

## **1979 Tractorcade to Washington D.C.**

### **Interview with Jean Titus**

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**Conducted in the Kinsley City Commissioners' Room, Kinsley, Kansas**

**Interviewers: Joan Weaver and Rosetta Graff, Kinsley Library**

Joan: Can you describe what your farm was like in 1979, or the '70's, before this went on?

Jean: Our farm was pretty much like it is now. We've improved the buildings and that sort of thing. Where I live is separate from my farm ground. The ground is at Centerview, Kansas. We have irrigated ground, and my grandson does the farming.

Joan: Was it irrigated in 1979?

Jean: Yes, it was.

Joan: And did you do both crops and animals?

Jean: We had crops and we had cattle. Finally, the cattle seemed to need attention when the crops needed to be cut, so we finally sold our cattle and just farmed the ground. (*Corrected after interview to be 1972.*)

Joan: About when did you sell the cattle?

Jean: I'm going to say, we're talking about ~~1979~~ 1972.

Joan: Would it have been before or after the Tractorcade?

Jean: ~~After~~ *Before* the Tractorcade. I'm going to say about ~~'77~~ '72 or something like that.

Joan: Well, '77 would be before the Tractorcade...

Jean: Yes.

Joan: And you were raising wheat and...

Jean: Wheat and corn and soybeans. After Shorty Michaelis, we were the second one to start raising soybeans in this part of the country. One day I was out hoeing devil's claws out of the soybeans, and a banker from Greensburg stopped and wanted to know what in the world we were growing out there. I said, "Soybeans." and so he got out and came out in the field and wanted to know if he could take some of the soybeans home to the bank so people down there could see it. Otherwise, the closest place was Stafford that raised them.

Joan: When was that, about?

Jean: Probably along about '72 or something like that.

Joan: Was it just you and your husband or did you have help on the farm?

Jean: No. We worked seven days a week. (*No vacations; did go to church on Sunday morning.*) The

only help we had was we had three daughters. They helped out in the field; they'd rather help out in the field than work in the house. Then eventually when my grandson got big enough, Mica Schnoebelen, he helped on the farm. He's the one who's farming the ground now.

Joan: In the 1970's, was the farm your only source of income? Neither one of you worked outside the home?

Jean: No, I had worked out at the (*Home State*) bank (*in Lewis*) and at Ehler's Clothing Store in Kinsley in the earlier years, but at the time we were having all these problems, we just worked on the farm. Part of irrigation systems were tow lines; you had to move the big lines. I was generally the one who got wet, because I was shorter, and the men would lift up the other end and here would come the water my way.

Joan: About what year did you put in irrigation? Would it have been in the '60's or '70's?

Jean: I'm going to say it was probably the late '60's. We were also the second one to put it in. Shorty Michaelis was the first to put in irrigation in our area. (*We first leveled the ground and put in flood irrigations. Then in about 1979 we put in circle systems.*)

Joan: Did you have to take out loans for the irrigation?

Jean: Yes, we did. At the time we took out the loans, we didn't have excess money, and we thought, "Gee, will we ever get them paid for!" We took out loans at a Pratt loan company. Eventually, a little bit every year, we got them paid for. It is really a satisfaction when you get something like that done.

Joan: Did you already own your land? Or were you paying for that too?

Jean: No, we had bought the land, and we started out dry land farming. The year before we'd bought the ground, we had wheat and it was very good, but the next thing we knew, it was flat on the ground. So, our combine wouldn't cut (*part of*) it, (*so we had to hire it cut*).

Joan: Had wind blown it over?

Jean: No, it was just the moisture. It was already headed and it was flat on the ground. Not all the fields were, but that one was. So we hired a Baldwin combine to come in and cut it one way. It was very good wheat, but they liked to never got it. I will never forget the land lady said (we didn't own the ground at that time) she said, "I'd think you'd better go buy a new combine if you want to farm this ground." So anyway, in the next year or two we bought the ground.

Joan: So how did you hear about and become involved in the American Agricultural Movement?

Jean: Well, if the men weren't working in the field they met at the café in Lewis every morning for coffee. That was a good way to get the word around. I don't know, through this Wayne Cryts, the man from Colorado-Missouri, he'd had such a time getting his beans sold and the money! Then they were having a lot more trouble out there than we were, financially. So the word just kind of filtered up here. Then the men just kept talking down at the café. Pretty soon, they had the office. I guess they didn't want them in the café that long! It was adjourning the café. (*The office was in one of two offices on the south side of the café in Lewis.*)

Joan: Right on the Main Street of Lewis.

Jean: Right where the restaurant used to be (*on the south side of the café*). So they had a regular office set up there. Zelma Mead and some of the women came and worked and answered the phones when the men were in the fields. We went to places where they gave talks and we would go give talks. Ed Scheufler and Marj and Jim and I went and gave talks. Each one of us would give a talk each night in the hall. That was clear down in the southeastern part of Kansas, where we gave those talks.

Joan: Fredonia?

Jean: Yes, and you know, the word just got around because the farmers everywhere were having trouble, all over the United States. It didn't make any difference whether it was grain farming or sugarcane farming or whether it was poultry. Whatever they were farming, they were all having the same problems. They couldn't get what they needed out of the products they sold enough to buy machinery and keep their expenses paid for. So they were wanting Parity. Or in other words, as much money that they had to pay for stuff equivalent to what they were getting for their products.

Joan: When he first came home from the café and told you about this, were you receptive to the idea? To the A.A.M.?

Jean: Yes. It was all neighbors and everything, and not having the income and having to work all the time out in the field and one thing and another. It affected the women just as much as it did the men.

Joan: I was going to say, earlier you said you were hoeing the soybeans. Was that by hand, with a hoe?

Jean: By hand, with a hoe.

Joan: How many acres of soybeans did you hoe?

Jean: At that time, we had probably had 160 acres. (*25 acres of soybeans*). Of course, there weren't devil's claws all over it (*just in spots*). We didn't know siccum from sooie about raising soybeans. We had gone to Stafford and around different places, in Stafford were the guys that told us what to do and one thing and another. They said, "When they're ready, cut them!" We didn't know they were ready, so Jim was out there one day and here was a bunch of soybeans on the ground because they should have been cut. In other words, they didn't look ripe, but they were.

Joan: So I think you said he was involved in both the 1977 and '78 Tractorcades to Topeka.

Jean: Yes.

Joan: Can you remember what his involvement was? Did he drive a tractor?

Jean: He took a tractor. Sometimes on the trips like that, they'd drive the tractor down there and then have a semi come and haul them home.

Joan: And on the second trip, you left it there and then went on to Washington D.C. with it.

Jean: No.

Joan: Oh, you brought yours home?

Jean: Yes, because we weren't going to go to Washington! *(Later, when he decided to go and take the tractor to Washington, he took our John Deere.)*

Joan: Well, we haven't gotten to that yet, let's wait a minute here. So, when they met in Topeka, who did they talk to?

Jean: I really don't know. They had the tractors down there and they drove around and whether they went into the Capitol, I don't think so. I think they just talked to the general public.

Joan: How old were your girls at this time, in '79?

Jean: They were all gone from home.

Joan: But you stayed home and took care of the farm while he went to Topeka?

Jean: Yes. Because I could do that. My grandson Mica was old enough to help some. In fact, he went to Topeka and drove the tractor down there. I liked to croaked when I found out.

Joan: How old was he?

Jean: He was a ~~senior~~ junior in high school! I got down there, and here he was driving that tractor all around Topeka. I thought, "You know, if you have a wreck or a policeman stops you, we may all be in trouble!" ~~He wasn't old enough.~~ I don't know if a tractor in a city like that would be lawful anyway. I doubt it. *(Mica lived in Pratt and drove to Lewis that morning. In Pratt a truck hit the side of his pickup and he cut the side of his head. The policeman made sure he was OK and told him to come on so he would be here to go to Topeka.)*

Joan: I don't think the farmers were interested in keeping the law! *(They didn't get out of hand with anything, but keeping within the law wasn't helping them any. They were staying within reason.)*

Jean: No, that wasn't their concern at all.

Joan: But that is interesting that a grandson was doing that.

Jean: I think I have his picture there somewhere.

Joan: That would be good.

Jean: I also have some information from Topeka. My daughter drove out down there from Clay Center and took pictures. She had some clippings out of the paper, but she didn't get them sent to me. *(They were acquired after the interview.)*

Joan: So when they went in December of '78, you trailered a tractor home because you were not going on the Tractorcade in January.

Jean: No, not at all.

Joan: So do you want to tell us that story, about how that got turned around?

Jean: Well, you know. My husband and I didn't always agree on some of this stuff. When we got up that morning and the Tractorcade was starting the next day, I said, "Are you going to go?" And he said, "No." And I said, "Okay." And I had made no preparations whatever to go. Then about one o'clock, somebody from the office called and said, "Jean, you're going to Washington." And I said, "No, we're not." and it was "Yes, you are!"

You had to have a pickup and you had to have a trailer house, and our pickup wouldn't have gone to Washington. We didn't have a trailer house, and you had to have a generator that was big enough to charge your lights and all. You had to be self-contained. So she said, "Yes, you are." And I said, "We don't have a pickup to go." "Jim went to buy one."

And I said, "Well, we're going in the morning then." And she said, "Yes."

"But we don't have a trailer house." She said, "Yes you do. You have Pat and Bill's out in the barn." But it was such a small one. It belonged to my daughter and our son-in-law. And I said, "I don't even know if it's ready to go." She said, "Jim said that Pat and Bill are coming down at 3:00 to get it ready to go." So, here they came. And I said, "We don't have a generator that big." And she said, "Jim's buying a generator."

He came home to get all the papers for his pickup. He came by about 9:00 and said, "Are you ready?" And I said, "No. I'm not ready. I didn't think we were going." And he said, "Yes, we're leaving early in the morning." So I had clothes to get ready and some food to put in there. Pots and pans and bedding, everything to get in that trailer! Pat helped me and we got it in there, and I said, "I don't know about this."

*(One reason it was hard for us to go was we had hot water heat. We had to drain all of the radiators and water pipes. We were afraid if the electricity went off, it would freeze the heating and water system. We had to get all of this done the night before we left too.)*

Well, Elmer Huckstep came and my mother was older, she was about 90. And he said, "I'm taking care of your mother. She'll have all she needs to eat and I'll check on her every day." I said, "Our house?" "Your house will be taken care of." So we had Don McAllester and Elmer Huckstep take care of everything while we were gone. One night, I dreamed that my basement was full of water, and I thought, "Oh Dear." So I made Jim go and call home and make sure. They hadn't been checking that, so they went in the house to make sure everything was okay. They said, "There's no water in your basement." So we went on, and everything was fine when we got back.

Joan: Who drove the pickup?

Jean: Since Jim was driving the tractor, he wanted me to drive the pickup. I said, "No way, Jim, because I am not used to pulling a trailer house." So he talked to Marj and Ed and Ed said, "Well, Marj can drive our pickup, and I'll drive Jean's." And I thought, "Oh dear" Well, that's the way we started out. Ed was driving our pickup, and Marj was driving theirs. We got along pretty good, except when we got to the Cumberland Mountains, that was terrible. The pickups and trailers slid all over those mountains.

Joan: There was ice and snow?

Jean: Oh, ice and snow and blizzard. It was bad enough that they couldn't see... Some of the tractors came to the town of Friendly, some of the tractors couldn't see the rest of them, so they went down into Friendly, down off the highway on an exit. They discovered they were in the middle of the town and nobody was behind them. So they went around and went on up and joined us on the other side. But we had the fuel truck, and I'm not kidding, we would just slide all over that mountain. It was awful. Then

they went ahead to see if there was someplace we could stop. I can't tell you the name of the town. It was a college town (*Frostburg, MD*) so they said we could park there in their parking lot, but we had to be out of there early in the morning because the college students were coming back. So, there we have a young man that's with us that I didn't even know his name (*Larry Seele, a diesel mechanic from Paxico, Kansas*), but he was with the Stapletons. Someway he got with us, and he was a diabetic and couldn't get back to wherever Stapletons were. So he spent the night in our trailer on a bench in the breakfast nook. We got up early the next morning and started out and got on the other side of those mountains. The sun was out, and it was really nice and that young guy got back with Stapletons so he could get his medicine.

Joan: What kind of a tractor did you take?

Jean: A John Deere tractor. I couldn't tell you what year it was, but all of them were in pretty good condition or they couldn't have made it. One thing that Bev Snyder, my neighbor, her husband got killed not long after that, an ensilage truck hit him and killed him. She took her tractor and took care of it all the way there. It was cold as the dickens, so I said (*to Jim*), "How are you going to keep warm?" because there were no heaters on them. And he said, "Well, I'll take a gas lantern and set it in there. That'll keep me from freezing and the windshield from freezing over." So that's how he went, when he got started, he did the whole bit.

Joan: Are you talking about your husband? So he drove the whole way on the tractor?

Jean: Yes.

Joan: It doesn't sound real safe, heating with a lantern.

Jean: No, but that's the way we went, and once you joined the Tractorcade, you didn't stop or get off or take off to the side or anything. You stayed in line and it went like that clear up there (*to D.C.*). Anybody that joined came in at the end.

Joan: Because people were joining all the time?

Jean: All the way there.

Joan: Yes, so when the tractors (and trailer) went by, they (*the new ones*) would fall in behind.

Jean: And you could see them from a distance, sitting there in the tractor ready to fall in. Then up above on the viaducts there would be a bunch of people hollering and telling us, "Good luck!" So that's the way we went, and we had a highway patrolman in front of us and we had one at the end. They cleared everything for us, rather than for the traffic, I'll say that.

Joan: About how fast were you going?

Jean: I don't know. (*15-18 miles per hr, I imagine.*)

Joan: Not very!

Jean: No, not very and the trailers stayed in line with the tractors.

Joan: They were interspersed with the tractors?

Jean: And you had to have a CB or you couldn't go because you have to be connected clear to the end of the line.

Joan: Did you all have handles? That's what we used to call a person's name on the CB. I've never asked that before.

Jean: I didn't have one, but whoever was driving the vehicle generally had one. But they had those instead of cell phones, everybody had one of those CBs. I think they're obsolete now, but that was our communication, and it was the requirement that you had to have one of those.

Joan: But you already had one of those, you didn't have to buy one!

Jean: No, we didn't buy that. (*We already had one*).

Joan: Can you remember any difficulties along the route? I know there was a bad snow that you had.

Jean: Well, it was all the way. We had bad weather all the way. With ours, no. But when we got to St. Louis, of course it was several miles long. We were going through St. Louis, and a semi (of course, the patrolmen were favoring the farmers, and getting a bunch like that through a city like that would be kind of hard). Anyway, a semi decided that he was going to get on the other side. I suppose he was going to pull off or something. So he just cut through there and hit the back of one of the big trailers and took a hunk out of it. Well, they had to pull out, of course, they couldn't go on. And in about two days, here they came, with it all covered over with grey tape!

Joan: Duct tape?

Jean Duct tape! And they finished up the Tractorcade.

Joan: Give a farmer duct tape!

Jean: It had taken a hunk off, but they just covered that over with duct tape.

Joan: Do you remember any fun things about the trip, or wasn't it fun?

Jean: Not particularly. We had some enjoyable minutes; one time we stopped at (I believe) Fredericks (*Maryland*). A woman sheriff talked to us, and she was very good. Of course, she had thoughts for us, it wasn't city thoughts because they realized what we were going through, trying to get parity.

Jean: When we stopped at Indianapolis, we were in another blizzard. They took us out to the race track, you know, where they race. They said, "They can't stay out here, if they get out here in all that snow, there's no way to get them out!" So we were kind of around town at a motel and different things. We were still in our trailers, but parked there. Darrel Miller's were parked beside us, and it was so cold it broke their holding tank. It got kind of rough, but anyway, we did meet some nice people there, and we were there several days.

Joan: Did the local farmers come in and support you other than joining or anything?

Jean: No. When we had a meeting, I don't know about that, they might have come in (*or sat in*) on the meeting. Every night we had a meeting, and generally a speaker. We had Father Gottschalk from Colorado who came with us. He didn't go as a Catholic priest. He went just because he had sympathy for us and realized what we were going through. I think there's a picture of him there.

Joan: So just about every night when you stopped, you would get together and meet?

Jean: Well, not every night, but darned near every night. Maybe not for long, and sometimes the places where we would meet would have something for us to eat, and sometimes not.

Joan: How about church on the trip?

Jean: No church, except we had prayers all the time, because Father Gottschalk gave them and if he didn't, other people did. It wasn't like we didn't go with the intent to. (*We felt like we had the blessing of the Lord with us otherwise we wouldn't have made it. We were on the road all of the time.*)

Joan: You were busy driving tractors.

Jean: We stopped for lunch, but we didn't go anywhere! ~~I'd run back to the trailer and fix a sandwich for Ed.~~ (*We fixed our meals before we started out in the morning.*)

Joan: So you'd pull off to the side?

Jean: No. We never pulled off to the side in all that time. The highway patrol kept us going, and of course if anyone coming toward us was in the way... They generally went on roads where you could pass.

Joan: Highways like Highway 50? I know you started out on the interstate, but then you weren't allowed to be stay on that, were you?

Jean: I don't remember, I wasn't paying any attention. I wasn't driving! Probably one of the men or Darrell would know.

~~Joan: How would you get to the trailer to make the sandwich and how would you get the sandwich to your husband.~~

~~Joan: I didn't take it to him. I took him to Ed. He was my driver.~~

Joan: Did you have a sandwich in the car when you started in the morning?

Jean: ~~No.~~ Yes.

~~Joan: So how did you make it? Did he stop long enough for you to run back to the trailer?~~

~~Joan: Well, I don't know. I guess they did.~~ But as far as any outsiders ever coming or, Bev would stop and try to get a paper in every town where we were if she could. She said she couldn't find anything. They weren't printing anything about us.

Jean: We had a man with us who took pictures and wrote up articles and stuff. But as far as the



newspapers, there wasn't anything.

Joan: You've got several thousand tractors going by your city and nobody comes out to cover it?

Jean: No.

Joan: Amazing.

Joan: Any other memories in particular that stick out about the trip? When did you start in the morning and when did you quit at night?

Jean: I don't know. We quit so we'd be in and parked before it was dark. Sometimes we didn't make it.

Joan: And then you usually cooked your meal in the trailer?

Jean: Yes. You never went into town and got anything to eat. You didn't know where anything was and you just had to exist with what you had.

Joan: Okay, so then you got close to the capitol. Where did you camp before you went into the capitol?

Jean: Of course, there was quite a string of us. Dub Stapleton had been to Washington three times, I think, beforehand. And he knew there was a campground out close to Washington. Somebody made arrangements, and I think he would have been the only one, for us to park in the campground. It was a big one, and then they had a central building that you could do washing in. There were washers there; you could use it as a utility. Then you could connect up the water and everything there. So we were outside there, and we could walk over (it wasn't too far) and take a tram or subway deal over to the Capitol downtown.

The ones who didn't park where we were at (and I think it was mainly the group from Kansas that parked there) they went on down to the Mall and they would do tractorcades every day down there. I can tell you that people were afraid of those tractors. Some of them were so big that they vibrated the ground. The tractors they had around Washington were small, like a little Ford tractor. They don't have anything of those big things. So anyway, they parked down at the Mall. Then they got afraid that they didn't know what they were going to do with those big machines. They had brought a cotton picking machine, a thresher and a great big cotton bale, I don't know what it all was. They had set them afire down there on the Mall. I thought that was kind of uncalled for, but I guess they were trying to get their attention. Well, we could go through the Capitol and down in under. There are tunnels down there and big statues down in under there. You could go up through some doors and go into the Senate and the House and listen to some of the meetings. We went to the House to especially hear the one from Kansas. I can't think of his name, but he wasn't there and they said he hadn't been there for several days. So I mean, it didn't make too much of an impression on us, what they were doing up there. Anyway, we just had the run of the Capitol, and the tractors would do a parade down there every day. They came ready for the big rally that we were going to have. It was cold as it could be. When we got up that morning and here they had men up on the Capitol with guns. After they done the parade that morning they had the tractors down there all barricaded in so they couldn't get out. Then they had policemen on horses and motorcycles. One of the policemen, for some reason, hit Ellen Jenkins' tractor with a billy club, and she was sitting right in there! If you went to do something, boy they came. And I don't blame them, but we wasn't going to do nothing, but they didn't know if we was going to ram the Capitol or something. So it got kind of touchy, and then they were barricaded down there. They wouldn't let them out.

Joan: Where was your tractor?

Jean: Well, the day that they had the first parade, when they got through, Jim just took off down through town. He was driving to see the city, and I thought, "You're crazy!" But anyway, he didn't get caught down there where the others were, so he was out at the Cherry Hill (*Camp City*), the trailer park. Then it began snowing again. I thought it was 14 inches, but somebody corrected me the other day and said 21. I don't know what it was, but it just put the traffic in Washington D.C. at a stop. They didn't have any (*big*) street equipment at that time, and they couldn't get the doctors and the nurses anywhere, so they had to come and ask if we would let the tractors take them to where they needed to go. It was kind of funny. They were stuck down there on the Mall and the policemen were coming down and trading stuff for something the farmers had. They were just visiting and having a good time with the farmers. Of course, we didn't do anything to them, but anyway, they were trading buttons and stuff.

Joan: Were any of the tractors of the Kansas, Lewis area group caught in the Mall?

Jean: I think most of ours were all out there (*at Cherry Hill*).

Joan: All out at the campground?

Jean: Yes. I think. It was a nice campground, but gee, were we glad we were out there! Because after a while, your holding tank is full, so they had Port-a-Pots brought in and set down in through there (*at the Mall*).

Joan: So you went out and used them, or you emptied your holding tanks into them?

Jean: Neither one. We connected to their sewage and everything. But down at the Mall, there wasn't anything to connect to. They'd shut them down there, and they couldn't get out to do anything. That's when they burnt a couple tractors, a threshing machine and the cotton picker and a cotton bale down there.

Joan: So how did they solve the problem?

Jean: No problem, it was just a bunch of dumb farmers down there.

Joan: Well, about the holding tanks. What did they do?

Jean: I guess they just ran over... (*What else could they do? They were trapped down there.*)

Joan: Oh, just let them loose.

Jean: I don't know. They ones that were down there, really, it was terrible for them. But one thing about it, there wasn't any traffic out there, nobody visiting or anything because they couldn't get out there. And you really had the free run of all the buildings, all the Smithsonian stuff and their exhibits.

Joan: So did you go to the museums or anything?

Jean: Oh yes! I went to the Air...

Joan: Air and Space? I don't know what it was then, though.

Jean: Yes, and I went to the...

Joan: Natural History?

Jean: Yes, and to the Horticulture... and I went to see a lot of paintings. And I went to see the president's wives' inauguration gowns. I don't know, that was probably about it.

Joan: And you could go back and forth using the subways, you didn't have to take the pickup into that?

Jean: Yes, we just parked it while we were there. But I'm almost sure that Dub, he was really strong on that, he really worked on it. He'd come to my place and Jim would be gone, and he hardly ever rang the doorbell. He'd open the door and just put papers on the table all the time about it.

Joan: So about how much time did you spend visiting legislators?

Jean: Oh, I'm going to say two afternoons and that was it, because we weren't getting anything from it, because it's like a meeting and we weren't getting anything from it. So we didn't go anymore.

Joan: We've talked about buttons. Were you making buttons?

Jean: No, they were making these buttons and then they had... Well, I've got another button, and I never even thought of that one, that somebody was making. They were taking plastic lacing around it and putting your name on it. If I find it, I'll bring it.

Joan: How long were you in Washington D.C.? How long did you two stay?

Jean: Well, let's see. It took us 16 days to get there, and we were gone about three weeks.

Joan: So about a week in Washington?

Jean: Well, three to four weeks was what Marj said. We took a longer way home so she didn't really figure it down to the day.

Joan: But your tractor was trailered home?

Jean: Yes, I don't know whether everybody had theirs hauled home or not, but our group did. The implement dealers done it free of charge. As far as our expenses, the offices at home had sent money for all our gas. It didn't cost us anything, only the personal stuff.

Joan: So overall, while you were there, the confrontation with the police and the FBI or whatever, did you ever feel afraid?

Jean: Well, I'd say. Not until the day they were up on the Capitol with guns and the police had billy clubs and were riding those horses and motorcycles. They were like kids with a new toy, and you never knew when one of them was going to get irked with something and shoot. I mean, you just didn't know.

Joan: How did the other people in Washington D.C. view that?

Jean: I don't know. Well, you've been to the Smithsonian and down in there. It's not right in

downtown, so we didn't have much connection with the people actually in Washington, only when they got snowbound and couldn't get anywhere. Then they wanted our help.

Joan: Do you remember anything about any congressman meeting with you or being interested in the whole thing?

Jean: No, I don't. The only thing I can remember about anybody was a senator and three others came from Missouri and I believe Georgia. They had a plane wreck and killed all four of them, but outside of that I don't remember them ever meeting with us. *(A lot of the congressmen weren't in at the meetings when we went to see them.)*

Joan: Okay, before you left, how did people back here feel about your going on this trip?

Jean: Well, I believe they thought we were nuts. And they thought Jim and I were nuts getting ready that quick because the others knew they were going to go. I tell you, it's the same way as today. The city people don't really care about what the farmers are doing, or whether they're making it go. All they want is the money out of what they're selling, and I don't blame them. That's their business; it would be natural to do that.

Joan: So your neighbors in Lewis were basically for you going or were they...

Jean: It was kind of immaterial. They weren't against it nor were they for it.

Joan: And when you came back, what was the reception from people?

Jean: About the same. It was like you hadn't done nothing, really. I mean, it was, "Hi, I'm glad you're back." but so far as any other kind of thing, there wasn't.

Joan: Were you active in AAM after you came back? Did you do any speaking about the trip?

Jean: No. In fact, around there, it didn't stay active. But do you know, I looked it up on the internet the other day, and it's still quite active. There is quite a lot of information on there. But it is more all over the United States, and not just in Kansas.

Joan: Well, even in the Tractorcade, you had them joining from all the other states.

Jean: Yes. And the cotton farmers, it wasn't just grain farmers; it was every kind of farm type thing. There were three trains that went.

Joan: One that came down from the north and the south and the middle. Do you think you had an impact on parity or farm prices or anything back then? Did it help at all?

Jean: No, I don't think actually it did. It might have brought a few people like senators and the like's attention to it, but they weren't interested particularly in whether the farmer made a living or not.

Joan: Well, you had an interesting way of getting to go on it. When you got back, were you glad you'd gone?

Jean: I'm like Darrell Miller. I'm glad I'd gone, but I don't know if I'd go again. It was a hard trip

because you were in pickup or the trailer house (of course you couldn't ride in it) all the time. You didn't go anywhere. You didn't go shop. And groceries, when we started getting groceries and everybody started running out, the tractors were holding the trailers back, so they sent the trailers on ahead so they could get groceries and cook the meal and get situated. Then the tractors would come. Lester Derley was our fuel man, and at night he would fuel up all of those tractors and pickups. Of course, some of the men helped him. He really had a job of doing that, but he really stuck to it. Then sometimes there would be others who didn't have fuel either, so he gave them fuel. So he was kept real busy.

I never heard anybody gripe nor say they wished they weren't there or anything. They all just knew they were in it for the trip, so that's the way they went.

Joan: How about your husband? Do you think he was glad he made the decision to go?

Jean: Oh yes. He thought it would make an improvement. I've no doubt it helped, but we didn't get parity. But that was kind of asking for quite a bit, I guess.

Joan: How about your daughters? How did they feel about you going?

Jean: Well, they were excited. They thought that was the thing to do. Of course, they were either married or... they weren't in school or anything. It really didn't affect them any as far as that's concerned. Since we got back, Kade and Kelsey have used the trailer for 4-H club, so I guess it served its purpose.

Joan: Did your husband stay active in the farm movement, maybe not in the AAM, but with the legislature and trying to...

Jean: Well, he wasn't really active, no. I mean, he'd go down to the coffee shop and they'd discuss it and everything. They had a lot of people back of them then. W. A. Cross for one donated a lot of money for us for gas to go. Others did too. But that kind of ended it as far as us having an organization or anything.

Joan: Was there discouragement because there didn't seem to have an effect?

Jean: I think there might have been, well I know there would have had to been. Because they thought it would really help, and like I said, when we went, you couldn't find a paper along the way very often that there would be an article in there about what was going on. Today if you say something about the Tractorcade or AAM, they don't know what you're even talking about.

Joan: Well, this project is going to help solve that. We're going to bring it to people's attention.

Jean: And like I said, city people weren't concerned about the farmers. It was immaterial to them.

Joan: Can you think of anything else, Rosetta, that we should ask?

Rosetta: No.

Joan: Can you think of anything else you would like to have mentioned?

Jean: Well, I wish I'd brought my notes. *(No, this was a well-planned trip. We had nurses, teachers,*

*and any emergency was planned for.)*

Joan: I think we've covered most of it, unless there is some particular story or memory...

Jean: Well, I do know that the highway patrolmen really were strict, not with us, I don't mean that. But as far as somebody trying to ram through somewhere or something like that. In one place, and I couldn't tell you the town, but it was in Missouri. The first town we went to (*or at the state line*), we changed highway patrolmen there. They really treated us wonderful. We went there for supper and had a big meeting.

Joan: Where was the Kansas contingent in the parade? Were you sort of in the middle or towards the front?

Jean: Well, let's see. It started in Colorado, so I'm going to say that we were a little more towards the front than the back. But it was kind of automatic. It wasn't necessarily behind us, but on the road there would be tractors and trailers waiting and they'd just fall in behind. They never stopped for nothing.

Joan: Just kept moving and pushing on.

Jean: Just kept moving.

Joan: Lester Derley did the fuel, and Darrell went ahead. Did anybody else have a job like that?

Jean: You know, I don't know. Like I said, I didn't go to the office that often. Jim might have known, but I don't know. There needed to be somebody go ahead, because one time they took us and said, "We've got the park ready." We went out there, and gee, it wasn't much bigger than Kinsley's, maybe a couple times bigger. I said, "There's no way they can even start to get in there." So they had to take us somewhere else.

Joan: The way I understand it, it was sort of like circling the wagons. You went in a big circle and you kept going until you all got in.

Jean: Yes, and you were going in about the same place in line.

Joan: This question just popped into my head, I've never asked anybody else this question, but you ever think about the pioneers in the Conestoga wagons and they speed they traveled? You were going faster than they were, but...

Jean: No, I hadn't.

Joan: It was a similar trip.

Jean: Yes, it was.