

Interview Log

Interviewee: Lucille Snyder **Tape #:** MAAF/KFNA/FT 1. 14.404/208

Interviewer: Kelly Feltault **# of Tapes:** 1 of 2

Date: 1/14/98 **# of Sides:** 2 of 4

Location: Weirwood VA; in Lucille's kitchen on her farm

Topic: quilts; farming; personal narratives; selling vegetables; local fairs; home remedies; medicine shows

Corresponding Photography Log #: MAAF/KFNA/PS 1.14.242-258

Comments: File name: Va8404.doc. See Fieldnotes: FNO1.14.98. *Italics* indicate emphasis; [brackets indicate additional information not on the tape or asides by fieldworker]; "quotations indicate direct transcription."

I met Lucille through the Johnson's United quilters; she is one of the leaders of the group. At our first meeting she gave me a hand written list of home remedies and several women gave short oral histories. By the time this interview was conducted I had attended 3 of the quilting sessions.

BEGIN SIDE A

BIO: Lucille Snyder; [pause to check tape levels] born in 1915
begins to read from some notes she made about life on the farm;

KILN: describes potato kiln they would build every year; placement of vegetables in earth kiln; use of pine shats; shats they called "shadows"; on top of ground but covered in pine shats then packed dirt; found in back of barn; pull back dirt on Saturday morning, sunny and got potatoes, and other vegetables you needed for week; storage house; every farmer had it; had potato hole in front of fireplace; kept things there so wouldn't freeze

Canning: 5 girls; soup mixture in $\frac{1}{2}$ gallon jar: tomatoes, butter beans, corn; pickles; canned whole summer ate from it all winter;

mince meat; fruit cakes; ingredients for those; currants grown on shore; ate mince meat pie all her life now seldom does; canning fruit;

riding surry to church; first car in 1924; [still looking at notes periodically]; describes first house; getting ice from rail cars; making ice cream from it; sold it to black fieldworkers for nickel a cone;

GROWING: cabbage, peas, white and sweet potatoes mostly; says they never grew strawberries [was this area known for strawberries, the Berlin area was]; corn planted every other row between potatoes; all picked by hand;

Every town was self sufficient; somebody made barrels to store things in; kept at edge of woods with potatoes in them; called white potatoes "ash" (?) or "mash"; fieldworkers would be women and children, fathers working elsewhere; always had 1 hand;

In 1932 moved to a house that had "current" or electricity but no bathroom; got fridge and lights; changes in lifestyle from fridge: story of raising chix and couldn't dress a chix until ice man came in summer and that was Saturday after lunch; then dressing chix that day because always had fled chicken on Sunday but only in the summer time; but then after the fridge could dress chix anytime they wanted;

Canning chix and sausage; describes how to: brown it, drain some fat and put in jar, tip upside down, fat seals the lid;

Competitions for largest hog among farmers; would go view them on Sunday after church; weighed "900 lbs"; competitions for largest watermelon and corn, pumpkin; would come from miles around to see them;

When moved, length of farm was on the highway and dad built vegg. Stand for her; he grew them and she sold them; "even had lettuce, practically everything you want"; shelling beans all day at veg. Stand; sold for 25 cents a quart;

Story of Lucius Kellam wanting shelled beans; small henderson bunch bean type; how her mother taught them to shell; mother would count to 4 and bean had to be shelled by time hit 4;

Restaurant called the "shick/shit (?) Shinny" and he would buy all the beans at the end of the *day*; how everything was fresh; never sat around; displayed all veget. In glass ball jar; made 10 cent on the dollar, rest went to dad; most she ever made at stand was \$.50;

Spool a cotton was a nickel; general prices and their changing;

Chincoteague had first bakery on the shore; had first fried chicken by July 4 through the fall and then no more until next July;

Wouldn't want to go back to the oil lamps, ice box or outside toilet; father's sister married the drugist in town and they had "the" bathroom;

Didn't get first bought dress until 12 yrs old; father's brother married a woman from Saluda VA, across the Bay; and she was a milliner making hats; how everyone wore a hat then;

Polish hat maker in the area; describing WAVES organization; heritage trail they are building and how WAVES is supposed to be on that; supports tourism efforts; restoring the Eastville Inn;

KELLER FAIR: big thing of the year; in 4-H growing up; showed her chickens there; mother did pickles for ladies hall; all judged; ferris wheel, merry go round, and horse racing;

Attractions at night; died out after Major Bowls started: singers, musicians etc appeared;

Fair also had acrobats and tight rope walkers; never saw anything like that before; Midway section; large farm families carried food with them; describes her father going to Keller Fair with family; last week in Aug.; one in Tasley too, but never went to that; closed sometime in the 50s;

MEDICINE SHOWS: "Shataquas" she calls them

[phone rings, loudly]

describes the shataquas, stage show, tent show; dancing etc; held at night; held in Painter; Circus would be to Exmore or Cape Charles; medicine show was in every town; tents; 1 or 2 people;

story of boarding house that grandmother ran; peddlers would stay there, selling to the stores; sold everything;

re-visualizes Painter for me; tells me what the buildings were used for;

dad didn't work on water or hunt; could get seafood; oysters were 25 cent a bushel; dad would drive pumps for extra money; dad made shoes for kids;

HOME REMEDIES: "red sprangles" describes them; and that was one thing you would go to doctor for but hardly anything else; doctor in every town but not now; mid-wives;

Trains at that time; where ran and when; 4 trains ran every day; hauling people mostly; ferry at Cape Charles;

QUILTING: mother did; Lucille was the only one interested; mother had quilting parties in winter; Lucille would watch but didn't participate; quilts weren't big like today; pieced on machine and always did the courthouse steps; similar to Log cabin;

Saving scraps and even saving old pieces of quilts to reuse in quilts; quilt she is working on at home; how they are 2 years behind in quilting for other people at the church; Epeth Church in Willis Wharf quilts on Mondays

How group is growing with new members at Johnson's United; Hawaiian quilt Eileen is finishing; 700 hours in that quilt;

Mother quilted on back of chairs; frame set on back of chair or saw bench;

Begins to talk about her house and when it was built; construction techniques; being cold in old houses; drafts; techniques for keeping things warm like eggs etc, and from freezing;

"I was born before Clorox" begins to talk about wash days; describes how that process was done; lye soap types; washed on Mondays, Tuesday you ironed;

END SIDE A

BEGIN SIDE B

[wash day] set up for washing; barrels and oyster shells;

Oyster shells: uses: foundations, roads, filling in holes etc; drainage under barrels;

Bathing on Saturday nights in #2 wash tub set beside cook stove; getting clothes really dirty; 3 sets of clothes: school, church and work;

Fertilizers and insecticides; not really used then; hand picked the tomato worms off, got a penny a worm for cutting them with the scissors;

Women's duties; linoleum floors; good room used only on Sunday; beating rugs; rolled for summer and not used; summer rug went down; it was straw called "cracks"; curtains were changed in winter and summer; put out summer spreads etc; coal stoves taken down in early May, greased with hog's lard and wrapped in newspapers, stored; cleaning;

The good room: called a parlor; diff. Furniture, had piano, sang hymns on Sunday nights in there; mom raised on Tangier, not allowed to use scissors etc. on Sunday; story of one time her husband picked a bushel of peppers on Sunday and they all rotted quickly, learned his lesson about working on Sunday

Sunday meals; basket ball games on Sunday; riding horses;

Selling sheep and cows in Dover; Harold Tilghman giving them a Chincoteague pony; story of pony; paid \$60; given to sons; running a packing shed on farm; had blue eyed pony and how they are not trainable; horse was "the living devil"; story of horse and her son; story of how pony chased the old colored man who lived on their property; called a moon eyed pony if blue eyed; trading pony for other horse; more stories of pony

Lullabies: "two little children, a girl and a boy sat on a church door;" song her mother sang; very sad song;

Foodways; winter food; plenty of vegetables; minnie ha ha cake tradition; tall cakes; 5 layers at least; in Ferrywhite's cookbook; made 5 cakes every Xmas; coconut, black walnut chocolate, minnie ha ha; fruit filling between layers;

Pantries and dairy in kitchen; making butter;

Talk of current family and what they do, where they are; children mostly off shore especially grandchildren; military jobs her children have; stories of working in foreign countries from her children;

[pause tape to get up and look at quilts]

how they do the binding, learned from Mennonite women at Westover in MD; helped with borders too; Johnson's United was quilting without borders, how the old people quilted, and mennonites showed them how to put borders on;

pricing their quilting for Johnson's United; now get \$150 for each one regardless of size; [we are walking around the house, has gotten dark outside and frosty; making hot chocolate when return to kitchen]

Mrs. Van Ness stories; she started the quilt group in 1979; always quilted ever Monday; on second Monday in Dec, go to Nelda's and quilt there, don't return to church until 2nd Monday after New year's;

Describes group members and experiences with quilting; some didn't have any; how they taught them to quilt;

Mrs. Van Ness was a seamstress; not the quilter everyone thinks she is [this should not be public knowledge]; Nelda is the good quilter; diff Between good stitches and others;
END TAPE