

Interview with Donald and Betty Mayhew
September 20, 2007
Conducted at the Mayhew home, Trousdale, Kansas
Interviewers: Joan Weaver and Rosetta Graff of the Kinsley Library.

Joan: You can start with how you came here, but we'd like to hear a little bit how...about his family and how you came to this area.

Betty: (To Donald) You tell them how your family came.

Donald: My grandfather came here in 1885 from Nebraska City, Nebraska. He homesteaded across the road from here, across the road east. We've been here ever since.

Joan: Who came with your grandfather?

Donald: He brought the whole family.

Joan: What was that? How many children...

Donald: There was his wife and his father-in-law and about three boys and four girls.

Joan: They came on a wagon? Or train?

Donald: Three covered wagons that they brought down. I don't know how long it took them, but they came from the southeast corner of Nebraska, Nebraska City.

Joan: Do you know why they left Nebraska?

Donald: They came down for free land.

Joan: And what was his name?

Donald: Edward, E.F. Mayhew.

Joan: And your grandmother's name?

Donald: Grandma, I guess.

Joan: And then the children's names?

Donald: Dad's name was Frank Mayhew, and Allen Mayhew and another brother who died, and there was Mabel and I can't think of another. Jessie was another one of the daughters and Mamie and...I can't remember what Dub's mother's name was. I never did know her. I never did see her. But all of them but the last one, the youngest one, Mamie, she was born down here, but the rest of them was born up in Nebraska.

Joan: How much land did they get when they came?

Donald: 160 acres and the next one north was a tree claim, another 160 acres.

Joan: What is a tree claim?

Donald: You had to plant ten acres of trees to get a quarter of land, 160 acres.

Rosetta: So somebody had already planted the trees? Or he agreed to do it?

Donald: Well, somebody had started it, but they relinquished it, and he bought it and the kids had to finish planting the trees. That was a way of getting another quarter of ground, because there was no trees here.

Rosetta: So did they build a sod house? Or did they just live in the covered wagon?

Donald: Well, they lived in the covered wagon for a while, and then they built a wooden house, whatever the legal size was it had to be. At least, I think, about 12 by 14 or 16 feet I think. Something like that.

Joan: With that many people, I hope so!

Donald: They built a sod barn.

Joan: So they had livestock and farmed?

Donald: Yes. They brought some livestock with them. I don't know how they...it was pretty hard getting started because there weren't any trees for posts you know, for fences. I don't know what to tell you about that.

Joan: Do you remember any of the stories you were told about what life was like then?

Donald: My grandfather and grandmother died when I...back in 1928 and 29, and I wasn't very old then. I was about eight or nine years old, and I don't remember much about them.

Joan: Did your father tell you what it was like growing up?

Donald: Well, he didn't talk too much about it. Times was pretty rough, I guess, and he didn't really like to remember it, I think.

Rosetta: He became a farmer, what about the other children? His brothers and sisters. Did they stay on the farm or leave as soon as possible?

Donald: Well, Allen Mayhew lived three miles north of here, and he stayed there as long as he lived. Jessie stayed here. Mabel, they left and went to California. The youngest girl, Mamie, she died in 1927, I think. Winnie, that was another of them, one of the older ones, they lived down by Mullinville I believe, somewhere off in there. They pretty well scattered around.

Joan: Did they go to school here?

Donald: Yes, they went to a little country school which was up here on the Belpre road, called Lakeview. They all went to school there. They didn't have the high school here until way later, after all them were grown. The country school was all they had.

Joan: How did they get to school?

Donald: Dad drove, since he was the oldest one. He drove a, I don't know whether it was a wagon or a buggy, and the kids all went over there, which was a mile east and two miles north.

Betty: Tell him about your grandfather as postmaster.

Donald: Well, he was only postmaster for a few months.

Joan: By here, you mean Trousdale?

Donald: No, at the home. He was appointed...well, it's on a list of postmasters here.

Joan: What did they call it?

Donald: I could get the paper and show you. He didn't stay postmaster very long. It paid a little, but people coming to get their mail was such a nuisance with them coming in that he couldn't get any work done. He just quit doing it and let somebody else do it. I'll get the paper. It'd be on record over there at Kinsley because they gave me a list of postmasters.

Rosetta: So how did you meet somebody in the Trousdale area when you were in Salina?

Betty: We met at K-State. He was in college at K-State, and I went for two years. I had a 4-H Club scholarship. That's where we met.

Joan: Did you both graduate?

Betty: No, neither one of us. He lacked a year, but it was during the war and he had to come home and help his dad farm. That's the reason he didn't go to the service.

Joan: And then you came home with him?

Betty: No, we were married in 1941. I was in school down in Manhattan in '39 and '40. I graduated from Salina. I tell you what, when we got married, he said, "Now, we will have electricity this fall." And I thought, well, I could stand to use kerosene lamps for a few months. Well, they froze a crop of wire and we didn't have electricity for seven years.

Joan: So you got electricity what year?

Betty: Seven years after '41. 1948. On account of the war. They froze a crop of wire. So I had to pump water and carry it in the house and use kerosene lamps. I had always had electricity at Salina. We lived on a farm, but we had electricity. I told him one time that if I'd known that was going to happen, I don't know whether I'd have gotten married or not.

Rosetta: That was quite an adjustment.

Betty: It really was an adjustment for me.

Joan: You had an ice box rather than a refrigerator, or did you have a propane refrigerator?

Betty: No, just an icebox.

Joan: Did they still deliver ice that late? Or did you have to...

Betty: No, we weren't married too many years when we got a Serville gas refrigerator. But it wasn't easy. I had my first two kids without electricity.

Joan: Here at the home?

Betty: Yes, we lived across the road.

Joan: They were born in the home. Did a doctor come?

Betty: No, they weren't born in the home. Our three children were born at Larned.

Joan: How about you? (to Donald) Were you born in the home?

Donald: I don't know, I think so. I think it was in this old house over here that we don't have torn down yet. I think that was it... (off mike comments are heard, evidently about the postmaster list...) I can make you a copy of that if you don't have one.

Betty: I don't think it's working. My copy machine isn't working.

Rosetta: Well, we should have this.

Donald: Well, somebody from Kinsley gave it to me. I don't know who it was right now.

Rosetta: Thank you, I'll write it down.

Joan: I don't know where we are now...Okay, that was your dad. I'm going to give it back to you here now. So your dad was a postmaster for a little extra money. Was there anything else he did besides...your grandfather, to order to make a living out here, other than just farming?

Donald: No, that's all.

Joan: And they raised cattle? Hogs?

Donald: Yes, and chickens and a garden.

Joan: And their crops were corn?

Donald: Corn and wheat. I don't know when Trousdale was started then. You might probably have that on record somewhere though, don't you?

Rosetta: Yes, it was when the railroad came in.

Donald: Yes, Walter Trousdale started it. He was from Newton.

Joan: What do you remember about Trousdale as a young man, or a boy?

Donald: There's not much there.

Betty: But when you were a boy...

Joan: Well, when you were a boy there was though.

Donald: Well, there was three grain elevators and two grocery stores, a bank, barbershop, a drugstore and a hardware store and a blacksmith shop and the post office was in the grocery store. There was a hotel and blacksmith shop and a garage repair shop. A lumberyard, Lindas Lumber Company, and of course the railroad station.

Joan: And I guess a place where they shipped cattle?

Donald: Yes, there was a stockyards.

Rosetta: So Lindas was a branch of the Lindas Company that was in Kinsley?

Donald: Yes, there was a Lindas Company in Belpre too. When they quit at Trousdale, they hauled everything up to Belpre and then pretty soon it didn't last either.

Betty: Tell them about when the circus came to town.

Donald: One time they had what I call a one-elephant circus came to Trousdale. My grandmother was still alive, so it was before 1928. They set up a tent behind the hotel and the animals...they did have one elephant, and not much else. Dad took my grandmother down and she was in a wheelchair, so she couldn't go in, so they raised up one side of the tent and drove the car in far enough that she could watch the circus.

Joan: Handicap accessible! And did you go to the circus?

Donald: Yes, I saw it, of course, I didn't know whether it was good or not because it was the first circus I ever saw. So I suppose it was all right.

Joan: Did they have a clown or acrobats?

Donald: I don't remember that.

Joan: But you remember the elephant.

Donald: Yes. It came in on the train and I don't know where it went from Trousdale. Some of the other towns, I guess.

Rosetta: Did you ever have a revival meeting or anything like that in Trousdale?

Donald: Well, they used to have a traveling...I don't know if it was a preacher or not...Bibys from Larned came down every year with entertainment of some sort that they set up between the blacksmith shop and the garage. But as far as...it was just some plays. Biby Trenton (inaudible) was a fellow that traveled all over the state doing that. His location was Larned.

Joan: And you went to school in Trousdale?

Donald: All 12 years.

Joan: and graduated and went to K-State. What were you majoring in there before the war broke out? Agriculture?

Donald: I guess, kind of like agriculture. Kind of a general course. Betty and I both graduated from high school in 1936, which at Trousdale was the largest class they'd ever had was sixteen. And I think about eight of them are still living.

Joan: Did you go on a senior trip? Mr. Parker went on a senior trip.

Donald: Yes, we went down to Freedom, Oklahoma to the bat caves.

Joan: Had you been outside of Kansas much before that?

Donald: Yes, we'd been to Colorado on summer vacation. Before that, Grandpa and Grandma went on a train trip to Yellowstone Park. They had those organized trips. At Yellowstone Park they went through the park on a three or four day trip in coaches with horses and stuff. They camped out going through the park. On the way, I guess they went on to California to the beach somewhere before they came back. Then the year after we graduated in 1937, the folks took us to Yellowstone Park then.

Joan: How did farmers get away to go on vacation?

Donald: Well, it was a long time between rains, and if your work was caught up, you could take off for a week or ten days.

Joan: What were your chores?

Donald: Just to help out on the farm.

Rosetta: Do you remember when you got your first tractor? Or did they already have a tractor when you started helping?

Donald: It was 1927 when they got the first tractor, a steel-wheeled tractor.

Joan: So you helped with the threshing of the wheat...did you run the thresher? Or did you...

Donald: I helped run the tractor pulling the combine. Then later on I run the combine, in later years.

Joan: Did you milk cows?

Donald: We had a few, not a whole lot. Most everybody had their own milk cows, so milk wasn't very profitable.

Rosetta: And you had a few chickens. Did you have turkeys or ducks?

Donald: No, just chickens and cows and a few horses until they got enough machinery that they got rid of the horses.

Joan: Did you grow up riding the horses?

Donald: No, we never had any riding horses.

Rosetta: So that's what you remember, is working, right? Working on the farm?

Donald: Yes. And having fun.

Joan: How did you have fun?

Donald: Working.

Joan: Working was fun.

Donald: Wasn't much else to do.

Rosetta: So you would go to church on Sunday?

Donald: No, we didn't attend church very much, once in a great while.

Rosetta: But you would have gone to Trousdale?

Donald: Yes.

Joan: So what was the entertainment? Picnics or school activities or...

Donald: Once in a while, but just visiting with the neighbors, mainly.

Some off-mike discussion...

Joan: Well, she came out here with no electricity. When did you get a telephone?

Betty: We always had a telephone. It was one of those on the wall with the ringer, you know.

Donald: There were 16 on the line.

Betty: Yes, in the 50's, I guess it was, there was a family lived up the road a ways that was on our line. We must have had six or eight families on our telephone line. They had a bunch of kids. They had a telephone upstairs and a telephone down stairs. The kids would get on the telephone upstairs and downstairs and we couldn't get the line to call anybody. Well, one day I butted in when one of them was talking and I said, "If you would excuse me, I would like to make a telephone call." This one girl

says, "Okay, but by the time I get the dishes done; you had better be off this telephone." So it was kinda hard to get the telephone when you really needed to make a telephone call.

Rosetta: So, when you came from Salina to the farm, did you have running water in the house, or did you have to carry it?

Betty: I had to carry it in. I had to pump it and then carry it in the house.

Donald: The only running water she had was is she run when she carried it.

Betty: Right.

Joan: So how did you do the wash?

Betty: Well, we had an old Maytag washing machine with an engine on it. It set outside, and I had to pump water and carry it in and heat it on the stove and carry it out and put it in the washing machine. His grandparents had lived there, and they had a Delco plant, so we had a bathroom that had a tub in it. You could put water in it and it would run out, but you had to pump the water and carry it in. I pumped and carried water and heated it for our baths. When we had hired men in the summertime, I wanted them to take a bath every night, so I carried water in and had it heated it for them when they got done. I carried a lot of water into the house.

Joan: And that's heavy work, water's heavy.

Betty: Yes it is.

Rosetta: Did you kitchen sink have a pump?

Betty: No. I carried it all in from the pump quite a ways from the house.

Donald: Probably from here out to your car.

Betty: It wasn't easy for seven years. It wasn't easy.

Joan: And how many children did you have?

Betty: I had two before we got electricity. I washed a lot of diapers by hand and dried them on the clothes rack. It wasn't easy.

Rosetta: It was a good thing she didn't know what was coming, isn't it. So you wrote for the Trousdale news for years, right?

Betty: Over 60 years, I just quit two years ago.

Rosetta: Now that was in the Kinsley paper. Was it in the Lewis paper too?

Betty: I used to write for Lewis and Kinsley, Larned and Pratt.

Rosetta: Oh my.

Joan: The same article went in each?

Betty: Yes. But it dwindled down to just Kinsley, but I wrote for the Kinsley paper for over 60 years.

Rosetta: So you're the voice of Trousdale.

Betty: Well, I was. The reason I kept writing it that long was because the people that moved away from here said, "Betty, don't quit writing the news, because that's the only way I have of keeping track of the community." You know, the births and deaths and what was going on in the community. So, that kind of kept me going.

Joan: Are there any stories that you wrote that kind of stick out in your mind? Events or things that happened that were really sad or really happy?

Betty: There were a lot of them, but I can't name them right now. Just everything that anybody did, it was in the paper.

Rosetta: And did you call the people up, or did they call you to...

Betty: No, people weren't very good about calling me. I had a list and I called everybody and got their news. I spent every Sunday evening and Monday morning getting the news ready to go to the paper.

Joan: And that was a lot of work too.

Betty: It was a lot of work.

Donald: But we got the paper free.

Betty: Yes, I got the paper free.

Rosetta: But they didn't pay you...

Betty: Yes, they paid me some. It started out paying me so much an inch. That was when I was writing for several papers. Then the Kinsley paper paid me so much a month. One reason that I quit was because he called me and said, "We're not going to pay you anymore, except 25 cents and inch." And I said, "In that case, I'm quitting, because I won't write it for 25 cents an inch. It's not worth my time." So that's the reason I quit.

Rosetta: Our new editor has different priorities or...

Betty: The Kinsley paper is not what it used to be. Not at all.

Rosetta: Now, we had the Kinsley *Mercury* and the Kinsley *Graphic*. Was it in both papers?

Betty: No, it was in the Kinsley *Mercury*.

Rosetta: When I look in those old papers, I see Trousdale and just...

Joan: Did you make a scrapbook of all your articles or anything?

Betty: No, I used to clip them out and saved a lot of them...I suspect I've got them tucked away someplace, but I got tired of doing that and I didn't keep them anymore. I kept a lot of the weddings and deaths and things like that of different people in the community.

Joan: That would be quite a treasure to have. We could go through and do it, because we have it all on microfilm. We could go through and copy...

Betty: Yes, I should have made a scrapbook of them.

Joan: And then we would need somebody to read it and make an index for us...

Betty: Right.

Rosetta: Well, you were busy hauling water.

Betty: Well, when my children were small and in 4-H, I was a Community Leader for 16 years.

Donald: We have the old Edwards County Atlas (*Standard Atlas, Edwards County, Kansas, 1906*)

Rosetta: We haven't seen that, but we do have it at the library.

Joan: Show where your farm was at.

Donald: Here.

Joan: Did you have any help with your children? His mother or...

Betty: No. His mother was a nurse, and she was busy most of the time, so I very seldom had anyone to leave the children with. Where I went, they went.

Joan: How was it living on the same place as your in-laws?

Betty: They were here and we were across the road. It was fine. His father was in very poor health, so it was good for us to be close. We used to get together with our neighbors and play cards a lot. I'd take the kids and put them down to bed and to sleep and we'd carry them out to the car and come home.

Joan: I can remember my parents doing the same thing. Sleeping on a bed with all the coats.

Betty: Right.

Joan: What else sticks out from when you were raising the children? What was difficult or good about those days?

Betty: Well, I guess it was all good. We were really busy, especially with 4-H, and then when the kids got up in high-school, there was one year that our son was on the basketball team and our oldest daughter was a cheerleader for junior high and our youngest daughter was cheerleader for the grade school. So we had to go to all the grade school, all the junior high and all the high school games. That kept us busy.

Joan: What schools did your children attend?

Betty: Well, they went to grade school at Trousdale and then when Trousdale and Belpre merged, they went to Belpre. The two oldest graduated from Belpre and our youngest daughter graduated from Macksville. She went there two years.

Joan: There were a lot of changes back then in the schools there, merging together.

Betty: A lot of changes, right. It was a busy time, but it was a good time.

Joan: What was Christmas like at your house when your kids were seven to twelve?

Betty: They always looked forward to it. One thing that they remember is that their dad would take them and go over to the shelter belt and get a tree. We always had a tree that touched the ceiling. We had nine foot ceilings in the old house.

Joan: You had a tall one!

Betty: Yes, that's the one thing the kids remember is their dad going to the shelter belt and getting the Christmas tree.

Rosetta: Did you celebrate on Christmas Eve or Christmas Day?

Betty: Christmas Day. Christmas morning and Christmas Day.

Joan: And you had the traditional big dinner?

Betty: Oh yes. Usually chicken and all the trimmings. We didn't have turkeys back then much, we usually had chicken.

Joan: Do you remember since you've been here about any blizzards or droughts or anything? We'll get to the tornadoes later.

Betty: I remember some snow storms when the snow was piled up down here on the parallel about ten foot high. We haven't had snows like that around here for a long time now, but I can remember a lot of heavy, heavy snows. And the electricity would go off and be off and there was one snow storm that we lost everything in our freezer. We took it out and buried it in the snow, thinking it would keep, but we lost everything. We were without electricity for over a week.

Joan: How did you get around? Did you get the tractors out and move some of that snow? They didn't come and plow it right away, did they?

Betty: We just stayed home.

Rosetta: How much land did your dad actually end up owning?

Donald: It would have been this half section here that belonged to my dad.

Rosetta: Just what you showed me?

Donald: Great Grand-Dad had that half-section right across the road there and the quarter here.

Rosetta: Okay. The tree claim you just tore out?

Donald: No, they're still there.

Rosetta: Oh, they're still there. Okay.

Joan: What kind of trees are they?

Donald: Well, about all that's left is the black locust. The cottonwoods died out, but there are a few...

Betty: Osage orange. Yes.

Donald: There's dead trees and dead cottonwoods along here that the storm didn't get. We planted those trees were.

Rosetta: The tree claim was right on here on this, down in here.

Donald: Right there.

Rosetta: That's the parallel, right?

Betty: A mile north.

Rosetta: A mile north of the parallel.

Joan: And this is Trousdale where the school was.

Donald: No, that's Lakeview country school. Trousdale would be along here. It's right in here somewhere.

Rosetta: It wouldn't have been on this map.

Donald: No, Trousdale isn't on there because this is 1906, but see, these sections here...there's 640, 850 acres. This is Rattlesnake Creek, and this is Prattsburg Post Office there.

Rosetta: Well, did you ever go down to the Rattlesnake and go fishing, or was that too far away to go?

Donald: Well, usually there wasn't enough water in there to fish.

Rosetta: Okay.

Donald: But I think before all the ground was broke out, the creek used to run quite a bit and you could fish there then. Dad said they'd gone down in the wintertime and fished through the ice. They'd cut a hole in the ice and some of them would go down one way and some down the other and they'd stomp on it and drive the fish up there then they'd go back and throw them out with a pitchfork. You know, in the

cold water they'd be swimming real slow.

Joan: Catfish? Carp?

Donald: Mainly carp, I think.

Joan: But it was edible wasn't it?

Donald: It was a change of diet.

Rosetta: Do you have any sand hill plums or anything around here that you would have for fruit?

Donald: Most of the sand hills had sand hill plums on them and maybe a bunch of quail in them. So there was a lot of hunting, but there wasn't any pheasants then. They were all prairie chickens. They had a lot of prairie chickens. Dad said they ate prairie chickens until they got sick of them, they couldn't stand them.

Joan: There were a lot of rabbits though.

Donald: I suppose. He never mentioned about rabbits. Prairie chickens were thick enough that he said they'd come in the feedlot and they'd eat there and they'd hide in the sod stable to shoot them. He said they wouldn't shoot until they could hit three of them lined up in a row. Shot and powder were pretty hard to get.

Joan: Well, we heard her side of the story about coming out here. Now how did you entice her to come out.

Donald: It wasn't hard to do; she wanted to come out. She ditched all her old boyfriends and decided on me. She came out.

Joan: Your children, now did they help farm when they were growing up?

Donald: No. By that time, I wasn't farming much anymore, so my children never had the opportunity to help. I started working over to Cross Manufacturing and worked over there for a while at Lewis.

Joan: Did you lease the land, or...

Donald: Gradually, after we put down irrigation, we leased the ground. But I worked over there at Cross's for 22 years. Betty got a job in the post office and worked there for 10 years. She made twice as much money in 10 years as I did in 22.

Rosetta: Which post office?

Betty: I worked as a post master relief at Trousdale for several years, and also at Fellsburg for Irene Owens. Then they needed somebody at Byers. Byers was third class, and I'd always worked fourth class for \$1.25 an hour. When I went to Byers that put me into career. Then the postmaster at Belpre was going to retire, so they asked me to come up there. I was the relief for Belpre and Byers for two years. When she retired, I applied for the job and got it. I was already on social security when I started as postmaster up there at Belpre. I went to work full time the year he retired. Does that tell you

anything? Then I was postmaster up there for ten years. I retired in '91.

Joan: Tell us what you did at Cross Manufacturing.

Donald: Not too many people did just one job, they worked wherever they needed them, just working around here and there. I run the lathes quite a little bit and so did a lot of other people.

Joan: To get it on the tape, what does Cross Manufacturing manufacture?

Donald: They manufactured hydraulic cylinders, and they still do. They had a good cylinder, a pretty good cylinder, a lot cheaper than others. So they sold a lot of them.

Joan: Was it because of the steady income? Why did you go from farming to doing that?

Donald: Because I wasn't making enough money here on the farm to live. So I went over there and didn't make a whole lot more over there.

Joan: But it was easier?

Donald: It wasn't any easier, but it was cash money. Take home pay was about \$55 a week, something like that.

Rosetta: But then you got raises...

Donald: Not much.

Joan: When you finished, what did you make? When you retired?

Donald: I don't remember. I don't have any records of what it was. But eventually I finally did get some raises. It was a pretty good place to work. Of course, it was all inside and Cross was a pretty nice guy to work for.

Joan: Go ahead and tell us about the 2007 tornado, what it was like and what happened.

Donald: I'll let Betty tell that.

Betty: Well, we had the warning on the TV that the Tornado was at Greensburg and was headed towards Trousdale. I wanted to be in the little bathroom because they always say to go to the smallest room in the house. He said, no, if that big cottonwood tree south of the house falls, it's going to fall right on the house. Well, we had a big oak tree just on the north side of the garage, a huge oak tree. We never even thought about it falling. So he said, let's go out and get in the car in the garage, I think we'll be safer. Well about that time the electricity went off, so we didn't have any television to watch, so we went out and got in the car. The only thing I took with me was my purse, because I had quite a bit of money in the purse. I took my purse with me. Well, we just sat there and we knew the wind was blowing. We couldn't hear the roar or anything, but the car shook several times. Then 2x6 from the roof of the garage fell on the windshield and cracked the windshield right in front of where I was sitting. We heard several others fall, and so we knew something was going on. When it was all over, our son lives just down the hill from us. He came up and said, "Well, the windmill tower is gone and the big oak tree's gone." That oak tree fell straight east and the big cottonwood tree that he thought would fall

on our house, fell straight west. Neither one of them hit the house, and in fact if it hadn't been for the windmill tower twisting and coming through the ceiling, we wouldn't have had any damage to our house at all. But it came through, and the gear head was hanging down here in the dining room. We had just but down new carpeting last February, so it got oil all over the carpet and the floor was going to pieces. It just missed my china cabinet that had all my crystal from my wedding and all that stuff in it. It just missed it by six inches. I had potted petunias and dianthus out here on the deck. It never even took a petal off of them. Nothing. But it took all the trees along the driveway down south. It either took them up by the roots or took the tops out of them. Down west, the trees are just tangled up in a mess. All different directions and no rhyme or reason to it at all. I'd have been glad if it had taken this old house over here, but it didn't. It shifted it on the foundation a little bit, but it didn't damage our house and didn't damage our son's home down here. We were lucky.

Joan: And that old oak tree was planted by your grandfather?

Donald: No, it was one a squirrel planted.

Joan: It wasn't that old.

Betty: But it was a huge tree.

Donald: On the farm about two miles south of here, everything went north. But here, everything went every direction. Evidently there might have been more than one storm. But this whole mile of highline here, this is transmission line too, they had to replace every pole and a lot of the wire too.

Betty: We couldn't even get out to the road for four days. Our kids came out from Hutchinson to help, and they had to park down here on the parallel and walk up to the house because the wires were down and...

Joan: And that's a quarter of a mile.

Betty: A quarter of a mile.

Donald: Betty had some coupons she'd cut out in the kitchen on the eating bar. They were laying there, and it never disturbed those. There wasn't much wind blowing through the house at all. And we didn't get much dust in the house. And like those plants out there, it didn't even blow the petals off of them, but it tore all the trees up, right by the roots you know. There's some that the roots came out, and there's, uh, it seemed like from here to the ceiling there'd be that much root and dirt. Not all of them like that, but a couple of them.

Joan: It must have got it by the tops and pulled them out and twisted them.

Donald: It just laid them over. But you'd think that with a big tree down out there that the plants right there would have the petals off them, but you know, they were just as pretty as could be and weren't injured a bit. And as soon as we got electricity back, everything in the house worked. That was the main thing. But some of the other people, it swept the whole house away, you know. It just cleaned it.

Rosetta: Not that far away.

Betty: Just around the corner, they just...

Donald: Dean Welsch, three miles south, it just took theirs off the flooring, there wasn't anything left but the bathroom. It even took the stool and everything off.

Betty: And they have never found one piece of furniture or anything.

Joan: They may find things when they plow next spring.

Betty: Probably the shelter belts around have stuff in them.

Joan: Scary, scary, scary.

Rosetta: You talked about a sod house barn, is that one of the first things your grandfather did was build a nice barn?

Donald: That was just a little sod shed. The first thing he had to do was put down a well for water, and have water. So I suppose they lived out of their wagon and of course then, the closest thing was Larned, about 25 miles. They had to bring everything down from there, lumber and stuff. It was quite a few years before the railroad came through Belpre.

Joan: How long was the sod barn around?

Donald: I don't have any idea, I never did see it. It was gone. But there were a few sod building around, my dad said, but not too many I guess.

Joan: And then they built a regular big barn?

Donald: Yes, they built a fair-sized barn. Well, it was big enough for stalls for seven teams of horses, I guess. That would be 14 horses. Then the harness room too, with a hay-mow above it.

Rosetta: That was fun getting that hay up there too.

Donald: It must have been, yes. But after they left Larned to come this way, there wasn't any place that was inhabited. They had trees, but they weren't big enough yet for shade. They were just like large sunflowers, was all. So there was no tree in sight, but a lot of plum bushes, a lot of the sand hills had plum bushes on them, so they had wild plums for fruit.

Joan: So you were too late to have your grandfather tell you any stories about Indians.

Donald: Well, the Indians were gone for quite a few years.

Betty: He found a lot of Indian arrowheads and broken chips and stuff on a big hill out here west on our ground. So the Indians had evidently used that tall hill for a look out or something.

Donald: Of course those plum bushes on there was something to hide in, and then down on the lower ground there were some buffalo wallows that would hold water once in a while, so game would stop there, because there was no creek. Game would come to the buffalo wallows for water and they could hunt up there. Mainly, most of the arrowheads we found were what they call "bird points"; they were for quail and prairie chicken. Prairie chickens were thick. It was a good many years, I suppose 50

years, before they imported pheasants. They brought them in and now you don't see any prairie chickens here now.

Joan: Do you know why? I never thought about that.

Donald: Well, prairie chickens were when the country was in open prairie, and...

Joan: It's just too cultivated...

Donald: When they started cultivating, the prairie chickens couldn't take it, they had to move.

Joan: I'd like to ask each of you, you can take turns, but looking back over your life. How do you feel about your life? Has it been a good life? Or a hard life? How would you sum it up?

Betty: Well, there were years when it was pretty rough, but we had a good life. Looking back on it, I feel like we've had a good, full life.

Donald: We've had good neighbors. But most of them are all gone now.

Joan: Are you glad you have lived in this place during this time?

Betty: Yes. It has been a wonderful community to live in. Trousdale community is a really good place to call home.

Donald: Most of them left here now from the older families are the third and going on to the fourth generations, I suppose. But most of them have gone someplace else.

Joan: You have a son here, and so this property will stay in the family?

Betty: Hopefully. We're the oldest ones in the community now. We'll both of us be 89 this fall.

Rosetta: Well, you're doing great.

Betty: We're lucky to have each other.

Joan: And you're both very sharp. You can still remember things, we can't. We have to write everything down.

Donald: You've got a computer to refer to.

Joan: That's probably why we don't have any minds, because we rely on it for what we're putting...

Betty: I forget names sometimes and I wake up in the middle of the night and remember them.

Joan: I'd like to turn this off and see if ...you can remember the order of those ...do you have....I'm going to turn this off...

Audio ends.

