

LOLA GAMBLE CLYDE

Interview Four

Interviewed by:

Sam Schrage

Oral History Project
Latah County Museum Society

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I. Index

LOLA GAMBLE CLYDE
TOM WAHL
ELIZABETH GAMBLE WAHL

Lola Clyde: Moscow; b. 1900
Latah County historian; schoolteacher

Tom Wahl, Genesee; b. 1911
farmer; engineering teacher at Washington State College

Elizabeth Wahl, Moscow; b. 1905
schoolteacher.

1.3 hours

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02	1	Importance of play party games in lives of pioneers. <u>Happy is the Miller Boy; Skip to My Lou.</u> "Spin the Platter," "Charades", paying forfeit by kissing. Party games were as good as dancing. Importance of schoolhouse to social life. Basket suppers, pie suppers, children's recitations preceding play party. Children wrote their own plays; melodramas from Samuel French Co. Thanksgiving and New Years community celebrations. The evening usually called school entertainment, program or party. Participation of adults as well as young people. End of rural schools spelled end of community social life.
19	19	(Tom and Elizabeth Wahl have joined Lola Clyde.) <u>Happy is the Miller Boy, Skip to My Lou.</u> In many games one person who was "It" stood in the center. <u>Pig in the Parlor.</u> "Grand right and left." Playing games overcame objections of those opposed to dancing, but was almost the same.
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Lola Gamble Clyde
 Tom Wahl
 Elizabeth Gamble Wahl

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with Sam Schragger

May 19, 1975

II. Transcript

LOLA GAMBLE CLYDE

76.4

Interviewed by:

Sam Schragger

Oral History Project

Latah County Museum Society

LOLA GAMBLE CLYDE: Well, John Bond talked about it, about that there was a fault that ran from St. Maries on down along the Potlatch, along the Potlatch Canyon and that it runs on down to the Salmon River. And I'm not a geologist so I really don't know all about it. But one day we stood on the rim of the Little Potlatch Canyon and he told me to look up the way there and I could look down and see where the earth sank down, a sort of, along there - along the Big Potlatch. And he says ^{that} there is a fault there that runs from St. Maries to the Salmon River. Now that would be an interesting thing. I don't think John Miller talked about that in his book, did he?

SAM SCHRAGER: No, I don't think so.

L.C.: No. That would be an interesting thing to look up about, wouldn't it?

SAM: Yes. I've heard about those ice caves too. I've heard that there are some right between Troy and Kendrick.

L.C. Yes, I've heard about that too. Well, it seems that there's this geological fault that runs a long there. And I think that might be interesting because I'm not very good at this earth sciences, you know, and I think that's something the kids would be very interested in exploring. About how this fault runs right along through their country.

SAM: I want to ask you about the play parties.

L.C. Oh, yes! The play parties. Well, it was customary on Friday evening in the rural schools. With the coming of the pioneers, there was very little entertainment. There were no shows, there were no cars, there was no television, there was no radio. So they all had to make their own fun. So each person brought to the community their own ethnic background. The people from different countries brought the singing games of their land. And the people coming here, of course, to this country - they came from other states that had been settled. And each one brought in various forms of pioneer games and that was one of the chief forms of amusement.

It was the Rathaus of those days. You went down to the schoolhouse - you didn't drink beer - but you played party games. And there was a place for the young men to

choose their partners, you know. And this has been going on, of course, since the days of Adam and Eve, you know. So they had all kinds of games they'd play and most of them were something about choosing partners. And if you weren't allowed to dance, at least they could swing them around a little bit. And that served its purpose, you know. And some of the games they played were, ^{of course,} "Happy is the Miller Boy who lives by the mill, and the wheel goes around of its own free will. One hand in the hopper and the other in the sack. And we'll all turn together and we'll all turn back." Everybody reverses and the boy that's next to the girl grabs him a partner.

And another one went like this: "We're sailing East, we're sailing West, we're sailing over the ocean and say young man, if you want to get a wife - you've got to be quick in the motion." And they grabbed the girl nearest them and away they went.

And of course, there was "Skip to My Lou My Darling" with all its various verses. There must be forty-six verses to it all together. And everybody that came from a different section of the country could add a few verses as it was sung in their country.

SAM: How was "Skip to My Lou" played? Do you remember?

L.C.: Yes. They all got in a big circle and you chose partners. And you stood and held hands in this circle. And they sang about "My wife wears a number ten shoe, my wife wears a number ten shoe, my wife wears a number ten shoe, Skip to my Lou my darling." And then you took a hold of your girlfriend and you swung her in a circle round and round and round, you know. And then they'd get in a big circle again and then when it came to "We'll all turn together and we'll all turn back," one stepped ^{you} ahead - the boy would step ahead and the girl would fall back. And that gave each a new partner. Um-hum. And they played lots of other choosing partner games. That was the best. And it was a chance for the young people to meet

together and have fun under the very watchful eyes and chaperonage of the old folks.

SAM: Now – they did this without music? They didn't have music?

L.C.: They sang. And they all mostly sang. Of course, in some of the very early, even the earliest people brought some forms of music, like violins. And some schoolhouses, about the first thing they would buy would be a little reed organ. And with someone pumping on the organ you got a little rhythm, a little beat to it, you know. But if they didn't have anything they could still sing and clap, you know, clap in rhythm and that was all they needed. And when young people get together, you know, they can entertain themselves without much artificial music and things. And they played guitars even in those days.

SAM: Did they?

L.C.: Oh, yes, lots of them had guitars and they would play guitars and sing. Un-huh.

SAM: But I thought when they called it play parties, this is to mean that it isn't a dance, is that right?

L.C.: Oh, well, no. It was these play party games were – there were other games too that they played. They would play games like "Spin the Platter" and they'd get out and ~~they'd~~ twirl a pie pan around on the floor. And then they'd call out the name of some girl and she'd run, see if she could catch it. And if she caught it why she maybe would get a prize. Or if she didn't catch it then she had to be the twirler for the next game. And they played 'charades' and everybody would act out something, you know. And you acted out different games. And they would play – they'd play games like – and if you could guess it that would be fun. And if not you had to pay a forfeit. And some of the forfeits, you know, would be like kissing games. Some very pretty girl, she would be in great demand and she'd have to give a forfeit of kissing some of the boys there. That caused great hilarity and great fun.

SAM: That was OK?

L.C.: That was OK. Yes, that was just fine. Even in those days. So you see they had a

little – they had a little something going on in those days . (laughs)

SAM: But I thought that in some places they played these play party games instead of dancing. They didn't approve of the regular kind of dances.

L.C.: Yes. Well, that was right. You could always get by playing "Skip to My Lou" and "London Bridges Falling Down" and "Happy is the Miller Boy" if they wouldn't allow you to dance. At least you could play these games and ^{then} you got to swing your partners and ^{HAVING} a "girl in your arms tonight" was just about the same whether you were dancing "Black Bottoms" or if you were playing "Miller Boy."

SAM: What's "Black Bottoms?"

L.C.: (laughs) Oh, that was some kind of a dance they used to dance back many years ago. Something like – what do they call 'em now? What are the dances the kids do now? It isn't Watusi anymore is it? No – and its not Charleston. That was in my age. I belonged to the flapper age and everybody was out doing the Charleston, you know. But now do they do the Big Apple? No, that's out of style too.

SAM: No, they just stand there and move around.

L.C. They just stand there and make motions – make suggestive motions – lets put it that way. They just stand there and go through suggestive motions.

SAM: Well, now, this was usually associated with the schoolhouse?

L.C. Yes, ah yes. Of course, they did meet in each others homes too. But the schoolhouse had more room and you had more freedom. These schoolhouses generally had little better lights than they had in their own private homes. Candlelight and one little kerosene lamp weren't very conducive to big crowds. But the schoolhouse often had a gasoline lantern or something like that to light it up. And the young people then are like the young people now – they didn't need too much light. They enjoyed it anyway. And who are we to say who had the most fun, you know.

SAM: Do you think they had lots of fun in those days?

L.C.: Oh yes! I – yes, I have a bunch of letters from folks I taught fifty years ago

and every one of them was telling me how much they miss the good old times they had in the good old days. The good parties that they use to have. And that the schoolhouses were in use every day of the week. Saturday night they had their big play parties and on Sunday they had Sunday school.

SAM: Did - would this mean say every Saturday night people would get together?

L.C.: Oh, just practically - yes - practically. They'd have surprise parties at each other's houses too, if the schools got too busy with their scheduled things then people would open their homes and the young folks and the old folks and the little folks would go to each others houses and have a party.

SAM: Would these sometimes last all night?

L.C.: Oh, I think so - yes. I can remember getting drifted in in one of my early school teaching days. I remember the snow drifted so badly we couldn't ^{get} home if we had wanted to so we stayed all night and went home in the morning. You know the song about "and we danced all night to broad daylight and go home with the girls in the morning." So they had little all night parties in those days.

SAM: Was it usually during the winter?

L.C.: Usually in the winter because in the summer everybody was ^{so} concerned with putting in crops and harvesting the crops and that sort of thing. They didn't have time for much sociability.

SAM: So this made it a way of getting together, passing the time?

L.C.: That's right. For the long winter evenings it broke the monotony. Right.

SAM: Now were there other things that would be a part of the program besides the play party?

L.C.: Oh, yes - some - yes sometimes the schools would have what they called a "basket supper" and all the girls made pretty baskets and brought them. And it was sort of a charity thing. If they needed some new records or if they needed a victrola or if

they needed even just some new lamps. They would have a benefit and the girls would bring suppers and the boys would have to bid on them – on the baskets, to see who would get to eat with the girl of their choice. And the money would go to the school. And they had "pie suppers." Every girl would bake a pie and bring them. Much spirited bidding among the married men as well as the single men. And woe to the man that didn't buy his own wife's pie! I'll tell you, that was bad, that was bad. And those were some of the things.

SAM: Well, now lets say they were going to have a play party night at school. Would they have things going on that night at the school before –?

L.C. Yes, yes. Often the school children would start out with their program. They'd have like a little Thanksgiving program, maybe. And each would have a little recitation, maybe a little play about the coming of the Pilgrims – about why we should be thankful. And when that was over, then the other folks would shove back the chairs and maybe play singing games, as they called them. Or maybe play some play party games and they'd have lunch and then they'd go home. And that was the social life of the rural schools.

SAM: Were singing games the same as play party games?

L.C. Yes. The singing games were – well, they were the ones ^{that} you sang to and play party games could be anything like "Spin the Platter" and "Post Office" and "Musical Chairs", or "Cross Questions and Silly Answers" and all those kind of games where you didn't sing. The guessing games and that sort of thing or the singing games.

SAM: That could be play party games?

L.C. Oh, yes, yes. In fact lots of people call play party games – they think of it only in terms of singing games. But that's not so, they were lots of other party

games where you didn't necessarily sing. Like "Musical Chairs" and like "Spin the Platter," "Forfeits." Anything where you had to guess something, and get it wrong, then that was the paying of a forfeit for being wrong.

SAM: Where did these plays come from that these kids would put on?

L.C. Oh, well, sometimes they would make them up and those were the best of all, if they had a little history that they were interested in and could write a little pilgrim play. And some people could be the Indians and some pilgrims, and others something else, you know. And that they wrote their own and what they thought they said. That would show a lot of imagination and creativity. And they learned to spell, incidentally, and use proper grammar and then they'd dramatize it. And put it on for the benefit of their folks. Sometimes they'd just learn pieces that they learned regularly in school. Generally there were little verses that had a good moral teaching to them, you know. And often they learned pieces like "Little Boy Blue" and so on from their literature books. And then they would - whoever got to know them the best and could speak them the best - they would get to elocute them for their parents, for the enjoyment of their parents at the program - at the school program.

SAM: Did they ever put on "melo-dramers"?

L.C. Oh, yes, yes. Sometimes the young people of the community if they were ambitious and felt the need of getting together, why they would have plays. And there was a publishing company called the Sam French Company, and they turned out a regular line of plays to be put on by rural schools. Didn't take much scenery. It didn't take much costuming, and generally they were funny ones, you know, that would appeal to the audience and send you home laughing.

SAM: What about the feed? Did they have a big feed when they had a play party night?

L.C. Oh yes, yes. And they often had - yes sometimes, generally sandwiches and cookies, and maybe cake, and coffee. Generally always coffee and that would be - sometimes the communities would get together, maybe for New Year's Day.

Christmas Day they didn't very often get together but Thanksgiving and New Year's many of the communities made a regular habit of putting on a big Thanksgiving dinner at the schoolhouse and everybody come. And New Year's was another favorite time for them all to get together and eat a big New Year's dinner and then dance in the evening – and the afternoon and evening – and visit. And those were good things to do with roads drifted and snow blowing. And people were very limited in how far they could go for a good time.

SAM: Who was it that decided if there was going to be a night party? Would it be the teacher?

L.C. I think generally it was the teacher that promoted it. That was part of their all-around bit of public relations – would be to see that the young folks had a chance to get together and visit. And she was generally official chaperone. She and the school board would be the official chaperones for these parties and things. And that was kinda the way it worked out.

SAM: What would they call the evening? An entertainment or a party or what?

L.C. Yes, yes. School entertainment. Sometimes they called it the school program. And sometimes it was just "we're going down to the school for a little party." And sometimes there were women's clubs. Later on there got to be women's clubs in the communities and then the women's clubs were great at sponsoring some kind of a doings. And entertain their husbands, and the friends and the young people. But in the very oldest times, in the very earliest beginnings, I think it was largely sponsored by the teachers. Another thing they did almost before – before I was a teacher in the community – was having taffy pulls. And that was another chance for young people to get together, and socialize. And it didn't matter if they were pulling candy or what they were doing. It was an opportunity to meet and ^{we'd} get acquainted. And so they served a real purpose, I think.

SAM: Did people of all ages dance in the play party games?

L.C. Yes, they – well it was mostly the young people but it just depended on the community. In some of the communities the old people came too and they'd get out – especially where they danced square dances, like "Virginia Reel" and all the old "swing 'em on the corner like you're swinging on the gate" – all the old dances where there were callers. There'd be a caller and then they'd generally had a violin and an organ, the school organ. And they'd have somebody who could play the fiddle. And they'd dance. And they did that from the beginning, I think, of homestead days, because someone wrote a very lovely poem about the boy playing the fiddle so "she could dance on the puncheon floor." And a puncheon floor, of course, is a sod floor where the sod's just been turned up. So that would kind a hard dancing but I guess they did it. Yah. Yah.

SAM: How long did they continue to have the school entertainments?

L.C. Well, until the schools were consolidated. They did it up to the very last. And that's the one thing the rural people miss more than anything else – was it took away the center of their social life. The life of the community had centered around the schools – the dancing, the square dancing, the play party games, the entertainments marking the seasons, the interest in what their children were doing. So all those things entered into it. Now here comes my – now turn it off a minute, here comes my sister and Tom.

Break

SAM: Well sure. It doesn't matter, it doesn't make any difference. Its better to put

it down that way because then we get it the way you say it instead of –

ELISABETH GAMBLE

WAHL: Well, you would form a circle, everybody holding hands, and then you would start

and sing: "Happy is the Miller Boy who lives by the mill, the wheel goes around of its own free will. One hand in the hopper, and the other in the sack. The ladies

step foreward and the gents fall back." And that way you would change partners. And then you'd go around the circle again, say the same thing: "Happy is the Miller Boy who lives by the mill, the wheel goes around of its own freewill. One hand in the hopper, and the other in the sack. Ladies step for ward and the gents fall back." Then you change partners. But in the meantime there'd be somebody who was "It" would be in the middle, and he would jump in and try to grab a partner so that the one who lost his partner would have to come into the center. Then sometimes the singers would change it, like -a- "ladies step for ward", you see or sometimes the gent would step for ward. Sometimes the lady would step for ward. And that would give you a different partner. That was "Happy is the Miller Boy."

And lets see, what else do we have? Well, "Skip to My Lou." You have that here already.

SAM: Yum-hum.

E.G.W.: I think you had partners for that. You stood in a circle but each had a partner. And then somebody would be "It" that's in the middle. And that would be: "Skip, skip, skip to my Lou. Skip, skip, skip to my Lou. Skip, skip, skip to my Lou. Skip to my Lou my darling."

L.C. One girl was the skipper and she'd get out and skip around and then she'd stop in front of the boyfriend. And then she chose him and they'd swing and then everybody'd swing. Isn't that right?

E.G.W.: I think so. And so then, "Gone again, what'll I do. Gone again, what'll I do. Gone again, what'll I do. Skip to my Lou my darling." That would be if they lost their partner, you see. And they had many, many verses. They'd make up verses, too.

SAM: Well, how did you loose your partner?

E.G.W.: Well, somebody would come out from the center. You'd have this "It" person in the center who had no partner. And they would come out and get your partner from

you. And then you would be "It."

L.C. And you'd have to go on and dance with somebody else then.

E.G.W.: Then a similar one to that would be "Pig in the Parlor."

L.C. I hadn't thought about that.

SAM: I've never heard of it.

E.G.W.: And one – everybody formed in a circle excepting one who was chosen to be the

"Pig" and the "Pig" had to stand in the middle of this circle and then you sang:

"My father and mother were Irish, and I was Irish too. We bought a wee piggy

for six pence and it was Irish too. We kept the pig in the parlor; we kept the pig

in the parlor; we kept the pig in the parlor and it was Irish too." Now at a certain

spot there you all changed partners and – or did you do 'a grand right and left?' That's

it.

L.C. Yah.

SAM: What's 'a grand right and left?"

E.G.W.: Get up here Dad and we'll show him what a grand right and left is.

TOM

WAHL: It's the same thing as it is in square dances.

(Fades)

E.G.W.: Un-huh. You stand in a circle...

T.W.: Right hand – get up –

L.C.: We'll be the girls, yeh.

(sings) Right hand to your partner, your left hand to your neighbor.

T.W.: Your right hand to your partner. Yah, yah. Your left hand to your neighbor.

L.C.: (sings) "And your right hand to the next one you meet and then all promenade."

SAM: Oh, I see, I see.

T.W.: We did it a little wrong because the girls were always – they were standing wrong.

The girls would go this way, and you would go that way and take her hand next. And

... take your right hand to your partner – you take your right hands – then you go

inside of her. I would go behind you and take her.

E.G.W.: You call that a grand right and left.

T.W.: She's my neighbor, the one across from me.

E.G.W.: And for anybody who gets mixed up, ^{then} you sing it. And you ^{just} sing to them, "Your right hand to your partner, your left hand to your neighbor, the third one is your partner and we'll all promenade."

T.W.: That's when there's four – oh yeh – this is your new partner.

SAM: This would be singing, no instruments?

(sound level returns)

T.W.: Oh, it could be both, but usually just singing.

E.G.W.: Yes, now this man who led it in our community, he just sang with a good loud voice and we all followed after him. Everybody tried to sing. And he was a good singer.

T. W.: Of course, a lot of square dances were sung too.

E.G.W: Yes, a lot of the square dances were sung.

SAM: Well, would they figure that this kind – these ones that we were just talking about, would these be dances or would these be games?

T.W.: Games.

E.G.W.: We called them games. And – now you'll find it this way –

T.W.: There was a little difference.

E.G.W.: In the country communities, some objected to dancing, but if you called them games you got by with them, you see. But others didn't care and then you had the square dances. But there's really very little difference.

T.W.: A game usually had an "It". And the dances usually just changing of partners or scrambling for partners.

SAM: Do you remember – a – one that I wrote down that looked interesting to me was

"Water, water, Wine Flower." Did you ever hear that?

E.G.W.: No, no. That's a strange one to me.

T.W.: Are you – are you researching games? Is that what you're interested in?

SAM: Well, we're talking about the old times in the county for the museum –

T.W.: In general?

SAM: – in general, yah. Well, this is something I know Lola knows about and very few people talk about.

T.W.: The ones to send him to would be the Hills.

L.C.: Yah. They're not around.

T.W.: Aren't there any of them?

L.C.: That "Wild Flower, Wild Flower, growing up so high. Something sorry, she surely she must die. But they sent someone to see her and she revived." Yeh. "Well, what will we do for her? Wild Flower, wild flower growing up so high. So sorry – so sorry, little so and so must die. What shall we do for her. We will send Sam Schragger to see her, see her, see her. We'll send Sam Schragger to see her and she'll be alright now" or something to rythme.

E.G.W.: That would be more the kids would play because I never saw that played in the games at the schoolhouse where the adults were.

SAM: Would the kids and adults both play or would it just be the adults that would play the party games?

E.G.W.: Both. Both would get out and play at the party games. Largely the young adults. But anybody would come and play. And lots of times you would take a young adult, he would see some oldish lady and he'd run and get her and bring her out and she'd have fun. Lots of times the little kids were out there. They'd get pretty well mixed up but –

T.W.: Well, there'd be outdoors games as well as....

E.G.W.: Un-huh, some could be played outdoors.

T.W.: There was, there was "Drop the Handkerchief" of course.

E.G.W.: This one that Lola names is the – little children often play that one outdoors, about "Wild flower, wild flower." But those –

T.W.: Now that's the first time I ever heard that one.

SAM: What's "Drop the Handkerchief?"

E.G.W.: Oh boy, that's an outside game.

T.W.: Well, you can play it inside too. We did.

E.G.W.: Yes, you could, especially if you had a gymnasium.

T.W.: See you all get together in a circle, a ring. And –

E.G.W.: Yum, hum. And there are –

T.W.: And there is an "It" and "It" runs around the outside with a handkerchief, drops it behind somebody and the somebody is suppose to chase 'em and catch them. What happens?

E.G.W.: Well, it goes like this –

T.W.: If they get clear around the circle before she gets caught, then the guy that has the handkerchief, or that it was dropped behind, is "It."

E.G.W.: Right.

T.W.: But if he catches her before, then he goes back in his own space and she has to be "It."

E.G.W.: She has to be "It", un-huh. And, uh...

T.W.: Simple game but very exciting.

E.G.W.: That's an outdoors game mostly and for kids. "Drop the Handkerchief" is for kids. I never saw adults join in that much, very much of the time.

SAM: Would party games usually be in the schoolhouse?

E.G.W.: Yes, they would always be in the schoolhouse.

T.W.: Then there's one called "Post Office." Tell him about "Post Office."

L.C.: You do that, Tommy, you. He'll get a kick out of hearing you.

T.W.: I never played.

E.G.W.: I never did know.

T.W.: I never played "Post Office."

E.G.W.: No sir, I never did know. I've heard that -

T.W.: Well, they didn't - they didn't believe in kissing in my neighborhood. And that came into "Post Office".

E.G.W.: They questioned Abby about it and she couldn't give them how it was done either.

L.C.: Well, it was something about - if you got - you had - you wanted to mail a letter, you went to go mail a letter. And one stamp, it took one stamp, that was one kiss. And if it was something else it took two stamps. "How many stamps does this one take?" "This one takes..."

T.W.: You got special deliveries too.

SAM: How did you get matched up?

L.C.: Yah - special deliveries.

T.W.: Well, didn't you have to go in to see the postmaster?

L.C.: Yah, somebody was postmaster, yah.

T.W.: Were they in a darkened place, or..?

L.C.: I don't know.

T.W.: I think so.

L.C.: (laughing) I never indulged. My schools wouldn't stand for that kind of insult.

T.W.: No, they wouldn't, mine either.

L.C.: None of my schools would have allowed it.

T.W.: They left out the best part.

E.G.W.: Well, I'll tell you, from the way I saw the kids play it. "Did you get a letter?

Did you stamp it?" And they'd stamp right on your foot and that's all there was to that

part.

T.W.: Stamp on your feet, yah, but this...

E.G.W.: This I don't know about, this other.

T.W.: Then there was in all kinds of games, there was a thing ^{of} redeeming forfeits.

You've heard about that?

SAM: Um, what was that?

T.W.: Well, I don't know. In some game or other, if you lose you have to put up some article - pocket knife, watch, pencil - whatever you had for having lost, I guess.

Then when everybody had lost something, then you got to redeem your forfeit and you got up there, you held the...

E.G.W.: Now then, I'll be, you can hold it over my head now. You tell me, tell me part of it: "Heavy, heavy..."

T.W.: "Heavy, heavy hangs over thy head. What shall the owner do to redeem it?"

E.G.W.: "What must the owner of this pretty thing do to redeem it?"

T.W.: Oh, "pretty thing."

E.G.W.: "Fine or superfine?" If it's a man, if it's a boy, he says "fine." If it's a girl, she says 'superfine."

T.W.: "It's fine."

E.G.W.: "He must run out to the big tree and back as fast as he can go."

T.W.: Or three times around the schoolhouse or anything you thought of.

E.G.W.: Anything you thought of.

T.W.: Or he must declare his love for the school teacher.

E.G.W.: Or he must catch the cat, or anything that comes into your head. And then when he'd done that he could get his pocket knife back.

T.W.: And when it came to declaring love for the schoolhouse, well, he didn't usually redeem it - or the schoolteacher.

E.G.W.: No!

L.C.: No, they usually just let that go – that would go by default, wouldn't it?

T.W.: There was one though when you were teacher. My mother was setting up a difficult problem and Wilber Cameron – Wilfred Cameron – he was the one ^{that} had lost his pocket knife or something. And he must declare his love for Miss Gamble.

L.C.: Oh yeh! and he did too.

T.W.: And he said, "Miss Gamble, I shore love you."

L.C.: That's right. He "shore" did. (laughter) (aside) Sit down there; Gussie, sit down, there and listen with us.

T.W.: Of course, the person doesn't know who she's telling to do what, and so that makes it a little more chancy.

E.G.W.: That's "Forfeits."

SAM: How do you wind up being the one to choose? How do ya –

T.W.: Oh, how do ya?

E.G.W.: The one that says –

T.W.: Yah, how do you get to –

E.G.W.: – to sit down here?

T.W.: How come you're sitting there telling them what to do?

E.G.W.: Oh, I think –

T.W.: You must have lost something.

E.G.W.: No, I think kinda maybe the two oldest kids kinda just take it over. "I'll be the one."

T.W.: You may count out too. Like "eeney, meeney, miney, moe." Or any of the other things.

L.C.: You know how ^{those} "counting outs" went?

SAM: I remember "eeney, meeney" – they even had that when I was a kid.

E.G.W.: Now you mustn't say that anymore because ours went "catch a nigger by the toe" and that's out now. You can't say that.

SAM: Oh, yah, yah. Oh, yah, even when I was a kid, my mother told me we oughta say,

"catch somebody by the toe."

E.G.W.: Right, right.

T.W.: But in our day it was "catch a nigger."

E.G.W.: Then later on we went to school with Negro boys and so then we were all just as still as we could be, you know, when it came to that.

(End of Side A)

E.G.W.: And everybody said it isn't quite the same.

T.W.: And 'Pum Pum Pullaway' was sure similar.

E.G.W.: That's it! "Pum Pum Pullaway" is the same thing as "Blackman." But we couldn't say "Blackman" so we said, "let's play Pum Pum Pullaway."

SAM: What was – how'd that work? "Blackman."

E.G.W.: Oh, yeh, this is outdoors game for children. And you have two bases, like one at this fence and one at the schoolhouse as base.

T.W.: The base, yah, usually a line that you stand up in front of or on.

E.G.W.: And you're safe when you're on either one of those bases. Now one person is chosen to be "It." This "It" is quite a thing. And often one older boy or girl who's a fast runner, when they go on the school ground, instead of having any argument or counting out or anything, just say, "I'll be "It"." And volunteer and get out there. Then the kids –

T.W.: 'Cause it used to be, it took all noon hour to get the "It" decided and then it was time to go back in.

E.G.W.: Right. Well, it sure took all the recesses. But somebody'd run onto the field and say, "I'll be "It"." And then the kids will run from this base over to this base. We'll say that base was the fence and this base is the schoolhouse.

T.W.: And the idea is to get through without getting caught, isn't it?

E.G.W.: Yeh, run back and forth between these two bases without getting caught by the "It". And the "It" is required to grab you and pat you three times in the middle of the back.

- T.W.: And then there's two "Its" when he does that.
- E.G.W.: Then there's two "Its" and it keeps on and on and on.
- T.W.: Until pretty soon you're all in the middle or there's one last one left –
- E.G.W.: Maybe a last fleet runner or one that's awful strong and he can jerk away from the ones that go to pat him.
- T.W.: And he might be the "It" next time.
- SAM: You mean, everybody run at once?
- T.W.: Yeh.
- E.G.W.: Yeh, everybody can run at once. And usually you don't even get the game finished in a play period. You just have-ta –
- SAM: So, is the "Blackman" the one that was "It?"
- E.G.W.: Ah, it doesn't – yes, it could be.
- T.W.: What does the term "Blackman" come in? I don't know as it had anything to do with it at all.
- E.G.W.: I don't know. We just called the game "Blackman", and we never used it after that. Just say, "What are you playing?" "I'm playing "Blackman"." But since the Negro boys were there we said, "We're playing "Pum Pum Pullaway"."
- T.W.: "Pum Pum Pullaway" differed only in this respect: that you could, if nobody ran –
- E.G.W.: Then the "Its" ~~w~~ould say –
- T.W.: –the "Its" could, yah, could insist on your coming by –
- E.G.W.: They could say, "Pum Pum Pullaway. If you don't come, I'll pull you away." Then they went to the bases and grabbed the kids that wouldn't come off their bases, took them out and patted them three times on the middle of the back.
- T.W.: That's about when they get about down to the end, you know.
- E.G.W.: Lots of awful good fighting because they'd say, "You never hit me three times in the back. One of those hits was right on my shoulder." "No" and then the kids would have to stand, each one standing by what they thought. And usually they'd

settle it, before the period was up.

T.W.: Then there was "Prisoner's Base" too.

E.G.W.: That's outdoors.

T.W.: It was very similar except -

E.G.W.: "Prisoner's Base" was outdoors.

T.W.: - instead of making you into "Its", no, it was two teams, isn't it? And you have -

E.G.W.: Well, there's two kinds. "Prisoners Base" is the kind - "Prisoner's Base" and "Dare Base". "Dare Base" you have two sides. "Prisoner's Base" you have a prison, you take three sticks and set 'em up here, or four. And along here's your fence -

T.W.: Or make a circle with your toe.

E.G.W.: Yeh, here's your fence and you put a stick - here's a fence and you put this side up there. And here you've got a board here, a board here and a board here. And this is a pen. And then two of the fleet runners - it could be three but we'll say two - say, "I'll be "It"," and "I'll be "It"." And so they stand one at this end and one at this end. And all the other children stand down on one big base and say, "Who will give us a dare?" Well, you set a stick out here a few feet from the front of this. Somebody will come to give you a dare and they'll run up, touch their foot against this little stick and then run for their base. If they're real fast, you can't catch them. But if they're not so fast -

T.W.: You have to stay a certain distance from there.

E.G.W.: They had to have this much headstart - they stick this little stick out here and touch it.

SAM: They could touch the stick before you could come after them?

E.G.W.: Sometimes. Yes. They touched the stick - this little stick here. We'll put a little extra stick. Here it is. And the kid who's giving the dare will touch this with his foot and run for the big base, which will be the other fence or something.

T.W.: Before the "It" can get 'em.

E.G.W.: Before either of the "Its" can get him.

T.W.: Now where are the "Its"? Are they in the prisoner's base or -

E.G.W.: No, they're right here, right at the edges.

T.W.: Right here.

E.G.W.: Now then, if they catch this guy that gave the dare, they'll put him in here.

SAM: In prison.

E.G.W.: Then it's up to these that are out there to come and get him out.

T.W.: Then you can rescue him.

E.G.W.: He stands in there and he holds his hand, holds out his hand. And if some ^{body} runs in there and touches his hand, he gets out. But in the meantime these two catchers are dashing and catching. And every one they catch goes in here. The game doesn't end until you've caught every one and have them in here. Unless the bell rings.

T.W.: And while you're out catching, if you're the "It", one of the "Its", while you're out catching, why there might be somebody else releasing all the one's you've caught. So it gets to be really -

E.G.W.: Yes, touch them on the hand and they're out.

T.W.: - but it'd still be fun. That was a good game.

SAM: But only these two guys were the only two that are - only two people that can capture.

E.G.W.: Yeh. Or if it's a big bunch down there you might have three captors, one here, one here and one here.

T.W.: You kinda arranged the number of "Its" to make it exciting. If there's too many "Its" it'd be no fun. If there's too many that aren't "It", it'd be -

SAM: And what was the other game that was like that?

E.G.W.: Well, "Blackman" is a little like that but not a lot, but the other one is - a - "Dare Base." ^{And} that ^{way} you choose sides and you have a prison. You must have two prisons, don't you?

T.W.: I think so.

E.G.W.: I think each side has a prison and you catch from each other and put them in the prison and which ever side gets them all in the prison first is the winner. And that's a real good game too.

SAM: Well, when I was young the most popular game like that was "Captured Flag." It was a similar game where you had two prisons and each side had a flag that was guarded by the side. And there were two territories and as soon as you crossed into the other side's territory they could – if they hit you three times, you had to go to prison. And then the object was for one person to steal the flag, if they could manage to get that flag and get back over on his side. And it was the same thing – and if you hit the people who were in the prison, and then they were free.

E.G.W.: Yes. Yes. Now that's what we called "Steal Sticks" and instead of having a flag we just had sticks. And you'd try to steal each other's sticks. But that was just like playing this.

T.W.: Now when Dave was a Boy Scout they were playing "Steal the Flag."

E.G.W.: Oh, yes.

T.W.: A little newer version of the an old game.

E.G.W.: Oh yes, of what we called "Steal Sticks". Well, because –

L.C.: Sam's from New York State originally.

E.G.W.: Oh, yes. Our country schools would have only one big flag and that would have to be raised on the flagpole. And so –

T.W.: Oh, boy, and you treated it with respect too.

E.G.W.: But you could gather up quite a few little sticks around the woodshed. And steal each others sticks. That was pretty good too.

SAM: Well, it seems like these play parties, that they didn't, you don't hear about them much. You hear about the entertainment, you know, that there'd be entertainments. But people don't usually talk especially about the play parties being part of it. It

sounds like the entertainment was almost an excuse for everybody to get together and have a lot of good play party time.

E.G.W.: Well, that's right. First of all would come your little program where the children perform. Then would come refreshments. And after the refreshments, then you'd either – if it's a school that allowed dancing – you'd have maybe square dances or maybe just plain dances. And if it didn't allow that, you'd have these games which are practically the same as a square dance. And those we said would be like "Skip to My Lou" and "Happy is the Miller Boy" and then there was something about "The Needle's Eye." That was real slow – around in a circle.

T.W.: Oh, yeh. "The Needle's Eye."

E.G.W.: "The Needle's Eye, it does supply" and you just go around in a circle.

T.W.: Didn't you go weaving in and out, or?

L.C.: Yah. You two stand up – you stand up. Now just hold up your hands. They'd have "The Needle's Eye, does supply – da-da, da-da."

T.W.: And the whole circle goes through, doesn't it?

L.C.: Yeh, the whole big circle: "the thread that runs so trueley. And many a lass have I let pass, because I wanted you." And they'd catch a girl, see?

T.W.: And they'd catch that one – yeh.

L.C.: And then, I forgot what they do with the girl. I think that girl takes the place of ^{the} a girl that's standing, see? And then she gets to hold hands with some other boy. And then the next time its "Many a beau have I let go because I wanted you." And they'd drop down and then the boy had to get out and there was a new boy holding hands.

E.G.W.: And if they were kind of witty they'd make up little things. And I can remember them saying, "And many a fella I've kicked in the cellar because I wanted you."

L.C.: Yeh, that's right.

E.G.W.: They'd kind of make up their own as it went.

T.W.: Yeh, and if its not too much supervision, these terms they use might get

a little rougher too.

E.G.W.: They're recording this so -

SAM: Would they go all night?

T.W.: Well, they'd go 'til -

E.G.W.: Well, till midnight, probably.

T.W.: - nominally. Once in a while though, they'd run way t'ward morning.

E.G.W.: In the Mt. Tomer school they never went past midnight. And I think in Gray Eagle, where Tom went, when they had square dances, I think that would run past midnight.

T.W.: Yeh, we danced - well, there was a time when we didn't dance. About the time of the Sunday schools there wasn't much dancing.

E.G.W.: No.

T.W.: But - ah - they did both. But what was the parties that lasted the longest were like New Year's, Christmas, Thanksgiving - when there wasn't much farm work to be done. And you'd come and eat noon dinner. And then along in the evening while the women were washing up the dishes and so forth, everybody went home. ^{All} ~~the~~ men went home and did the chores. The kids stayed and played if they weren't big enough to do chores. Then they'd come back later. Some - then what was left of the dinner, you'd eat it again for supper. And then you'd play cards a lot of the time. Most of the daytime they played cards. Then after the evening meal usually they'd dance or play games or both. Sometimes intermittenly, you know.

E.G.W.: Now, Sam has never seen square dancing - or you said you'd never seen -

SAM: Well, I have. Square dancing is more common, I've seen that. People still -

T.W.: But he can see it.

E.G.W.: Right, well now this - the little games. There was so little difference between them and the square dance. Just very little. The square dance they'd play music for; this some good singers would sing out as the lead.

T.W.: What about "The farmer's dog lay on the back porch, and Bingo - "

E.G.W.: Now that one wasn't a bit popular in our school.

T.W.: Well, it wasn't much of a game, was it?

E.G.W.: No – un-uh.

T.W.: More like a dance.

SAM: But I take it that it was less of a caller in the play party game. It was more everybody singing.

E.G.W.: Everybody sang.

T.W.: It did require somebody that knew the game and somebody that was kinda bold.

E.G.W.: Yes.

T.W.: And in her neighborhood there was a whole family of these –

E.G.W.: Good singers and not shy and very cooperative. And there was ^{this} one young man that sang and led all the – in fact the small kids in school thought that you couldn't have a party unless this Oliver Hill was there. And they thought that he made up these games.

SAM: Which Hill family was that?

E.G.W.: Did you ^{ever} know that Lola?

L.C.: Oh, I suppose they did.

E.G.W.: Agnes Carlie thought that –

L.C.: Ollie made them up.

E.G.W.: We couldn't play these games unless Oliver ~~Hill~~ was present and she thought that he made them up and made up the music and everything. She didn't know they were old.

T.W.: Well, isn't Myrtle still around?

E.G.W.: She's dead.

T.W.: Oh.

E.G.W.: Stella is here.

T.W.: Stella. Stella is there.

E.G.W.: She could tell you all about it.

E.G.W.: No.

L.C.: No, they're not related.

SAM: Ada Hill? Her family? Lives in Viola now.

L.C.: No, no.

SAM: This isn't a Viola Hill.

E.G.W.: This is John O. Hill and they lived by Moscow. There's one daughter there yet – Mrs. Olson.

L.C.: She lives out around Tomer Butte, on the south side of Tomer Butte. She's Mrs. Alfred Olson. But, on yeh, those were good games.

SAM: But what you're describing – that was mostly – that kind of – when they'd get together and do the chores and then get back together again. That'd be for a special occasion like –

T.W.: Yah, usually.

E.G.W.: Thanks – like the Thanksgiving dinner.

T.W.: There'd be the whole neighborhood – adults, kids and all.

SAM: That really sounds like something.

E.G.W.: Community dinner – un-huh.

T.W.: You see, you were isolated from the towns for the most part all winter.

E.G.W.: There's nothing in town. There were no theatres – that is if you went into Genesee.

L.C.: There was no radio at home and no television at home. There was nothing.

E.G.W.: You read at home.

L.C.: Yes, you read at home but there was no–

E.G.W.: And in the town of Genesee there was no –

L.C.: Because the first radio I heard was when I taught the Snow School down here. And then you put on earphones and listened. And ^{that} was the first radio I'd ever heard.

SAM: Where'd all the dishes and plates and everything come from? Would the families bring them? Did they get them off the cookwagon?

T.W.: Usually that was the way it started. But by the time Lola taught there was a

bunch of that stuff at the schoolhouse at a kitchenette connected with the schoolhouse.

L.C.: They had a kitchenette.

E.G.W.: A school that I mentioned that we had all these good games and this good singer, they brought their own dishes. Everybody brought their own.

T.W.: It'd be like a potluck; it'd be like a potluck.

E.G.W.: Everybody brought his own plate, knife, and fork and they usually didn't bring anything very fancy – not their best china for sure.

T.W.: You always ate though. Everything you did, you ate.

L.C.: Oh sure, that was the main thing. Here I'll read you a reminiscence from Johnny – Jack Platt. "Lola, I don't remember I've ever seen you since you taught us at Gray Eagle and I thought you were swell. The only time I ever – I think that you ever really took us to task was when we stold some matches from the kitchen so we could go out and smoke mullan leaves. Shame, shame," he says. "The kids now have gone on to far greater stuff. Good luck to you." And that's from Jack.

T.W.: Yah, Jack was quite a character.

L.C.: Yah. He stold matches and went out and smoked the mullan leaves.

SAM: Would the little kids sit up and watch the adults then?

E.G.W.: Yeh, and any that were too small they would put down a quilt or coats or something on top of the desks and you'd lay them down, they'd go to sleep. And they'd sleep right there while the folks were out there on the floor.

T.W.: Every kid, every family, every hired man, everybody in the whole neighborhood came, unless they were sick in bed and usually they came then. And these kids– the school desks were here and they'd rick'em up like cordwood on the side of the room.

And they slept – or some did – and some of 'em ran around all night.

L.C.: Yah, like my granddaughter OreAnn would run all night.

T.W.: And you never saw any bottles but you saw lots of bosoms because all these little kids had to be fed. And you didn't go out in twenty below zero weather to feed 'em.

Ladies kinda demurely sat over in the ladies side of the room, more or less. And very

graciously and gently, sort of stuck their little baby's head in underneath the blouse or something and nourished it.

L.C.: At a Mother's Day school program, and this will slay you -- It was a good morning community where I was teaching and we invited the mothers in to tea. Well in the middle of the tea time the little babies were getting hungry, so mothers just sat there -- openly, and unashamedly and proudly nursed their babies.

T.W.: That's the way to do it, yah.

L.C.: And some of these elderly ladies that were critic teachers there -- oh, they looked down their noses. "How rude and how vulgar." I said, "Gals, this is Mothers' Day. These mothers were just exercising the first privilege of motherhood." And I said, "I'm for it." Those babies needed refreshments far more than these big, fat, old teachers sitting around there looking down their noses. And, I was right.

T.W.: Well, another interesting thing about it was to the kids -- most of the grade school kids -- it wasn't worth looking at. And as soon as you thought ^{that} it was worth looking at, why then you had been so well indoctrinated that you were afraid and you didn't know what direction to look. And your face turned red if you even opened your eyes.

SAM: Well, I would guess it must have been a real good chance and place for courting too. That the -- that sort of thing.

T.W.: Well, there was so much embarrassment with courting that little tiny kids, maybe about four or five, would go around with their arms around each other. I know a case or two like this. And the little boy would say, "I'm going to marry 'er." But the young guys -- oh, twelve, thirteen, fourteen, fifteen, sixteen on up to twenty, they're pretty shy about this and scared of one another. But then the schoolmom and the leading bachelor, they got pretty -- a -- what would you say? Pretty bold? Pretty erogant? Pretty flamboyant?

L.C.: Some of them did. Some of them. Not me! Don't look my way! (laughing) Some

of them may have. I understood that several of them did in the past. But with me - I was well chaperoned by Grandma Wahl.

SAM: But I would think that the games - when you have all these chances to pick your partner and let other people know how you feel about a girl.

T.W.: Oh, yeh. This was quite a thrill, quite a thrill if the pretty little redheaded girl dropped a handkerchief, even, behind you and got you to chase her.

E.G.W.: Well, yes, now you'd think so but thinking of this -

T.W.: Then there was another where they touched you too, wasn't there? Instead of a handkerchief they patted you or something?

E.G.W.: That's different. That's, of course, an outdoors game. He's talking about these party games. He'd rather have the party games.

T.W.: Well, we did a lot of those inside.

E.G.W.: Well, now I was thinking now of this school that I'm talking about, this ^{is not} Gray Eagle, this is Mt. Tomer. Of all the chances, as you would say, for courting only - there was only - one marriage among any of those people. ^{That was} Ed Nelson and Helen Erickson and they were - later years when they were grown up, they married but -

SAM: I'm surprised.

E.G.W.: - the rest of them married elsewhere.

T.W.: Well, you have no notion of the economic problem that people faced. The problem of - if you got married you were going to have kids and you had to be able to support 'em and you had to have a roof over their heads. And there wasn't a whole bunch of old houses around so that you could go in with your long whiskers, you know, an -

L.C.: (laughs) and they didn't have the pill in those days.

T.W.: No, they didn't. So you were going to have kids and you gonna have't have a place to support 'em. And on a dollar a day if you were lucky enough to get a job.

SAM: She describes in here - this woman, Mrs. Ball - how when they - the parents - well, she's making it funny - but they'd be dancing along at the play parties and

then everybody would break t'eat after quite a while. And ^{it} said, "Parents could always tell which couples were thinking of marrying by noticing the ^{last} two or three couples on the floor, three or four games after everybody else is finished. They don't even seem to notice that everyone's eating. Then they start thinking, 'Well, am I gonna have't give -', the father thinks, 'am I gonna have to give my son the best cow or can I get away with less than that?' And mother thinks, 'Boy, I finally saved up enough linen and I got all the table cloths I need. And now its all going to go again.' "

T.W.: Most girls had hope chests that they kept adding to.

E.G.W.: But this is, as I say, was the only one resulted in marriage at all and they were grown and gone from the community for a long time before. Well, let's go now to some more of those old games so he'll get them straight. Let's see, we said, "Skip to My Lou" and we said, "Happy is the Miller Boy." Did we say that one?

L.C.: Yeh.

SAM: Um-hum. Um-hum.

E.G.W.: And we said "Needle's Eye" and -

L.C.: "Kept the Pig in the Parlor."

E.G.W.: - and "Kept the Pig in the Parlor" and I don't think we got that one very well. I think I'd have to write these out before I could do - what?

T.W.: You had somebody in a pen in that, didn't ya? The "It" was in the pen?

E.G.W.: Yes.

T.W.: You circled around him -

L.C.: I know about -a-

SAM: "Old Dan Tucker." I've heard of it.

L.C.: "Old Dan Tucker." "Get out of the way for Old Dan Tucker, you're too late to get your supper." And its like "My Dog Rover" - what was that dog? "The dog lay on the back porch and his name was - "

E.G.W.: Oh that was awful. We didn't like that one. "Bingo."

L.C.: Yah, "B-I-N-G-O. The farmer's dog lay on the back porch and Bingo was his name." Go ahead Tommy.

T.W.: The Chautauquas, when they came in, they introduced a lot of these acting games. That is, you acted out a fairy story or something.

E.G.W.: But that wasn't the kind you played in the old schoolhouse.

SAM: That's interesting – that's interesting though. The Chautauqua is something I've heard a little about but I think it's real interesting because it seems to have brought in a whole lot of new ideas from other places. That was a regular circuit that they had. I've heard of Chautauqua, New York where it originated.

E.G.W.: Oh, is that where it originated?

T.W.: Well, yah, it was a non-profit thing. The people that ran these here were Ellis and White. Ellis and White Chautauquas. They went by that name. But in order to get one in your town you had to have enough citizens sign-up – pledge a certain amount of money or they wouldn't come. And a lot of them got stuck. And I guess it happened often enough that they sorta died a natural death. But a certain amount of public spirited people, when things were a little bit prosperous, would sponsor the Chautauqua. But I think the Depression is what ended them. I don't believe they came during and after the Depression.

E.G.W.: No.

SAM: What would the main features of them be here?

T.W.: Oh, they'd put on a, you know, they'd stay what, two weeks? At least a week.

L.C.: Yeh. At least a week or ten days.

T.W.: Yah. And they would have programs all day, nearly, didn't they? And lectures, and plays, and music and, you know, all the things that – They had a tent usually with a stage in it. Then there was usually someone with the troupe delegated to take care of

the kids and keep them out from underfoot. And they entertained these kids by teaching them games.

E.G.W.: A man who I heard lecture there was Pvt. Pete who was a soldier in the First World War. And he gave a lecture.

T.W.: He was a writer. He wrote a book and sold his books after the lecture.

E.G.W.: Yes, un-huh. Now what else was there that was good?

T.W.: Well, there was one man came from Australia describing the land, the country, the aborigines, the people and so forth. And one of the things that he did that fascinated all the kids was, if you brought a heavy piece of cardboard, he would cut out of it a boomerang that would work.

E.G.W.: Oh.

T.W.: And so this was a big deal.

E.G.W.: Yes. And then I heard two young girls, I suppose maybe high school age. And they interpreted James Whitcomb Riley. And I think they played a little on a piano to go with this.

T.W.: There was a Dr. Miles that lectured there and by some hook or by crook, he gave the same lecture at two different years. The same man in the same town. The name of his lecture was "The Tallow Dip."

E.G.W.: Oh, yeh.

T.W.: And the tallow dip, of course, - course, first thing he explained was that one lady, one time, ^{that} was so glad to meet him because, "I've been taking your pills, Dr. Miles, for the last twenty years." But he said, "I'm not the pill man." And then the tallow dip was the old candle, of course, made of tallow by dipping a string in tallow. And I don't know quite - I've kinda forgotten what the point was of this. But it was... - I don't know what. There was some significance to using that for the title. I've forgotten it through the years.

E.G.W.: Then there were good singers. Quite a group of lady singers. I can remember

real lovely, fine singers.

L.C.: And William Jennings Bryan toured the Chautauqua too.

T.W.: They had some good performers, well known people.

SAM: What about the plays that you mentioned came along with that?

T.W.: Well, I can name a few of them. ^{of 'em} One was "Cappie Ricks". Another one was the –
was it "The Pinafore?" Kind of an operetta?

L.C.: Yah, "H.M.S."

T.W.: Oh, one I believe – I think that they dramatized "Tolden Hills" there one time, a novel
of that period. But I'm not certain. That could have been a separate thing.

SAM: But then you say this had an effect on the kind of games that people played at –

T.W.: Well, this was the entertainment they did to keep the kids out of the road. That's
when the games came in. While the parents were listening to a lecture that the kids
couldn't hardly stand, why somebody was out on the playfield – or several people out
in the park teaching the little kids these games.

SAM: These were new games, not like – ?

E.G.W.: No, not the traditional thing.

T.W.: They were more an acting well known fairy story. One of the best ones was "Snow –".

Well, the one where the –

E.G.W.: "Sleeping Beauty."

T.W.: "Sleeping Beauty." Yah.

E.G.W.: Yah, sorta get the kids acting in little plays.

T.W.: The kids all go through this. They sang, they sang songs.

E.G.W.: But we never –

L.C.: That's the woman that came out to your school and saw them do it. This Mrs. Ball.

E.G.W.: Oh, I see, un-huh. Well, boy, it's been really –

L.C.: Here she talks about it. And this is just exactly the way it was at your school. Because
the teacher came out after the school program and said, "Now this ends our little

program." And she thought it was over but the fun had just started in then.

E.G.W.: Oh, yes.

L.C.: So you're the one that came out and told them. See?

E.G.W.: Oh, yes.

L.C.: Because that's Mrs. Ball and she went out to your school and saw them do it.

E.G.W.: Well, she couldn't have come to a better place because ^{when} we had Oliver Hill out there it was done and done right.

L.C.: No. That's when they had it. She did, she went out to your school and saw it.

E.G.W.: Now then, the "Virginia Reel" - that usually is a square dance and you play violin music for this. But we had it at Mt. Tomer where you could sing to it because they were against dancing there. And I don't remember just how that went. Can you remember any of the words of the "Virginia Reel?"

T.W.: No, no. I don't think I can.

L.C.: And they clap (claps).

E.G.W.: Un-huh.

L.C.: Yah, they did a lot of clapping. When you dos-a-dosed, you know. You ran down this way and you dos-a-dosed and came back this way. And then you swung your partner again. You skipped the length of the way.

T.W.: Oh, yes!

E.G.W.: Yes, I know now. Now your partner would stand beside you -

L.C.: -opposite you.

E.G.W.: - and the one - yes - there was -

L.C.: -two long lines.

E.G.W.: To hurry and get it going, a man in charge could just line up all the boys on one side and all the girls, ^{the} /other side. And this would be your partner. Maybe you didn't want that partner at all, but it didn't make any difference to start the game quickly. And they would say, "A right hand swing with your best likeness". Your "best

likeness" was diagonally across from you and at the far end, you see. So "a right hand swing with your best likeness, a left hand swing with your best likeness, a right hand swing with your best likeness, you're the one my darling." And you came back to your place. And then "Dos-a-dos with your best likeness." And your "best likeness" wasn't even a corner, you see. It would be the one a way diagonally down from you.

L.C.: Yah, that's right.

E.G.W.: "A dos-a-dos with your best likeness, dos-a-dos with your best likeness. You're the one my darling." And you'd go through this whole thing just by singing this, and you couldn't really call it a dance. You called it a game. But it was "Virginia Reel."

T.W.: We did run through "Skip to My Lou," didn't you?

E.G.W.: Yes.

SAM: It's funny. It just seems like without the music, I'm so accustomed to thinking of having music with any kind of dance that I think of, that the idea of being able to do it without music. It must have been really -

E.G.W.: Well, they all sang.

T.W.: Then they all sang. The words were simple and you all knew 'em.

E.G.W.: And this man in our community had this big voice, a splendid singer. He could - oh, he could just sing anything and everybody followed after him. And there was lots of music there without instrumental music.

T.W.: (singing) "Flies in the sugar bowl, two by two. Flies in the sugar bowl, two by two."

L.C.: You got it!

T.W.: "Flies in the sugar bowl, two by two. Skip to my Lou, my darling." And that's about all there was to it.

L.C.: You got it now. That's right.

SAM: I'd like to -

T.W.: "Gone again, what'll I do?" I don't remember how you played it though. But the

partner was gone anyway.

L.C.: Yah. Yah, you- there was one extra one always and you came and swung with this one, see? And that left that other one out, see? That one you stood by - partners in a big circle - partners. And then/when the one that was "It" in the circle came up and took your partner, then you had to get out in the circle and go and swing somebody. Then that left that girl. And sometimes they'd run all the way around the circle and then pick somebody and then that left an extra person when that one -

E.G.W.: Just a way of mixing.

L.C.: Oh yeah.

E.G.W.: A mixer. What you'd call - you know dances they call 'em a mixer? Well, this would be a mixer. The one in the middle would come and choose a different partner.

L.C.: Yes, un-huh.

SAM: Well, I was wondering about the marriage customs. Were they - were there differences the way it was then and now? I'm sure the courting was different because the attitudes about it were different.

T.W.: Well, for one thing, a horse didn't run off the road - when you're in a buggy. He knew the way home. You didn't have to park.

E.G.W.: Well, now I can tell you a wedding that took place when I was in the grade schools. The oldest daughter in the family, an older sister to this man that was such a good singer - could keep the program going. She was, I guess, about twenty-two and the young man from the community and he was about twenty-three. And one day, the children of my age didn't appear at school. And somebody said, "Martha is getting married today." And so as we came by the home of the bride that night - the Hill House - we looked up there and here we saw all the kids that we were in school with all dressed up. Everyone was dressed up and the two boys had on their kneepants, you know. That was their best suits. You didn't wear long pants. The pants came to the knees. And we knew that the wedding had been right there that day but just a family wedding. it was.

and right in the home. And the minister from the Lutheran Church had come out.

Well, this young woman, her uncle was a minister but whether he was in Moscow at that time or not, I won't know. But anyway, the wedding was a home wedding. Many more home weddings and not much church weddings.

L.C.: That's right. It was mostly home weddings.

E.G.W.: Home weddings. Church weddings were expensive.

T.W.: We could stand a little bit of description about knee –

(end of side B)

T.W.: Well, Jim Cameron liked to describe how he looked. He said, "I always had a big stomach. And they always had knee pants. I always had knee pants". And he said, "I looked just like a toad. I always looked just like a toad." And you look at Jim while he told this and you could kinda believe it. He was convincing.

But these were quite a style. There was a little button and a tab on the bottom of these pants and you were either supposed to either have that buttoned above your knee or below your knee. And nobody ever was sure – so usually you had one above one knee and one below the other knee. And then, of course, you couldn't have your bare legs down underneath so you had long stockings that pinned up onto something up above. Now some of those things were called pantywaists – and they had little garters.

L.C.: That's where "pantyaist" came from.

T.W.: That's where – yah – and some of these pantywaists had a little kind of a rubber biscuit on the end of a thing with a sort of a bitch-links slipped up over the biscuit. You stuck the biscuit up through the stocking and you slipped this up over it there. And that was supposed to suffice and all kinds of ingenious devices for fastening up your stocking. Now one way was a safety pin that fastened onto your long woolen winter underwear up here someplace. And the other end had one of those biscuits and bitch links on the lower end.

But, of course, usually something was held up with the little safety pins.

by pinning the safety pin through the stocking and through your long part of your underwear and that left the biscuit with the bitch link hanging down out of the bottom end of your knickers or your – whatever you called them.

E.G.W.: Kneepants!

T.W.: And more often than not, if you played these games with any enthusiasm at all, something happened to the stockings – usually just one leg at a time, you know, and the stocking would dangle down around the top of your shoe. Of course, if you had high shoes, it didn't handicap you much. But if the biscuit was still hanging on and the safety pin came loose, why that kinda made a tail and if people stepped on them when you were playing "Drop the Handkerchief" why it slowed you down momentarily.

L.C.: That'd be no good.

T.W.: ^{But} In spite of that, that was the only real bad thing that happened to boys in my youth – was that when you were dressed up you had to wear these – these knee pants. Otherwise you could wear bib overalls and have fun. But a –

SAM: You went there to the parties – you were supposed to get dressed up in these kneepants?

T.W.: You were supposed to, although in the country schools kids got to wear overalls quite a bit. The mothers even got tired of these – trying to keep these things repaired and in working order, 'cept Mrs. Braizer.

E.G.W.: She just had one child.

T.W.: She just had one kid and he had to wear stuff that I wouldn't of been caught dead in.

L.C.: You wouldn't of been caught dead in it!

SAM: Was this an Eastern style, you think?

T.W.: No, this was all Western. Well, I don't know where it came from.

E.G.W.: That's where it started.

T.W.: It was the only kind of pants you could buy. You couldn't – boys couldn't have long pants 'til they were sixteen. Now I don't know why that was. And if it was a real do^uing mother she might wait till he was seventeen. Howard Schooler got his first pair of

long pants, I think, when you were there, didn't he?

L.C.: I think so, yes. Un-huh.

T.W.: No, by gosh, he had to borrow mine. His mother wouldn't let him. And I got mine because my cousin was older than I was and I inherited them.

L.C.: That was a practical – that was a practical, sensible way to do it.

T.W.: And Howard got to wear mine because he was in a play. And I was sure mad at him too, 'cause I wanted to wear them. It was the only pair of long pants in the neighborhood.

L.C.: Oh, dear. Oh, dear.

SAM: When would people get married mostly? About what age?

T.W.: Well, when the girl was about sixteen and the man was ^{about} thirty.

E.G.W.: That was earlier. That was earlier that they married about those ages. But this couple that I remember, wouldn't you – Matha was about twenty-two and wasn't Carl about twenty-three? Wouldn't you say?

L.C.: I think so.

E.G.W.: Not more than twenty-five. And that was the only wedding that happened around

there. ^{T.W.:} Now in my generation, very few girls wanted to get married because that was only for people that didn't have any talent. The girls were all thinking about a career.

SAM: They were?

E.G.W.: Well, this was a little before that too, yah.

SAM: When you were young?

T.W.: You see in my – my high school –

SAM: That would have been when? In the '20's?

T.W.: '29. There was one girl that got married, Muriel Oyer, Merle Oyer, and everybody thought, "Oh, gosh, isn't that awful! She's such a smart girl too. Oh, isn't that awful."

L.C.: I'll tell you a worse one than that. Somebody came home and told Leota Canfield that they heard that one of the gals was engaged. "Why", she said, "engaged!? I didn't even know she was pregnant yet."

E.G.W.: Of course, that was more the recent days. That was more the recent days.

T.W.: Yah, when I was in high school, there was a girl didn't come back to school the next year. And it was whispered around, "She committed suicide." Nobody ever said why but everybody kinda wondered. It was that serious, getting pregnant without having caught the man.

E.G.W.: Yah, it was that serious. That was bad. Uah, but I was thinking though of a – the time like when I was small, in the grades. Now that's the only wedding that I can think of, was –

L.C.: Now I remember when Bertha Jones got married and they came out in a buggy. And the minister came later and the minister lost his way. And he went over to Mrs. Anderson's place, way down in there. And Mr. Anderson was out cleaning out the barn and he stuck his head out through the manure hole and the minister said, "Is this the home where they're having the wedding today?" He said, "No." He said, "We've had too many weddings here already." And he banged the manure door shut *on him*.

E.G.W.: Just the one man himself – he'd had one. His own.

T.W.: Well, what usually happened, the girl – well, some of them, got married young – but, usually, the girl, if she was going onto school, she went and taught school or she got a job. Or she worked in somebody's house for awhile and didn't get married until later.

E.G.W.: Well, this young lady had graduated from the eighth grade and lots of times they didn't go onto high school a-tall. Eighth grade was real good, if you got through that. And then she had done, as you say, gone in and worked in town for a Doctor Valenda, I guess. Did you know – Fernanda, or –? Well, anyway, that's the one. She went in and worked in his home.

T.W.: I know him. I took chemistry from him.

E.G.W.: Yah, that's the man. She worked in his home, I think. Or some home in town, anyway. And then when she got up to a suitable age, she married this neighbor boy she'd been going with. And they'd been going to church together too. They were Lutherans.

SAM: I must say, I'm surprised to hear you say that young women were thinking of careers when you were in high school.

E.G.W.: Yes, and that would be in the thirties. That would be –

T.W.: She taught school years before she got married. So did Lola. And years after she was married.

E.G.W.: Yes, then I was going to say about Mary Alice. Mary Alice was a young woman in high school with Tom and she said, "When a girl –", well, she graduated in '30. Huh? '29?

T.W.: '29, She graduated with me, '29 with me. She graduated early. And like so many others, she went to Normal School long enough to get her teaching certificate. Typical.

E.G.W.: Right. And she said, you know, that they'd said when there was a group of them together– say, "She's, so-and-so," – naming so-and-so – "she's getting married." "She's getting married!?" Doesn't she have any talent?" See? It was the last thing to do. The last thing to do.

T.W.: There were a few girls that were set on marriage.

E.G.W.: Yah, but not very many.

SAM: When do you think this idea came in? Because now–a–days we tend to think of it as sort of a new idea, but I know it isn't, from what you're saying. You know, the idea of a woman having a career of her own other than just being –

T.W.: Now she has a career because she wants things. Then she had to have a career because she wanted to eat. There was that much difference.

E.G.W.: Yes. And also there was no money.

T.W.: Now it's your standard of living. Then it was almost survival. That is, you had to get out of the family home pretty quick.

SAM: But most of the mothers of the girls hadn't been teachers too, had they?

T.W.: Yes, most of them had done something.

E.G.W.: Well, another thing too. A lot of these mothers had had so many children and such an awful hard life of cooking and raising these children. And they just hated to see their

girls go into something they thought would be like this. And they thought it would be so much better if the girls would have a career.

T.W.: If you got married and had a kid, you were trapped for the rest of your life, that's the way the mother's taught their daughters. And there was some justification too.

E.G.W.: Yes. Yes. You were just stuck.

SAM: Well, of course, these were mostly the children of the people who were more or less the pioneers -

E.G.W.: Right, right.

T.W.: Well, it was the children of the generation after the pioneers.

E.G.W.: Yah. Like your grandfather would have been the original pioneer, then your father and people of that age would be speaking against marriage.

T.W.: See, now, my grandfather came into this country in 1879, just as an example and it's quite typical of everyone. He had thirteen kids and times got so hard that even with the free land and all, it was just the problem of clothing and feeding those kids. And then by the time those kids were raised or some maybe just a little older, like say my mother for example. She sure thought that this was awfully foolish to a - for a woman, as she said, to make a brood-sow out of herself. And to have all these children which you couldn't provide for yourself or your kids. And you can go up to the cemetery in Moscow here right now and you'll see - it's not hard to find a family name, baby after baby, after baby, after baby buried one year after -

L.C.: There's four little babies all in a row.

T.W.: Yah, there's one good one -

L.C.: That's Steffans, four little babies all in a row.

E.G.W.: So you can see why then these mothers then taught their daughters, "Have a career. Don't get married. Make your own living. Make your own way."

T.W.: At least until you had a start. That was the idea. To have a start. Now my dad, just for the example, the difference between us. My generation, most kids didn't even think

of going on to college. A lot of them didn't finish high school and they didn't have to either. But, my dad, he thought very highly of an education because he saw how handicapped he was without it. He'd only gone to the fourth grade, I think. And at one time later, he got, at his own expense, got to take some high school courses in the winter time. With me, now, I went to college for three years and then had to quit. And Donald, he didn't even – that's the brother of this Mary Alice – he didn't get to go to college. He went to Normal School and got a teacher's certificate which he could get in two years. And so did his sister Mary Alice. And so did you girls, didn't you?

E.G.W.: One year. You could get it in one year.

T.W.: You got your teacher's certificate first and then went to college later at your own expense. And so many people did. Oh, many of ^{the} guys I went to college with were doing it the same way. They were older than I was.

SAM: But how much opportunity was really open to women as far as the different choices they could make? It seems like most of you became teachers.

E.G.W.: Well, they could do this: they could teach; or they could be librarians; or they ^{could} – well, this would be teaching too – but give music lessons, teach that; they could be a seamstress; they could make hats, work in a millinery store.

T.W.: And of course, all of them dreamed of going to Hollywood and being in the movies.

L.C.: They say, you know, all of the "It Girls." "We could all have been Clara Bows if we hadn't given it up for George and the children."

SAM: That was pretty strong, then? And then people were really influenced by the movies, were they?

T.W.: Oh, it was the only thing! It was – it was Fairyland. It was THE thing, wasn't it? I don't know of anything now that corresponds to what the glamor of the movies.

L.C.: Well, Elisabeth and I – we were both going to be English teachers and we would have been good ones.

E.G.W.: No. I was going to be a writer.

L.C.: Oh.

E.G.W.: But I never got a chance to be that. Because just about the time I sat down to write one sentence, then I'd have to get up and chase the pigs or cook some food or something, see. But that was in my mind that I would make my living writing short stories of the lives of people around me.

T.W.: If she'd have ever got started at that she'd have never have raised her one chick, or had it even.

E.G.W.: That's right. That's right. Yah, that was my idea.

SAM: Well, it sounds like that when you get right down to it, though, there weren't that many different possibilities that women could do, not compared to the way it is now.

T.W.: Teaching, teaching was the main out if you were a smart, intelligent woman. And marriage was about what was left for the stragglers.

E.G.W.: Well, sewing though. You know, you could sew.

T.W.: Yah. Some of them had a talent.

E.G.W.: Some of them.

T.W.: And, of course, there's a lot of people attracted by the entertainment field. There're a lot of modeling. The girls that had the – whatever it takes.

E.G.W.: Yes, and running little shops – ready-to-wear shops.

T.W.: Yah, yah, that was done. Yes. Clerking too. Clerking in a store.

E.G.W.: Clerking, clerking in a store.

L.C.: Well, I was going to be a teacher and I went down to Albion Normal and saw the old women, seventy-five years old still teaching. And everybody was saying about them, "When are they gonna die? Aren't they ever going to die?" The kids would say to me, you know. Oh, and I said, "I'd better hurry home before Dad – before Earl Clyde – changes his mind."

T.W.: Teaching – about two generations earlier, teaching was a man's name – man's (EW:Job) field. They were the – that was the pioneer generation. It was a school master then. But a – in my time, school teaching was a woman's job. Almost reserved for women.

You almost (Break)

Main, what would you call it?

L.C.: Social Season.

T.W.: The social season always occurred when farm work was not going too strongly. Usually in the fall of the year after harvest and everybody had a little money. But it did occur other times in the year too. Farm auctions – they still have them. Still the same thing. When you went out of business, that's the way you did it.

E.G.W.: Fall was a good time for farm auctions. Change farms or even when you wanted to get rid of surplus stuff. *At an auction.*

T.W.: Yes, my dad had a sale and I had one too, just to get rid of stuff that was obsolete as far as you were concerned.

SAM: But it turned out to be a real important part of the social life then too, to be able to get together with your neighbor?

T.W.: Well, you saw your neighbors; you got acquainted with people from further away. Yah, that was part of it. In those days, of course, these sales all furnished a free lunch at noon. But since the Depression that ended. Too many people came for the free lunch and crowded out the buyers.

L.C.: But all the ladies would go and sit in each others' cars and in the old days in the buggies and they'd sit and visit with each other and got acquainted. I think it was quite the social season for the women.

T.W.: Yah, I sure loved them as a kid.

L.C.: And you got a few miles away from home. Even if you just went over the hill, you'd never been over the hill. You didn't know what was over there. And that was great stuff to get in the buggy and go over.

T.W.: For example, we went to a sale out in the Tammany country, I guess, how that Tammany is south of Lewiston. Or at least it was in the Lewiston Orchards. And we went from our farm near Genesee – that's twenty miles from Lewiston – we went down the day before.

We went out to the sale and then we came home either that night or the next day. That was by team, of course, you see, so -

E.G.W.: Have you been to some of the auction sales around? They're just the same, just the same thing. Auctioneers stand ^{ing} up with his -

T.W.: Except that there was always the stock, the livestock, and the cattle and the horses. Horses, of course, -

E.G.W.: Oh, it was pretty - it was just like being to a stock show.

T.W.: - were always quite attractive. That was your motive power for farming. So lots and lots of times there was - they always kept the horses till ^{the} last because that would hold the crowd. Everybody came to either see how the horses sold or to buy an extra horse or buy a good horse or get a mate for one ^{that} he had or some such thing. And harness. Gus still can't go to a sale without bidding on harness.

SAM: You grew up there by Genesee then?

T.W.: Yeh, um-hum.

SAM: So you probably have strong memories of the stock show and all that?

T.W.: Yah. Of course, Gus would remember that better than I would but I was about - ah, in the grades then when the stock shows were going. That was along about - well - before World War I.

E.G.W.: They had lovely stock shows more recently in Uniontown (Wash.) though.

T.W.: But these were the big things out there where the mill now is. Where the pond is. Where they've got their -

E.G.W.: Oh, in Lewiston, you mean.

T.W.: Yah. The Lewiston Stock Shows. That was the big deal. That's where the Platt boys always took their cattle.

SAM: I was thinking of the Genesee Stock Show.

T.W.: Well, yah. I remember them too. They were a little bit overshadowed when they had the Lewiston ones though.

L.C.: Yah. We heard Bob Gray, you know, telling the other day about how he polished off Greasy Davis' horses and brought them in to the stock show. He had to curry them and wash them and trim their hooves.

T.W.: I was pretty young when they had the Genesee stock shows. That was when Mildred was – that was before I went to school so my memories are not too good of it. Five, I think, I was about five years old then.

E.G.W.: Uniontown had dandy stock shows just up until, oh, twenty years ago, or so.

T.W.: Yah, since we were in Pullman they had some.

L.C.: I need a good chair to sit in because –

SAM: Would you say the old – that horse trading was real – was that the kind of thing men talked about?

T.W.: Oh, there was a lot of horse trading. Now Gus is a better – I didn't get in on much of the horse trading. But Gus can tell you about horse trading. Tell him about the horse that – wasn't it? – who was it? Was it Chuck Sands? The horse, you know, that his hindend would get ahead of his front end? Do you –

GUS GAMBLE:

Oh, yes.

T.W.: How did he have him rigged up? Did he have him in a buggy with shafts on each side so he couldn't turn around?

G.G.: Yah. He had him cinched right up there so, by God, he couldn't turn around.

T.W.: And traded – you traded him the one that wasn't any good either, didn't you?

G.G. Yes. He bought two sixes that swam. And –(fades) – Yes, he traded off to me in the barn over at Whiskey Pete's and he said, "It's such a nice horse." So – and ^{he} A said, "Gentle?" "Yes!" "And you can ride it?" – "Oh, yes" and he jumps right on its backside in the barn, yes. But the damn thing, it had a flounder – or – its hindlegs were shot.

End of side C

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