

ORAL HISTORY PROJECT

NARRATOR: Lyle and Frances Davis

BIOGRAPHICAL INFORMATION: Frances Davis was born in Northeastern Kansas to the home of a Swedish Lutheran Minister. She has three older sisters and a younger brother. After high school, she attended Bethany College for her teaching degree. She spent one year in Logan, Kansas and then moved in Ingalls, Kansas where she taught mathematics and Home Economics. It is also where she met Lyle Davis. Lyle Davis was born on a farm south of Ingalls, Kansas. He met and married Frances. He served as the Bulk Oil Distributor for the area surrounding Ingalls for more than thirty years. They now have three children and live in Cimarron, Kansas.

DATE OF INTERVIEW: June 25, 2003

INTERVIEWER: Rachel Pederson

LOCATION OF INTERVIEW: Cimarron, Kansas

NUMBER OF CASSETTES: 1

LENGTH OF CASSETTES: 60 min.

LENGTH OF INTERVIEW: 53 min.

SUBJECTS DISCUSSED: Experiences with the dust and sand of the Dustbowl; Farm life; Farm machinery and harvest; Experiences in the country school, high school, and junior college; The arrival of radio and electricity; Jackrabbit drives; Memories from World War II and the rationing it caused.

**Lyle and Frances Davis
Narrators**

**Rachel Pederson
Interviewer**

**June 25, 2003
Cimarron, Kansas**

Lyle Davis - **LD**
Frances Davis - **FD**
Rachel Pederson -- **RP**

(Side A)

RP: Lyle and Frances Davis. I'm Rachel Pederson.

When and where were you guys born?

LD: I was born southwest of Ingalls, six miles in 1921.

FD: In a farm house.

LD: Yes, in a farm house. The doctor came to the farm house then with a horse and buggy.

RP: That's quite a, quite a time ago, then though.

LD: Oh, yes, that's . . . I'll be eighty-two years old here in just, well a couple weeks or so.

RP: Wow. What about you?

FD: Well, I was born in uh, the country too and uh, the address was Burdick, B-U-R-D-I-C-K, Kansas, and I was born at home and I was the fourth daughter of my folks.

RP: Wow.

FD: And I think they were hoping for a boy, but my mother said that the neighbor lady cried when I was a girl but my mother said she never cried.

RP: So were you the last?

FD: No, I have a brother that was two years younger than I am but he's uh, uh deceased now. He was killed when he was seventy in a farm accident . . . over by Lindsborg, Kansas.

LD: And, I'm the oldest of an odd family, and I have a sister that's four years younger than I am, Helen Grunky (sp?), and uh, we both grew up out on the farm until we, when we went to country school . . . I did, I went to country school for seven years before we finally had the consolidation and went into Ingalls, so uh . . .

RP: Is it the same building they are going to now?

LD: At Ingalls?

RP: Yeah, at Ingalls.

LD: No, no. They've torn that building down and there might be a little bit of it incorporated into the other but didn't look anything like that. And so that was uh, uh . . . I walked to school, just a mile to country school and uh, we uh, seldom ever rode with anyone. Mother, someone never come and got us unless the weather was inclement. And uh, one time they did buy us a little Shetland pony with a cart, a two wheel cart and we drove her to school and ah, she didn't want to go to school. We always had to fight her to get her to go to school but boy, when you got ready to come home, we come home in a hurry [laughing].

RP: So, Lyle, you, your parents were farmers right?

LD: Yes.

RP: What did your parents do for a living?

FD: My uh, father was uh Lutheran minister, Swedish Lutheran at the Augustine Synod uh, which has been incorporated with other Lutheran churches so there's no Swedish Lutheran Synod any more. And uh, I went to school too, to a country school and the name of the school was uh, Farrar School, F-A-R-R-A-R. And I went there for my eight years, of course we didn't have kindergarten then, and uh, one of our big worries was when we would, after the eighth grade when we would go to town and take the county examines and to see if we passed the county examines so we would be eligible to go on to high school. And that was one of the big concerns of all the kids.

RP: I bet.

FD: And uh, we uh, I walked to school with my sisters, older sisters and I have three older sisters and my parents hardly ever took us to school because they believed that exercise was good for us – which it was – but there was one real cold day when, and it was, if we went around the section it was two miles or we could go through the section it was just a mile. Anyway the morning it was real cold and we were going through the section and I was just in the first grade and I got so cold and I wanted to sit down and rest. And my oldest sister who was in the seventh grade, she wouldn't let me sit down and she just took me by the hand and just pulled me to school. And I can remember that

yet, she was so very upset with me that I wanted to sit down and rest. But uh, we kids all got along well in school. The big kids helped the younger ones and we all played together out on the playground and, and they kind of looked after us. I remember one time when we were walking home from school and it was real muddy place there on the road because it was a mud road and one of the older boys – I think he was a seventh grader, no he was an eighth grader I believe – and he offered to carry us little girls across the mud puddle so we wouldn't get our shoes muddy. So he carried me across and then he carried my next older sister who was in the third grade, carried her across the mud puddle, and then when it came to my next sister who was in the sixth grade, she absolutely wasn't going to have boy carry her across the mud puddle so she walked. But I like to think then that the kids got along fine. It seemed like they didn't pick on the little kids. In fact they looked after them.

LD: We had uh, a one teacher school and you had all eight grades and uh, you wonder sometimes how you learned but apparently we did because we learned from the older ones as you heard them recited. And uh, the school house was just uh, one or two . . . just picturesque that you've seen about every where, and one pot belly stove inside to warm the building and uh, you, we didn't have water. You brought in a bucket of water and then you each had a tin cup and you could dip in and drink from that tin cup.

RP: So this school, have they torn it down or is that one . . .

LD: Yeah, oh yes, the building is gone long ago.

RP: That's kind of sad.

FD: And of course we didn't have any hot lunches then. We all carried our little dinner buckets to school and we always had jelly or jam sandwiches, something like that . . .

LD: A lot of fried egg sandwiches.

FD: And uh, uh, so, but, so, I carried, back then when my folks lived to Nebraska before my senior year, they lived close enough to school so I could go home for dinner and what a treat that was, to be able to go home and not to have to have an old sack lunch anymore.

LD: And I graduated from high school at Ingalls in 1939 and uh, then went to junior college for one year, Dodge City. And that was about the time when World War II started, and there was so much unrest and you felt like you would be called into the service and I didn't finish up my education.

RP: Uhm-hum. So what did you do?

LD: Uhm, what do you mean?

RP: Well, you graduated and then you went a year to junior college . . .

LD: I went to work . . . I went to work Beech Aircraft in Wichita.

FD: Well, you worked for, I mean you went to junior college for a year and you, then, you . . . tell her about your job.

LD: I went to work for Beech Aircraft in Wichita.

FD: I mean when you were going to Junior College.

LD: I worked on . . . I forget what it was.

FD: NY.

LD: NY. National Youth Association.

FD: It was a government program that President Roosevelt had come out because that was during the depression when people didn't have any jobs. So he was on that . . .

LD: I worked at Superintendent, school's office in Dodge City and made sixteen dollars a month. And I paid eight dollars for my rent, for a place to stay and finally left me eight dollars for the month.

RP: Wow.

FD: And to save on expenses why, he and he roommate, they would go home for the weekend. Tell her about that.

LD: We'd go home for the weekend and we'd take turns cooking and uhm, when we went home why then our mothers would fix us up quite a good many things, you know, to use during the week. My roommate – I won't mention who that was – but uhm, his mother always made macaroni. I never got so sick of macaroni, eating it five days a week [laughing] but I finally got to the place where I like macaroni again.

FD: But before that, when he was in high school . . . tell her about that. You had a, you were a bus driver.

LD: Yes, I drove one, an old real bus.

FD: School Bus.

LD: School bus and picked up kids through the area just like buses do now a days but the bus that I had didn't have such a thing of seats in it. It had benches down each side and then a narrow bench down through the middle.

RP: Wow.

LD: So everybody sat on the outside and . . . but the older ones looked after the younger ones and everything went fine.

RP: So as a bus driver did you have to get any kind of special training?

LD: No, no, if you had a license uh, why then you were eligible, if they . . . that was up to the school to whether they would hire you or not.

FD: But I think most of the bus drivers were high school juniors or seniors, weren't they?

LD: Yeah, junior and senior usually.

FD: And they seemed to be very reliable and I don't think they . . . I don't know if they hardly ever had an accident, and of course, they . . . and back then when there was so many dirt roads, why if there was a bad storm, you know, a snow storm or rain why then you'd have bus holidays.

LD: Yes, uhm, see my time was during what you'd call the dirty thirties and uhm, we hadn't raised crops there for two or three years through that era, and uhm, and when we did, I can remember uh, uh many times the wind would be blowing one direction and the dirt would have the road pretty well closed. You could hardly get through. But if the wind changed through the day and then it might blow the dirt somewhere else and it would move. And we also had a lot of Russian Thistles. It wasn't uncommon to find completely blocked by Russian Thistles.

RP: Really.

LD: They'd get out and throw them out, away. That happened on the highways even.

RP: Huh. Just piles of torn up Russian Thistles?

LD: Well, they were big . . .

FD: They pretty well hang together. They just roll along.

RP: Oh, like a tumbleweed.

FD: Yes, let's see . . . and course sometimes . . . now I lived in eastern Kansas so I didn't experience what he did but then when the dust storms were so bad, why you called off school didn't you for . . . somedays.

LD: Yeah, I have in my mind that we had one year, we quit a year early, I mean a month early in the . . . Back then uh, when you went to grade school in the country, we only went eight months anyway.

RP: So you went September to April?

LD: Um-hum.

FD: But then the teacher in the one room school, the teacher was not only the teacher but she was the janitor and so she had to come early and start the fire on cold days and uh, and uh, what else did she do? But anyway, and of course she was playground supervisor and all that, so that was different than what teachers do now.

RP: So what kind of chores did you do as, as a kid?

LD: During my time, uhm, all during the thirties there wasn't much money at our house and uhm, I didn't get very many toys of any kind. It was apt to be more like a book or something of that sort. But back then you had orange crates to play with and uh, you could make various farm things. Of course being on a farm that was my idea of having fun was to make little farm implements from these orange crates.

FD: They were made out of wood, the orange crates were. Of course now they don't make anything out of wood you know.

RP: Right.

LD: And uhm, there was no such thing as TV of course, and radio, our first radio at home was an Atwater Kent.

RP: An Atwater Kent.

LD: An Atwater Kent. And it was uh, uh a six volt so consequently uh, you didn't play it all the time. You'd run your battery down, so we would play it a while in the evening usually or maybe get the news and, and uh, we used to listen to Amos and Andy and, and uh, what was Armstrong? What was . . . ? I don't remember that.

FD: I can't think of him. But anyway that was, his folks were progressive and they got a light system. Tell about your light system.

LD: Now all the time that I was home, we had nothing more than just kerosene lamps to use and then, about the time I left, they bought a . . . generator and generated juice . . . electricity for the house. Most of those were thirty-two volt. Some of them were a hundred and ten. And then it was uhm, in, about 1948 before my folks ever had . . .

FD: REA.

LD: REA.

FD: Rural Electrification Administration and where I lived in northeastern Kansas too, I, the church and parsonage, they had, they had motors that would, uh supply the electricity for big batteries that were stored there. So anyway that was one of the preacher's jobs

was to keep those motors going so there would be a . . . store up the electricity in the batteries so there would be lights in the church and parsonage. And uh, and uh, but I can't remember exactly when REA came but that was wonderful to have REA because uh, that was only thirty-two volts on that system and you couldn't hardly get any appliances. I don't know if you could get irons or not, and things like that so we had uh, we would heat irons on the stove. We could do that or we had a gasoline powered iron. Put gasoline in it and you'd pump it up and light it up. Gasoline iron, um-hum.

RP: I've never heard of that.

LD: You were talking about what we did. Uhm, recreation of course was church. My folks were Christians and uh, we had a four, we called it four point charge and the preacher went to these four different towns and would be preacher once a month and sometimes come out on the evening. We always had church Sunday evening as well as Sunday morning and uh, it, that was when we did a lot of visiting. Even the parents would, have others come to their house or we'd go to their homes and all run, the kids would go with some other kids and play with them and Sunday afternoon and your folks would pick you up at night. That was, that was part of my recreation. It was always a good uh, bake in the summertime there was always a good baseball game to go to. It would probably be out in someone's cow pasture but that's where we played and uh, that was uh, a way of passing the time.

During the, during the thirties, uhm, there was hardly any of the younger people had a car. Once in a great while one did but most of us didn't have a car, it was . . . I was out of high school only, almost two years before I ever owned a car.

FD: Well, one of the fun things you did was when you went watermelon swiping [laughing].

LD: Nah, that's, that's a different story.

RP: I think I'd like to hear it.

LD: The couple lived out south of Ingalls and they hadn't been married too long and they had a big watermelon patch. And uh, one of my other men friends was going with some girl and so fixed me up with a uh, with uh . . . what do you call them? What kind of date?

FD: Blind date?

LD: Blind date. And he said, "We'll have some fun." And he said, "What we'll do . . ." he said, and he already made it, my friend had already made arrangements with this couple, that we'd bring the girls out and get into the watermelon patch and they would come out yelling and shooting their guns. Well, that is what happened. We got out into the watermelon patch and boy, they began to yell and shoot the gun, one thing or another and everybody high-tailed it for the car [all laughing]. You wouldn't do things like that would you?

RP: Me? No, never.

FD: Well, one of the things that the boys did was take some new comer or somebody kind of green, what was it? Snipe hunting?

LD: Yeah.

RP: Snipe hunting.

FD: Have you heard of that?

RP: Yes. Yes, somebody tried to take me snipe hunting once.

FD: No kidding. That was mean wasn't it?

RP: It's still kind of funny but you know.

FD: Well, you didn't, uh, when the uh . . . during the dirty thirties, why those big clouds of dust would come in all of a sudden. And there was this one Easter Sunday that was black Sunday and . . . of course, I lived in Eastern Kansas, Northeastern Kansas, and even there it was dusty but not, not like it was out here, but Lyle, tell about you and your sister then.

LD: My sister was in the outhouse. We didn't have plumbing and she was in the outhouse when that rolled in. And you could just see it roll from miles ahead of it and it would hit and it was so black that my dad knew she couldn't find her way back to the house. So he went out and called to her and brought her in and when you got into the house, you couldn't see the windows. It was that black. There was nothing to, nothing to come up, or end up on a morning, wake up in the morning with a layer of dust maybe a sixteenth of an inch thick or maybe even thicker on top of your quilt.

RP: That's a lot of dust.

LD: A lot of dust and of course, through the years now, older ones have had bronchial problems, you know, and so forth and I think it had something to do with it.

FD: Well, they would die from, some people died from dust pneumonia, didn't they, back then.

LD: Yeah, yeah.

FD: So, well I lived in Eastern Kansas, Northeastern Kansas and uh, it wasn't as bad as it was out here in this part of the country but then the farmers weren't raising hardly any crops and, and they would lose their land because they couldn't make their payments, and it was a very sad time.

LD: Before we got into the dirty thirties, uhm, my folks raised wheat. And you cut, cut it with a header.

RP: A header?

LD: Uh-huh. A header.

RP: What's that?

LD: And uhm, sometimes you shocked it and then put it through the threshing machine, or sometimes the header would . . . you had a header with a big belt on it and it would grade up into a wagon and then when you went to the house or somewhere, you'd unload that -- and everything was done by hand -- and pile it in a great big pile. And then the threshing machine would come along and thresh it. And the same way with corn. Uhm, you hand shucked the corn at that time. You just went out and you had a hook on your hand, is what you had and you'd pull it open, pull the ear out of it and throw it in the wagon and when you got your wagon full you'd take in to the house and dump it in [unclear], in rows and uh, then the uh, the thrashing machine would come along and thresh it. And the corn cobs was a good way to have a good hot fire and all, everyone had uh cook stove was a big range. Most of them had reservoir on the end for water and that was one of my jobs, after I got home from school, always, was to fill the reservoir back full of water and bring in several bushel baskets full of corn cobs. And the corn cobs were hot and hot and burn quickly so it took a lot of them but that was what the women cooked with.

RP: That's interesting. I never heard of that.

FD: Hadn't heard of corn cobs?

RP: Well, I know what corn cobs are but I hadn't heard of them burning them to . . .

FD: Oh, yeah. And of course, they start fire easily to, so they are easy to get a good fire burning but then his mother kept a little can of kerosene behind the stove to pour on the cobs to get it going faster and when he was a baby, well, just crawling around . . . How old were you?

LD: I don't know. I don't . . .

FD: He wasn't very old but anyway, he got into that kerosene and drank it [laughing] and his mother would tell how horrified she was. She thought for sure he was going to die, took him to the doctor and anyway, why the doctor got him to throw up and anyway saved his life, but anyway.

RP: That's terrible.

LD: Now all this stuff I know we're telling you were in kind of a hodge-podge sort of way and you'll have to sort it out and put it in the . . .

RP: This is fine. This is fine. What did you do for fun when you were younger?

FD: Well, I had uh three older sisters and always in the summertime we went and took piano lessons. We'd just have piano lessons in the summertime. That was one thing that we did and, but we would play croquet and we played croquet and more croquet. That was thing that we did the most of and uh, we enjoyed that.

LD: I took piano lessons but I didn't, now . . . not very proficient at it and didn't follow through at it but I liked to sing and uh, took some voice lessons at one time. And, I've never kept track – I wish I had – of, but I don't have any idea how many funerals that I have sung for through the years.

FD: And weddings.

LD: And weddings and that sort of things.

FD: He has uh, had, well he still does but his voice is so husky now he doesn't sing that much anymore but he had high tenor voice and everybody enjoyed hearing him sing and, and he sang in several quartets over the years because they always needed a high tenor, you know, and that was what he sang.

RP: I bet you have a beautiful voice.

LD: I don't . . . I'll leave that up to somebody else. But I did . . .

FD: But he had many requests anyway to sing.

LD: Uhm, there was one, at one time I used to be the Standard Oil Bulk distributor for this area and uhm, we had three funerals that year in one week and the mortician said, "If you will just come, we'll put you in a robe" –

FD: To sing.

LD: "Put you in a robe and you don't have to clean up or anything" [laughing]. I sang at three funerals that particular week.

FD: But anyway he said, well he said that, "We can just have our choir robe, have you put it on and you can stand behind the flowers" [laughing]. So anyway . . .

RP: So you were an oil distributor.

LD: Uhm-hum. Bulk fuels. Not necessarily oil but bulk fuels to the farms, see. Delivered fuel around to the area to the farmers.

RP: So when was that? When did you do that? From . . . ?

LD: Oh, from about 1949 till 1976. I sold out and retired.

FD: And then . . . What year was it your father died?

LD: 1958.

FD: So, but anyway he took over the farming operations and . . .

LD: We had eight hundred acres of irrigated ground. So . . .

RP: Wow, I bet that was a lot of work.

LD: It was.

FD: But he had a farm hand that helped him, so that helped.

LD: You know we used to . . . the oil business today is altogether different than it was then. So many of them today, uhm . . .

(End of Side A, Beginning of Side B)

LD: . . . It followed the fuel into the bulk [unclear] and then we hauled it out in trucks. We had three trucks that we used at one time, travel around through the country, fills tanks.

FD: But your fuel also come in by rail at that time, some of it did.

LD: Some of it did. Uh, and that was something else. You had to move tank cars to get them in the right position to pump them off but that didn't last too many years till it was all transport.

FD: One of the big deals was uh, his uh boss left in Garden City, he was the uh, what would say . . . What was George, your uh . . .

LD: He was the area salesman.

FD: So anyway, they had this contest that the uh, all the fellows that sold a hundred barrels of oil, why then they'd have this special dinner and program for them so that was quite an honor if you got in the Hundred Barrel Club.

LD: We sold a hundred barrels of fuel, of oil several times, as far as that's concerned.

RP: So when did you two meet?

FD: Well, I came out . . . Uh, I was a school teacher and my first year I taught school in the little town of Logan up in Northwestern Kansas. It's west of Philipsburg and uh, I enjoyed teaching there but the town was uh, twenty miles from Philipsburg and all there was was a mud road and when it rained you couldn't even get out and so I decided that it would be to my advantage to get into a town where you at least could get out. So then I came to Ingalls as a school teacher and I taught Home Ec. and, well, my major was mathematics and so I taught Home Ec in Ingalls and that was where I met him. All the local boys, you know, their always out after the school teachers [laughing].

LD: I caught you on the rebound. That ought. . .

RP: So you were a school teacher. Where did you go to school?

FD: Well, I uh went to country school in Northeastern Kansas where we lived and then I went to a little junior college in Wahoo, Nebraska. It was a . . .

RP: W-A-H-O-O, Wahoo?

FD: It was a little uhm, live in school, junior college and they consolidated with another college when the Augustine Lutherans did their merging. And so then I finished at Bethany College in Lindsborg. See my, uh, my grandfather on my father's side, he had homesteaded land close to Lindsborg and so all the good Swedes, they want to move back to Lindsborg. So anyway when my folks retired, they moved back to Lindsborg and uh, my mother's folks they homestead land outside of Hutchinson and to pay for the land, my grandfather worked in the salt mines and, around Hutchinson.

RP: Really? I didn't know there were salt mines. I guess I don't know a lot but . . .

FD: Oh, yeah, Hutchinson is . . . What do they call Hutchinson? It's uh . . .

LD: The salt capital of the world.

RP: Really.

FD: Yeah.

LD: Oh, yeah. Carry salt and several of those . . . there's just salt everywhere down in that part of the country. And she's been married for fifty-four years this coming summer.

RP: She has or you two have?

LD: Both of us [laughing].

RP: I figured.

FD: Yeah, it's been a long time. I guess it depends on which way you look. When you look forward you think, "Fifty-four years sounds like a long time." But looking back, why it's gone pretty fast.

LD: And we have three children. We have two boys and a girl. The girl is the oldest and, and she's uh, uhm, a CPA in Dallas and Kevin is a CPA and owns his own business in rural Castle Rock and Douglas is the youngest and he works for Boeing, he's a [unclear] engineer and uh, he's had some interesting experiences in recent years. He's been to China, and to England three times, and all over the United States.

FD: Arizona and Texas and . . .

LD: And our kids all graduated from Kansas University . . .

FD: Well, they all graduated from . . . from Cimarron High School and then they graduated from KU.

LD: And they all have their masters.

RP: Wow. So let's, backing up a little bit to the dirty thirties, do you remember jackrabbit drives.

FD: Oh, yeah.

LD: Yes. Back at that, during those times in the dirty thirties, jackrabbits, if you could get anything to grow at all, they just go in and dig it up to have something to eat. So when they formed these jackrabbit drives they would specify a section of land and out in the middle they would build a pen and everybody walked in from the outside towards the middle and you eventually forced them in to these pens.

FD: And they weren't allowed any guns or firearms.

LD: Yeah, never guns because there were too many people and they would club them to death after they got them in there. I've seen them two feet deep or better, there would just be so many of them.

RP: What did you do with them?

LD: There was usually somebody that would like to use them to, for uhm, -

FD: The hides.

LD: - pet's food and that sort of thing. They'd make it in to . . .

RP: That's a lot of pet food.

LD: I don't remember now . . .

FD: But you would uh, have uh, what several hundred?

LD: Oh, yeah, there would be . . . several hundred rabbits and I expect you had probably lots of times a hundred to two hundred people, people, number of people scattered around the section to walk in. You farther, you could have them farther out on the outside but the rabbit, he wants to get away so you run this direction. Then as you get in closer why you're closer to you see and you finally just pin them down.

FD: Yes, but some of the rabbits would get away that way too, wouldn't they?

LD: No, not usually. Not very many of them.

FD: But that was before I came out to this country. But anyway, I went on, I was an observer at one of the rabbit hunts and that was, I think, 1956 when Pam was a baby. You still had them then. Right?

LD: Yep. What else did you think about?

FD: Oh, what do I think about?

LD: No, I meant her, I mean Rachel.

RP: Well, uhm, I've heard about grasshopper plagues. Were they here during that time or was that someplace else?

LD: I, I wouldn't say that they were a plague but yes, I've seen the grasshoppers come in and they'd pretty well strip a field of, of uhm, like cane or something of that sort. And just eat the leaves and leave the rib along the, down through the middle. But that didn't happen very often and I've heard about those plagues but I wouldn't ever say we had that kind.

RP: Ok. Do you remember hearing about Pearl Harbor?

FD: Oh, yeah.

LD: Yes.

RP: Where, where were you when you first heard about it? Do you remember?

FD: Well, I was living at home in Northeastern Kansas and I heard it on the radio and uh, that was really a big thing and my father being a Lutheran minister, he had been so . . . of course they all were afraid that we were going to be enticed into the war, you know, because that was when, in, over in Europe, all of the uh, Hitler was on the rage then, you

know, and, and so, but . . . But anyway my father knew then with Pearl Harbor that we would, President Roosevelt would declare war, which he did. We got involved in that.

LD: I was working for Beech Aircraft by that time, when I heard it.

FD: And of course those were scary years, you know, because we kept reading about what, of those little countries that Hitler had taken over and everything and it was scary time. And then of course then why, the boys were all going off to war, either in the army or in the navy and uh . . .

LD: I was never in the service. Working for Beech, and when I was called up I had a bad knee and they gave me what you call it, a 4F and, but they made sure that I went back to work for Beech to help build airplanes that . . . but I wasn't ever in the service per say.

FD: Of course during the war years, then after we got into the war, why there were a lot of things that were scarce and so we had a lot of things that were rationed and you had to get your ration cards. And uh, some of the things that were rationed, why sugar. And for the women that canned why you had to get a special allotment for that if you were going to can. And shoes, you could only have so many pairs of shoes. Gasoline, tires . . . What else, Lyle?

LD: Oh, there was a lot of other things as far as that's . . . but that was about . . .

FD: But those were some of the main things so you didn't, you didn't travel very far because, of course as the war went on your tires got thinner and thinner and you didn't dare go too far because you didn't know if you'd have a blow out or not. But gasoline was rationed and uh, and uhm, clothing uhm . . . I liked to sew and you'd go into the store and you couldn't find hardly any material at all or some you found, what you'd find would maybe satin or taffeta or something that wouldn't be to practical to sew for an everyday dress or uh, or uh, you know, for a regular dress and uh, then elastic was one thing that got . . . And so, they were making, finally got to the place where they were making women's panties without elastic and they had a little button on the side. So that was one of the sacrifices we made but when I was teaching my first year of school . . . Pardon?

LD: [unclear] silk stockings either.

FD: Yeah, and of course silk, why, we weren't getting silk because that comes from Japan and then they came out with nylon stockings and that was the big thing then, uh, nylon stockings that they came out with and uh, some of the first nylon stockings, they would have cotton tops to conserve on the nylon and, but anyway we all were please. And of course, even they were so hard to get, you'd put your name down on a list to get them, and if you had a good pair of stockings why you'd save those just for special occasions. You wouldn't wear them everyday. And uh, the first year I taught school at Logan, why I taught Home Ec. and when we were going to make cotton dresses, why the girls went down to the elevator and got new feed sacks to make their dresses out of.

RP: Really?

FD: And uh, they were making the feed sacks and they would make it out of very colorful material with nice prints and so then when the farmer went to get his feed, why he wanted to get the feed sacks, you know, that matched up so his wife could make dresses out of them. But anyway, they could buy new feed sacks and that's what the girls did. And I remember making dresses for my mother, took two feed sacks – she was just a little gal – I could make her a nice cotton dress out of two feed sacks. And uh, but they used feed sacks for a lot of thing. They even used them for the backs of quilts but it was good material. It wasn't, it was kind of a coarse material but it was, it was uh, it wore well and lasted, and they had some real pretty prints and uh, so a lot of the women wore feed sack dresses and they were proud of them. Your mother did to, didn't she?

LD: Yeah.

RP: See, I've always envisioned feed sack dresses as being, or feed sack as being burlap or that plain, light . . .

LD: Thinking about burlap or something . . .

RP: Yeah.

FD: And now my father had gotten one feed sack. It had printed on it an apron. And then it had a design that you could embroidery and so I made that up for my mother and I embroidered it and I still have it. I'll show it to you after you get through, remind me.

RP: Ok, I'll do that.

FD: But, uh, that was quite nice. So you know how old that is.

RP: That's . . .

FD: Sixty years old?

RP: At least.

LD: What?

FD: I said that apron would be sixty years old. Maybe more, because I made it for mother when I was a girl.

LD: A little bit more.

FD: Sixty-five but anyway, why . . . of course back then why the women all wore aprons to protect their dresses. And an apron was quite a useful piece of clothing. Like you go

out into the garden and you gather a few things and put them in your apron and make a pocket out of your apron and carry them to the house, or go out to the hen house and you could pick up some of the eggs and put them in your apron. Or when your at, if some of the cattle got out why then you could, the women could go out and flap their apron up and down and scare the cattle, get them back in but anyway an apron had a lot of useful purposes.

RP: Do you remember hearing about, hearing about the war being over? When did you first hear that the war was over? Do you remember that?

LD: I can't tell you where I was but yes, it was over the radio when the, when I heard that they. ...

FD: And I don't which one, the war in Europe or, and uh, with Asia, with the Japanese. But anyway . . .

LD: Well, it was the one that . . . We declared war, you see, on Japan, and that was the one that President Roosevelt made that announcement.

FD: But it was interesting because I went, when I went to Bethany College, finished up my last two years of college there, why, some of the boys that had been in college there when my oldest sister had been there, uh, let's see, six years before . . . some of those boys had been in the service and then they were, had come back to finish their degrees so some of the boys that knew her, why, I was in college with them and some of them were my good friends.

RP: That's about all I have. Is there any other stories that you can think of that you'd like to tell?

LD: I'll go get my story and you can . . . I'll probably, there will be something in there that . . .

RP: All right.

FD: You can just uh, put those in and . . . I guess.

RP: Yeah.

LD: Now what, uhm, are you a junior, senior?

RP: I will be a sophomore in college this fall.

LD: Oh, you will?

FD: Where are you going to school?

RP: I'm going to Tabor College.

FD: Are you? Ok, uhm . . . oh shoot. What was I going to say? Well my sister one time made some, made up a story about the depression but you know, back when . . . I can't remember that it was that big of deal. My folks had a big garden. They had, my father as a minister even had, had a couple three cows and chickens and we always had plenty to eat and, and uh . . .

LD: That's the way with us. We always had sufficient to eat.

FD: Good food.

LD: You've heard stories about them people who didn't but that wasn't, that wasn't a norm through this area.

FD: Well it wasn't, but of course there were people that did have hard times and didn't have enough to eat but my folks were, oh, let's say . . . not inventive but what would be the right word? Conservative or . . . I mean they made use, you know, and were able to, you know, do what they could to have a good living.

LD: Well, that was another thing. We didn't have a closet full of clothes. We had uh, the men had, had one good pair of overalls and that's what you usually wore to church and places like that.

FD: My mother, when I, we were little, my mother made most of our clothes and I wasn't very old until I got started sewing my own clothes and I was quite proud of that fact but we didn't have a lot of clothes either.

LD: Well, where you'd say you went to school?

RP: Tabor College.

LD: Oh, Tabor. Ok.

RP: Yeah, graduated from the high school here and I'm going to Tabor College.

LD: You have quite a bunch of kids that go . . . that are going and have gone to Tabor. Not just . . . I'll go down and get one of those.

RP: Yes, and I'll turn this thing off. Thank you very much for talking to me.

LD: Well, I hope it, I know it's been kind of a hodge-podge thing.

RP: It's, it's great. It's wonderful.

FD: You'll have to put it together the way it should be, but anyway it's uhm, don't step, oh . . . We had a good bringing up and, and we didn't have all the things that kids have now, but they have so many more temptations now. When kids go to town, you go to Wal-Marts and you have all these wonderful things to buy, and things that they need, they think. And back when I was little, why we didn't have all those, the stores didn't have all those things in them so we didn't know what we were missing, you know. So . . .

RP: Yes, well, thank you.

FD: You're very welcome.

(End of Interview)