

INTERVIEW SUMMARY-TAPE INDEX

NAME: Mabel Morris  
 DATE OF INTERVIEW: 4-26-75  
 LOCATION:  
 INTERVIEWER: Isabel Miller

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END

IM: I'm Isabel Miller and I'm at Mabelle Morris's house in Elk River today on the 26th of April in 1975. We're going to ask Mrs. Morris some questions about how her life has been here in Elk River. Do you live here with your son and his wife?

MM: They live with me.

IM: They live with you in your home?

MM: Yes, in my home.

IM: How long have you lived here?

MM: Well, this house was built in '24, but we came up to Elk River in 1910.

IM: Did you and your husband build this house?

MM: Yes.

IM: So it's your plan and everything?

MM: Yes.

IM: Okay, we'll start out with this personal data record and then we'll just get this information and then we'll go into the other questions.

IM: Your full name?

MM: Mabelle Morris.

IM: And what was your maiden name?

MM: Nickell.

IM: Have you ever had a nickname?

MM: Not anymore. My sister used to call me Bobo. I've often wondered where she got it. She called me that for a number of years -- Bobo.

IM: When were you born?

MM: July 26, 1887.

IM: Where were you born?

MM: Rockwood, Ontario.

IM: What is your address here?

MM: Just Elk River.

IM: When you first came to Idaho, did you come directly to Elk River?

MM: No, I worked in the post office in Potlatch.

IM: And you came directly then, from Ontario?

MM: No, I lived in Duluth for a year before I came to Elk River.

IM: And did you work there?

MM: No, I stayed with an uncle and a sister.

IM: So, what year was it when you arrived in Idaho?

MM: 1907.

IM: How did you travel?

MM: By train.

IM: Was there anyone with you?

MM: No, I came by myself.

IM: What was your mother's maiden name?

MM: Eupheia Campbell.

IM: Do you know when she was born?

MM: No, offhand I can't tell you.

IM: Did she have any occupations?

MM: She was just a housewife.

IM: Do you know where she was born?

MM: She was born in Dornch [?], Ontario.

IM: What year did she die?

MM: 1959.

IM: Do you know what year she was married?

MM: No, but I can look it up and tell you; I've got the Bible in there that tells.

IM: And your father's name?

MM: John Robert Nickell.

IM: What was his occupation?

MM: He was a farmer. He built bridges, too, in construction. He did live on a farm, but he had Ben to look after it.

IM: So, he really had a profession other than farming. An engineer or contractor?

MM: Well, I couldn't tell you what he had in those days because I don't know whether they did have those. But I do know that he was a construction man. He was building bridges all over the country back there.

IM: Do you know when he was born?

MM: I'd have to look it up, I'm not sure.

IM: Where was he born?

MM: In Limehouse, Ontario.

IM: And when did he die?

MM: That's another thing I'd have to look up because I just can't recall.

IM: Did you have brothers and sisters?

MM: I had four sisters.

IM: Can you tell me their first names?

MM: Minnie E. Nickell who is living, she's the oldest, she's 90 now.

IM: Did she marry?

MM: No, she was a dietician; that was her profession until she retired. And Colleena Rachel Nickell, she passed away; she was a dietician also; she wasn't married.

IM: She's the one you traveled with for a while?

MM: Yes. And then I'm next, and then there's Marjorie Frazier Mann. She's married and lives up in Saskatchewan. And Margaret Ames and she passed away; I can't tell you what date, but it was Easter and I don't know the year.

IM: Did you have brothers?

MM: No, no brothers.

IM: Your husband's name?

MM: William George.

IM: When was he born?

MM: December 15; I'm not sure of the date, I'd have to look it up.

IM: What was his occupation?

MM: Druggist.

IM: Do you know where he was born?

MM: In Farmington, Iowa.

IM: Where were you married?

MM: In Spokane, the First Presbyterian Church in Spokane.

IM: And what date were you married?

MM: December 7, 1909.



IM: And when did your husband die?

MM: It was in '46, October 5th.

IM: How many children have you had?

MM: Just two. Mrs. Chester Yangel.

IM: What was her first name?

MM: Lillian.

IM: Where was she born and when?

MM: In Elk River on January 9, 1912.

IM: Has she had an occupation?

MM: She's a teacher.

IM: Is she still teaching?

MM: No, she hasn't taught for some time.

IM: And then, your son is here?

MM: Yeah, he's a druggist, John Morris.

IM: Was he born in Elk River?

MM: Yes, they were both born here.

IM: And what was the date for him?

MM: May 15, 1918. He was a Lieutenant Colonel in the Air Force.

IM: How much education did you have?

MM: Just high school.

IM: And that was in Ontario?

MM: Yes.

IM: And you worked in the post office as a postmistress?

MM: Yes.

IM: Do you see yourself as having any other skills? Now, you do sewing, quilting, rugmaking, and you clerked in a drugstore?

MM: Yes. I've worked in the drugstore all my life, when it used to be a drugstore.

IM: Yeah, it's just a little bit of everything now.

MM: We've had a hospital and a doctor here for years. Then, when the mill went out, fo course, they couldn't make a living here so he had to move out.

IM: How large was Elk River at its largest?

MM: 1,200.

IM: That's four times now.

MM: We had a lot of beautiful homes here and they moved them all out. There's one or two of them down there in Moscow. And there's one just as you go down the Troy hill, not two new ones, but the one on the other side is an Elk River house. That one just as you go into Deary. that's quite close to the road, that's an Elk River house, too. They are all over the country down there, all kinds of them. There are several of them in Troy.

IM: It had to be a house in good sturdy condition to be able to be moved.

MM: Of course, Potlatch built all those houses and they are all well built.

IM: Is that how Elk River, when the mill came in, it was a mill

town and they built all the houses?

MM: They built practically all of them. Of course, now we built this one ourselves. We bought land and built it, but most of the houses when they were first started were owned by Potlatch.

IM: Did people get it as part of their pay for working in the mill, or did they pay rent?

MM: No, they paid rent. They just built the houses and rented them.

IM: Do you want to tell me about any other skills that you have?

MM: I haven't got any more, I don't think. I always have liked to sew. When I was a little girl, my mother would buy material to make us dresses, I'd snip a piece off and make a doll's dress. That's the way I learned to sew. She used to get awfully mad at me, too, a lot of times I got spanked.

IM: You just couldn't keep your hands off.

MM: I used to cut up handkerchiefs, too. I'd snip it up and make a doll's dress. Mother always said that after I grew up that was the way I learned to sew. I make all my own clothes, I always have.

IM: When your children were growing up you made them?

MM: Yes.

IM: Have you held any other jobs?

MM: No.

IM: Was your husband a druggist when you married him?

MM: Yes, he was a druggist in Potlatch and that's where I met him, in the drugstore. They had a huge store there. They were a great big company store and he worked in there, put a smile on and got the job.

IM: Do you have any other interests or hobbies?

MM: No.

IM: You're a member of the Syringa Homemakers Club?

MM: Yes. I just joined that here a short while ago so I'd have something to do. We used to have a bridge club and we used to have a five hundred club; but, they don't play anymore and I don't know why.

IM: When your children were growing up, did you have Four-H then or anything like that?

MM: No, they had scouts. Mr. Morris had a scouting group.

IM: Did you help with that?

MM: No, I didn't. I never had time. I had to get up in the morning and I had a big garden; all this place back up in here was in garden. I had flowers all around the house. I'd get up in four o'clock in the morning and do that, come in and do my housework, then go to the store and work till eleven o'clock at night. We used to keep the store open until eleven.

IM: What time would you open in the morning?

MM: Sometimes we'd have to open at six o'clock because they'd come to the house and want us. There was always somebody coming to the house and wanting us so went down there, but we generally tried to open up around eight.

IM: Long hours!

MM: Yeah, I'd say they were long hours. Then people wonder and they say, "Oh, you got lots of money!"

IM: Do you remember ever getting any special awards or ribbons

for anything? Did you enter any sewing?

MM: I had a certificate from the President when they were signing up the men for the war. I worked on all of those as a volunteer. I've been on the election board for years and years and years.

IM: This was a certificate of appreciation?

MM: Yes, for war work. And I belonged to the Eastern Star and I belonged to Rebekash. I've been the Matron for the Eastern Star three times; that was a lot of work, too.

IM: Lodges and that kind of thing used to be more important than they are now?

MM: Yes. We don't have anything here anymore. Our lodge has moved to Bovill. They went to Bovill and then they transferred to Deary. In the wintertime, you see, they have vacation during the summer, and in the wintertime the roads weren't good enough, so we just didn't go. I've got my 50 year pin for the Eastern Star. I've been with Rebekah pretty near 55 years, I guess.

IM: Can you think of anything else you'd like to add to that list?

MM: I don't think so.

IM: We talked some last night about the advantages of living in rural areas for what it is right now. In general, as you look back over your whole life, would you by choice come to a rural area again?

MM: Yes, I would. I don't like the city, I dislike the city, I always have.

IM: You were married how long?

MM: Well, Mr. Morris died in '46 and we married in 1909, so it would be the difference of that, when he passed away.

IM: You met him when you were working in Potlatch as a post-mistress; he was a druggist there? I think it would be interesting if you would tell me, now, start out from the time when you were a child in Ontario, just a brief, so I could get the sequence of your life.

MM: There isn't too much that I can tell you. We lived on a farm. I had to walk over a mile to school. We had a creek that went down to our farm; in fact, it bubbled up on the farm. It was ice cold all the time. We always had ice cold water. My father dammed it up and built a milk house and he would churn the butter and make the butter and he had criss cross things that he put the milk in there to keep it cold. There was all kinds of fish in it. When he dammed it up, of course, there wasn't



very much water went down to the stream, and we'd go down there with pails. We always had a bunch of children up there; we had cousins and there would be anywhere from maybe 15, 18 or 20 children there during the summer that were just visiting. We'd take pails and go down and gather up the fish and take them up and put them up in the pond. And then, of course, when they'd open the gates, all the fish would get back out. We used to have more fun on the picnics. Outside of that, I think that's where we spent most of our time as children. There was always a bunch of children there. My mother had two or three sisters and they all had children and everyone of the girls, of course had girl friends, and we were always welcome to bring them home anytime we wanted to. But, when I was real little, that's the way we spent our time -- down there on the creek.

IM: So you have some warm happy memories of your childhood?

MM: I certainly have.

IM: And you stayed there until you graduated from high school?

MM: Yes.

IM: How did you happen to go to Duluth?

MM: I had an uncle there. They had a daughter and she died, and

this uncle always said that I looked like the girl that he lost and he wanted Mother to let me come out for a visit. Then, I stayed for a year. In the meantime, I had another uncle; he was living out here in Potlatch. He was the superintendent of the Woods Department, Tipi Jones. I don't know if you have ever heard of him.

IM: Yes, I have. He was your uncle?

MM: Yes. They were the ones that got me into the post office in Potlatch because they lived out here. So, Aunt Marjorie, she was so lonely out here and she wanted me to come West so I come West. So, that's how I landed in the West.

IM: You got the appointment as postmistress?

MM: I just worked in there. My uncle, Mr. Campbell, was the postmaster at that time and I worked for him.

IM: How long did you work there?

MM: You know, in those days they used to, when the different parties, the Republicans and Democrats, they changed the post office everytime. You remember that, don't you?

IM: There was a change of parties.

MM: Yes. He left the post office and Mr. McDonald, he wanted me to tsay in there but my aunt, she didn't want me to so I ended up as cashier in the store for just a few months until I was married.

IM: This was the department store in Potlatch?

MM: Yes.

IM: How long did your courtship last?

MM: About a year, I guess.

IM: Would you have dates?

MM: Well, he used to walk home with me every night. We bordered with the man who ran the store. We went up to the lumber store.

IM: You both lived in this house?

MM: No, no. His folks lived up there. Mr. Morris's mother and father came out here and Mr. Morris had charge of the furniture department in the store. He used to send me notes by little kids and tell me that his son was coming out and I was just the right girl for him.

IM: He was scouting around for his son and he had a pretty good

idea of what his son liked. That's interesting.

MM: That's why I happened to meet him.

IM: What did clerking in a store involve in those days?

MM: I never did any clerking. I went right into the cashier's office.

IM: Oh, you made change?

MM: I had to make change [unintelligible].

IM: I remember seeing those things.

MM: Men used to put mice in [unintelligible] always playing tricks!

IM: I remember hearing somebody tell that was before the time of adding machines, so you had to add everything up yourself and most women who worked like that became very expert.

MM: I used to be able to add up to three or four hundred in just my mind, but I can't do it anymore. I used to be able to add like that. Sometimes, now if I'm feeling just right, I can do it, when I'm down at the store doing the books. But I can't see very well.

I think I'm getting cataracts on my eyes. And a lot of times, when I'm adding up on the machine down at the store, a lot of times I can't see it very good so I have to add it in my mind.

IM: That's a good point, you know, you're limited by machines. I'll have to tell my son that when he keeps asking for a computer. I'll tell him that it's better if he learned to use his mind. That's more reliable in the long run. When you first got married, do you remember the reasons why you got married?

MM: Just because we liked each other, I guess.

IM: Do you think nearly every woman got married at that time? But your sisters didn't, now did they?

MM: Well, they could have been married several different times, but they liked their work and they stayed with it, I guess.

IM: Do you think they've felt any put downs or any lower status because they weren't married?

MM: I don't think so. They're both well traveled. Both of them have been around the world four or five different times. They just leave in the winter and go out and board a ship. Here are some of the books of the cruises that I was on. They gave me these books at the ship we were on. These are the places we

visited on this one.

IM: And you got off the ship at this port?

MM: Yeah, and then we took trips. We had different trips. When we were in Australia, we took a trip from Melbourne to Sydney and went to all the places that we wanted to visit. We did the same in Japan when we were there.

IM: This was in 1957. You've been to all these places?

MM: Yes. I went over to Hawaii in '48 and that was right after the war, practically, and everything was just as it was during the war. When we went back the next time, why, I wouldn't have known it -- the buildings and all these skyscrapers and one thing or another. It was just horrible. If I ever went back there, I'd never stay in Honolulu. [Narrator and interviewer now look at a different book.] That was an interesting place.

IM: That's something I've always wanted to see.

MM: We enjoyed that very much. We went back there two different times. We saw it in the morning, we saw it at noon and we'd got to see it at night, and it was different every time.

IM: Yes, I think I'd like to do that too. The Taj Mahal is such a romantic ... was it everything you expected it to be?

MM: Yes and more. There was a man here that had been over there during the war and he had a lot of pictures of it, so I had a pretty good idea of what it would be like. I wasn't disappointed in any of it. I liked Japan and I liked India, too.

IM: Were those your two favorite places?

MM: Well, at the time they were, but when we went back the next time, I liked Africa. I really enjoyed Africa.

IM: I saw east Africa here. Have you been in any other part?

MM: No.

IM: That was really some experience.

MM: When we got off the ship, the ship gave us these books so we could have something to show. When we were in Hawaii, I really enjoyed that. I've got some beautiful pictures of Diamond Head in the sunset in there.

IM: You went through San Francisco?

MM: Yeah, this was in Acapulco down in the bay. We stayed there too.

IM: And you've done this another time?

MM: Yes, twice. This is the one of Japan, the Pacific Cruise and that was just lovely.

IM: What a beautiful book!

MM: That one, the paintings in there, they had an artist. Oh, they gave dancing lessons and they gave painting lessons and they gave lessons on playing bridge and everything. I think there is some in there somewhere that they painted for the ... That was interesting, Easter Island.

IM: That, I would like to see too. These are very attractive pictures. I have a feeling that you took advantage of everything they offered, too.

MM: Yeah, I did. Now, she painted these; these are all hand painted.

IM: Did they provide experiences for you to meet Japanese people and go into homes?

MM: Yes, we were entertained in the embassy in Australia and we were entertained in the embassy in Japan. It happened that we knew Mr. Drew, the Canadian man; he was over there visiting the ambassador, so we were entertained there. When we were in England we went to [unintelligible] party at the palace.



IM: So you saw Queen Elizabeth?

MM: Yeah, we saw Queen Elizabeth and the Prince and Margaret and her husband and Princess Alice, I think it ...

IM: That was really an opportunity. Well, let's talk a little bit about Elk River now. What major changes have you seen?

MM: Well, I don't think there are too many things that are good. Because when we had the mill here, there were many men working. In fact, Elk River had one of the biggest payrolls in the Inland Empire when the mill was running. And, of course, when the mill was gone and everything was gone, and now there are only men that work in the woods. And they ship most of their lumber out by train, they haul it out by truck.

IM: So, the profits go somewhere else.

MM: Sure.

IM: What's responsible for the change?

MM: Well, they've got that big mill in Lewiston and everything goes down there now instead of staying in Elk River. They've been sorry ever since that they ever took the mill out of here because they said they were making more money when they had it

here in Elk River. The higher-ups didn't want to live in Elk River; they wanted to live in the city, so they talked them into moving the mill out. When they took most of the machinery out and then they decided to burn it down. They set it on fire in the evening and it was lit up just like the day. And there was a plane that had come over from Spokane. Of course, John was in the air force and he knew how to ... it kept flying over Elk River like it was trying to land; so he knew the signals and everything, so he went out and signalled. Then, they started out towards Spokane when they found out they were in the wrong place [unintelligible] someplace.

IM: Oh, how awful!

MM: You could see clear up on top of the hill, it was just like day light. It made such a terrible fire.

IM: That seems like such a waste.

MM: There wasn't anything left. They took most of the machinery out and they wouldn't let them leave it there so they burned it and that's what happened.

IM: I think you mentioned something last night about the big forest fire.

MM: That was 1910.

IM: Very shortly after you came?

MM: Yes. I've seen many forest fires. In fact, I've seen one that come in back of the school over here. It got down all the way almost to the school and they went and changed it off. We thought sure the whole town was going.

IM: How did you and your husband decide to come to Elk River?

MM: Well, the town was new and this man that run it, when we first were married we went to Yakima and then Mr. Morris worked for a man over there for the man in Yakima. Then, we knew Mr. [unintelligible], the superintendent and he wanted Mr. Morris to come and start the drugstore and so we came. We had two drugstores here at that time. Did I show you the picture? This is the building we were in first. Mr. Morris's father built this building and this was the drugstore and this was Mr. Morris's brother. And he had the hardware store and we lived back here. His mother and father lived here and the other son that run the hardware lived in this part.

IM: And this was in Elk River?

MM: Yes, in Elk River.

IM: That was really an expansive family operation.

MM: So, we stayed here and Mrs. [unintelligible], she lived in Bovill and she had a youngster and she come up here and built a brick building and they only lasted about a year and a half or two years and he bought them up.

IM: You certainly served the community. You were willing to get up when they needed something.

MM: My uncle would come out from Twin K; he was on business for the Weyerhauser people and he come out here on business and he called me up one day and he said, "Mabelle, I don't have very much time, but if you go up and get a mess of fish and make some hot biscuits, I'll come up and have breakfast with you." And so I told him all right. Mr. Morris went out that morning and he got a dishpan full of fishes. I had a [unintelligible] and it was just heaped up. He had another [unintelligible].

IM: Do you catch them by hook?

MM: Yeah, he caught them by hook, one at a time, they really bite. You throw it in and they bite, and in those days you didn't have to have any kind of certificate to go out and catch fish. You could go out and get all you wanted.

IM: That bothers people now to have the government tell them when they can fish or when they can't.

MM: Well, they have to conserve it. That's the way we lived until 1924 -- we had an apartment in back.

IM: And you got into brick building in the same year that you built this house?

MM: Oh no, we were into brick building before that; we were into brick building about 1913, I think it was. We were living about a year; we had it about a year and they had to sell it because they weren't making any money, they were losing money all the time.

IM: Where did you live then?

MM: We still lived down there in the back of that same building. We just moved the drugstore. These are one of the stores that was down below [unintelligible].

IM: We walked down there by the drugstore and along the sidewalk we saw traces of foundations of buildings.

MM: Yes. That street that the drugstore is on, now there was a laundry on the far end and there was a Japanese dentist and a Japanese photographer had another building, two buildings there. And then there was a picture show, and the hardware store and the grocery all in that block. We had a lot of Japanese people

at that time. There was a lot of Japanese that worked in the mill. When I was over in Japan, two of the boys came to see me that used to live here in Elk River and they were both in the army. One was working in the post office department and the other one that lived here.

IM: Do you know these people?

MM: Yes, she was in Yakima the last time I heard from her. Well, her husband bought that place up on the hill. They had a lovely garden; she had all kinds of things. And these people, when they moved out here they had a land [unintelligible] and they had to carry it up, there was no roads or anything.

IM: I think women in the past were pretty influential in bringing cultural.

MM: That's right. They both taught school here for quite a while.

IM: They enhanced community life.

MM: Sure.

IM: I understand in some places they had community plays and programs put on.

MM: This is the hospital that was here at the time. It was on the hill above us.

IM: I'm glad you are pointing out these pictures to me.

MM: Here is the church.

IM: We walked in there this morning; they told us it would be open and those are beautiful glass windows.

MM: The Potlatch built that church and donated to the town. Children during the depression took beebie guns and broke all the windows out in the front.

IM: So they replaced them with blue, plain blue.

MM: I was talking to someone the other day and I asked them about those and they said there was the windows taken out and other ones put in so I believe there are different ones in there. And they were going to try and find out where they were made and get glass to put in. There was a man in here, maybe six months ago, and he asked me if I thought they'd sell those windows out of that church. I said, "Sell them? Where'd you get the idea that they would sell them?" I said, "Nobody can sell those anyway because they were donated by Potlatch state.' But, you know how they do now, they do anything with a little bit of money.

IM: How did you get, having any sense of not knowing how to raise your children, your mother-in-law and father-in-law were here.

MM: I also had two sisters-in-law.

IM: So, you had a lot of adults.

MM: Yes. Of course, when I was working in the store, we lived right in back and I knew where they were all the time.

IM: So you were in and out of your apartment and working?

MM: Yeah, I was at home all the time.

IM: Did your children help as they grew up, too?

MM: Yes, both of them worked in the store. John never really wanted to, he didn't think that he'd like to work in the store.

IM: But after he went to the service, he came back?

MM: He went to an air college back in St. Louis first. After he was out of high school, he graduated when he was 16 and he didn't know what he wanted to do. But he wanted to do Grimsley airplane work, so we sent him back to [unintelligible] Air College in St. Louis and he graduated from there and then, of



course, the depression come along and he wanted to come home. We didn't want him to come home because we didn't want him to work. We told him if he came home, he'd either have to work and come home or rather go to school. He wasn't going to come home and just loaf. So, he decided that he'd go to school. So, with school, he started in taking accounting. Mr. Morris never said anything to him about studying to be a druggist or anything; he really didn't care whether he did or not. He wanted him to do what he wanted to do. He come home one night and said he was going to be a druggist! So he graduated to be a druggist.

IM: Now, he wishes he'd done [unintelligible].

MM: Well, he's [unintelligible] too much of the time, too. It's awful long hours.

IM: How late do you keep the store open now?

MM: He generally stays down there till about eleven. He never gets home before eleven o'clock at night.

IM: What about your daughter? How did she decide what she wanted to do?

MM: I don't know. She just decided she was going to be a teacher.

IM: Where did she go to school?

MM: She went to Moscow part of the time and then part of the time she went to Lewiston. She taught here in Elk River most of the time.

IM: Did she meet her husband here?

MM: No, over in Potlatch. He was working up here and she met him here. He hired all the men for the company.

IM: He was kind of a personnel director.

MM: Yes.

IM: Did she teacher after she was married?

MM: She did for a while, but she lives in Bovill and she didn't want to drive back and forth from Bovill. They go down to Arizona every winter. They are down there now but they are going to be home on the first of the month.

IM: Is he retired now?

MM: Yes, he's been retired for several years.

IM: Let's talk about your leisure time or recreation compared to when you were young and how things have changed through the years. Did you have time for recreation then?

MM: I had a better time when the children were little than I do now.

IM: Is that right?

MM: On Monday, we did the washing, Tuesday you did the ironing, Wednesday we cleaned the house, Thursday we baked, and on Friday we did what we wanted to do. That was the system and we carried it out.

IM: So you'd get your work done and have time for recreation.

MM: We used to go visiting in the afternoon and somebody would say, "What do you have left from dinner?" And you would run over and bring what you got and then you'd spend the evening and maybe play cards.

IM: So it was a nice community spirit.

MM: Sure. All the time that's what we would do. On Sunday afternoon, we'd have deer and all the women would congregate in the houses. Everybody would practically have their own piano and we'd sing hymns and have a good time in general. Now we don't do any of that anymore.

IM: When you go to see somebody, do they leave their television on? Has that ever happened?

MM: Lots of times.

IM: Does that bother you?

MM: Once in a while.

IM: But people just don't go to see each other as often as they used to.

MM: Nobody goes anywhere. We used to visit back and forth all the time, always. I can remember that there wouldn't be a night, a lot of times it'd be in the afternoon or evening or something, that there wouldn't be something doing. The [unintelligible] would put on a program; the Eastern Star would put on a program. We had bridge clubs. We had another club where the hostess would bring the meat and potatoes and the rest of the bunch would bring the rolls and the dessert and the salad, and whatever. We did that every two weeks. From the time we had New Year's until the first of April, there wasn't an evening to where there wasn't something doing.

IM: So, it wasn't an isolated winter at all.

MM: I've had as many as eight tables for dinner in here many a times.

IM: Was this when people had younger children? Did everybody

bring their children?

MM: No, they hired a babysitter; they never brought any children.

IM: What did you do in the summertime? Did you have big picnics?

MM: We used to always have a picnic. We would catch fish and fry them in a frying pan. Just go out there and spend the day.

IM: Was this a Sunday afternoon?

MM: Mostly Sundays because the men worked, you see, and in the daytime they couldn't get away.

IM: The whole family went?

MM: Yeah, everybody went.

IM: Sounds very pleasant.

MM: Oh, we had a good time! Nobody knew how good of a time we had, really. And we had a [unintelligible] bunch of people [unintelligible] because [unintelligible] if we had anybody come in that wasn't desirable, they followed them right [unintelligible] and they were gone.

IM: They had to leave town.

MM: They had to leave town because there wasn't anything for them to do here. They kept their families [unintelligible] real nice people.

IM: So, they kind of regulated that.

MM: Sure.

IM: When your husband was alive, did you ever worry about what might happen if he died, if something happened to him?

MM: I never did. He was always very healthy. He never seemed at anytime of ever being sick. He had a heart condition and I didn't know it. I went East and my mother was at home, and I went back East and it was in November. He loved to hunt; he'd just left for his vacation to go hunting, and he liked to fish and he went hunting and he passed away, just like that.

IM: If he had gone when you had the children when they were young, you would've had the store to make a living.

MM: Yes, I would've and I could've done it too. I couldn't have done the rug part of it, but the other I could. I never even thought about it. I never even knew he was ill. That's why it was such a shock.

IM: I guess what I was getting at was how would a woman make a living in those days if she had dependent children.

MM: Well, I guess they could do it someway.

IM: It must have happened because sometime men who worked at the lumber company were killed or injured.

MM: Well, they had insurance if their husbands were killed in the woods. They got so much insurance and they done that until they were remarried.

IM: So, they could stay right here. Did they usually remarry?

MM: A lot of them did. I know a woman who had two husbands killed in the woods and she got a pension until she remarried.

IM: There was never any time then, when you were the major support of your family?

MM: No.

IM: You worked before you were married, and did you completely support yourself then?

MM: Yes.

IM: You talked a little bit about your church and community activities you were involved in. You worked for the volunteer work during the war.

MM: Well, it was mostly Red Cross. I did all the cutting; I cut everything that needed to be sewed. I passed it out to whoever was supposed to do it; but, that's what I did.

IM: Was this both wars you did this?

MM: Yes.

IM: When the depression was on, did you increase the number of vegetables you grew?

MM: No, because I always had a garden.

IM: It didn't mean so much that you didn't have money to go buy food because you supported your own.

MM: You couldn't buy white flour, you couldn't get that much sugar. We could get honey and we got oatmeal bread and that was just as good as any other bread. We didn't suffer that way at all. We ate all our own vegetables.

IM: You just lost business at the store and there was less money exchange at hand.



MM: Yes.

IM: If you knew a young woman now that was starting out like you did, what do you think she would have to be able to do?

MM: I don't think she could do anything. I don't think she would know how to. You take the majority of these young girls now and they go to the store and buy canned stuff and they don't cook, they don't know how to do anything like that.

IM: You knew how to can?

MM: I canned and I made soups. In fact, I made everything. I made my bread, everything.

IM: Did you know how to do all this before you were married?

MM: I was taught at home how to do it. My mother taught all of us how to do it.

IM: What magazines and newspapers do you read now?

MM: National Geographic. I get ARP magazine and I get the Arizona Highways, and I get Sunset. That's about it.

IM: Do you watch television? Do you have a favorite program?

MM: Yes. I like "The Waltons" and I like "Lawrence Welk." Oh, I watch quite a few of the different shows that they have on. There isn't anything I particularly am crazy about. I watch "As the World Turns" while I'm eating lunch, I watch that.

IM: You work every morning in the store?

MM: I go down and help and the mail comes in the morning. In the afternoons there is hardly anything doing.

IM: They come in and check their mail.

MM: Yeah, they come in and get what they want and then they go home and stay.

IM: So that's kind of a pattern in this town. When you were running the business and your husband was alive in the store, did you help make decisions about the store, or was that his business?

MM: No, we just worked together. We always had the help; we always had a girl in there, too. A lot of the times I stayed at home, if I had something to do at home I wouldn't go down.

IM: Did you have help with the housework?

MM: I always had help. I've had help ever since I was married. I never done washing or anything like that -- couldn't wash on

the board.

IM: Did you have teenage girls?

MM: No, I had a [unintelligible] that worked for me for two years. She'd come in and she'd do the washing and a lot of times, if I was busy she'd do the ironing.

IM: Was she a widow?

MM: She was a widow woman.

IM: Did both your husband and you make the decision to come here?

MM: Yes.

IM: Has there ever been a time when you had strong feelings about if you liked being a woman or you disliked being a woman?

MM: No.

IM: You just met your problems and worked them out?

MM: Yes. No, I never thought about it.

IM: Is there anything else now? I've asked you a lot of questions. Is there anything else that you would like to tell me?

Would you have changed anything if you could've?

MM: I don't think so. I was thinking about that the other day. There's no use in worrying about things like that; you have to take it as it comes.

IM: Was marriage about what you expected it to be?

MM: Yes, I had a wonderful husband. He was a very wonderful person. I have a picture of him over here. Would you like to see it?

IM: Yes, I'd like to. He looks like a solid citizen.

MM: He was. Mr. Morris was very well thought of. Everybody says he was a wonderful person.

IM: I'm sure he was a leader in the community.

MM: He as a [unintelligible] named after him and he has a mountain named after him.

IM: So, people know he was in the community; he left his art. It must have been a great shock to have to lose him.

MM: I'll say, and so sudden, too. I was back East when it happened. I got a telegram saying, "Come home," he'd passed

away and that was it.

IM: It is very hard. Yet, I think that at other times when people have long lingering deaths that's not very good either. What were some of the biggest problems you met in trying to readjust to living without him?

MM: I don't think I had anything really big because I worked all the time. I went right back to work in the store and I just kept busy all the time.

IM: Yes, that's important.

MM: That's the only thing you can do because it doesn't do any good to sit at home and worry about it. It's just one of those things that can't be helped.

IM: Did you ever consider remarrying?

MM: No, I never even thought about it.

IM: Was there a difference in your social relationships after that?

MM: Yes, considerably. Because all the friends that we went out with, practically all their husbands are still alive and when you

are alone like that, it makes a big difference.

IM: So, you literally had to find new friends, other women who were single?

MM: Well, about that time, practically everybody had left Elk River. All of my friends that were here in those days are now living in Spokane and some are living in Moscow. A lot of them in Moscow have lived here in Elk River. And, you know, you just gradually, as far as the younger people, here, I like them and everything, but I don't really want to be with them because we don't have anything in common.

IM: Do you have a few friends your own age?

MM: Here in town?

IM: Yes.

MM: No, there isn't anybody here. [Unintelligible] only one that's left.

IM: So, you joined the Syringa Homemaker's group. But, they're still not ...

MM: No, they're not people that I've been intimate with at all.

IM: Do you write letters?

MM: Lots of them. I've got a lot of friends in California. I've got a lot of friends in Spokane. Then I have friends up in Canada that I still write to.

IM: Do you anticipate in traveling to visit them?

MM: I'm considering going back now because my sister is settling her estate and her other sister that she lives with is 90 and she wants to stay in the house by herself and she's getting quite forgetful. She don't remember from one day to the next from what she's done. So, we just insisted that she's got to give up the house. She doesn't want to come out with me because all the money in is Canada. It makes a difference, you know, to change countries. So, we don't know what she's going to do, but I think in possibly two or three more weeks that I'll be going East. Everything is up in the air. There isn't anything settled yet. They wanted me to come back when my sister passed away, but at that time, I had a heart condition and I couldn't travel very well because I couldn't walk. So I didn't go back, which is a good thing I didn't because I'd of probably been there when Bill passed away.

IM: This was your grandson?

MM: Yes.

IM: That's been pretty recent, hasn't it?

MM: The 31st of January. That was a terrible shock. They'd come home every weekend.

IM: How many grand children do you have?

MM: Just the three.

IM: So this little baby is Bill's?

MM: The mother, her sister had the baby. They called us a little while ago and said that she had a seven and a half pound boy.

IM: Well, you just got the news. Did she want a boy?

MM: She wanted a boy, yes. So, Janet Lee has a cousin.

IM: Unless you would like to ask something that I haven't asked about, I think we've covered everything pretty well.