary Club along with this doctor, and

I told him- my father came to visit and he told him this story about Dr. Widby delivering my mother when I was born, and oh, he couldn't wait. So one time I was at Rotary Club as a guest with 4H Clubs, you know or on the program. <sup>His old eyes were dancing-</sup> And I knew something was coming but I didn't guess what it was. And he said, "I have an important guest to introduce." And he asked me to stand and then he said "I'd like for Dr. Widby to stand." And he told that whole Rotary Club at Wenatchee that- And Dr. Widby was a small man and very much liked in Wenatchee- that Dr. Widby delivered me when he was a young practitioner at Quincy. I liked 'em both so I didn't care, but it was real funny.

SS: Well, you know, in just glancing at your sister's story, I have the idea that from <sup>glimpses</sup> that she gives of your mother, that it was somewhat rough on her. The living in that time.

MLL: Well, yes, it was- of course, all pioneer women- most pioneer women, had it- but they were happy doing it. I mean, my mother knew how to- for us to have great fun. Oh, my childhood was just happy and we had great fun as a family. There were finally seven children; there were two more after me. Two more born there.

ML I was born up here in Kendrick- Avery- and when I was born there was women come in and took care of me.

MLL: But there wasn't any money, and they broke up this sagebrush and expected to raise crops like they had in North Dakots where there was more rainfall. Well, the first few years there was enough rainfall so that times were not quite so hard, and they got crops and all- wheat crops. And then the climate changed in that country and it became drought and they weren't able to even raise a crop. And so then, my father had to work out at whatever he could get. In the hills north of Quincy there were wheat ranches that did produce and my Uncle Jim lived there and he

used to go over and work in harvest and earn money that way. Then there was another way that they earned money that was sort of interesting. They had- what do they call it? A road tax. They taxed everybody to build the roads in those days, and if you couldn't pay your tax- if you didn't want to pay your tax, you could hire somebody else to do the work for you. And he did that kind of work. And he'd be gone all week. He used to roll up a bed that was real heavy quilts<sup>It was fun,</sup> On Sunday night, we'd help him roll up <sup>the</sup> a bed and then he'd load the wagon and they'd go out. Sometimes the boys had these jobs, too, and they'd go off and work on the road all week and then come back. They'd do their own cooking and sleep under the wagon if it rained a little; didn't rain much in that country, but if it did. And that's the way they made a living.

ML: That's the way they paid taxes, too.

MLL: The only people that survived the <sup>r</sup>droughts- we moved away- and the farm went for taxes finally because of this long drought period. And it was these German people that had moved in there that were thrifty, that knew how to survive. They would take- the Russian Thistles had come in as one of the pests, the rail<sup>way</sup> brought it, and they're the things you see on Western pictures, the big tumbleweeds that go down in the ghost towns, you know, a lot of those were Russian Thistles, I think. Ours were big like that. And they used to cut these in the green stage and stack them and feed them to their cattle. These German people knew how to do that and they could survive, but we didn't; we moved. My mother was determined we would have an education so we moved to Pullman.

But I was going to tell you about some of the fun we used to have. We used to play games, you know, <sup>as a</sup> family. And we played lots of games sitting around the big dining room table. It always had white oilcloth on it. We had a big table, that would seat all nine of us, of course the youngest children didn't play much. We played games like -

not cards! My mother was against cards; against liquor and cards, baseball on Sunday, and she had very strict standards about those things. A lot of people did in those days. You were either one way or you were the other. So we didn't know anything about baseball because it was always played on Sunday and you couldn't play games on Sunday, like that. We couldn't play with a ball at home on Sunday, even. We couldn't cut paper dolls on Sunday. I've never understood that, but there was a hook on the wall where we kept the scissors- and the paper dolls were a big thing in our life, but Sunday you couldn't take down the scissors and cut paper dolls. Sunday had to be special. And that impressed us. We went to church. We got ready on Saturday. And no work was ever done on the farm on Sunday. My people were Presbyterians.

MARVIN: We never had that kind of thing---

MLL: Well, that's the way it was in those early days. And there wasn't any work done on Sunday. The horses were allowed to take you to church, but the horses weren't worked, they rested, too. And then the preacher- oh, we had a big dinner. We got up and had to kill a chicken- there wasn't any refrigeration, so you had to get up and kill the chickens Sunday morning and get it started cooking. And then bring the preacher home for dinner. And my mother worked hard, but then that was all in-- for the good of the Lord, because it was the preacher <sup>she was</sup> feeding, you know.

SS: Did he come to dinner often?

MLL: Oh, he came to dinner often. The preacher was just like a member of our family. He was always one of my mother's best friends. And the first preacher I remember was a- they callrf him- he was quite well known in that country. They called him- what did they call him? He was like an itinerate preacher- they called him the jack rabbit preacher because jack rabbits were prevalent in the country and he came from

one town to the other.

SS: Circuit rider?

MLL: Yes. On that order. And he used to ride a bicycle. The Great Northern Railroad went through Quincy, and he would ride that bicycle down that railroad, just imagine, bumpity bump, from the little towns- Not Soap Lake- but the next little town, Adrian, I guess it was up the road. He'd ride to Quincy to get there in time for the service on this bicycle! And then Mother would take him home to dinner. He wasn't married; he had been married and he would have had a daughter my age, so he was very fond of me, and I just adored him. As a child, I still remember him. His name was Herbert M. Course. And he was a big, lanky man. But everybody just loved him. And she'd bring him home to dinner. I mean, we would. And then she'd cook dinner; cook chicken dinner for him.

SS: Do you know what happened to his family?

MLL: Well, his wife died at childbirth. And so, he married later and we kept in touch with him and I knew his second family years later. When he left Quincy, I was just a child, just quite small, I don't know how old I was, nine- no, six or seven years old, I suppose. And so, he said, because of my two older sisters, he said, "When you get ready to get married I'll come back and marry you." Oh, me, it was me he was talking too, because I was his little favorite, so I always talked about when I was ten, Mr. Course was going to come back and marry me. Of course by the time I was that old, I realized what he meant. He didn't mean he was going to marry me, he was going to perform the ceremony for all of us. But he never got to do that. ^ But he was quite a talented and interesting man.

SS: Do you think that religion was particularly important to your mother?

MLL: Oh, it was their life. It was why they could do these things. Why

they could take up homesteads. They had to have it; <sup>they</sup> depended on it. They had faith, you see. They knew that it would come out alright, and it did. Everything came out alright. Four of her children graduated from WSC up here. That was her aim in life, to have her children educated. The boys didn't graduate, but the girls all did.

SS: Were the women- this I am a little curious about- were the women more involved in the church than the men?

MLL: Not in our family. My father was- he was very musical - he was an Irish- his parents had come from Ireland and he had an Irish tenor voice, and he always led the singing in the Sunday School and church and sang in the choir, and was a superintendent of the Sunday School. And my mother was so busy having children that he did more work, I think, that way than she did, but she was back of him in all of that,

MARVIN L: Our family-- my father, of course, there was a big family of us and Mother had to-

MLL: They had to do the work at home.

MARVIN L: -- had to do the work at home.

MLL: But she saw to it that we were always clean and dressed-

MARVIN L: But we always had to go to church.

MLL: Made over <sup>in</sup> handed down clothes. You know, everything was recycled in those days, but we didn't call it that. Nothing was ever wasted.

MARVIN L: Everybody went to church.

MLL: Yeah. We all went to church. And we never missed. I've got a little gold pin that I got for perfect attendance at Sunday School. I've still got my little gold pin that I earned.

SS: Weren't you able to play any games on Sunday?

MLL: Oh, yes, we could play with our dolls, but we couldn't-- and we often had company and we could play- go out and play. But it was limited somewhat. We had to know it was Sunday. And then sitting around in

your Sunday clothes, that alone was a bit of a hardship, you know, when you wanted to have on your play clothes. And you kept them on if you had company, and so that made Sunday kind of a stuffnecked affair, too, I think.

SS: Do you remember what those early sermons were like?

MLL: Oh, I don't suppose I ever heard the sermons.

SS: Oh, the kids didn't?

MLL: I'll tell you- well, children, I don't think even yet listen very much to sermons- do they? They learn in the<sup>W</sup> Sunday School classes- I can remember things we learned in Sunday School classes. I had a lovely Sunday School teacher, and I can remember the stories- Bible stories that we learned there. But I don't remember the sermons. I<sup>remember</sup> there was the singing- I know the songs that we sang. And I can remember mostly what the beautiful hats and the clothes that the women sitting in front of us wore! You know, and people around- the young couple that held hands under the songbook, and that sort of thing. We were more interested in the children- more interested in the people in the church or the colored window. There was a colored memorial window in this church. This preacher I was speaking of had it put in in memory of his wife that died. And that church is still there in Quincy. The Presbyterians built a big new church,<sup>new</sup> but that little church is still there.

SS: The Presbyterian church there- was it a community church?

MLL: No, it was a Presbyterian Church, but it seems to me that sometimes the Methodists also- that they kind of alternated. It seems to me there were years when they alternated, but it was built as a Presbyterian Church. And when they first went there there was no church. And they held services in a hall, they had a hall called the Dickerson Hall. And it was used for all sorts of community affairs.



I think my sister in that story told about the big sagebrush that was used as the first community Christmas tree because they didn't have any evergreen trees. And later they shipped them in, but at that time they used this great big sagebrush, and it stood up in the corner of the hall and they decorated it just like a Christmas tree. At home we had to burn sagebrush, but I don't remember that we ever took a sagebrush in for-- it probably was too dangerous, because they burned easily. But we did burn sagebrush. And sometimes up in the draws-- do you know what a draw is? We called it a little ravine-- was called a draw-- spring runoff would wash the little <sup>place,</sup> ~~place,~~ they called them draws in that country. And the sagebrush that grew in these draws, up in the lower part of the hills grew very large. Sometimes as large as six or eight inches across the trunk. But around where we lived <sup>they</sup> were smaller, but those big ones made good fuel and my dad would take the wagon and go up there in the fall and get a load of that for <sup>winter</sup> fuel. In later years they shipped in slabwood and we burned that, but <sup>the</sup> early days they burned sagebrush, so you see there was no expense, it was just labor.

SS: It would take a lot more work when they could cut up sagebrush to burn--

MLL: Well, you know it's soft, so it isn't hard to cut and they just cut it with an axe. This big stuff they probably had to saw, when they found those big ones. I don't know, I don't remember that. One time Dad and the boys, the two older brothers went with him, and ~~they~~ took me, I was sort of the tomboy and I liked to go more and there was two girls at home to help with the dishes and things, so I never really did much housework then, and I still don't. (Chuckles) But they took me with them and it was an all day trip with the wagon up into the hills to get

it and we took our lunch. And I remember we cooked out. That was my first cookout. And Dad took potatoes and onions and built a fire and we roasted those. Oh, I can still taste them and were they ever good! And I was just a little girl, you know, and I played. And there was big grass, Dad called it rye grass that grew around where they were cutting the sagebrush, and after the manner of children I built me a hut, you know children go through that stage of building all kinds of houses at different ages, you know. And I built a hut out of this rye grass. And of course, it probably was nothing, but to me it was quite

elegant- Then they would pile this sagebrush up in the yard by the cellar, a safe distance from the house. One time it caught on fire from a spark and we lost it and he had to go back and get a second supply. That was tragic, of course, all that extra work. But you know it burns real quick and hot.

MARVIN L: My grandparents, uncles and aunts was pioneers in the Yakima Valley  
? sagebrush. Cleared the land they had.

MLL: The land at Quincy was real sandy and light, and all it needed was water. ~~Because they~~ proved.

MARVIN L: -- sandy and every house there had to be well plastered.

MLL: Well, our house wasn't plastered, and when there was a sandstorm coming, Mother would say, "Children, run and close the doors." But it was no use the sand would come right in anyway, you couldn't keep it out. Those awful dust storms <sup>that</sup> they had in that country, they still have them. Now of course with irrigation it isn't so bad, but south of Quincy they still have 'em.

SS: Well how were the slats tightened up. <sup>?</sup>

MLL: Oh, well, board and batten- that means boards that are put together as close as possible, but there is still a crack and then a board is put on the outside over that crack. And that's the kind of construc-

tion it was. That was homestead houses- were built that way. And <sup>then</sup> some-  
times they had- I don't think our house ever had anything but a tar pa-  
per roof. It had to be replaced often, of course. I think it always  
had a tar paper roof. That was another fire hazard.

SS: Would you be warm in the winter?

MLL: Well, we had a cookstove in this one room, ~~we~~ had a cookstove and a hea-  
ting stove. And of course, at night the fires went out, so then it  
was cold. And when you went to bed, it wasn't extremely cold- not like  
North Dakota cold that they'd been used to, but it was cold at night.  
But in the winter we had some snow, usually, always had some. They'd  
take hot stone wrapped in an old flannel cloth to bed with you to heat  
your bed, you know. Or a brick sometimes; we didn't have brick, we  
had stones or flatirons, we'd take to bed. We had some hotwater bot-  
tles, but not enough to go around. So you'd take one of these- and you  
also took 'em when you went on sleigh rides, too. You'd take those in  
the sleigh to keep your feet warm while you were on the sleigh rides.

SS: Who got up in the morning to start the fires?

MLL: Dad. And then later, one of my brothers liked to get up. They'd get  
up and start the fires and put on the oatmeal and start breakfast. WE  
always had oatmeal at our house, or Farina. And it came in sacks;   
everything came in cloth sacks in those days. Sugar and flour and  
cereals were all in cloth sacks. And I started to talk about recycling.  
That wasn't used as a word, but everything was used over. And these  
sacks were different quality. And the flour sack was a firmer material  
and it was made into dishtowels and sometimes dyed and made into quilt  
tops. And everything was saved. You opened them so you didn't tear  
the sack. Then the sugar sacks were a finer cloth, and if it was wa-  
shed and starched a little it was almost like linen, and it was made

into garments quite often, too. And the underwear and nightgowns were made out of sacks of the finer quality, softer sacks. And the small ones, the salt sacks were small and they made good handkerchieves <sup>and</sup> they were bleached. That was quite a chore in those days to get that printing out. It didn't always come out but if you were skillful with it you could get it out and bleached; homemade bleach-- <sup>give it (?)</sup> water and that type of bleach. And then my mother would hem them on the sewing machine and make the men's handkerchieves out of the little salt sacks.

SS: Where did she grow up?

MLL: Well, she came- her folks were New England people, and she was born in Wisconsin, and got her education in Wisconsin. She was a normal school graduate and had been a teacher. And then her folks moved to North Dakota and she was married there. And she taught in North Dakota before her marriage, and after that of course, she didn't teach any more. Married women didn't teach in those days.

And in these draws- I was going to tell you about the food- we raised- they set out an orchard and it produced for quite a long time before the drought. The trees died by the time we left, there weren't too many left. But we had cherry trees and peach trees and a crabapple tree and some other apples. Quite a few cherry trees, and we had some currants- currant bushes- and then in these draws where the spring runoff would hold the moisture for one thing, and also the topsoil, you see, so it was rich soil- my mother planted her early garden. And we had radishes and leaf lettuce and those early things in that little garden in the draw and then the other crops, corn and peas and squashes and those things were raised up in the orchard. But there was no irrigation; there was no water. So if it was a dry summer you didn't always

get too much from that garden, but usually we had some garden. And then we always kept some pigs and a cow, milk cow; made our own butter. If there was any excess, there wasn't much at our house, but she could sell butter at the store; get a little grocery money. And we had a few chickens. And of course, coyotes were plentiful and so chicken raising was hazardous. At one stage- or after I had gone to school, my grandparents were having their golden wedding and it came after school started, so Mother and the small children went to North Dakota <sup>to</sup> the golden wedding but those of us in school had to stay home and go to school. And I was the first one out in the lower grades, I would get out first, so my chore was to go home by myself- I always went home alone anyway- and let the chickens out because if you left them out all day- Dad was away working- these coyotes would come down and you wouldn't have any chickens. So they had to be kept cooped up. But in those days chickens, you know, had to go out and rummage for food a bit, and so they had to be let out, and so when I got home from school I had to let out the chickens and then I could play til the other children got home. And one night when I got home, and I fixed a teeter-totter in front of the cellar, we had some apples in the cellar and I would go down and get me an apple to eat and then I was alone, but by using a big chunk of wood on one end of the teeter-totter I could teeter-totter pretty good, you know, get it to balance <sup>me</sup> and have fun and with this apple and I let the chickens out. And I had one old pet rooster, and here he came and got up on the teeter-totter with me and he wanted some apple, and I'd hold it behind me and then he'd go behind me to eat the apple and then I put it in front and there he'd be on the teeter-totter and looked around the next time to see where he was and here was a big coyote, just real close, oh, I was a bit scared, but I knew

that coyotes were cowards, my folks had taught us that, to really not be too afraid of them. But that coyote wanted that rooster awful bad and I got up and I yelled and he skedaddled and I was safe, but I was a little scared after that to go home and let out the chickens because those coyotes were lurking all around, and there were lots of them in that country.

SS: Did they have those coyote chases?

ML: Well, those were rabbit- well, they did coyotes- they used to shoot all the coyotes they could, they were so plentiful in Quincy Valley. But the jackrabbits were so plentiful and the coyotes fed on the jackrabbits, you see, and then when they killed off the coyotes why then the jackrabbits practically took the country. And they were very hard on crops. And we'd stack up the hay- in those days we used headerboxes you know, there were no combines yet- they used a threshing machine- and they were itinerate. They'd come around and thresh for you and go on to the next farm, so you stacked up your ~~w~~heat and then in the winter you would have a strawstack or a haystack- you'd have some hay to feed the livestock and these jackrabbits would come down and live off your haystack, and you just couldn't afford that. My father never owned a gun; he trapped, he trapped the rabbits to try to keep 'em down, but they got a lot of our grain, <sup>that way</sup> you know because there were so many. And then in later years- I don't remember the rabbit drives, but they had those rabbit drives that are historically interesting, where they would build kind of a tight fence <sup>corral</sup> and run the rabbits in and then knock 'em down with clubs. It was very cruel, but at the same time they had to get rid of 'em, I guess. And now that country is all irrigated and doesn't have that problem.

MARVIN L: After they got the sagebrush cleaned off they had to clean off the--

MLL: In this gardening that we did- one time you know it was- my mother always had fun on holidays. We all had fun, no matter what the holiday. We never spent any money but we had fun. May Day was one of the big days and we made May baskets and took our teachers May baskets. So my mother helped make this May basket for me to take to my teacher when I was in just the first or second grade, I don't know just which grade it was, but I was just <sup>real</sup> small. She took a shoe box, we never threw away boxes of any kind, they were used for many things. She took a shoe box and she put some of these long white radishes that she'd raised, a bunch of those all scrubbed nice and clean and some red radishes- the white ones were called white icicle radishes and they were real crisp and delicious, and a bunch of leaf lettuce and a little dish of homemade cottage cheese in this shoe box with tissue paper to hold it firm and wrapped it up and put a big bunch of crabapple blossoms on it.

(End of side A) The children would bring May baskets <sup>3</sup>that had candy in and I didn't like this idea at all, but I never disobeyed my mother. So, I took it to my teacher and it looked real pretty on the outside, it was wrapped with white tissue paper, that came out of a shoe box, too, and with this bunch of crabapple blossoms on top. She opened it and everybody was standing around looking and here inside was this stuff; this food and oh- well, in those days, there was no fresh stuff shipped into little towns, and if you didn't raise it, you didn't have any, so my wise mother knew that that would be the biggest treat that the teacher could have, would be some fresh vegetables like that. And so I was the pet that day, and it turned out alright, but I didn't like the idea when I took it.

SS: What was the May Day celebration? That's one I haven't heard much about.

MLL: Well, May Day- at school we decorated the room for every occasion. The

children made decorations for every holiday. I think they still do in school, but it was big in those little schools. And so for May Day, if we had flowers we'd pick wild flowers and bring them and decorate the school room, and we kind of had special programs. I don't remember anything special. I don't remember winding the Maypole at that early age, I did later at Pullman. We used to have it out on the campus. The school children would wind the Maypole and I remember being in that one time when I was older. But I don't remember it at Quincy.

SS: Was Hallowe'en celebrated?

MLL: Oh, yes, and it was in a bad way, you know. The boys went out and did all these tricks that you read about. And put wagons up on buildings and all those kind of things. But we lived so far from town that nothing bad ever happened at our house, and we didn't go trick and treating. I never did that as a child. We had neighbors but we just didn't- there wasn't any way to go easily, you see, because we just had horses.

SS: Was there the same business about goblins and witches and all?

MLL: Yes, yes, but it was fun. It was great fun. Stories, just stories at our house because we were by ourselves. We didn't have Hallowe'en parties with anybody. Valentine's was a big day at our house, and it was all homemade. And one thing we used to make valentines was sample wallpaper<sup>books</sup>, you could get them free from the mail order houses, and they had these beautiful samples. Sometimes they were about a foot by six inches, the size of the sheets, so it was big enough to make a nice valentine. And then another thing we used for valentines was the pink paper that came in the rubbers. When you bought rubbers, they came in a box and they were wrapped in pink tissue paper instead of white and this was a great treasure but always smelled of the rubbers. That's



the only thing we didn't like about it, it had an odor. But because it was pink we thought it was pretty and if you would take that and fold it- a piece of tissue paper, you can still do this, and fold it, and then cut it with the scissors, not too fine, not clear through to the fold but kind of fine and then you pull that across the scissors, you can curl it, and then that would go around- we'd cut heart shapes and then we would paste that around the valentines and it made a very beautiful valentine. My mother used to make us valentines, too, as well as we made them for each other and we made them for the children in school. And the one I treasured the most was one of these with this pink tissue paper, it was a cardboard and she had saved a beautiful picture of a girl- my mother's got curls and there wasn't a curl in our family that's got curly hair but she loved curly hair. And on this valentine was a picture of a blond girl with beautiful curls and then all this curled pink paper around it and on the back- my mother had beautiful hand writing- they used to teach penmanship- <sup>put</sup> great emphasis on penmanship- and her handwriting was beautiful. And on the back she had written my name which was Martha Minibel Lowery in her beautiful handwriting and then this little verse: "Be good, sweet girl, but let who will be clever." I didn't know what that meant, but I knew it was something very lovely, and I treasured that valentine for years. In fact, we kept our valentines. We each had a brown manila envelope that something had come in that she had saved, and we saved these valentines, and we played with them for two weeks after Valentine's Day, and then they were put away and the next year we got them out and everybody had their own, and the old ones were just as much fun as the new ones. You see, that's the way she knew how to have fun, to make use of what we did have. Everything was used. Everything was used--

tins cans- why, when I look at the garbage- there was no garbage. The food garbage was fed to the pigs, even the dishwater. All water was very precious at Quincy. And the dishwater was put in a special bucket and that was called pig slop. Not a very elegant term, but that's what it was called, and it was fed to the pigs because there was a lot of nourishment in that dishwater, you know. And then the wash water and the bath water was put out to water the yellow rose, and the matrimony vine. The only way they could be kept alive was <sup>from</sup> this water. And our water all had to be hauled. In very early days it was hauled in barrels. In the very early days when they first went there, it was hauled even on a stoneboat from a place called Willow Springs, which was about five miles away. <sup>But</sup> just think of that chore with no roads and a stoneboat. You know what a stoneboat is? There were no wheels on it, just a platform and barrels of water. But later on they hauled it in barrels in a wagon and then later, tanks. We had a tank and our <sup>cistern</sup> was filled with a tank. But water was very precious. And all this paper doll work and valentines took paste, and we made our paste with flour- a little flour and we would take a spoon, cause you couldn't waste water- I'm not sure I should tell this part, it's not very elegant- because water was so precious, and there was a bucket of water with a dipper in the kitchen and in trying to get some water into that paste, you would waste water, so we couldn't do it very often, but we liked to have lots of paste and sometimes we would spit in it! (Chuckles) That's not very elegant, but that we actually did as children to get paste. But you would mix a little water with this flour and then you would have paste to make <sup>your</sup> paper dolls or your valentines or scrapbooks. We made lots of scrapbooks, too, that way.

SS: I want to ask you another question. How would kids take <sup>care of</sup> their baths?

Did they use the same water?

MLL: Oh, that- oh, well, if they were small, but not older people, never did. Not even <sup>though</sup> the water was very scarce and very precious. And it was heated in two ways; it was heated in the wash boiler on the stove for the Saturday night baths; they were the most popular, you sometimes had other baths, but always Saturday night baths. And you let down the oven door- there was no bathroom, no privacy- you let down the oven door for heat, and the children were bathed earlier, and the water was heated in the reservoir. That was a part of the early cookstoves at the back. And the small children were bathed together in the same water, but the older ones weren't. And then that water was thrown out on the rose bush and the garden, maybe, sometimes. And the chairs that we had were rather high backed, and if it was necessary to have a little privacy those chairs with a blanket were arranged around this washtub; it was the washtub that the baths were taken in. We were clean.

SS: But it was somewhat of a sponge bath?

MLL: No! No, it was a washtub, it was a washtub that any grown person could sit down in and curl up in. No, no. They weren't sponge baths. There were sponge baths, alright, taken in a basin.  
(This is one I used to tell-

MARVIN L: (We lived on a fruit ranch one time, we had seventy acres and went broke.

MLL: And we got so hard up there on the fruit ranch there was a bunch of us kids. He said, "You young uns come here and get your mouths greased, you make me got company at our house." <sup>people think</sup> That wasn't true though. You just nagged your father telling that story.

We never went hungry on our farm. We didn't have lots of things, but we never went hungry.

MARVIN L: Two crops one of 'em down here in Kendrick in cold storage, we had that thing full one winter and come down here in the spring, by gum, we had to talk them into order to get the boxes back. That's all we got out of it.

MLL: We had another Christmas custom that's kind of- that I don't think very many families would have thought of this- it was my mother's invention.

They'd find the biggest gunny sack, you know burlap sack, the biggest gunny sack, clean gunny sack, and eventually Dad built a stairway in this homestead house, and there was a loft- we never used it for anything but storage. It was very useful as a place to put things, you know, and so at Christmastime- about two months before Christmas, this great big gunny sack was hung about half way up this stairway, up where it was out of the way<sup>of living</sup>, but it was in sight, and then we made presents for each other and as they were made they were put into this sack, and that's the only time you were allowed to go up there near that sack was when you had something to put in. But you could delay a little and sit on the step and kind of listen and maybe feel a little if no one was watching, because the Christmas presents were accumulating in that sack and it was very tempting- we never dared reach in and feel anything, but we could feel through the sack a little bit. We made all kinds of things for each other. And one of the things I remember making for my father; he shaved with a straight edge razor<sup>and a</sup> stropped you know, and there was no running water, so the soap, the shaving soap and<sup>the</sup> whiskers as he would shave it off his face would have to be put some place and he would use paper. So we would make him a shaving pad. We would take an old catalogue- we always had mailorder catalogues<sup>Sears Roebuck catalogues</sup>, and we would take the soft pages and cut them about six inches square, he liked that size, and we would make a pad of those papers. And then we would punch, with a darning needle, we would punch a couple of holes in the top and make a pretty cover, maybe a piece of this, one of these wallpaper books, or maybe we would draw a picture for the cover and then tie that with a piece of yarn and make him a shaving pad and that was the kind of<sup>of</sup> presents- homemade presents. We would make Mother a needle book. And the needle book was made with pieces of soft cloth that was blanket stitched around. And that's one of the first

stitches that you learned as a little girl and with bright thread and then you would put several of these pieces of cloth together with a cover and she would keep her needles in <sup>here</sup> . Or you would make a pin-cushion, and stuff it with something soft. And those were the kind of presents we made for grownups, and then the presents for the children were toys. And then of course, Santy Claus came too, that was separate, the Christmas sack was our presents to each other. That wasn't Santy Claus. But Santy Claus came Christmas Eve and we would hang up our stockings and what was in the stockings, Santy Claus brought. And about two weeks before Christmas we would send our dolls to Santy Claus because Santy Claus knew how to make beautiful doll clothes. And we didn't get new dolls, we'd get new hair or new head or new eyes, depending on what the doll might need, but we couldn't have a new doll at Christmas. I only had one or two new dolls in my whole life, but I loved my old dolls. They would be renovated, you see, by Santy Claus. And my poor mother, I didn't know it then, but she would sit up after we'd gone to bed and fashion these beautiful doll clothes. Christmas morning we would get up- we could get up any time we'd wake up and there would be- the stocking would be full, and then here would be this newly dressed doll sticking out of the top. And that was the early day Christmas, but nothing was spent. An orange- every year we got an orange, that's the only orange I ever had was in the toe of my stocking. But they would buy an orange for each child and we'd get some hard candy in a tarleton sack at the church program and sometimes they'd buy some candy for Christmas, but most of the candy was homemade. We would decorate the house lavishly with paper chains made out of the wallpaper any books and <sup>any</sup> colored paper you could find. Paper chains, that took more paste. (Chuckles) The chains were fun to make and we'd string popcorn and the house was decorated all those hanging from the ceilings, great

loops of all this. And we'd sing all the Christmas carols. We were a great singing family. My father - his father had come from Ireland and had been a singing school master- and Dad had done this, too; and he taught us all singing when we were very young. We would sit around this big table- this white oilcloth covered table before we had the organ- later we got an organ, but he had a tuning fork and he would strike the tuning fork and he would get the tone and everybody around the table would get the tone and then we would sing. And he taught me to sing alto, because I had a natural low voice. I was a big girl. And he was an Irish tenor, and he liked an alto sitting next to him, so he taught me to sing alto. I didn't know it was alto at that time. He taught me how to sing the second part. And when I went to school we sang. We sang, you know, America and all those songs that you sing in school. And I was singing also, it was the only thing I knew how to sing. The teacher stopped, she says, "Martha, what are you doing? Why are you singing like that?" And I said, "That's the way I sing, because I sit next to Papa and Papa taught me to sing like that." She knew Papa, so she said, "Okay, you can sing like that." But she didn't understand why a child my age was singing alto. But anyway that's what I did.

SS: What was the kind of music that you sang at home? Was a lot of it religious pieces?

MLL: Well, gospel songs were popular, but all the old songs, old religious songs we knew. And then we always sang lots of fun songs, rounds, like oh, you know- what are some of the old rounds, I can't think of them.

SS: "Row Your Boat."

MLL: "Row, row, row your boat." Yes, and in a big family that was great fun because there were a lot of us. And we sang songs like The Bullfrog on the Bank ~

and the bullfrog in the pool." And Father could sing that real good where the high voices sing, "The bullfrog on the bank," and then the low voices sing, "The bullfrog in the pool!" you know<sup>way</sup> down low. And that was one of our fun songs. And then we sang- oh, there was one about, oh, my sister and I were talking about it this summer- McGinty- what was the old song about Mc Ginty? I can't think of that. Yankee Doodle , was popular because my folks were New Englanders. They knew a lot of the New England songs. We knew all the old songs like "Home Sweet Home." And Coming Through the Rye, and Annie Laurie , and we had big song books that we sang from. And then later, when I was still a child, the folks in North Dakota sent us an organ. That was a big day and we all had to learn to play the organ. My mother could play and so she taught the girls. I never learned very much. <sup>But it was fun.</sup> But we had lots of music. The four older ones became a quartet, and they sang as a quartet in church. The four older members of the family, when I was a child.

SS: Christmas, it sounds like, was really mostly family rather than a community celebration.

MLL: Well, it was both. It was both. There was a big celebration at the church where we spoke pieces, and had special dresses, you know, we had to dress up and had big programs at the church. And they had a big Christmas tree, and they gave out sacks of candy and an orange sometimes in the sacks and they were made out of colored tarleton- that's a stiff material that's kind of like cheesecloth, but it was cheap and stiff and it was pretty. And the women would get together and make these bags and fill them with hard candy and nuts. And everybody that came to the church program got one of those Christmas Eve. It was done on Christmas Eve. And some of the families took their gifts there. If

they were going to give their children expensive dolls and nice things they liked to show them off, and of course, that was hard on my mother because we didn't have those kind and she would explain to us- this is how wise she was- that Santy Claus didn't bring our gifts to the church he brought them to our house and we were satisfied, we were never jealous. It was fun to see those beautiful dolls and trains and things that were displayed there- they'd bring 'em and put 'em under the tree and then Santy Claus came and passed out the candy and gave these gifts to the children that had their names on them, but the poor little Lowery children never got any there. But we didn't care because we knew ours were at home. It was alright, but it was a bad custom, really, for poor families. Some poor families didn't have it explained that way to them. We had lots of reading at home; my mother liked to read and she read all the classics, you know, a lot of the good books to us. She liked Shakespeare, but she didn't read that to us as children. She read us poems and all the Mother Goose and the fairy stories, the Aesop Fables, and we knew all of those. And books were real important. Books were treasured. She wanted us to learn about money, but it was real hard because there wasn't much, and so one year she assigned us jobs, and we would be paid. My job was to hoe the weeds between two rows of trees in the orchard and I was to get a dollar if I kept the weeds out all summer. I wasn't a very good hoer but I was learning that if you worked hard that you would be rewarded, you know, <sup>there was a reward.</sup> And I got my dollar; it was a silver dollar. Then was the question what to do with it. And of course, she guided me there and made me want to buy books with it. I don't know, if she had let me alone I probably would have bought candy or something else, as children do, but I was influenced to pick out some books, because I thought books were great. And I bought two books with that dollar and I still have one of them.



I bought Beautiful Joe, and the Hoosier Schoolboy. I didn't care much about the Hoosier Schoolboy; <sup>at</sup> <sup>first</sup> I bought it, but I liked Beautiful Joe. And we all cried. We used to all cry when we read these sad stories about Black Beauty and Beautiful Joe, and these mistreated animals; they made you cry. And <sup>my</sup> Mother cried, and so I cried. Later I rebound that little book, but that was bought with my first dollar.

SS: Beautiful Joe is ...?

MLL: Is a dog that was mistreated, you know, and it was a sad story. And children liked those sad stories. We all cried! (Chuckles) We cried a lot when Mother read to us because she cried over poems, all the sad poems, you know! But that's still a good educational way of getting children interested in books, isn't it? I mean, children need to be interested in books and you have to start young.

SS: Seems like crying was a lot more common in those days, wasn't it?

MLL: Well, my mother was very emotional. Some people were and some weren't. But, I think maybe they did cry a lot. Not always sad, it was happy crying, too.

SS: Nowadays they take it so much more as weakness, you know, to cry.

MLL: Yes, um-huh, I guess so.

SS: Although it's always been that way for men.

MLL: Eye specialists say it's good for your eyes. Yeah, tears are good for your eyes; necessary.

Let's see, what else did we recycle? I think I told you most everything I thought of. Oh, the tin cans! We used every tin can and every bottle, except poisons. And they were thrown, you know where! They were thrown out in the outhouse! <sup>because</sup> They couldn't be washed up, like carbolic acid. But all the other containers were reused in various ways for things. And some of the bottles were used to give the horses their medicine, you know. And some of the bottles were used to store things

in, that you had. And Mother made eyewater, and it was put in a bottle. <sup>I can remember</sup> A lot of the medicines were homemade and they had to have a bottle. And cans- baking powder cans had a tight lid. And the cover of the baking powder can was Mother's cookie cutter and biscuit cutter. That's all she ever had, was a lid. And the cans were used to store things in because there were no tight cupboards or places to store things; you had to have tight containers for everything.

MARVIN L: Mice.

MLL: Yes, you had varmints of different kinds; insects and mice and rats. And then the only can I can think of that couldn't be used that way was the milk can. And condensed milk was used by- when the cow went dry you had to have some condensed milk, you know. And sometimes it was used for baby formulas- there weren't any actual baby formulas- but if <sup>a</sup> mother wasn't able to nurse the baby, then condensed milk- I don't mean canned milk like we have, although that was available, too, but condensed milk, which was sweeter was used and babies got real fat on it. It wasn't good but that's what they used. And they used it just straight, I mean, they just used it the way it was, they didn't mix it with other foods. And so there was the milk cans that we had then, and they were even recycled. And if you jammed 'em just right you could make 'em stick to your heel and they were great fun to run around on, sort of like a little stilt. And we played games. And then they were used as a game like hockey with a stick, and you bat the can. You know, hit the can. Isn't that what it was called?

MARVINL: Shinny-on-your-own-side.

MLL: Yeah, shinny-on-your-own-side; now, that's it. I don't think we ever called it that, <sup>though</sup> but we used to play that. And that's remarkable, you know, that people try to go to these old homesteads and dig up the dumps. Well, there weren't any. They didn't throw anything away except broken

things. Broken glass and broken bottles and broken dishes were thrown away but no anything else.

SS: If there was sickness in the family, how <sup>vi</sup>ould you deal with it?

MLL: There were just a few home remedies that were drastic. There was always castor oil. And you didn't try to show you had a little stomach ache, because if you got it, you got a dose of castor oil! And it was drastic! And that was one of the common ones and everybody used it. And then for cuts and small <sup>s</sup>injuries of that kind, there was turpentine, which was used in our family a great deal. That would heal up anything. Nowadays it won't, but it did then! And we had a few boughten things, we had Listerine when I was quite young. I remember Listerine, which was considered an antiseptic <sup>f</sup>of a sort. And then there was carbolic acid for real severe injuries. We were a real lucky family, we never had any real serious illnesses. And then if you got a cold- colds were common- it wasn't called 'flu. Colds were ~~common~~ and my mother had a drastic treatment for that. It was kind of like an Indian sweat bath in a way. She would take the big rocking chair and put a big quilt in it and then the blankets- the wash blankets- and put you in your night gown in that chair and take a five gallon oil can- we always had those- they were salvage too, the ones that the kerosene came in. The top was cut out carefully so that it made a container. And you put your feet in that with hot water and mustard, and you soaked your feet in that, and you sat is this chair all wrapped up in this blanket and drank hot lemonades and then you would sweat. And that took everything out of you that you didn't have as well as what you did have! You never had a cold afterwards. And then as soon as you thought you'd been there long enough, and you'd sweat enough, why she would get the washtub out and have the room good and hot and give you a bath and put you in bed

till you cooled off, because you know it's dangerous to get chilled. That was a standard remedy. And oh, a mustard plaster on your chest and one on your back. And they were hot and they blistered you. And they were homemade. Made out of the same mustard that you ~~ate~~ on your ham. And you made that by mixing it up and sometimes you put a little flour in that and that reduced the heat so it wasn't quite so bad. But she'd take a piece of an old sheet and stir up this mustard and water and lather it out on the sheet; fold it up and put that on you, put a flannel over it and that would sure cure a cold! (Chuckles)

SS: Did it work good?

MLL: We never had any, we were always healthy, so I guess it worked. We never died, either. That was a miracle. She was real careful of us. We never had anything but children's diseases. We got that kind of treatment quite often if she thought we had the sniffles.

MARVIN L: We had to wear flannels.

MLL: We had to wear our rubbers, and it never rained there, but we had to have rubbers. You know what we used to do with them? I think my sister told that in that story. We used to hide 'em <sup>under</sup> the sagebrush. And, oh, that was awful, guilt was worse than being punished, you know. And I was so scared she'd find out. I'd hide mine under the last fence before I'd go to school, I'd hide my rubbers. There ~~wasn't~~ any rain, there was no need of wearing 'em, but you had to wear 'em! And the kids'd make fun of you if you wore your rubbers to school in dry weather you know. And then I'd worry all day for fear somebody'd steal 'em and they wouldn't be there for me to wear home again. (Chuckles) She was a stern mother, but she was a wonderful mother. She taught us the things that were good. Honest<sup>y</sup> and good language. She couldn't stand slang. There was no swearing in our family. But slang, even- one time

I learned the word, 'dickens' from one of my little girlfriends, and we were out hanging up clothes and I was holding the clothespin bag for her and I dropped a clothespin and I said, "The dickens!" Boy, she grabbed me just like that and in the house I went and had my mouth washed out with a bar of soap! And I never said that, and I felt guilty I was grown before I ever said that again. It wasn't swearing exactly, you know, but it was slang, and she wouldn't put up with it.

MARVIN L: No wonder she's such an angel!!

MLL: Yeah. Well, afterwards when I grew up it was fun to say that because I had been punished and I realized it wasn't really bad, it was just she was a real strict- you know, she liked the English language the way it ought to be said, and she taught us that.

SS: It seems to me that you kids did not do things that you knew were wrong that you would go ahead and do those things like the rubbers anyway?

MLL: Well, that we did. But I suffered from it because I was guilty -I felt guilty all day. I <sup>was scared</sup> all day. So it wasn't good for us. We didn't defy her very often. It was easier to be guilty than to face the kids at school, because you know kids are rough on each other.

Lee MAGNUSON: Tell that story about the kids at school that spoke different languages.

MLL: Oh, yes, we had- well, my folks were English, I guess you would say and Dad had come from Michigan- he was Irish but they spoke what they called English. And then there was one family of Bohemians and then there were a lot of these German families had moved into the Quincy- that farmed, and they spoke German. Parents often couldn't speak English, and the children didn't learn English til they went to school, so that there was a lot of German spoken on the playground, you know. They had to speak English in school, they had to learn, but they would speak German. And then this one family that were Bohemian, they spoke Bohemian, I guess it would be, and then they would say, "What do you

speak?" Well, I didn't speak anything, and I went home and I said to my mother, "What's wrong with us? These other children speak German and they speak Bohemian and we don't know anything? What are we?" My mother said- she was quite incensed to think that I'd been attacked like that- and she said, "Yes, you are, you're Irish." My grandparents had come from Ireland, my father's parents. She said, "You're Irish." <sup>(End of Side B)</sup> She was proud of the Irish blood in our family. Well, you know children- they want to be all alike. If one can do something, then why can't you do it? So, I said, "But I can't speak Irish." She said, "Well, now tomorrow." And she went over to the corner of the kitchen where she cooked and got into the potato sack and took out a little potato, scrubbed it up and she said, "Now tomorrow you put this in your pocket and when you go to school, when they say that to you," 'Cause they would again, she said, "you say, I'm Irish." And they'll say, "Alright, talk some." And then you say, "I'm Irish, and if you don't believe it, I can show it to you, I have it in me pocket." And then you pull out this Irish potato. And sure enough they asked me the next day and I showed them the potato and that quit the nagging, they didn't bother me any more. (Laughter) So, we're proud of being Irish. My dad could sing songs and things to us. He played the flute and he played the jew's harp. And he could stand on his head and he entertained us that way. He was a real performer.

SS: He could stand on his head?

MLL: Yes, Dad could stand on his head, that was one of his accomplishments until he was quite old. He lived to be in his eighties. I don't remember when he quit doing it. But it scared Mother to death. None of us could do it, but he always could stand on his head, you know, he'd go down and put out his hands and bring up his feet and stand straight up on his head. We thought that was great. Quite an accomplishment. He

wasn't a heavy man. He was a tall man, but he was slim.

MARVIN L: Danced to--

MLL: Danced the jig, but dancing wasn't allowed you know in our church or anything. My mother didn't believe in dancing, but she'd let Dad dance the jig, but he never got to teach it to us, I wish he had, but he didn't, because she didn't believe in dancing. But I guess maybe he did. He could sure dance the Irish jig.

SS: You said a little while ago that it was either one way or the other with families as far as religion goes; either they were strict or they just weren't strict at all.

MLL: Oh, yes. Well, these little towns all had saloons, you know. And there were people that didn't go to church that just lived a different life then we did. There was the other side of the street- there was a saloon. It wasn't discussed much in our family. My mother was such a temperance person. But coming home from school, there were boardwalks in this little town and this walk came up past the hotel, and there was a saloon - apparently a saloon in that town in that hotel; I didn't know it at the time, but that's what it was, but this odor, I would notice odor, and later then I found out that was the odor of whiskey, but at the time I didn't know that's what it was, as I would come up the street I could smell this. I always wondered what it was but I never knew as a child that that's what it was. And then there were lots of bottles. In fact, my sister told about my mother's rollinpin being a beer bottle- round beer bottle. There were lots of liquor bottles around. And sometimes they would use them for things, but there was never any liquor in the house. And no smoking, either. And no dancing. No card playing.

MARVIN L: There was no liquor in our house, but the older brothers, they all drank.

MLL: Well, my brothers did too when they got older. It didn't necessarily mean that they grew up that way, but that's the way they were brought up. That's the way it was. It wasn't necessarily a good way, but that's the way it was.

SS: But there were probably some people that would also go to church and still dance?

MLL: Oh, yes, yes, that's right. Sure. Dickerson Hall that I mentioned was where they had dances, but I didn't know much about them, because we didn't go. Oh, yes.

SS: Was she at all active as a teetotler? Was there any opportunity

MLL: I don't think so, I don't think so at that time. No. No, women's organization or anything, it was just the way she-- her folks had been that way. That is the way she'd been brought up. Lots of families were like that.

Lee Magnusen: Tell him about the cards on the train.

MLL: Yes, the playing cards. I'd never seen playing cards. We had Flinch and we played Muggins with the flinch cards. We played card games, we played old maid, and authors was great. But not playing cards, because playing cards were associated with the devil in the religious training in those early days. And gambling- you know, you couldn't play cards and not become a gambler, that was the supposition. So I'd never seen playing cards, I'd just seen these flinch cards which were- oh, they weren't bright colored, they were gray-green and white or brown-white or maybe sometimes <sup>sort of</sup> of rosy and white. They were pretty designs on the cards that we had. And of course, old maid cards had pictures on them. Authors cards had pictures. When I was four years old my mother was to go back to North Dakota to see her folks and I went with her because a child that age could travel without any fare. The other children were in school and I was the youngest, so I went with my mother.



And on the train in those days they had a table- they would bring you a table that was put up between the seats. The seats would- plush seats that faced each other, and there was a table between and you could eat your lunch; you carried your lunch in a shoe box and you could eat your lunch on that table or you could play games or whatever you wished. And so the people in the seat behind us were playing cards, and I stood up in the seat and looked over, and the whole thing was very exciting to me. I don't remember much when I was four, but I remembered this because it was all different you know, see, the train and the plush seats, red plush seats, and standing up and then we were going to see Grandpa and Grandma, besides, which was great excitement. And I stood up and these people were playing with these beautiful cards and I was so excited. And I said, "Mother, look, come and look." And she looked and she yanked me down, and boy, "No, you mustn't ever look at those, you must never play with those." She said. And I didn't know why and I didn't understand why. I just knew they were beautiful and those people were having fun, and it's too bad it couldn't have been explained better. I didn't learn to play cards til I was through college and out in the world. My mother was gone by then, and she probably would have changed by then too, and I became a good card player.

SS: You probably danced, too.

MLL: Yes, I learned to dance in college. But I had to take lessons though because I was I was so old by that time that everybody else knew how. They learned, you know, along the way, like people are supposed to learn things, but I hadn't so I had to go to Saturday afternoon,- on the campus, they had a class because there were lots of college kids brought up just like I'd been that didn't know how to dance. And we learned to dance.

- SS: What was the idea of socializing- the form of socializing if you were stricted with these cards and dancing and that sort of thing?
- MLL: Oh, you played games. You had lots of games, all kinds of indoor games.
- SS: For adults?
- SS: Oh, yes. You had socials, you know. And then you had games, like he said, checkers and those things that you played in between two or three or four people. Dominoes were great favorites. Families would go visiting and play games at each other's houses. Or you would have a social. I don't remember going to many of those in the town. The traveling was a little too difficult, but town families <sup>did</sup> get together and have 'em. We played games like- oh, you could play games that were almost dancing like Farmer-in-the-Dell., and Skip-to-my-Lou. We played those even in my college days at church socials. At Pullman we played those games. And we played Spin-the-Platter and Winkum, and Post Office. My mother didn't approve of Post Office, but we did play it. That was a kissing game. But Winkum was okay. She'd let us play Winkum, but not Post Office. That was off the list! (Chuckles)
- MARVIN L: You played anyway though.
- MLL: No.
- SS: Those party songs, were they part of the-?
- MLL: Anything- Skip-to-my-Lou you had a partner, it was really dancing- <sup>it was</sup> like folk dancing. You had a partner, you held hands and you skipped around the room. It was sort of folk dancing, those were allowed but not social dancing.
- SS: What was really the difference? Just that there wasn't any instruments?
- MLL: Well, it was mostly that dancing and card playing went along with saloons and the rough life that they were trying to protect us from. That was the reason. It wasn't the thing itself, there wasn't anything wrong with it. But it led to it; where it was done. There was drinking

at public dances. And so, you would be led into this temptation, you see, and that's why it was prohibited, and we didn't do it.

SS: Like in Skip-to-my-Lou, would there be any musical accompaniment?

MLL: Oh, yes, somebody played the piano. We played a lot of musical games. Farmer-in-the-Dell. That was fun, because you chose- you- the farmer chose his wife, see. If you got to be his wife, that was a big night. You know, if it was your favorite boy. Those are kid games, but adults played 'em too. The whole family would play together, all kinds of games.

MARVIN L: Did you ever play Skip-to-my-Lou?

MLL: And then Spin the Platter. You had a circle and then somebody was "It" and you spun the platter, and if you could grab it before it stopped, then you were "IT". Had a lot of games that were fun.

MARVIN L: They still are.

SS: As far as socializing with other families; would it be mostly be your family visiting another families' house? And they visited you?

MLL: Yes, we did that a lot, and that was mostly in the daytime, because of travel, I think. And a lot of going to Sunday dinner. They were too busy during the week to do much. On holidays we'd get together. And Fourth of July was always celebrated with a big celebration and several families would get together.

MARVINL: Go to church and then you went home with somebody-

MLL: Yes, and one home that we used to go home to dinner was more crante, and they had more money than we did, and she had Vic torian furniture, that she kept stored and covered in one bedroom because of the dust and she didn't use it as she would have. And that was a papered ho use and it had big pink roses on the wallpaper and oh, I thought that was just the end. That beautiful pink roses patterned wallpaper! We didn't have any wallpaper on our walls. I thought to have a house like

that they must be wealthy, just very wealthy. And she had an ostrich and she would give us feathers from the ostrich. They were great treasures. And one time for Easter, she took an ostrich- not an ostrich- I'm sorry, I meant a peacock- she would give us the peacock feathers, they were so beautiful. And a peacock egg is quite large- not as large as an ostrich- well, she didn't have an ostrich- she had <sup>a</sup> peacock. And one Easter she had-boiled a peacock egg and colored it and gave it to me for a present and I kept it. My mother let me keep it. I kept it upstairs in the loft. Of course, I suppose it finally dried up instead of- it rotted probably <sup>first</sup> then it dried up. It was one of my treasures I kept for a long time. To me it was huge but I don't think a peacock egg is actually so much bigger than a duck egg. Is it?

Lee Magnuson: I don't know, probably twice as big as a chicken egg.

MLL: It was a big egg compared to the chicken eggs that we colored for Easter.

Well, you get an idea how we lived anyway, haven't you?

Oh, there was another little fun thing that we got out of-- anything you got free, you know, was made-fun. We used baking soda, lots of baking soda in cooking and then in it was also a home remedy for upset stomachs and bee stings and all kinds of things. It still is a good remedy. But in the baking soda package there was a little card <sup>of</sup> little birds. And it was a little premium or a little gift with the package. And then we collected those. And when we bought a new package of baking soda, which cost a nickel, this little card was attached to it, and it was someone's turn to have it that time. You know, you couldn't always get the card yourself, but you would save those and then you would have a collection of beautiful pictures of birds. And now, they would be an antique collection if anyone has any of those.

You keep your eye out, because you might find them.

MARVIN L: Baking soda was never less than a dime. Martha, baking soda was never less than a dime.

MLL: A dime? I thought it was a nickel. You sure? Well, you're the merchant, so you'd know. But anyway, baking soda went a long ways. We had baking powder biscuits and it didn't take much to make a pan of biscuits. These men that went out to work on the roads did their own cooking and they made soda biscuits. And they learned to make awful good ones, and so when they came home then our treat was for the men-- my brothers and Dad to make the biscuits for supper. They were crisp, had crust. Soda biscuit has a nice crust.

MARVIN L: We generally had them of course for breakfast. Mother, if we had toast, pancakes--

MLL: But you always had biscuits.

MARVIN L: Always had biscuits.

MLL: But we didn't. My mother didn't think so much baking powder bread was good for you.

MARVIN L: She always had biscuits. Dad had to have biscuits.

MLL: And see that was the difference between New England and Southern-- his mother was a Southern cook, and she always made biscuits. My mother was New England and they were raised on yeast bread, and she didn't think so much baking powder bread was good for you, so we just had it sort of like emergency bread when you ran out of yeast bread, then you had baking powder bread.

SS: How hard do you feel that your parents had to work?

MLL: Oh, they worked hard. They got up early and there was stock to take care of, and the farming to do. Any everything had to be made. Clothes had to be made. Butchering. The butchering, you know, was hard

work. And everything was made and there was no refrigeration, so butchering was a problem to keep the meat. In the winter it wasn't any problem.

MARVIN L: Lots of chores had to be done.

MLL: The children helped. Everybody worked.

MARVIN L: <sup>Always had fresh milk.</sup> Had to milk twice a day.

MLL: Yeah, you milked the cow twice a day, and then you put it in pans and you put it in the cellar and the cream rose and you skimmed off the cream and then the milk that was left was still real rich, but the cream was made into butter. We churned the butter in a dasher churn. The children had to help do that with the dasher churn. Took a long time to get the butter to come. Mother made the butter.

Lee Magnuson: Tell about the first churn- how you churned.

MLL: Well, to make things easier we were taught to sing. We sang a lot when we did chores like that. And we sang this, "Churn, butter, churn,-" I've forgotten the rest of it- "Peter's waiting at the gate, waiting for a buttered cake." And then you'd sing this little verse and that made the time go faster. And then we finally had the washing machine- at first, of course, it was just a washboard, but then we got a washing machine that had a wheel that had to be turned. It didn't get the clothes very clean, but the boys and I had to turn it sometimes and we would sing or we would read stories while we turned this and of course if the story got too exciting you'd forget to turn. It wasn't a very good system, but the children had to help with all these chores. We gathered the eggs.

SS: Did you feel that you and your brothers and sisters were really close to each other?

MLL: Oh, yes! We were a close family, I should say!

SS: Not very much conflict among you?

MLL: Oh, no, there wasn't any. No, no, they were real close. There was no jealousy or anything.

MARVIN L: All families were close. Closer than they are now, don't you think?

SS: Well, that's hard to say. I think that family life--

MLL: We did everything together.

MARVIN L: Did everything together.

MLL: We read together. We read these exciting books. Swiss Family Robinson. My mother did the reading but we all sat around at all ages and listened. And we'd read one chapter before we went to bed at night and could hardly wait for the next chapter to see what happened to the Swiss Family Robinson. Robinson Crusoe.

MARVIN L: There was twenty years spread in our family.

MLL: My goodness, and then we'd go out in the sagebrush and play act these things, you know. And one time somebody sent us a box of books; I don't know ~~where~~ they came from, but they'd been carelessly put in this wooden box and in nailing it the nails went through some of the books. But the books in that box, one of them was about Perry's expedition to the North Pole, and that was really exciting. I was old enough, I couldn't read a lot of the books, but there was one about missionaries and it had pictures of cannibals in it, and that was quite impressive because it showed these colored, naked people with a fire and a big iron kettle acooking the missionaries over the fire, in this book. And so we went down in the sagebrush, my younger brother and sister and I and we play acted; we killed the cannibals, and these weeds were cannibals, and we acted, you know, like kids do, we acted this all out!

SS: You know, talking about the working; was there much leisure for either of them, say during the week? Was there a time that they could put aside to just sit down and relax and not do anything?

MLL: Well, I don't suppose there was much time. They read the Bible. They

took time for that. There was always prayer at the table, and there was Bible reading, and then before we went to bed there was always this little family time of either reading stories- and then, of course, some of the work wasn't- there was lots of sewing and mending. Mending you know, was a big deal for mother and she'd sit in a rocking chair and so of course that wasn't as tiring as some of the other work was. But they worked hard, of course. And it took a lot of sewing because all of our she made . clothes and she made over most of the clothes. A lot of clothes had to be made over- people would give her old clothes and she would rip them up and dye them and she made <sup>up</sup> beautiful clothes out of old clothes. We were well dressed for not spending much money. We ordered our shoes and underwear and things she couldn't make out of the Sears Roebuck catalogue. Ordered the most of them.

Well, that's the way it was. That's the way it was all true. People lived like that. All pioneer stories tell the same thing. Some people had more money than others in some parts of the country, but it was the drought there that they didn't prosper. If they'd prospered we would have had- We had furniture; we never had homemade furniture. We had straw ticks <sup>on</sup> one bed, but we had mattresses on our other beds. We had springs and bedsteads; they brought them from North Dakota with them.

SS: What was the difference with those few families- those families in the area that did well enough that they could get things- Christmas presents and that kind of thing?

MLL: Well, some of them were town people that were in business, see, and had stores- there were stores and banks. There was a bank and a store and a drugstore. And those people would make more money.



SS: Were they generally doing better than the country people, then?

MLL: Well, they depended of course on the country people for their economy but then, at the same time there was business and they did make more. And some of them had more money when they came here. Some had better land. Some of the land produced better than ours did. That made a difference, too. I don't know. And then some of them- the teachers were paid; I don't know how they were paid, but they were paid. Teachers got salaries so they could have better clothes. They didn't have to wear madeover clothes like we did.

MARVIN L: What do you think our homestead was sold for, when Dad sold it?

SS: When did he sell it?

MARVIN L: He sold it when we was- see, I was born up here <sup>Cedar Creek,</sup> ~~on~~ that's where it was.

We lived at ? at the time. That's right up here. We lived at Leland, some guy, he heard it was for sale, well it hadn't been worked. They had a big family of German kids, I don't know how many. Big

family. Some time in 1908. This guy just stomped in

there one day with Dad, he was a German, an old German. He had five

one hundred dollar bills, he'd been working up in the mines that winter, <sup>he proved it up for a homestead, And years later that</sup> <sup>went to me over here</sup> ~~he proved it up for a homestead, And years later that~~ <sup>Sold it for about 8000 dollars.</sup>

SS: He was willing to sell it for \$500 at that time?

MARVIN L: <sup>Tickled to death. Course, there was no income on it.</sup> He'd used up his income. There was income as long as he stayed there

and made these posts and shakes; that's what he made off of the home-

stead, and that's how <sup>splitting these</sup> he raised us kids; his family. <sup>^</sup> Posts and shakes for these farmers down here on the Ridge, <sup>the creek</sup> ~~^~~ Kept it all those years then sold it for \$500.

SS: Did your parents start to despair after they hadn't been able to get crops for a few years, or did they really expect to turn around?

MLL: Well, the two oldest ones graduated from high school in 1914 and Mother was determined they were going to have an education. Well there was no ways, you see, there was no money. And so she just- there was no income coming from the farm, so they couldn't pay the taxes; so they

talked it over and it was a hard decision to make because it was kind of like Columbus venturing out, you know. And they just loaded us all in the wagon and we went to Pullman because the agricultural college was there; WSC was there. And we knew one man there, and Dad went over first and visited him and he found a house and we drove in a wagon from Quincy to Pullman. And she was determined that they were going to go to college. And the house that he had chosen, we didn't stay very long there. The water wasn't good and it wasn't right. She got a house close to the college and took in boarders and Dad could get work and the two oldest ones started to- entered college and the rest of us went to school there. And that's how we got out of Quincy. We could have never made it there and then later the climate changed. The rains came to Quincy and some of those farmers that could hold onto their land made it with wheat. And then, of course, irrigation came. Even in my day I can remember Dad coming home from town and talking about - they were talking about irrigation then. They knew the land would produce if they could get water. And they were talking about bringing it across the Columbia River from- we were pretty close to the- about twelve miles from the <sup>Crescent Bar of the</sup> Columbia River- bringing it across in a flume- they were talking that. But they hadn't thought of Coulee Dam yet then. But it was talked around the stove in the country stores, you know, and he 'd come home and talk about it. They were *quite enthused* but they knew the land would produce if they could just get water, but they just couldn't get water in our day. We used to go down to this Crescent Bar. They had orchards down there. They raised peaches. And once a year we would go down in the wagon; put some straw in the back of the wagon and take our lunch- usually took someone with us- somebody that didn't have any horses. And drive down. It's down quite a grade, if you can remember

that country. you go down that Trinidad grade, down to Trinidad. Quite a little grade going down to Crescent Bar from Quincy, and we would drive down there. Start early in the morning and pick peaches. And if you picked your own you could get 'em quite cheap. And we'd have a picnic, and we could wade in the Columbia, none of us could swim so we couldn't go swimming. Mother was scared to death of swimming, but she would let us wade in the edge of the river, and that was a great treat. And the peaches on the ground you could have for free, but it was a trick to get those home in any condition, because they were bruised- to get them home in a wagon in any condition to use, but we always- she always brought a lot of those, too and salvaged some from those and canned lots of peaches. But that was a yearly jaunt, was to go down to the Crescent Bar. But now Crescent Bar is covered with water, of course since the dam, it's gone. But it was quite an interesting place in those days. There were big peach orchards, big growers down there. And it was fun. The whole trip was fun. And then they used to go to Moses Coulee- that's a different direction. That was a longer trip and they used to go for prunes. There were prune orchards in the Moses Coulee. And I can only remember going once. It was too much for the family and Dad and the boys usually went. It was a real rough trip. The road went down over the bluff from the top; Quincy was on top and ~~it~~ was down in the Coulee and it was a place called the Three Devils, it was kind of shale rock slides, I think. I asked somebody if that was still there and ~~I~~ think it's still there on the road, but it never did improve too much. I'd like to see it, but it was real rough to go over that with a wagon, and that was the hazardous part of the trip to get through the Three Devils on the road. But they would get down and they would have to stay all night to go to Moses Coulee. And one time

we all went and took blankets. We didn't have any rattlesnakes at Quincy but there were rattlesnakes of course along the river and in the coulees. Mother was so scared of rattlesnakes. And so we slept- they fixed sort of a tent. They had a big canvas they fixed kind of a tent. There were school seats out on this- it was in a schoolyard I guess and she made us sleep on these schoolseats. Well, if you remember the old school benches that you went up and sat on when you recited- they sort of tipped a little, and of course in the night we children all rolled off, She put a rope around, that was supposed to keep the snakes out, you know, if you put a rope around the tent, that was a sure cure. Of course later that's been proven that snakes crawl over the rope just as easy as anyplace else! But my mother felt quite safe as long as that rope was there! But they would get a lot of prunes and then she'd can 'em in two-quart jars; the old style jars with a rubber and a zinc lid. She'd can lots of those and we had a cellar- dirt cellar- you know, an outdoor cellar where it didn't freeze where we stored those things. In the winter if it got real cold we would have to light a lantern and hang it in the cellar to keep the vegetables and <sup>the</sup> fruit from freezing. Most winters it wouldn't freeze.

SS: What year did the family arrive then?

MLL: Well, Dad went in 1901, I think, and Mother came in 1902 and then I was born in 1903.

SS: And you stayed until--?

MLL: We left in 19- the fall of 1914, I believe it was.

SS: Did he try to grow crops there at all, all time he was there?

MLL: The last years it was so dry, it was just hopeless and he gave up. And then, of course this land that he had broken went back to sagebrush. I guess that there in later years in the '30's when I was in ~~that~~ coun-

try, I went over there to see if I could possibly find our homesteaded. The house had been moved and that land was all grown up to sagebrush again.

SS: I wonder about how much he had cleared and planted then.

MLL: He hadn't cleared the whole quarter section. I don't know. There was still some sagebrush on it. He cleared most of it though. And it was hard work clearing it. I don't know just how they did it. Kind of a dragging process, wasn't it? I think. They dragged it, it wasn't very big sagebrush. It was sort of sandy soil, so I don't think it was too hard, it wasn't like clearing timber. Some of it they'd have to cut. I think they dragged it out.

SS: The weather pattern- the rain, such as it was, did it come in the spring?

MLL: Yes, we'd have some showers in the summer, but not very many. Winter, winter and spring and fall it would rain some, but not enough. And then there was this drought cycle, you know, that that whole Big Bend country suffered from, and then it came back, the rains came back. Now the country around Davenport always raised grain. Dad had a cousin that lived at Davenport and he always produced. They didn't get the drought that Quincy got and their soil was different. It wasn't- I guess it was sagebrush <sup>country</sup> originally, but it was- they always raised bigger crops. Quincy needed the water. Euphrata raised better crops than Quincy did.

SS: You know you read about the later day Victorian women. A lot of them seemed to have been sort of fragile, frail, you know, somewhat protected, you know. It seems to me with your mother coming from the New England background that she wasn't like a- she was really ready to pioneer.

ML: No. no, her family had always worked, I think. They pioneered- her family had pioneered in North Dakota, I think. They had homesteaded

possibly. My grandfather was a- had a store and had been a postmaster.

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MLL: -- like funny papers, <sup>read</sup> we didn't have 'em. We had somethings though. We took the Youths Companion, and the twice a week Spokesman and I think we took the Ladies Home Journal most of the time when I was a child. I remember the Ladies Home Journal, or Delineator, one of those. But we always took the twice a week Spokesman to get the news. And the Youths Companion and it had lots of things for children- pages for children in it, as well as stories and everything was read thoroughly. And the funny papers we weren't allowed to have but my grandfather would send them so then Mother had to let us have them. I think she thought they would corrupt us! Because they played tricks, you know. You know the Katzenjammers played tricks and then there was Mutt and Jeff, and then there was Buster Brown and his dog Tige, and oh, we ~~love~~ loved all the characters in the old funny papers! It would be a treasure to find some of them - the old ones- now.

MARVIN L: I guess you could find 'em.

MLL: They're probably are some around in somebody's attic. We saved 'em, we wore them out reading them. They were just like they look now, just the same size- colorful just like they are now, but different characters. Different stories. Happy Hooligan. Happy Hooligan was a great one. He wore this funny little hat that looked like a tin can, I guess it was a tin can, wasn't it? I don't know, it just sat up on the top of his head. He was one that we liked.

Lee Magnuson: How about the yeast story?

MLL: Oh, that is not a very nice one. Well, I was a big girl and my mother let me sleep and when the children went out- the older ones had to go out and help weed the garden in the morning, but she would let me sleep a little longer and then in the summer they would have breakfast and

go and then when I got up I would just eat my own breakfast. And so this one morning- I was very fond of canned pears and pear juice was especially delicious- and she always canned pears in an Economy jar- ~~it's a~~ wide mouth jar- and pears could be fitted into nicely- and so one morning when I got up to eat breakfast there on the breakfast table was this jar and it had a little bit of pear juice left in it and I drank it. When I drank it I realized it wasn't pear juice, it was her yeast. She made <sup>her</sup> yeast the night before and she'd mixed up her bread that morning and left it and that was supposed to be one reason why I grew so tall! (Chuckles) That's a true story! It didn't taste like pear juice.

SS: Did she knead you when she came in?

MLL: I had to knead the bread because it was hard work and one of my sisters always had weak wrists, you know it's easy for children to complain about something when they want to get out of something. We always accused her of wanting to get out of some of the work, and so her wrists were weak and they probably were, because she wasn't as husky as I was. But I had nothing to complain about because I was just a big husky girl. So when I was quite young one of my jobs was to knead bread. It was in a big pan and you had to knead it along time, and I wasn't tall enough to do it on the table so mother would put it on the organ stool and then that was my job and I had to knead this bread. I don't remember any songs or poems that we used for that, <sup>I</sup> should have had one, because -- but I could turn the stool, I could give it a whirl and fortunately the bread never sailed off. That made it a little more fun, but I had to knead that bread until it was nice and satiny. ~~So~~ the bread would be good. I didn't mix it. I didn't know how to make bread. I did the labor because I had big husky hands and I was husky. I didn't mind doing it, it was kind of fun.

SS: Was there anything to stop you from being a tomboy?

MLL: I was a tomboy. Well, we didn't wear- I wore overalls. I wore the boys' left over overalls to play at home, but never in public. We wore dresses and petticoats and so forth and long stockings. But I did wear overalls at home to play in, because I played with the boys. And I was Dad's boy. And Mother allowed that. That was okay. The other girls, I don't remember them ever wearing them, but they stayed in the house; did the dishes and cooked and things. Probably didn't want to wear them. I loved to wear them. They were just left-overs.

SS: They didn't care that you didn't want to do the housework?

MLL: Well, Mother believed in children playing. She didn't believe in children being made to work too hard. We had to have playtime; it was important; she knew that. And I don't know, I grew so fast maybe is one reason but I never had any tasks that were hard or that I hated, really, very much. And I did play a lot, and I was imaginative, I could make up- one of the things I loved was to find an old hoop. We didn't have many hoops, but sometimes you know, you'd have a barrel that it would come off and you'd find the hoop and then you could roll that. And it was a great way for children to play. It's very ancient, I guess. But we would make- the boys would help me- and we would take one stick and put another stick across and then you would- it's quite a trick to get the hoop started and then you could run after it and you could roll it all over the yard and it was great fun. And that was rolling the hoop. And that's one thing I liked and that was lots of exercise for a big husky girl like I was. You know, there was no one just near enough my age and I played by myself quite a bit. I had friends. I had one little friend that was a minister's daughter and I used to go- and my mother would let me because she was the minister's daughter and she



was my age, and I would go to her house to play. And he had been a missionary in the North and he had a white polar bear skin, and oh, that was fun to get to go and we'd play on this big rug, polar bear rug. But my mother never knew this I don't think, but we would play- tea parties were great fun for children, you know, and we always had tea parties at home. And so this little friend and I played tea parties, but she was allowed to use the communion glasses to play tea parties and I am sure my mother wouldn't have approved of that if she had known, but I thought that was wonderful, because I never understood what communion was. Children didn't take communion in churches in those days like they do now. But the little dainty glasses- our church didn't use the big cup, we always had individual glasses and we had our tea party with them! And she also played marbles for keeps, this girl did. And my mother didn't approve; marbles was the big deal before and after school, but my mother didn't approve of marble playing for keeps. We played marbles, alright, but not for keeps. That was gambling. And so this girl played for pencils. Boy, did she have a-- she was a slick little marble player! And she played with all the boys at school, and she had the biggest collection of pencils of anybody I ever knew. *This friend of mine.*

SS: Did you play for keeps with her?

MLL: No, no, no I never played for keeps. Heavens no! My mother would have chastised me if I played for keeps. I knew I shouldn't, I didn't know why it would do something to me, but it would do something bad to me to play for keeps, so I didn't play for keeps, but I would play marbles just to win for the fun. You were supposed to do things for fun not for gambling.

SS: Well, between your parents in those days, were they- did they have a pretty equal relationship, or was your mother just kind of doing what

your father said?

MLL: Well, no, it was sort of equal in it's way, but Mother was the dominant one, in that things had to be strict- well, my father approved of all this strictness, too. And I think that he had been raised that way, too, because he had a little Testament that his mother had given him when he left Michigan. Two - three of the boys left Michigan and went West, and she had given them each a Testament, so you know she was a religious woman. I never knew her. So he was brought up in a religious home, too, and he approved of all of this but, for instance, spanking, which wasn't done very much in our home, but we got a paddling occasionally, and Mother was afraid Dad would hurt us, so she did the spanking. *See*. But there was great love between our parents. But I don't remember Dad ever spanking anybody, I don't think Mother would have let him, she was afraid he would hurt us.

SS: Would your father let her do whatever she wanted to, as far as the home and that, you know?

MLL: Oh, they did it together. Yes, I don't remember- there were no arguments or fights. I don't ever remember any fights or anything.

SS: Do you think she wanted to go- to leave earlier than he did?

MLL: No, I don't think so, except- because of the school. They had good schools and she always got acquainted with the teachers and the teachers came home <sup>with her</sup>, took meals like the preachers did. She wanted us to know teachers and preachers and so we knew- they were friends, you know. And to take these two out of high school before they had finished wouldn't have been good. It was a small high school, but it would have been better to let them finish there. I think that's why they hung on, than to take them into a strange- the rest of us could adjust but when they were so near through high school it was better to stay. And we were able to stay. They managed. But that high school graduating class

the two, they weren't the same age but they were in the same - they graduated together, my brother and sister- the oldest ones. Because when we came there she thought it was too far for the girl to start, for my sister, Esther, to start to school and so she had taught her at home, and so they were in the same class when they graduated. And my sister was the only girl, there were four boys, as I remember and my sister in the graduating class. And it was a big event- a family event, we all went to graduation at the school house. And the graduating class sat upon the little platform- or maybe it was in the church, I remember them sitting on a platform, the graduating class. And they were given their diplomas. And my sister had a white dress. Aunt ~~Bella~~ had sent her the dress. It was decorated with pink satin roses. And long skirts were still the style then, you know, and it had a fichu collar- that's kind of a ruffly collar that tied in the front, and the collar was sort of tucked up with a bunch of these pink satin rosebuds. Oh, it was a beautiful dress. And then the hem of the skirt- the skirt was tucked up with a bunch of these pink satin rosebuds, too, because that was just a bit of style, but that wouldn't do, my mother took those off and got that skirt down to cover those ankles quick! And those pink roses weren't wasted, they were put on the dress someplace, but my poor sister- I thought that was a shame! I thought that <sup>tucked</sup> ~~that~~ real stylish. That's the way they looked in the Ladies Home Journal pictures, you know! The skirts were tucked up a bit, not enough to be immodest, of course, but just an inch or two. But my mother couldn't have that when my sister was going to sit up on the stage for commencement.

SS: Where had she got the dress?

MLL: My Aunt ~~Bella~~ had made it. And she had her measurements and it fit her and it was a beautiful, white, cotton- I don't know what kind of mate-

rial it was. It was a soft- it wasn't organdy, it was a soft material, but it was beautifully made with ruffles and a pink sash.

SS: Where was she? Back east?

MLL: North Dakota. Mother's only sister.

SS: That's where she left her relatives.

MLL: Uh-huh.

SS: You say she really felt that it was good for her to get away from her relatives?

MLL: Well, I don't know. Maybe it was because it was hard to make a living there, too, and maybe ~~they~~ thought having a homestead would be a good life, because she was very lonesome for her family. But she thought too many relatives living close together would cause problems, and of course it does sometimes, too. But she was very lonesome and so far her folks that she didn't get to see very often. They visited us and she visited them a few times. But we knew them well, but we didn't know them personally well. We didn't get to see them very often.

SS: You mentioned something about getting an organ.

MLL: Yes, they shipped out an organ as a present to us. The grandparents apparently were better off than we were. And Aunt Della and the grandparents shipped this organ; a reed organ to us. And Mother knew how to play somewhat and she taught Esther and then Esther played the organ in church after that. It was hard on the organ in that dusty country because of the sand storms we had. But Mother knew how to clean the organ. The back comes off from an old organ and there are reeds and you pull these reeds out and she would tune them with a tuning fork and keep it in good tune that way. But she did that herself. Maybe with Dad's help, I don't know. Dad had a better ear for music than mother had, but Mother was good at it, too. She couldn't sing a second

part, it always hurt her, ~~cause~~ she couldn't, but Dad taught the rest of us with him, so we learned to sing with him .

SS: It hurt her to sing second ?

MLL: No, she wanted to sing with Dad. She wanted to sing the second part, you know, and she couldn't, she could sing soprano alright, but she never could learn to sing alto, for some reason, I don't know why, because anybody that could sing ought to be able to learn. Seems that way to me because that's the way I learned, you know, early, but-

SS: Did you ever get caught out in a dust storm?

MLL: Well, they weren't that bad, I don't think. I don't remember any trouble that way; no.

MARVIN L: We stayed home.

MLL: South of Quincy, that would have been possible in the sand- that was more sandy country, south. Down around Beverly Hills- you know where that country is? <sup>now</sup> <sup>no</sup> But these sand storm were smaller than that. They just kept the house dusty all the time. But the big sand storms were south of Quincy through the- oh, Beverly Hills, they call it. There are some town down in <sup>that area</sup> <sup>now</sup> I think with irrigation, but in those days there wasn't much. There was a Catholic Church down there, I think. Mission.

SS: How important was education to your mother? Seems like she really wanted that for you.

MLL: Oh, education was the goal in life. You had to have an education in order to amount to anything. And no sacrifice was too great to get an education. And so even after we went to Pullman, we were still poor of course, and we all worked our way through college to get our education. But it was really important. And it never occurred to any of us not to go. If you lived there it wasn't so expensive in those days.

You could go to college. If you had \$200 or \$300 you could pay your expenses a semester ~~where~~ you lived at home, you see. And we could earn that much money. I did different ~~kids~~<sup>things</sup>- I did anything. Ironing and baby sitting and jobs like that. And in the summer I got a job one year, cooking for harvesters with a friend of mine down in the La Crosse area. I earned \$200- \$240 that summer, cooking for harvesters. I was sixteen and this friend of mine was seventeen and we cooked for her brother. We did all the cooking on this ranch. She knew more about it than I did, but I knew how to cook. And that was enough money for a semester of college, you see in those days. Now that wouldn't go anywhere.

MARVIN L: Do you know what she was doing when I picked her up?

SS: Extension work?

MLL: He knows. (Chuckles) Well then after I got ~~an~~ education, then I could do things.

MARVIN L: State of Washington.

MLL: My mother had been a normal school graduate in Wisconsin. She had taught, but she had went to normal school. And my dad, I don't know what his education was. He didn't have any higher education.

SS: I was thinking if it would be okay, I'd really like to talk to you about the extension work, in the '30's. That seems to be very interesting work.

MLL: Well, it was, yes. I don't know what you would want to know about that. I was home demonstration agent at Wenatchee and it was the first one that that county had and it was in that depression time.

SS: When did you first get the idea that you wanted to go into home ec?

MLL: I don't know exactly, but all four of us girls took home ec. It was a good course at Pullman at that time. And because my sisters took ~~it~~

I knew something about it. One time during my course I changed- I thought I wanted physical education, but I'm not an athlete; I'm not coordinated enough to be a good athlete, so it's lucky I didn't. But my dean, Dean Harrison, let me change and then before the year started I changed back and stayed <sup>at</sup> home economics. And we all taught. All four of us were home economics teachers.

SS: Were you interested in teaching before you went to college?

MLL: Well, that's my mother's influence again, you see. She had been a teacher and it was great to be a teacher. There weren't too many things girls could do in those days, you know. You could be a nurse, you could take nurse's training, which was real hard or you could teach or you could get jobs in stores; ~~clerking~~ in stores, which didn't pay very well, or you could be a telephone operator, but you know, there wasn't- or you could do housework. But there weren't too many kinds of work that women did, you know. But teachers were considered- that was considered a good job for a girl if she could get the education, and there was always a job. And then being a college graduate <sup>then</sup> I could do high school teaching and I taught in high school first.

SS: You said that you couldn't teach if you were married.

MLL: Well, they didn't hire very many married teachers. There were some in those early schools that I taught in. There would have to be reasons why. There would have to be a great need. If you got married, you just resigned right then during the school year. They didn't permit that. They told teachers what to do in those days. When I took my first teaching job at Culdesac down here in Idaho, it was understood that I would stay there weekends, that I would work in the community. That was part of your contract. I was used to that, I'd always worked in the church, and I worked in the church at Culdesac. I liked it. I was used to doing it; I wanted to do it. But a lot of teachers didn't

they lived in Lewiston and they wanted to go home, don't you see? Made a problem. And they did go home and the school board didn't like it. They wanted them to stay there. You weren't hired just to teach you were hired to be a part of the community. And that's good; in a way it's good, because a teacher's influence is greater on the kids out of school than in, really.

SS: In the church and other activities?

MLL: Teachers were important people in those little towns. In little towns especially. Now I don't know that that was true- in my day, a teacher couldn't teach in those little towns if she smoked- if they knew she smoked- or if she- I don't know, what else? She couldn't get married.

SS: Maybe I'm not too smart, but I don't understand what marriage would have to do with it, one way or the other.

MLL: It wouldn't nowadays. Nowadays- they didn't get married til they got through college- it was partly the economics, they couldn't afford to. There was no way that a couple could get married and both go to college. It just couldn't be done. And the girls weren't trained so they could send the boys to college like they do now. Nobody got married in college like they do now. And they didn't get married as teachers. But we did have a few women that were teachers- there was one when I taught at Omak, who had taught there a long time and she was- her husband had an orchard and they kept her on the faculty. She was a wonderful Latin teacher; and I think it was because Latin teachers were so scarce and hard to get, probably. I don't know. But there had to be exceptions. There were plenty of unmarried teachers that needed jobs, was the reason, I think. They needed the jobs, and they just wouldn't hire married women.



SS: When you started going to WSC, what was it like? What was the program that they had for you?

MML: Well, it was called home economics. Earlier it had been called domestic science; not in my day. It had come a long ways by then. Dean Harrison was a wonderful woman and it was a small school; Pullman was a small town then. And the college was small compared to what it is now; that was in 1920, I graduated from high school in 1920 and I started college that fall. And there was nutrition, and there was cooking, still called cooking, and sewing. A lot of clothing work and some of it was actual sewing. You had to learn all the fundamentals of sewing and patterns and fitting and making clothes, because you still made clothes. We learned to make hats; still made hats. And there was tailoring; more advanced work. Then you had to take chemistry. There was a lot of science. It was considered one of the hardest courses that women took. Pharmacy was the hardest, I guess, that girls took. And home economics was one of the next because of the science. There was two years of chemistry, including organic and bacteriology and zoology. Those were all laboratory. There was lots of laboratory work to it, you see, as well as all your home economics classes had laboratories. So it was hard in that respect. And there were very few electives. And the few electives that were- you had to take general courses, of course, like English and, let's see- no mathematics. Didn't take any mathematics or history. Didn't have to have any of that, but you had to take English. And physical education was a requirement for everybody. There was no intramurals, it was just between classes; the games. But you played the games, basketball and hockey- girls' hockey.

SS: Most of the people that took the course, what were they planning to do?

MML: Well, there was dietetics; that was a specialty. You could be a dieti-

cian and work in<sup>a</sup> hospital . You could specialize in that. Or you could specialize in teaching, that's what I went into. And then, let's see, what else? In those days, those were two fields. There weren't as many as there are now.

SS: Were many of the women just planning to use it in the home?

MLL: Oh, yes, yes, lots of them<sup>would</sup> get married before they finished. That was beneficial, of course. But a lot of them became teachers and then this extension work was pretty well established then and they went into that. They usually went into that from teaching, though. They usually taught first to get experience. I don't know very many that went directly into extension. That was teaching, of course, in a way. And then there<sup>buyers</sup> was some commercial fields. There was some in textiles. Textile and textile manufacturers hired home economic trained people. So they specialized in textile work if they were interested in that. There was quite a field opening up in the buying field for women trained in textiles. That was laboratory work in our course, too. It was a good course, interesting. And I don't know how I happened to get in extension. I was teaching. I taught six years three at Culdesac and three at Omak. And then the extension service held this big 4-H Club camp in the summers; it's changed a little now, but it was a big affair on the campus. And they hired extra people to teach the classes. And because I lived in Pullman I was hired one summer to teach a cooking class for these 4-H girls. And I was supposed to teach them to can chicken. And the chickens were sent by the poultry department at the college and they were supposed to send me young, small chickens that could be canned in a pint jar. I was supposed to teach these girls to fit a chicken into a- I knew how to do it- I knew how to do that, but a big hen couldn't be fitted into- there was no way a big hen could be fitted into a pint jar. But we only had a certain amount of time for

the class and it was held clear across town in the Pullman High School so the kids had to come from the campus, clear across town to Pullman High School laboratory where this- where I was teaching this class, and these chickens were supposed to be all cut up ready for us to can. The cutting was not supposed to be part of the lesson. And so that morning when I arrived and the chickens arrived from the poultry department they were dressed but they weren't cut up and they were very large. And I only had a certain amount of time for this class; they had to be cut up; packed in the jars and processed and let those kids get back to the campus: it was an impossibility. So, we started in <sup>ON</sup> these big chickens; they couldn't get a whole chicken in a jar, which was what I had hoped to teach them, but we did the best we could, and we canned the chickens, and I spent the rest of the day finishing up that chicken. I had to stay in that laboratory all afternoon pressure cooking the rest of these chickens, because the girls didn't have time to finish. They each did a jar. We got through that. But all these great big old chickens were left and so there I was. And I was awful mad about it and I told the woman that had hired me, she was an extension woman and I wasn't interested in extension work at all. And I told her what had happened, and I said, "I just did the best I could do, and that chicken is all canned and its here and I hope it will keep." "But," I said, "I wouldn't guarantee that it'll keep." And she laughed. And later when I was teaching at Omak they arrived at my door one day and offered me a job in extension, and I don't know what else it was based on except that I got mad because I'd been given an impossible job and I'd done it. Now would you say that might have had some influence? Well, that was just an impossible job and I was awful mad about it! And she saw that I had- I think she saw that I had possibilities be-

cause that's what extension work ~~was~~ like. You had to do impossible things, and we did 'em. You know, that's what it was, out working with rural people.

SS: Was the background very good for that at the University? I've heard people say -

MLL: ~~For~~ extension ? No. Yes, we had practice teaching before we were sent out from Pullman. <sup>It was excellent.</sup> We had an excellent woman in charge of practice teaching. We each had a six weeks session I think. We had an actual class that we were in charge of in Pullman. At the Pullman High School. They cooperated ~~with~~ the college in home economics and in commercial - they did that in commercial for years. Later they send these kids out like they do here, out to the neighboring towns and do it, you know, but we did ours right at Pullman High School. I did mine right at Pullman High School. So, that's how I got into extension work, ~~those~~ darn chickens, I think. I ~~wasn't~~ interested, but later I <sup>I thought</sup> was, <sup>it</sup> sounded good, and I thought I would try it. So I'll tell you if you'd like me to. about that some day, It won't be as long as this. (Laughter)

SS: Is there anything from the early days that you can think of that we haven't touched on?

MLL: Most of what I've told him. Lee and I have always sat and visited and I never thought about putting it down. But it's fun to remember. We had wonderful parents. We're thankful for our wonderful parents. That's why we're what we are, <sup>is</sup> because of our parents.

MARVIN L: Don't leave out the husband. (Chuckles)

MLL: Because of what I was when I met you. I was already made then because a child has to be formed. Strictness doesn't hurt a child. But fun, they have to have fun; my mother believed in fun. And beauty; lots of beauty. Everything had to be beautiful. It was hard in those days.

We planted- one time we got some tulips. Some way, I don't know how we got these tulips, we planted a bed of tulips. And everybody had one tulip. Mine was a pink striped one. That was the way she made things fun; it belonged to us. A tree in the orchard; because they were so few, it belonged to us. The family shared the produce, but it was our tree! The crabapple tree was hers, but mine was a cherry tree, and this pink striped tulip was my tulip. We didn't have a lot of bulbs. They wouldn't grow; they wouldn't survive in that country. But it survived several years. And then it died of course. But when it bloomed in the spring, it was the prettiest one in the bed of course, because it was mine. That's good for children to have things.

END OF FIRST INTERVIEW

Transcribed by Frances Rawlins, June 28, 1977

We had things, you see. Didn't have to be, all our toys were homemade  
We had a homemade sled. (End of tape)