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Stevenson Interview by Jean Strader - November 14, 2008

Nadine Stevenson

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November 14, 2008

Interviewee

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Okay Nadine first of all we are going to be talking a little bit about just your biographical information, information about yourself, and your farm and everything and then later I will get into questions about the New Deal programs. Okay—so first of all just for the recording would you state your name please:

Nadine Stevenson.

Okay, and could you spell that.

Stevenson

Okay, and where and when were you born?

2/17/1923 in Parsons.

Here in town?

Yes.

I think it was 1112 Crawford something like that 1120 Crawford something—I'm not sure of the address.

So if you were born in 1923 when the stock market crashed in 1929 you would have been about 6 or so.

Yes, that's right.

Who were your parents?

My mother was Reba, Reba and Ralph Brown, yes Ralph Brown was my father.

And how did your family come to live in this area?

My father worked out at the electric light plant that was formed out here at the river—I forget what it was called do you know what it was? I'm sorry it just slipped my mind—I'll think of it.

They called it “Service” out here on the river and that was where they were building a new electric light plant for the city of Parsons.

And did they live somewhere else previously to that?

I don’t know really, because they had lived in Parsons at that time I know they had lived here 5 years because my sister is 5 years older than I am and she was born here to.

Did you live in town?

Yes right down on 1122 Crawford, right here in town.

Then later in your life did you ever live on a farm?

Yes, my father died and my mother remarried when I was 5 years old we moved (now let me get my directions straight) we moved east of town into the area that is now the Kansas Ordinance Plant area, and we went to school in that area—country schools. That was when I was just 5 years old when we moved there.

So your parents then they did farm them?

My mother and stepfather yes, I lost my daddy when I was 3 months old out at the electric light plant—he was killed on the job.

So your stepfather he mainly farmed or did he also have another job?

He worked for the Katy at that time. He worked for the Katy Railroad, that is when he started farming.

Then how long did you live on your family farm?

Well we rented—we were renters and so we moved—we lived on different farms up until I graduated from high school in 1940. So I was on the farm for all of my life except for the first 5 years I lived here in Parsons.

Then, did you happen to marry a farmer?

I married a young man that was in service at the time and he had been raised on a farm not far from where I lived but he came back and worked for the railroad and we lived in a little country town just west of town (Dennis) a real small town, a country town but he worked for the railroad.

Did you or any of your family members did you benefit from any of the New Deal programs?

Well yes, my father lost his job when at that time there were no unions and it just so happened that (this is the story I got) that the man he was working for—some relative of his got laid off or fired from his job so they laid Dad off at the railroad and put this guy to work. I don’t know

names but put this other man to work and from then off we had to depend on the farm for a living and we did take advantage of some of the programs.

And I'll ask you a little bit more later about this New Deal program. Okay and you have told me that you did rent your land and you rented different lands you said and moved around a little bit and about how big were your farms?

About 160 acres—that was the average farm at that time.

And that was when you were growing up your farm was about that size?

Yes.

And then later when you married was it about the same size of farm then?

When I married we bought a little acreage (7 acres) and made our home and raised our children there.

So when you were growing up what kind of crops did your family raise?

Well they raised corn and oats, soybeans, wheat and then of course we always had a big huge vegetable garden and a lot of fruit trees, so just about anything where he could we could make a living and have plenty to eat and that was one thing we always had plenty to eat there on the farm.

So your garden always produced enough for you to eat—self sufficient.

Yes Mother canned—Mother did a lot of canning and we went out in the summer and picked blackberries and I can remember mother tying, letting us wear, women didn't wear pants so we would put on our brothers overalls and mother would tie binder string around the bottom of the legs to keep the chiggers from biting us.

Did it work?

Yes it worked and then she would put kerosene around our ankles. It worked.

So did you have to work in the garden then too?

No, Mother worked in the garden. I was the youngest of 5 children, I mean I was the youngest of their 5 children, and I took care of my younger brothers—I had 2 younger brothers and I usually was taking care of them and my older sister worked in the house and my middle sister wasn't very well but she did what she could. But I was the one that mother would say go out and take care of the boys so I did.

Did you raise any livestock?

Yes, and one of my first, maybe I shouldn't say this, but one of my first memories is that when I was 5 daddy would come in (this is my stepfather) would come in and wrap me up in a blanket and carry me out to see the baby calves—that was a big deal to me. We had a lot of animals around always had a lot of animals around—we loved it.

Did you have hogs?

Oh yes, yes we always had meat to eat.

How about chickens?

Mother raised chickens, hatched them out herself, I mean set the old hens and hatch them out herself and us kids loved the baby chickens.

Were the animals that you raised, your cows and hogs and things did you sell them to markets or was it mostly for your own consumption.

It was mostly for our own consumption—there came a time later in the depression when we did sell some of them, but mostly it was for our own consumption, and meat hasn't tasted good since then.

Did you do your own butchering then, your family?

Yes, daddy did the butchering and mother would cut up help cut up the meat and then trim off all the fat and build great big fires outside in great big kettles and render that out and put in big crocks and that was our lard (shortening), and that's what we used—made good pie crust.

Oh, I bet it did.

So you mentioned that later on you sold some of your cattle?

Some of it we did, but we didn't sell very many of them, but once in a while daddy would take a pig or two to the market but mostly we used, there were 7 of us kids, mother and dad, so we used most of our farm produce for food and that was one thing though we did have food to eat, we did have something to eat and we ate pretty good, we had chickens, we had pork, but they never butchered a beef that I can remember, but we had pork and chickens and they would go out in the winter time and get rabbit, shoot rabbits and we'd have rabbit, it was fun in a way—it was hard work, it was hard work, they worked awfully hard to get what they had because crops weren't worth very much and you had to sometimes the fields didn't produce very much but we had something to eat all the time, I don't remember any time when we went hungry like some people did.

Did you have milk cows?

Yes, we had plenty of milk all the time, and we had eggs, we had chickens, we had eggs, so we had stuff to eat, we never went hungry—there were some who did, but it was hard, it was hard

work to get it done with no electricity and no gas. Dad and the boys would go out and chop wood and bring it in. Mother cooked on a wood stove, cooked all of our meals—there were 7 of us kids. Daddy had 2 when they got married, mother had we 3, and then they had the 2. So there were 7 of us kids and it took a lot of food for us.

So did you make butter?

Oh yes, butter, milk, but we used buttermilk but I said I think my mother could take a piece of meat and make it go further than anyone I ever saw.

I wonder why they didn't butcher any beef?

I don't know, I don't remember—I don't remember what we had with the pailed calves, but the heifers they all raised them for milk, but I don't remember, I just don't remember dad selling the calves off, but I know something happened to them because we didn't have much beef so he must have sold them—I just don't remember that.

Did you ever take like some of your produce, like your eggs or your butter, did you take it to town to trade or?

To the creamery, we took it to the creamery—to the produce house and sell it. That was quite a trip to town. Yes, they took it once a week—that was after daddy lost his job on the railroad that was the money we had come in to eat on—every week farmers would take their creamery and eggs and butter and stuff to town and some of the farmers pedaled it out on the street, some of them didn't, some of them took it to the produce house and sold everything, but the cream was all taken to the produce house.

And then did they pay you in money for it?

Yes.

They paid you every week then for it cash.

Yes. That was just about all the cash we had and sometimes it wasn't very much. We had a good life though—we had a big family but we never went hungry because the folks always had something for us to eat.

Did you have to help churn butter?

Yes, that was fun, that was fun, yes we had sometimes mother, mother had a churn but sometimes she would put it in a jar and we could shake it back and forth and one of these I don't know what you call it but one of these old fashioned churns and then she got what they called a daisy churn and that was the one you turned round and round with your hand, it had a handle on it.

That was a little bit easier then than the dash.

Oh, yeah but it wasn't near as much fun, we loved that dasher, we all took whenever momma was churning that we all, all of us kids had to have a hand in it to help her do it.

Did you use those wooden molds to make the fancy designs?

Mother had a mold—I don't know what happened to it—but I know at one time mother had a mold that she could put it in there and push it out and it had a little rose on it, make a design with a little rose on the top of it.

So you mentioned that sometimes your dad took a hog to sell—did he have a truck, did he drive a truck or how did he get it to market?

I don't remember—I was in the house so much of the time at that time. I guess they got somebody to take it with them because we didn't have a truck—I suppose they asked somebody and probably paid them to take it to town for us.

During the course of the depression years do you remember if your parents ever changed crops or anything, did they stop growing one crop and start growing another one or anything like that.

I don't remember that—I really don't remember that. In fact some of the things seem more like a dream than real—I just don't remember. I know he never—I don't remember daddy ever planting wheat but I know we had oats, but I don't remember him ever planting any wheat. And I don't remember them changing much.

How did he get the oats to market you think?

They had somebody come and help thresh it.

Oh, okay.

They had threshing crews that went around with a big thresher and they threshed the stuff and we kept the hay and usually the grain was sold, just enough to keep us going in the winter time, the hay was stacked—when it blew out of the thresher it was just stacked right where it fell, and that was fun to play on too. But I can remember on threshing day—oh how we cooked for those threshing crews.

So you had to feed them?

Oh, yes. There were men to drive the horses, men to spread the fodder, the wheat and oats on the racks easy so they could pitch it off easier and then there were the ones to catch the grain and it really took a big crew of people. Then we fixed great big dinners, great big dinners, and that was fun—that was a fun time. Most of the time people cooked fried chicken and I've heard many men who used to go on a threshing crew that after they got older, they couldn't eat fried chicken at all, because every place they went they had fried chicken—because it was available—it was the quickest thing available.

You mentioned horse-driven equipment—is that what your dad use—mules, horses?

Yes it was.

How many mules or horses did he own?

I don't know—I know he had one good team and I can't remember—it seems like we had 4 horses but I'm not sure. I know we had 4 horses, one of them was Babe us kids rode it and I think he had 4 horses because I know the boys could go out and do different things, my older brothers could both go out to the field and both of them be working the fields at the same time so we had to have 2 teams of horses.

Later did he ever switch to a tractor?

No. No he never switched to a tractor.

Then when you and your husband were married and you had that small 7 acres, did you have a tractor at that point.

Oh yes, we had a little Farmall tractor and we just had 7 acres but we put in a small crop each year and we had a nice garden, but by that time we had gas in the little place we lived in and we didn't have to cut our wood, haul it in or anything, and things were a lot easier when my husband and I got married.

Did your family ever increase your acreage to produce more or?

No.

Well, now I am going to be asking you some questions about some of the New Deal programs that FDR put into effect and the first one I'd like to ask you about is the agricultural adjustment administration.

I don't know anything about that.

Well this was the organization that paid subsidies to farmers to hold down production, to not produce as much because the theory was that the government wanted to prevent an oversupply of crops or something.

I remember, but I don't remember, I imagine the folks did what they were suppose to do but I don't remember too much about that—really I don't.

You don't think your dad ever received subsidies?

No, I don't.

Did you ever hear your dad talking about the government intervening in farming by controlling prices or anything like that.

I heard him talk about it but I didn't pay too much attention to it, I wasn't interested in that right then so I didn't pay too much attention to it.

Okay, the next program was the Federal Insurance Deposit Corporation and this is also known as the FDIC and the FDIC was created as a result of all of this you know there were a bunch of bank failures and people made runs on the bank and there was just a general fear that the banks would go under. The FDIC was established to guarantee your money that was kept in the bank up to \$100,000.

But we lost all of our money, Daddy lost everything they had in the bank failure, so we didn't have anything put in, because everything we got from then on went to feed us kids.

Which bank was it that failed-do you remember?

No I don't know, I just heard them talking about it and you know as a kid I wasn't that interested in it so I don't know what bank it was but there were several of them that failed.

So after that your family didn't really put money in a bank?

We didn't have it, we just lived from hand to, we just didn't have any cash—what cash we had would be just what cash we got for the cream coming in and that just went for groceries because there were 9 of us and that every penny of it went for groceries. They worked hard, they worked hard, there were a lot of people a lot worse off than we were because they just didn't, they were the ones who lived in town and didn't have anything, it was rough on them. Those of us that lived on the farm were lots better off because we had crops, what we had was crops and stuff to eat out of our garden and we had eggs, we had milk, so the best thing Dad ever did was to take us kids to the farm—but it was work.

Okay, Public Works Administration is another New Deal program of FDRs and the Public Works Administration basically was established to employ people in building public works—dams or mines, or school buildings or whatever—did you know about any PWA projects.

I don't know what they were or anything, but I know my father worked on them—he had to with that many kids, he had to do something so he did work on them. Sometimes it wasn't very pleasant and sometimes it was fine, because so many people would look down on you if you had worked on it, yet there were so many on it, there were just a different cast system than there is now it seems like. If you worked on that well you were and then the ones who had a little bit more just thought you were getting a hand-out and weren't working for it. I know the project my daddy worked on he would come home exhausted because he was a hard working man he always gave them a day's work for their money and a lot of the men did and they didn't just take, they said that some of the men they got around would just lean on their shovels, but they didn't they worked hard. Some of them didn't but some of them did—it's just like some of the things that happen today—some people work for it and some don't.

So you said he had to work some long days, long hours?

They worked so many days a month and I don't remember how many days a month they worked—they just worked 8 hours I think a day, but I'm not sure about that either.

How far away from home did he have to go?

I don't know, I know that there were several things going in at the time there was a little lake went it, then they built these outhouses for farmers and built ponds for farmers and he just worked where, I don't know, I don't know how far he went, but not very far, nothing he couldn't drive to and drive home at night. He didn't have to go away from home.

What did he drive?

An old Model T touring car. A fun car.

What year was it do you remember?

I don't know.

When did you get it?

I think he had it when mother and dad got married, they got married in 1925 and I think she said it was new when they got married—I don't know 1924, maybe 1923, 24, because they got married in 1925 and I was 2 when they got married. See my father was killed—another project they had was they put in the dam out at Service which was to provide electricity for Parsons and my father was killed out there when I was 3 months old so that's why there were so many of us kids. Daddy had 2, mother had 3, and then they had children so it was kind of rough but we had fun.

So your dad worked on these public works projects but then he also had to keep up with the farming too—right.

Yes, but the 2 older boys (his boys) were, let's see I was trying to think his oldest boy was in his teens and the other boy was just going into his teens and they did a lot of the farm work.

Did they ever work on these public works projects.

No, they never did—just daddy.

So how did this program—how did it impact your farm life, your home life, or whatever?

Well the main thing it did it brought a little money in so daddy could buy us kids a few clothes now and then, but it wasn't very much and in a big family like that, and it just took it, but it did

bring a little bit of cash in so that mother and daddy along with the cream and eggs they took to town we never went hungry, and some of them did, a lot of people went hungry at that time.

Okay, how about the Farm Security Administration and what this agency did was it offered low-cost loans to help farmers upgrade their farming equipment or purchase new equipment.

I don't know, Daddy never took, we never were at the place that he felt like he could take advantage of it so he never did but I think, it probably helped a lot of farmers because money was real tight for everybody and so I think even the ones, I think my in-laws took advantage of that but I'm not sure—that's about the only ones that I knew of.

Do you know if your in-laws when they took out the loan did the loan come with any strings attached to it.

I don't know, I wasn't in the family or anything and I just heard my husband mention it one time that his dad got a loan to get some equipment with and that's all I know, I don't know where he got it or how he got it, but it was a low-cost loan, I don't know.

Did your in-laws ever mention receiving any home visits from any workers that were involved in education programs or did anyone ever come to your house.

No. There were some come to mother's house to our house and asked mother about how we were eating, but that is all I know about, just the ones that came to our house and asked mother about how we were eating and then she went away thinking well, they're eating better than some of us do, but mother just had a knack for making anything taste good.

Did your mom sew your clothes too?

Yes, yes she made all of us our clothes and we wore hand-me-downs, but everybody else did too. You didn't feel bad somebody you went to school with, somebody had a dress on, you had a dress on that somebody passed on to you, you never felt bad because everybody else was doing it too. Even those that had a little bit more was doing it because it just wasn't as plentiful then as it is now.

Okay the Rural Electrification Administration. Of course that was the administration that brought electricity to the rural farms. How did this program impact your farm?

Well, I don't know because we—I remember when they got it, and I know a lot of people got electric washing machines because they had used washboards and it saved on kerosene, but you had to pay your electric bill. I don't know really, I can't remember really, I think about the time that they started getting this electric—I think we moved back into town about that time. You don't know about what time this came in do you? Because

When is your earliest recollection of electricity on the farm?

We didn't, we never had electricity on the farm. I moved off of the farm when I was 18 and we never had electricity. We couldn't take advantage of it. I don't know when it was started or anything, but there weren't very many even then that had electricity. I think most of them got it just before the war started.

When you got married in 1940 did you have electricity at Dennis?

I got married in 1944, I think. I was 23, yeah I got married in 1944—okay yeah we had electricity—no we didn't have electricity in the house, but there had been a gas well around where we were living and some of us had gas lights, but Frank and I used kerosene because they had quit pumping gas into the area so we used kerosene lights when I got married. Kerosene lights and kerosene stove to cook on and a coal stove to heat with and it kept us busy so we didn't have washing machines—there weren't a whole lot of washing machines out yet some of the had gasoline washing machines, but there weren't too many of us—most people washed by hand obviously. Mother washed on the board all the time—I don't know how she did it for 9 people. I've took after my husband came home from the service will I brought mine to town to a washateria until I could get me a washing machine, but when my mother was raising us kids they didn't have that—she washed on the board and I remember when she got her gasoline powered washing machine she and I washed all day long that was so much fun and I would say I was about 16 or 17 when she got that one and we went home. They had got this Maytag gasoline-powered washing machine and oh it was so nice to get. We still had to lift the clothes out and put them through the wringer yourself—they didn't have the dryers but this washing machine was wonderful and a lot better than when mother was trying to do it all on the board. I'm not saying the clothes got any cleaner, but it was sure a lot easier. It was battery powered—I mean gasoline powered. Sorry.

Okay, the next agency is the Civilian Conservation Corp and Works Progress Administration or WPA.

Well now the CCC—my brother went to the CCC camp and he said after the war started (World War II) started he got in service he said they had—he said it was just as bad as being in the camp for World War II he said they had to do everything regimental and he wasn't very happy about being there but they did do a lot of good the CCC did a lot of good, they built a lot of dams and things and the CCC, PWA, WPA all of those if people would just stop and think about what they have done there were a lot of things they did for the country and it helped people out to eat to have something to eat, but a lot of our lakes the people go fishing in now were formed by those organizations.

Can you remember which projects your brother went to work on, CCC?

No, he never said.

How far did he have to go?

I don't remember. All I know is that when we got a letter we were tickled to death to get a letter from him.

Where was he?

What.

When you got a letter from him where was he?

I don't remember, Mother would open them and all I wanted to do was to read the letter, I was let's see I was about 12 years younger than my brother, so when he went away I was probably about 8 or 9. I probably wasn't that old because he would have been 20 and I think he went when he was about 18 so I was pretty young and I wasn't interested in that I just wanted to read the letters and hear from him—so I don't know where he was, I really don't.

Did he send money home?

They had to. No he didn't send money home they sent money home—the money came from the government and they just got a little bit out of their check. They got a little but they didn't get much—the biggest share of it was sent home to the parents—that's what it was for to help the family and they were being fed and I guess they figured they were being fed and clothed there so they just got a little bit of spending money and the rest was sent home and I have no idea of what the wages were. I think there were times that my brother resented it but I don't know he did it, I don't know how long he even did it, I just know he went, broke my heart when he went because he was my buddy, but the CCC did help a lot of people, all of those projects has helped a lot of people and there are a lot of people who don't want to talk about them now and there were a lot of people that were on it that a lot of the other people resented it that weren't on it so I don't know what was the best but you know that's the way it is with everything you can please some of them and some of them you can't.

The National Recovery Administration—this was an administration created to set minimum wages and maximum hours that industries could operate under and also some industries could collectively set minimum prices and this is a picture of a poster do you remember that poster.

Yes, National Relief something administration—National Recovery.

Do you remember seeing it in windows of businesses?

Oh yes. Construction industry—yes they did a lot, they constructed a lot of dams and a lot of buildings and you can just even now you can go across the country and you just somebody will say oh that looks like one of those they built during the depression and that's what the CCC boys, the WPA did it and the PWA did it, they all worked on these things. The trouble of it was some people got on them and didn't work and so it just got the reputation that they weren't doing anything, but they had to do something to get them all built so anyway it's kind of it wasn't a good time really. Families broke up, men went on the road because they couldn't find a job, let their families and, but dad he stayed with us and I said he took care of we 3 girls, we were his stepdaughters and mother helped take care of the boys so (his boys) so I think we turned out pretty good.

When you would see this poster in a business did that, how did you feel about that?

Oh I just took it for granted that it was there, I was so young that most of the time I just took it for granted that they supported it but you knew they supported it and that was about all. See I was, gosh I don't know how old I was when they started having problems, but it affected me in that we didn't have the things that we wanted, some of our friends would get things and we couldn't do things that we wanted to do and we couldn't have the things we wanted and that was mostly the way it affected me, as young as I was at the time. Because I was I know I worked for the NYA my last 2 years that will probably come up though later won't it?

What's the NYA?

National Youth Association. You hadn't.

I hadn't heard of that, what is it?

Well we worked on the NYA and I worked for one of the teachers at school and they paid us so much money to help us out with our schooling and my sister and I both worked on it and there were several of us worked on it at school and we worked on it and it helped us with our schooling and took a lot of the burden off of our folks. We had a little money if we had any left over where we could go get us a dress but most of our dresses we made. We made our dresses out of feed sacks.

What kind of work did you do in the NYA?

Typing, my sister and I did typing and filing for the teachers.

And what age were you?

Oh I was probably 16 and she was probably 17. You couldn't work under 16.

About how many hours a week did you work?

I think we worked gosh I don't know I think we worked about 8 hours a week but we only worked about I'll take it back about 6 hours a week for about a dollar an hour, maybe an hour or a little bit more a day is all. We didn't work very long.

And your wages were a dollar an hour, is that what you said?

I don't remember how much they were I know they weren't very much—I don't think they were that much. For girls, but anyway what little dabb we made it helped us through school, it wasn't very much.

You think the boys got paid more than the girls?

I think so, yes. I don't remember the wages, I don't even know whether the checks were given to us now I know that some of the projects the boys worked on the checks were sent or given to the parents and I think that we got ours, but I'm not sure about that either. It's been so long ago, I hadn't even thought about it for years. I think the reason I hadn't thought about it because how hard my mother worked and I don't like to remember how hard she had to work to make ends meet.

What kind of chores did you have to do around the house?

Well like I said a while ago mostly I took care of my baby brothers, but I helped with the dishes because I was the youngest girl, but I would help with the dishes and help with the housework, the milk separator—I hated to wash that thing—but I did and carry in wood and gather chips to start the fire with and carry water and just anything there was to do we did it.

Did you have to help take care of the chickens?

Oh yes, fed the chickens, fed the pigs, we did all of that. There wasn't really the worse job in the world to do that but sometimes you wonder when something happens in your health, you think well if I hadn't had to do that that wouldn't have happened, but you know you can't think that way.

So who killed the chickens—did your mom kill the chickens? Who killed the chickens?

Mother. I've killed them, mother did, dad has, we all did, we wanted a chicken for dinner why we'd just go out and get it. When they were young oh that fried chicken tasted good after in the summer time. We always had chickens, we always had a garden.

Did you have a smokehouse?

Yes. Dad you pack the meat in there and smoke it—I can remember him smoking it. Smoke coming out the edge of the smokehouse, the smell of it oh it smelled good. And that ham, that ham that they smoked was so good, slice it on a winter morning with hot biscuits, yeah it was good, times were hard but we had fun.

Okay, how about the Social Security Administration?

Well I don't know when it was started but I know that—Do you know when it was started?

Well, I think it started in about the mid 30s—I think that they started withholding money from people's checks about the mid 30s, but I don't think any benefit payments really started for retirees until 1940 or so.

I don't really know too much about it, but I just heard them talking about they were withholding so much from Social Security, but you were suppose to get it back and of course, I've drawn Social Security ever since I was about 17 years—I didn't draw it I mean I've been paying into it

since I was about 17, because I started working with I was 17 and we paid in a little bit to Social Security then, but I think it is a wonderful thing.

When it first started how did your parents feel about it?

Well I think they were happy about it, I think that daddy said that at least, he said at least they would have something when they had to quit working so I think they felt pretty good about it.

You mentioned that you started working when you were 17, what are some of the jobs that you've done?

Oh gee, I've done housework, I've taken care of babies, I worked for a farm lady at one time, but I did housework and then I worked in restaurants, I just did anything I could get a job at doing. We moved back to town when I was 18 and of course it was easier to get a job then. That's when daddy got back on the railroad and that's when they were talking about the war and everything and by the time I was 18 things were starting to perk up a little. I worked on the they had a thing for young people in schools that they had and I don't remember a service for them but my sister worked on we did typing, well I think I told you about that, but we worked on that, but when we graduated from school well when I graduated from high school my 2 older brothers were gone and my 2 older sisters my older sister got married right away and the other sister went off to school so things weren't as hard at home with 4 kids gone as they had been.

When you moved back to town did your parents sell the farm then?

They never did own, my folks were renters the whole time.

How about all of your livestock—did they have to sell the cattle?

Well when we moved back to town we sold everything. That was in, I think we moved back to town in 1940, yeah I know we did. We moved to town in 1940. I was 17 when we moved back to town (Parsons). We had water in the house, that was so nice.

Well how did you feel about the programs of the New Deal?

About what?

The programs, the New Deal Programs?

Well I tell you what—when it first started we were okay with it, but there were some people who didn't like it, which is like everything and it just happened and it just made a difference as to what crowd you happened to be in, if you were in a crowd that made fun of the people that were on it, it was miserable, but if you were in a crowd that people were on it why then it was fine. When you're young you get in both crowds and there were a lot of people who didn't like it and they said it was just a hand out, that it wasn't a, and I know that these projects that they worked on my dad worked hard on them and it makes me mad when they talk about it as being just a

hand out. There's a lot of people that were on it that wouldn't be where they are today if they hadn't got on it.

Did the kids at school make fun of you or anything because your dad was on it?

Yes, oh yes, but we just had to take it, that's just the way it was. We just, we didn't ignore it because it hurt, you know every time something like that happens it affects the way you feel when you get older too about things, so, no it affects, some of them who's parents weren't on it and had to had more and had help to start up, my dad didn't why they would make fun of you but that's just the way life is. Of course, I'm one of these kinds of persons that I don't think the Lord puts on you any more than you can take, so you've got to depend on him about as much as anything else.

So overall what was the impact of the New Deal programs on your farming life?

Well it was just, we knew we weren't going to go hungry and it was help. A lot of farmers wouldn't have made it if it hadn't been for that, they would have gone under and a lot of farms would have been abandoned, but the ones that could stay out there and tough it through are doing real good now, it just took a lot of grit to stick with it, but they did it.

What do you think was the impact of the New Deal on the community?

Well in a way I think it brought it closer together because you depended on each other. You depended on each other for so many things, if somebody got hurt well the neighbors were right there—especially the farming communities and I think it made people appreciate other people more, because you depended on them, especially farm people they just really helped out. They were there when you needed it. Like I say we lived out on the farm, we didn't live in town so I don't know about the town people, but the farmers were there and if your crops failed they were there to help you, like garden stuff and things like that so I, we didn't ever go hungry, sometimes the meals weren't as plentiful, variety like, as we'd wanted them to be, but we never went hungry, but there were a lot of people in town who were starving. Farmers helped other people, if they saw a family that was really having a hard struggle they would take things to them, so I think the farm people were the best place to be and we are a farming community and I'm kind of proud of the fact, even though I am a dilly from the farm, as they say in the cities.

So do you feel that the New Deal was the right course of action for the nation?

I don't know what the right course of action would have been, but they had to do something. Something had to be done or there would have been lots of children starve to death if they hadn't have done something. I think it was a good thing because I think it did save lives and it saved families because a lot of families wouldn't have stayed together. I know several families personally that didn't stay together because their fathers went on the road like we call them bums now, we called them tramps back then and they would stop at farm houses and get something to eat. They would go all over the country looking for something to eat and some work to do. Families broke up so, of course, there are a lot of families breaking up today too, but a lot of them after the depression went back together too. It was a hard time, really it was.

Do you remember if your parents were at that time pretty supportive of FDR?

I think so, I would say yes.

Did they view him in a positive way?

Yes. I think yes. My stepfather was a very strong FDR man. We all were too, but there were a lot of people who didn't. I think some of his programs were very good. I think we've kind of outgrown them, but you know what we might have to go back to them again. I hope not, but we may, I don't know. Some of his programs were good. I feel like the ones that didn't work were the ones that weren't made, that just didn't want to work, as they went out on these jobs they just thought they were getting a hand out and to him that's what it was, but to Dad it was a job.

Well Nadine that's all the questions I had for you, is there anything else any other memories that you would like to share about the great depression or?

Well there is one thing that I would like, I think that communities and families were closer than what they are now, because they depended on each other and now you've got a job and I don't need to depend on you, but then you depended on other people and I think that communities, that people in communities on the farm and even in the cities, I think they're closer. I think they work together more than what they did and I don't know how it would be, whether they would separate again like they did during the depression, I said work together now, I mean work together then better than they do now. I'm sorry I got that turned around, because see like back then people were always willing to help in whatever you were doing they were always willing to help and I think that was one thing that I have, has bothered me a little bit is that people don't help now like they use to. They don't seem to care what you do and they don't worry about whether this child next door is going to have anything to eat like back then they did, they just take it for granted that there will be something in the house to eat, and you know I think there are people who are hungry today that could use a helping hand a cheerful hand. I think those of us who had to take help—it was hard because we were kind of looked down on, those of us who had to take help, I think those of us who had to take help are more compassionate today than what some of them that just breezed through it. It wasn't easy, but it really wasn't easy for anybody. But we had fun—it wasn't all bad, but mostly the work situation, the food situation, as far as recreation is concerned we made our own recreation and we had lots of fun.

So like what did you do for recreation?

Oh we would all communities would get together like on Sunday night 3 or 4 families would come to our house and we had milk, someone would bring maybe the sugar and we would have ice cream on Sunday night, we'd have little parties where people would gather and they would gather together and bring little sandwiches or something and just seem to me like the family, the community was closer—the sense of community was closer and if somebody was sick there was always somebody coming in to help you and I just think it was closer than what it is now, a more compassionate time, especially in the young people, but I think that because if any of my school friends were sick why the whole school rallied around to try to help them get caught up on their

lessons and things and I just think it was a compassionate time. Maybe I'm wrong, but I think we would be again if we had if anything like that ever happened, I think people would work together again but we've kind of got away from it and it just isn't like it, it just isn't very compassionate I don't think.

Did your mother belong to any clubs?

Yes mother belonged to a little—they called it well it was just kind of a sewing club I guess, because they would get together and help each other make quilts, and they would help each other can, just a little community club there that they had and people would come in and one I know one time this woman had been sick and she had children and they went in and cleaned house for her, so anything that needed to be done they would just a group of women the same group go in and do that person's time and they'd have a little bit to eat and just have a lot of fun but yet they would get some stuff done. They would make quilts for each other and it was just a nice, and it got the women away from the drudge of their homes for an afternoon and I think that's always good. I think it is good today.

Did you get to go with her?

No. No she left us kids home with our older brothers and sisters. They just went and others did too, there were very seldom any children there. It was just a time for the mothers to get away which was good, they needed it. I think mothers need to get away once in a while from the drudge, well at that time it was drudge, but even from kids and everything I think.

How often would she go?

Once a month, it wasn't very often, just once a month.

How about your dad was he in any organizations or anything?

No. No, when mother went to club he'd watch us kids but he said, see he went out and worked with farmers and everything and he said he got away from them when he would go like that and mother never got away, she was always there, that was the only time she got away but dad would get out, he worked with other farmers and everything he said he got out, but he said Mom doesn't. I had a good stepfather. I loved him very much.

Any other good or bad memories?

I have a lot of good memories, memories of the things daddy use to do when I was little, things that mother sacrificed to do and we had, we had a good childhood, we did, even though we didn't have any material things but we had a lot of love and that's more important. We didn't always have what we wanted to eat, we had enough to eat, but not always what we wanted to eat and candy was very scarce, we didn't have much candy, and toys were scarce at Christmas time which sometimes we didn't have any but we always got something, a sack of candy or cupcake or something in our stocking at Christmas time. Depression was not an easy time and I hope we don't we don't ever, I hope my kids never have to go through one. But we were there was a lot of

love in our family and I think that's what kept a lot of people going and we lived in a community where.

You decide to come home—How's Dorothy? How's Dorothy? She's okay but she was about asleep so I thought I better.

Well I tell you Nadine, I'm just about out of questions for you.

Okay—you should have probably interviewed her she could probably tell you more than I could.

Oh, yeah!