

a: Was he a miner?

B: Yes. That's why we came to Athens County.

A: Which part of Athens County did you live in then.

B: We lived in Millfield. We've always been around Millfield practically all my life, well after I married I lived in Glouster for a while that's when my first husband was living.

A: Was he a miner too?

B: Yes. He was in the explosion. And I lost two brothers in the explosion. But my husband didn't get but they was able they brought him out. They said he'd live ten years but he lived sixteen.

A: He was injured.

B: Yes. Hmm Hmm. Carbon monoxide poisoning for one thing then he had fractured crack on his skull and something else well, what they did that I can remember about that was they had to tap the base of his skull spine every so often to relieve the pressure on the brain from where his skull.

B: We came in November to Millfield because up around Santoy the mine could played out. We came to Millfield in Number 6, that's the mine that the explosion happened. Wasn't quite ready but number 7 a mine just the few feet below that one was working, so he went to work in there until the other mine was ready.

A: And umm, he was a part of the union during that time was he?

B: I don't think right to start with that they was union, I think it was later after we came there awhile.

A: So, it wasn't unionized in Millfield right away.

B: I don't think so. I hate to say that then somebody else, you know, come along.

A: But well anyway, as a little girl that probably didn't matter a whole lot to you.

B: I couldn't remember.

A: Do you remember strikes and things like that?

B: Yeah as we got older. I remembered all the strikes. Because, um um, in our family we always, I could still visualize it, we'd have barrels of upstairs in our bedroom where they would be

mine accidents

filled with sacks of flower. Put down in barrels so the lid so if mice or anything couldn't get into it. Sugar, beans and things so the family wouldn't go hungary.

A: Wow so you really had to stock up.

B: You stocked up. My dad and mother always stocked up. Made sure we had enough to eat.

A: And you had a garden I suppose.

B: And we had chickens and we had dogs and we had cats. Pets.

A: Did you own you house in Millfield or was that a companies.

B: That was called the company houses.

A: They gave you a piece of ground for a garden as we as a.

B: Well there was a, no you just had enough of garden space at the back which you spaded it up. You never thought about a plow they wasn't that large. But you put what garden in you could at the back had flowers in the front.

A: Did your mother like flowers?

B: She loved them.

A: What are some of the kinds you remember?

B: Well just about what we have today. Geraniums, petunias, marigolds.

A: So they were annuals.

B: Uh huh.

A: In the spring time. And um, did she do the gardening of the vegetables or was that your dad's job.

B: Dad and the boys did that mostly.

A: Wow that thing roars.

B: Yeah

A: Put out a little heat for us here. Um well, during the strikes that was the time when you had to go up to Columbus. Wasn't it your dad who went up there or was that your husband.

B: My husband. When they be off so long a time, you know, why its hard to make what little bit you had stretch so he'd always look for jobs.

A: Sounds like your dad just reaped it out with his garden. Did he have any other around here like on the railroad or anything like that?

B: I don't remember my dad ever having anything else only in the mine.

A: And had he started into the mine as a young man?

B: I'm assuming. He was real young. His father died when he was only four years old. And I can remember him always saying, "Well he never knew what a home was because he was just first with this one and then with the next one."

A: Must have really appreciated getting his own home then.

B: Oh huh, he died in February and if he'd lived till June they'd had 56 years . . . looking forward to being that old. But my dad had czarists of the liver. Took him over a year almost dead fast.

A: Did he talk much about his mining experience? Maybe he wanted to forget it.

B: You never heard him talk much about the mine, you never heard him say much about the strikes or anything he just kept everything bottled in more than what they do nowadays you hear it all now.

A: Do you think your mother was worried about him?

B: I'm sure that she was plenty worried. And of course later on as the strikes got worse, you know and all the shootin' and killing' that went on made it worse than ever.

A: Do you remember that, when they were scabs coming in and a lot of resentment and violence?

B: My first husband was mixed in with some of that I'm sure. And we lived at Green's Run then, now that's where you go out of Millfield towards Jacksonville, and turn and go up a hill like you're going into Buchtel that way.

A: Uh-huh.

B: OK give you an idea.

A: So it's a little bit west?

B: Uh-huh.

A: What people did they bring in as scabs as you remember?

B: I really don't know where they came from. They just, they came in by carloads and they'd stay overnight.

A: I heard that some of those scabs who came in maybe it was in the 1800's were black people.

B: Yeah.

A: And that caused a lot of resentment.

B: Yeah the whites at Millfield didn't like the blacks but . .

A: You don't remember that they were the ones who were brought in as scabs?

B: Huh-uh.

A: I also heard that Hungarians or some east European people came in as scabs sometimes.

B: Well that could be true because Millfield was made up of foreign people. We had Hungarians, we had Russians, we had all well any branch. We had little towns their at Millfield on this side was called Hunkeytown. They were all foreigners so they called it Hunkeytown.

A: Is a hunkey a Hungarian?

B: Well.

A: Or is it just foreigners?

B: They just call that cause they was all foreign people you know.

A: Foreigners.

B: Uh-huh.

A: Well did the different groups hold to themselves pretty much or did they mix?

B: They always just as friendly as can be. The Hunkeys stayed in Hunkeytown and other people went up to the other end of town.

A: So you mean the English Scotch-Irish? Other types. .

B: Yeah.

A: So they really weren't mixed that much.

B: Well they were mixed I think a lot of them wouldn't have known the difference. You know.

scabs

A: So when you were in school you didn't um, feel funny if you sat next to somebody who was another country or something?

B: Didn't bother me at all.

A: Well that was. . .

B: And to this day I, course I worked at the University for 17 years in the kitchens and dining halls.

A: You did? You didn't say anything about all that work you did.

B: Well that's been since John and I was married.

A: After your children were grown?

B: Uh-huh. I was there a little over 17 years.

A: So you saw a lot of foreign students in that time.

B: Students and you know a lot of people talked about the blacks and that made me mad because I don't think we should talk about them I don't care. You don't have to live with them, you don't have to go to bed with them. But be nice to them. They didn't ask to be put on earth. Try and get my little sermon in and quiet them down for awhile.

A: Now I know there was some real bitterness in the Nelsonville area and Ku Klux Klan and all that.

B: Well that's one thing I don't know much about. The Ku Klux Klan. But I know as far as me working at the University, I'll tell you, Mrs. Horn, some of the foreign students treated you better than Tape ends.

B: When I went over to the University to work why, the other manager, the last five years I was assistant manager in the dining room. Dietician. I didn't have the degree but I. .

A: What dining room was that?

B: Well I was in Ervewine and I was in Old Edge Hill at Verdown, can you remember all those names?

A: No I don't know Edge Hill but I know Ervine.

B: Well that's where the doctors have their . .

A: Right. That's a lot of responsibility uh-huh.

B: Uh-huh. I worked around about all of them over there.

A: Well I guess we should really be concentrating on these coal pounds and the kinds of experiences you had there but I can see that you've had exposure to a lot of different kinds of people.

B: Uh-huh.

A: It's interesting to hear that there was this real mix in the Millfield. I heard that um, there were especially a lot of German people in Buchtel. Was that your impression?

B: I think there's a lot of foreign people around Buchtel

A: So do you remember what countries did people come from that were in Millfield? Some Germans? I guess Mr. Olbers was from a German background.

B: Well his father and uncle came from Germany together.

A: And were there some Polish people?

B: Uh-huh.

A: And some Hungarians you think?

B: A lot of Hungarians.

A: Do you remember any other countries that people came from where there were some Welsh people?

B: Probably every thing.

A: Not any other major group that you remember. What about the summer times when they weren't buying as much coal and the mine didn't have as much demand. Did your father just not have work for a month or two then during that time or did he work pretty steadily all year around.

B: No, I think when the mine shut down nobody worked.

A: And they did pretty much in the summer time?

B: I can't remember them doing to much in the summer time.

A: So he had some time to be with you then? What kind of things did you do for fun?

B: Well I imagine not very much of anything they had one movie house we probably got to go to a movie every once in a while.

A: That was in Millfield.

B: Uh-Huh.

A: You must have worked in the garden and what about you and

your brothers and sisters? Did you go exploring up in the hills and pick berries and things.

B: Well we always went out for berries and then there was resources up there you know you'd go fishing. Two different resides up there in Millfield at that time.

A: Is your mother a good fisher woman?

B: I don't know.

A: Did you use to do that?

B: Did you hear him? I was a good cook.

A: So you were expected to cook the fish that they caught.

B: Yeah! But after I was out of high school see then I was married and see so I was away from home. So I really don't know what was going on to much.

A: I was just thinking like when you were growing up as small fry what things do you remember doing around here that were fun?

B: Want me to tell you something that I didn't think was much fun at the time?

A: Sure.

B: My mother made homemade bread, she made pies, she did baking, and cooking so it was my job to help mix up the bread we had a stool just take the back off, and that was my stool that I could climb up on so I could help to mix that bread. and we would mix as high as thirteen loaves at a time.

A: That was heavy, that was a lot of work wasn't it?

B: And she would bake 8-10 pies when she baked pies. And it was my job always help with the baking that's why they think I can cook.

A: What kinds of chores did you have to do?

B: We always had to help with get school, get evening meal on the table, and then when supper was over with, I had a sister next to me that four years younger we had to do the dishes. When the dishes were ready to wash we didn't have a bathroom she went to the outside john. She wouldn't come back until she made sure the dishes were done.

A: Did you have a pumping sight or did you have to go outside to get your water.

B: You had to have a rain barrel where it was coming off the

homemaking skills

roof or you had to have a cistern out back and we had to carry our water. Down a road a piece. The boys had to carry the water.

A: That was a lot of work

B: I look back and wonder how she ever made it.

A: When you preserve food did you do that indoors or on wood stove or coal stove.

B: Coal stove

A: Did you get involved with that?

B: Usually my job to clean off the jars. Green beans, tomatoes what ever we had to can.

A: Did you can some meat too?

B: Not very often because we had meat when butchered we would have to can it.

A: Did you have any pigs?

B: Not on that farm we did. He did all that stuff when we were living up in Perry County. But we got to go to. When I look back I had a happy childhood. Every Sunday we could go for a walk.

A: That was part of family tradition

B: Well other girls my age we want to do something. Nobody had a car and couldn't afford to rent one.

A: Where would you walk?

B: Walk from Millfield to what we call Narrow. That is between little narrow road go through Morris Town on the highway. Parent would say don't go further than that

A: Was that a pretty way to go?

B: Yeah. Well when you saw cars you could wave.

A: Do you feel like Dad wasn't making very much money that there was things you wanted you couldn't have? Did you got pretty much what you wanted?

B: The way I look at it I felt like that he didn't have what I ask for he would get it when he could get it for me. One time it might be my time to get something.

A: What are somethings you were waiting for?

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B: I wanted a watch. I don't know why I wanted a watch. And I was suppose to get a watch. A lot of my friends had a wrist watch and why couldn't I have one.

A: With all those brothers and sisters Christmas must of been a challenge for your mother?

B: We always knew we would get two things a piece. She always thought of that.

A: We they home made things or things that she bought.

B: They would be things that she had saved and bought.

A: Did she have a way to make money?

B: No, she had a kid all the time.

A: Do you think she ask for help from other people?

B: When my father came to Millfield he married my mom's sister so that made two families living in Millfield at same time. They always knew that the two sister's could rely on each other. We have always have stayed together.

A: At least they could talk about there troubles to each other.

B: You never heard my mother complain she keep it to herself or she and dad to talked it over after we were in bed.

A: What were her special joys? Your mother do you think?

B: I think her kids.

A: They were her work and her joys both. Funny things you said and .

B: she just enjoyed having her around, and even if she got older and after we all away from home she was just as happy to see us when go if it's for 5 or 10 minutes.

A: Did she do hand work or anything like that at all? She just didn't have time to do anything like that did she.

B: She just didn't have time in what she liked to do and I take that after her, I like to read. And she did to.

A: Did she have a chance for much education? Did she go through High school?

B: No,

A: But she really enjoyed books.

B: She read, she read.

A: So she really taught herself then.

B: Yeah.

A: Did she read novels?

B: Anything that she could get she would read.

A: After you all went to bed I suppose.

B: After she got us all in school she'd have time in the' she'd get up and get her work done early in the morning.

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B: I saw my uncle coming and that's this uncle that came to Millfield the same time my parents came, and he said "There is no need in going over this way Myrtle, no he called me Sis, you go up to the mind shaft. I said what for? He said because the mind blew up, he said that's what you heard. I went in and got Bill, this I want to tell you this because this to me is funny, I started out with Bill, he was the only one I had then. I had a pot of soup beans on. That was a pour mans friend, you know? Did you ever hear of that?

A: Yeah.

B: Ok, I was cooking soup beans, doing my ironing and I picked up Bill and I said, "We are going over to the mine." Here come um Pape Sanders, that's if you've ever heard Dr. Sanders, we used to have a doctor in Nelsonville, called Dr. Sanders. His dad said, "Myrtle I'll take Bill." So he got Bill and put him across his shoulder, carried him clear over to the mine. When I got over to the bridge in Millfield, here come one of our good friends, he said, "Myrtle, Emmette's all right, don't worry." He said, "He's laying over there in tippie, just go on he's up there, you'll see him, as soon as you get there." Well, I went, and the first thing I saw was him, of course, because I was looking for him. And his buddy he worked with was stretched out beside him, and I knew he was alright, because they both had cigarettes in their mouths. I knew they wouldn't be smoking if they didn't feel alright.

A: Yeah.

B: So, I went over, and he said, "I'm alright." Of course, the ambulance pulled in and loaded them both in, and I got in too. Well, I didn't know were this thing got to. Pretty soon, Pape Sanders, well I might be telling this wrong, but I think this is what happened. He brought him to the house and he said.

Mine accident

A: This is Bill now.

B: There something wrong with Bill, he keeps talking, but I can't understand what he saying.

A: How old was he then?

B: Well about four years old.

A: Four years old, yeah.

B: It was October and it happened in November. He was hungry, he hadn't had anything to eat. He hadn't had any lunch.

A: What about some soup beans?

B: Pape, he was trying to tell Pape that he was hungry. Because he wanted to go. And Pape never did get over that, he said. Carried a kid around all day, that was hungry and I didn't know what he was saying. He wanted to come home and get some soup beans, I guess.

A: Sounds like a mama would not have had problems of understanding that.

B: No, I wouldn't of.

A: Boy, it was after you saw it, Emette was alright that you found out that other people weren't then.

B: Oh, yeah.

A: Yeah.

B: Well we came home and it was a real bitter cold night, this is light as day all night long, and uh in the mean time Emmette's parents lived on Tailor Ridge. Do you know where Tailor Ridge is?

A: No.

B: How long have you been in Athens County?

A: Well I live on the other part of the county, so you'll just have to forgive me.

B: Oh, Oh, Ok. They came down.

A: Um-hum

B: And I kept saying, well we ought to be hearing something, they, we ought to know if those boys are out yet, or not. Well dad came finally, and said that they had found both of them. They were both dead. And they laid them out, they had them straightened out, uh where they company store. Do you know where

the company store used to be in Millfield?

A: No, I don't. But, they stretched them out in front of the company store?

B: In the building, inside. And then across from there was Charlie's ?? store.

B: Hadn't been there yet. Had a cataract on his eye.

A: Um-hum

B: And he had to get down real close, you know, and see, men that was all dirty anyway. How could you tell one from the other? With this magnifying glass and one of these, what do you call them?

A: Guards?

B: No, dad didn't call them that. No, he had a nasty name for them. Got a hold of him and popped off dad and dad said, "You just let me alone, I'm looking for my sons." and he apologized.

A: Yeah.

B: But that always stuck in me about the guards. I said, "Well they ought to know that people wasn't in there just trying to maul over people, surely.

A: Yeah.

B: But that's how he said, and then that of course, always made me kind of angry when ever I hear about the guards.

A: Um, the National Guards.

B: But, ah, they had them up there in about 80's, I think there were 82. Some of them, Mrs. Horn, was father's and three sons.

A: I saw the list, there were some names, that were just all in the same families.

B: But now the Kish's, there were two different families of Kish's and they spelled their's a little different one was just Kish, and the other one was Kiesh.

A: Um-huh. Yep, well your mother really had a lot to cope with, then didn't she.

B: Um-huh.

A: She was still living right close by.

B: Yeah, they had my two brothers laid out in the same home,

they were both married, see? And they was, they were laid out in the homes, they did that more then, then what they do now.

A: Yeah.

B: They, do keep them more at the funeral homes.

A: So, you were all there that night, I suppose. And that next day to?

B: Yeah. Well, I think this was the sad part of it all to me that happened the day after election. And that would have been on the elections are always on Tuesdays so, that would have been on a Wednesday? Wouldn't it? We couldn't bury my brother's they couldn't get to them until Saturday.

A: Um-huh.

B: So that was really along, drawn out thing to have to keep them that long. That's the hardest part of a death, I think. Cause you know you have to do it.

A: Yeah.

B: And, ah, we had whoever's the undertaker from Nelsonville always took care of ours. Used to be Stout. I don't know who it is now.

A: Everybody just must have been overwhelmed at that point.

B: Well, just look how many has come and gone all the time. And our next door neighbor, now that was a family of Kish. There was two maybe three in that family. The father and son, maybe father and two sons.

A: And your daddy had to go back into the mines after that?

B: Well, he didn't go back in, he was at a point were he didn't have enough quarters then, to get his social security. So, they gave him a job taken care of the mine. Where you take your baths.

A: The shower rooms?

B: Yes, the shower rooms. And ah, and he stayed with that until he got enough quarters then so he got his social security.

A: So, he didn't actually have to go back into the mines, but Emmett couldn't go back into the mines, it sounds like.

B: Uh.

A: Because of that carbon monoxide.

B: Emmett never went back at all. Did he?

A: Was he just home with you after that? After the disaster and everything.

B: He watched the baby and I worked.

A: That was when you went to O.U.

B: No, because see I wasn't married, I was married to John.

A: Oh, what kind of work did you do then?

B: I worked up in Glouster in the stores.

A: Did you?

B: Uh-huh, I worked.

A: Were you a clerk in the stores?

B: Uh-huh, I worked at ?? Wells, I think he used to have a little luke off store in Athens. You know an Atuman Store, and that's the same thing up in Glouster, and then I worked in ?? and then I went to Kroger's.

A: Uh-huh.

B: I was working two Kroger's stores.

A: You were on your feet a lot then weren't you?

B: Yeah, I worked at the Kroger's store and then I went to ah, well then after Emmett passed away and John and I got back together three in a half years later.

B: Emmett had coal slack in his back, the doctor came and he had tweezers and he would be pulling those things out and he was saying that I have got out all that I am going to do today Myrtle because I do not want to get any soars started there, and then he came back and kept picking them out and all over his face where the slack.

A: You had to watch that?

B: Well, I did, I didn't want to miss anything. I watched him the first, I said I want to see when you take that spinal tap, I want to see what a spinal tap is. He said now Myrtle, that is what the doctor always called me, he said, you won't pass out on me, I said I have never passed out before in my life, only once. That was when I was hit in the nose with a ball bat.

A: Oh my gosh, I guess you had a right to pass out at that time, that is really something.

*mine
accidents*

B: So I got to watch it, and you know that it didn't bother me.

A: Did you get to see babies born and things like that, you have given birth yourself?

B: I was with a girl when she gave birth.

A: So I guess you have seen some blood and stuff before?

B: It didn't bother me

A: You have coped with other kinds of sickness and injuries and things.

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B: I wanted to be a nurse but we, there again, I try not to let it bother me too much. I have always wanted to be a nurse, that is the only thing that I wanted to be that I have never got to be. Somebody said that I think that you have learned enough about nursing anyway. Well my, Emmits father had his back broken in the mine and laid over here in the hospital for I don't know how many months, then they took him home and through Dr. Sanders, he trained me and I went up and took care of grandpa Albers twice a day. I got paid for it through the industrial commission.

A: Did you have to lift him and do the bedpans and stuff?

B: No, he could do that himself, he could turn over, but it was just dressing. He got like um, well it seems to me now, maybe I would be stretching it but to look back now. He had soars on him that seems like I could put my fist in it.

A: They were on his back from lying there in bed all of that time?

B: That cast, it was on there for so long.

A: So you really had a lot of experience?

B: But I said that the, I never got that degree. As a dietitian, I never got a degree.