

YOUNGSTOWN STATE UNIVERSITY

ORAL HISTORY PROGRAM

History of Mecca, Ohio

Housewife and Farming Experience

O.H. 201

NORA IONE PALMER

Interviewed

by

Beth Hanuschak

on

April 17, 1979

NORA IONE SHAFFER PALMER

Mrs. Palmer is the oldest living person of Mecca, Ohio. She was born March 22, 1883, the daughter of Frank and Luna Shaffer. Her parents were farmers and raised six children.

Nora entered Bristolville District School, but did not graduate. In 1902, at the age of nineteen, she married Frank Palmer, son of Lathrop and Jennie Boone Palmer. The Palmer family came from Connecticut and settled in Mecca in 1833. The home in which Nora and her husband lived is the oldest in Mecca. The house was built by John Abell. His daughter married Nathan Palmer and were parents of Nora's husband Frank.

Mrs. Palmer has always been a housewife and a farmer's wife. She had only one son, George, who passed away in 1974. She has never left Mecca and has a fairly good recollection of the township. At present she is a member of the Mecca Methodist Church. She resides at Gillette Nursing home having lived there for four years. She enjoys reading and visits from friends and family.

Beth Hanuschak  
May 14, 1979

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History of Mecca, Ohio

INTERVIEWEE: NORA IONE SHAFFER PALMER

INTERVIEWER: BETH HANUSCHAK

SUBJECT: Mecca inclate 1800's and early 1900's,  
Cyclone of 1917, Life as a farmer's  
wife, Jennie Boone Palmer of the upper  
class

DATE: April 17, 1979

H: This is an interview with Mrs. Nora Palmer for the Youngstown State University Oral History Program by Beth Hanuschak. The topic of this interview is The History of Mecca, Ohio.

Mrs. Palmer, you are 96 years old. What can you tell me about your parents? Tell me about being a little girl in Mecca. Can you tell me a little bit about growing up in Mecca? Can you remember then? What can you remember about your childhood? What can you remember about your parents?

P: Oh, well we were farm people, raised cattle and horses and things like that.

H: What was your mother's name?

P: My mother's name was Luna Shaffer.

H: Luna. And your father's name?

P: Frank D. Shaffer.

H: What can you remember about them?

P: We were farmers and hard-working people and honest.

H: What did your mother look like? Can you tell me a

little bit what she looked like?

P: My mother had dark hair, straight, brown hair and she was a good-looking woman. She was quite tall.

H: Do you have any brothers or sisters?

P: Yes, I had three brothers and two sisters. There were six in our family.

H: Are they living now?

P: Two sisters and one brother are living.

H: What can you tell me about your father?

P: He tried to be an honest farmer. That's all I can say. He was a good farmer, raised good cattle and horses.

H: What was it like being a child in Mecca? Can you remember when you were a very little girl living in Mecca? What did Mecca look like then?

P: Well, it didn't look like it does now.

H: Can you tell me what it looked like then? Do you remember it, growing up when you were little?

P: Yes, I can remember when I was growing up but I don't know how to tell you.

H: Just put it in words.

P: We still have the old homestead and oh, I can't tell you. I don't remember anything we used to do, only play as kids.

H: What did you play?

P: We didn't play like they do nowadays. We didn't have things to play with. We didn't have things. We had horses. We always rode horses and drove horses. If it was wintertime, we used the horse and the sleigh and if it was summer, we used the horse and the cart or rode it or put the saddle on the horse.

H: And in growing up, did you go to grade school?

P: We didn't have a grade school.

H: How did you go?

- P: We just had the common country school. It wasn't graded at all.
- H: What was that like?
- P: First, the little children, we didn't have grades, we just went to school. And when we left off the school at [the end of the school year] the next time we went, we picked up our books just about where we left them.
- H: Were you smart? Were you a smart student?
- P: Well, I was as good as the rest of them, but I can think back now and I think I was pretty dumb.
- H: No!
- P: Yes, I do. I think and I get the Bible and I . . . well, I'm dumb. I don't know one thing about it. I never cared too much about the Bible. So I think, as I say here, I didn't think about it. Well, I was awful dumb.
- H: What did you learn? What did they teach you? Do you remember?
- P: What did he teach us in school? ABC's. We didn't go very far at school.
- H: You didn't graduate high school?
- P: Oh, no. Oh, no.
- H: Now come?
- P: Well, I didn't go long enough to graduate.
- H: You dropped out? Quit?
- P: I dropped out and got married.
- H: What age did you get married? How old were you when you were married?
- P: My goodness. I was, eighteen? Don't ask me anymore questions. You think I'm mighty dumb.
- H: No, you're not dumb! You're very smart. No, no, no.
- P: I was married when I was nineteen in 1902. I don't keep trying to remember those things.

H: So, you were married really young?

P: Yes.

H: You quit high school to get married?

P: Well, I quit school.

H: Did you have to work? Did you have to work on the farm?

P: Oh, we had to work. When you get married, you have to work. You have to work on the farm. In those days, we had to work.

H: Can you remember anything about your school friends?

P: I can remember some of them, but they're all dead.

H: Are they?

P: Oh yes. There isn't any of my old friends that aren't dead. Frank Benton is about the only one.

H: Yes, I see. You were born in 1883. World War I came. Can you remember anything about World War I?

P: Why, of course I can remember about that since I was married then and I lived right across from Frank Benton's folks. Frank Benton and his brother both had to go to the war. I can remember all that.

H: Did your husband have to go to the war?

P: No. He didn't have to go. He was married so he didn't have to go or take his examinations.

H: Yes. What was Mecca like during the war? Did things change for you?

P: They hadn't changed then, but they have now, of course.

H: So, the World War really didn't affect you at all or you didn't see too much of it because your husband didn't fight?

P: No, we didn't see too much of that. Of course, we all worried about it because I had a cousin in the war and then Frank Benton and his brother right across the road--our nearest neighbors.

H: Where did you live then? On Route 46?

P: Yes.

H: Your house is still there, is it not?

P: The old house is still there.

H: What can you remember about that house? It was a big house.

P: Oh, yes, it was big. Why, it was just about like the common houses that they had.

H: What did your husband do for a living?

P: He was a farmer.

H: You never left the farm?

P: No, he never left the farm.

H: Did you want to? Did you ever want him to leave?

P: No.

H: No?

P: No, I was a farmer too.

H: You never wanted to leave?

P: We never would think of leaving the farm.

H: Is that right?

P: Yes.

H: What did Mecca look like during World War I? What can you tell me? Things have changed, but what did it look like then?

P: What did it look like?

H: Dirt roads? Horse and buggy?

P: Oh, yes.

H: Did you ever travel? Did you ever go to Warren?

P: We used to go to Warren, that's about the farthest we went.

H: What did you do in Warren?

P: We did our shopping in Warren, and we drove our horse and buggy to Warren. Of course, we didn't have anything but the horses then.

H: Can you remember when you got your first car? Did you have a car?

P: My mother-in-law got the car, the first car.

H: What was that like?

P: It was a Ford. She got the first car, and my husband and I didn't have a car. When my son got big enough to drive, why of course, he drove and then when we got a car, why, it was his.

H: Do you remember what kind of car you got? Your first car?

P: A Ford.

H: Do you remember anything at all about the 1920's when, oh, it was kind of a fun time to live? Can you remember anything about that? Remember they had the girls called the flappers that wore long necklaces and things in their hair? Can you remember? Was Mecca affected by that? Did Mecca have any of that?

P: Oh, I don't remember anything about that. I wasn't thinking about that, I guess.

H: It didn't bother you? You didn't see too much of that.

P: I was a farmer's wife and I didn't have time to fuss around.

H: You keep saying, "a farmer's wife." Describe to me what a farmer's wife is.

P: They keep the house. They do all the work in the house.

H: Like what?; What did you do?

P: They do part of the work outdoors.

H: What did you do outdoors?

P: I helped him take care of the cattle and the horses and milk the cows--do all that.



H: Did you like doing that?

P: Well, I was raised to do that. I didn't know much else to do.

H: Yes.

P: Because I was a regular farm girl and that was about all I did know, because we didn't go to college and we didn't have a chance to go. We had to stay home and work to make your living. People didn't get their money the way you get it nowadays, most of the people.

H: Where was your son born? Do you remember? Was he born at home? Did you have him at home?

P: Yes. We didn't have to go to the hospitals in those days.

H: Yes. You only had one child?

P: One son.

H: What did he do then? Did he stay on the farm?

P: He didn't stay on the farm. As soon as he could get away, he got a job someplace else; he left the farm. There wasn't money enough on the farm for young people nowadays.

H: What did he do for a living? Where did he work then?

P: Oh, he worked in Republic in Warren.

H: Yes, I see.

How much money did you . . . ? Did you sell all your cattle?

P: What was this about money? (Laughter) We sold them one by one.

H: Do you remember anything at all about the Depression, the 1930's? Things were hard--hard times then.

P: Yes, the hard times. Why, of course, I remember all those things. I lived through all of that.

H: Tell me about it.

- P: It didn't bother us as much on the farm as it did people in other places because we raised our food. We had our chickens; we had our eggs; we had our cows and our milk and our butter and all our foods. Then we'd raise potatoes and all foods and things like that. We didn't have to buy very much. Personally, in our home, we didn't mind that so much like the other people.
- H: Did you have to help your friends out and your neighbors? Did you help them out?
- P: Oh, we worked back and forth. Of course, we weren't seeing any of our neighbors suffering at all for food or things like that, but we raised all our own vegetables. There's one neighbor, she's living yet. She's just my age, just my age. She's living, for all I know now, and we talked one day. About the only things we had to buy for our table was sugar and salt. What else was there? Coffee and tea. Now, we produced the rest of that on the farm, our food.
- H: When did your husband pass away?
- P: I don't want to remember that either. When my picture was in the paper the other day, they had quite a little story about it.
- H: Yes. What can you remember about him? He sounds like a strong man, a big man.
- P: He was a tall man. Just common education.
- H: How did you meet him?
- P: How did I meet him? Oh, I can't tell you just how. He was a young man in Mecca.
- H: He was very handsome. In the book that Tom Catcher wrote, there's a picture of him standing with his parents.
- P: Oh, well that was when they were kids.
- H: Yes, yes. He's very cute. He's a very good-looking man.
- P: He had blue eyes and black hair and oh, of course, I never thought about him being beautiful, but he was tall; he had black hair and blue eyes. And one of these cousins of his told me one time he used to think so much of Frank when he was a little boy. But that

was way back.

H: Was it hard raising your son George?

P: Why, not any harder than other kids.

H: Was he a good boy?

P: Yes, he was a good boy. He never got in any trouble at all. Of course, he was the only son and when he went to school he was the best-dressed kid in the school.

H: Did you spoil him?

P: No, no. He wasn't really spoiled. It was his grandmother that was looking after the clothes.

H: Was it your mother?

P: No, my husband's mother.

H: What was her name?

P: Jenny Palmer.

H: Is that Jenny Boone Palmer?

P: Where did you get Jenny Boone Palmer?

H: Oh, from that book. I've been doing a lot of studying on you.

P: Have you had the Mecca book?

H: Yes.

P: Is that it?

H: Yes. She's one of the original people in Mecca.

P: Yes, and my folks.

H: What can you remember about them? Were they nice people?

P: Oh yes, they were the highest--if you would call any difference in the class, why, they were well-to-do, well-to-do people.

H: Where were they from? Were they from Mecca originally?

- P: Yes, they were. I lived at the old home; that's where I lived all of my life in Mecca on the old farm, I mean.
- H: Yes, it's a very pretty house, very, very nice.
- P: Have you been through there?
- H: No. I would like to go through there--very nice house.
- P: It isn't so very nice now.
- H: Who lives there now?
- P: Oh, there's some people from Cleveland bought it. They paid a big price for it. They got it from our real estate man and they paid a big price.
- H: Yes.
- P: But they tried to burn the house down.
- H: Really?
- P: And they say it looks nice on the outside but I was past last summer once and that's all I can tell. The old place on the west side of the lake. They took most of our land for the Mosquito Lake.
- H: How did you feel about that being built--the Mosquito Lake? Were you glad to see that built?
- P: No, I wasn't.
- H: Why?
- P: It was our farm and I hated to see them sell the farm, of course. You hated to see it go.
- H: Did you like that Mosquito Creek?
- P: No, we never paid any attention to the creek. We never went fishing or anything that way.
- H: I understand the people did not get along. The creek separated . . .
- P: Oh, you got that too! (Laughter)
- H: Yes, I got that. How come people didn't get along?
- P: I can't tell you how come.

H: Did you have any problems with that?

P: I didn't have any problems. When we lived at West Mecca, we lived on the west side and the others were living on the east. You had no idea what folks would do.

H: Like what? What did they do?

P: I couldn't tell you.

H: Can you remember or . . . ?

P: The Boone's, Jenny Boone Palmer, her folks lived on the east side.

H: Yes.

P: Down at the creek. And their farm went into the lake, but it changed hands, so it wasn't from the Boone's. Oh, I can remember what they all looked like.

H: You went through the 1930's with relative ease. It was pretty easy. What were the 1940's like for you?-- World War II? What was that like? Can you remember? How did World War II affect Mecca?

P: Well, I just can't tell you.

H: Can you remember anything about that?

P: No, I don't remember very much about that. Of course, the reason I remember the First World War, why, because of Frank and Mark Benton. They were my nearest neighbors.

H: Did any of your neighbors fight in World War II? Did you son have to go?

P: No, he wasn't old enough to go.

H: He wasn't old enough then?

P: He wasn't old enough to go. No, I just can't think of any of our real close neighbors that had to go. I guess we were all so busy.

H: Farming?

P: Busy thinking of ourselves and our work at home that we never thought so much about the war. We didn't think so much about the war.

H: Didn't you?

P: I guess not.

H: No.

Did your son have to go to war at all?

P: No.

H: No. How come?

P: Well, at the time of the Second World War, he wasn't old enough, and of course, the next war, he was married and he didn't have to go. He didn't have to go to either war.

H: Yes. Is his wife still living?

P: Yes.

H: Do you have any grandchildren?

P: They had one son.

H: Yes.

P: She looks after me.

H: Does she?

P: She looks after me, yes, financially. Of course, when we lived here, why, there has to be somebody that looks after us financially. She looks after me.

H: Did you sell that house on 46? That house that you lived in, did you sell it?

P: We sold the place, yes. We sold it.

H: Do you remember how much you got for it?

P: I couldn't tell you what we got for it because I don't know.

H: Yes.

P: My son was living then and he looked after the finances. I couldn't tell you. I don't know what he got for it. I know we didn't get enough, but he was ready to get rid of it.

H: He didn't want to work there anymore?

P: He didn't farm and my husband wasn't able to do anything. We just had to depend on hired help and you had nothing left, but you had to have hired help for everything. You had to pay all the help.

H: In the last few years then, you had hired help, right? Towards the end? But when you were able to work you didn't have hired help?

P: After he got so he couldn't do anything, we had to hire; plus farming was done and by time you paid all the help and all, you hadn't anything left at all.

H: What kind of equipment did you have to farm? Did you have to do a lot by yourselves?

P: Of course, at first we didn't have very much equipment. Then we got so we had, oh, the regular amount of farming. We didn't have very much to farm with. Finally, at last, we got a tractor.

H: How many acres did you have?

P: A hundred and fifty some acres.

H: What were some of your neighbor's names? The Bentons were one neighbor.

P: The Bentons, right.

H: Who else were your neighbors then?

P: Oh, Jenny Reed was a neighbor, but she's gone. And the Johnsons were neighbors. Oh, they're all gone. I can't remember. As I look back and think, I haven't any of my old neighbors living but Frank Benton. My old friends are gone..

H: Yes.

P: Oh, and the Duncans, they lived next to us.

H: What's it like for you to see Mecca now? Does it bother you to go back there? It's changed an awful lot.

P: Oh, yes. There's some things look pretty bad. Things don't look good at all.

H: Why?

P: I guess I kind of lost my mind when I go through Mecca. I remember the places. The creek went down. It's the biggest creek that goes into the Lake and it's just all grown up so thick in there you can't get through the thicket and it comes clear up to the road, the brush does, clear up to the road.

H: You know they have Mecca Circle now. Do you remember that?

P: The Mecca Circle?

H: Yes. How did that look to you? It has changed a lot now.

P: That's what they used to call the Circle. That's in East Mecca.

H: Yes. Mrs. Falkner used to take care of that.

P: Yes, they always lived there.

H: She's the caretaker.

P: They lived there.

H: That has changed a lot hasn't it?

P: Yes, it has changed a lot.

H: In growing up, what did you do for fun? When you were first married, did you go to dances?

P: Well, we didn't dance very much. We didn't have that many parties in the country and I didn't dance. I wasn't a hand to dance and Frank wasn't either, so if we had little parties, why, we went, but we didn't dance.

H: How many years were you married?

P: How many years? Oh! (Laughter) We were married in 1902.

H: Did you have a big wedding?

P: A big wedding?

H: Yes. What was that like?

P: We were married at my own home. Just our own family and one uncle and aunt were there. It was in the



wintertime when there was zero weather and awful big snow storms, deep snows and we had to go through. The bridges and things weren't like they are nowadays. And they had to dig out around the bridges to get through the deep snow. Of course, nowadays, they have things to take care of the snow.

H: Yes.

P: We didn't have then. They had to use their shovels.

H: Did you go on a honeymoon?

P: No.

H: No?

P: Got married and went right home with his mother.

H: Started to work the next day?

P: Of course.

H: Yes. Very interesting.

P: We didn't have so much stock to take care of then. As we grew older we had more cattle and horses and stuff.

H: If we had to pick out one thing that has been important in your life, what's the most important thing?

P: The most important thing? My mother-in-law looked after the money while she lived, if you can imagine what that meant. (Laughter)

H: You didn't like that?

P: Well, I didn't have any chance on anything. She had the say about everything.

H: Oh yes.

P: So, if you can't imagine anything, don't ask me anymore!

H: In 1917, was your home destroyed by a cyclone?

P: Yes.

H: What can you tell me about that? I read that. What happened?

P: Oh yes. I was not in the house. We were living over here on the West side and it was at our home over at East Mecca. It was just at the time in the evening that we were in the barn milking. But we were on this side of the creek. We were on a farm on the west side of the creek and that was on the east, at East Mecca.

H: Yes.

P: You don't know where the house is over there?

H: Is that in the circle? Is that house in the circle?

P: It's below the circle.

H: Below?

P: Below the circle. Did you ever hear of the Palmer house in East Mecca? They called it the Palmer house. And of course, we sold that and we fixed it up.

H: You fixed it then after the cyclone hit?

P: Yes. Took all our buildings.

H: Really?

P: And so it left us in pretty bad shape, of course, and we were living at this side and had our barns over here but our barns and everything over there was destroyed, so we had to come back here to live at the old home.

H: Did people help you build it up again?

P: People?

H: Yes, people help you build it?

P: No indeed!

H: No?

P: We didn't get any help.

H: Is that right?

P: All the help we had was some of the neighbors came in and helped to pick up the boards and things. The house was all destroyed. The house was moved off of it's foundation. Claire Palmer came out and said--

she was in the house and a little girl was there with her and the neighbor woman. They were at the supper table and they knew the storm or something had hit and everything went smash in the house. And she raised up the window. She wanted to get out of that, of course. She raised up the window and stepped out, out the window. The thing was off the foundation and the house was moved way over, so she stepped out of the window on the dirt. Of course, I was not there. Frank and I were in West Mecca.

H: Yes.

P: And George wasn't there because he had gone that day to Cortland to get some feed corn. We were planting corn.

H: Your son was born then? George was born then?

P: Oh yes. He was able to be out driving the horse, then. And he went; he took Grandma to Cortland. He took the horse and buggy and went to Cortland and got the corn. He came back and of course, he was in the new buggy and she wouldn't come back home with the new buggy. She had to take the old buggy so that meant that the new buggy went smash too.

H: Yes.

P: Everything we had, so I try to forget that.

H: Yes, I'm sure, yes.

P: This was on the other side of the lake mind you, and that land went into the lake and our farm here went into the lake.

H: Yes. Yes.

Who was a guy by the name of Thomas Abel? Who is that? Did he build a hotel?

P: Yes. He had the hotel. I think it was at East Mecca. I think the building is still there.

H: Is it?

P: I think.

H: Who is that? Did you know him? Is he related to you?

P: Uncle Thomas.

H: Is he related to Lucretia Abel?

P: Lucretia?

H: Yes.

P: Yes. Now, where did you get Lucretia's name?

H: Oh, I'm smart. (Laughter)

P: Now, Lucretia Abel was my husband's grandmother.

H: Oh, I see.

P: That's what they were. Lucretia and Thomas Abel; they were brother and sister.

H: They weren't married then, they were brother and sister.

P: They were brother and sister.

H: I see.

P: They used to live in East Mecca, the Abels.

H: Yes. He built a hotel though? There's a hotel in Mecca?

P: Yes, at the East Mecca Corners.

H: Oh, I see.

P: But in those days--oh, I'm all mixed up.

H: No you're not.

P: Well, there's a great big hotel on the southeast corner over there in East Mecca.

H: Yes.

P: Across from--I don't know what they call the other big store. I don't know who was in the store last. The Falkners had run the store a long time.

H: Yes, Bill's father. William Falkner's father.

P: Yes. The hotel that's across at that other corner . . .

H: Oh.

P: Here was the Falkner's and over here at the other corner was where Thomas Abel had the hotel.

H: Oh. Was there a lot of people that stayed in that hotel? Was it crowded a lot?

P: Oh, I don't know. But they were gone; they were gone before I came.

H: Oh.

P: Lucretia Abel was Grandma Palmer.

H: Yes.

P: Is that the way you have it?

H: Yes. Yes.

Tell me a little bit more about your mother-in-law.  
Tell me about Jenny.

P: Jenny Palmer?

H: Yes. She's kind of interesting. You said she was very wealthy. She had a lot of money.

P: Who said that?

H: You told me that.

P: I did?

H: Yes. Did she have a lot of money--Jenny?

P: I don't remember that she had a lot of money.

H: You didn't like her though, did you? Did you like her?

P: Oh well, of course I liked her. Yes, of course, I liked her but she was boss of everything.

H: Was she?

P: Of course, that's where it didn't fit so good. It was like if you married a man and worked with him on the farm and she handled all the money. But we didn't have a whole lot at that time.

H: Yes. Do you remember getting your first car?

P: Yes.

H: Did you drive?

P: No. I never learned to drive. She wouldn't let me. She wouldn't let me learn to drive because she couldn't learn to drive. She tried to learn and she tried and tried and she couldn't make it go, so she wouldn't let me learn to drive. She'd have been better off if she had because [I could have driven] different times when George wasn't there--my son.

H: Yes. My goodness.

What was the most happy time for you? When were you the most happy in Mecca?

P: You mean what good times we had or something?

H: Yes.

P: Did anyone ever tell you about the club that we had?

H: No. Go ahead and tell me about that club.

P: Oh, it was just the married people and their families. I can't tell you just how often we did go, about once a month, probably, and we had a car and went from one place [club member's homes] to the next.

H: Yes. What did you do?

P: What we did? Oh, some of them danced and we had music and just play and things. Just had a real good time and had the refreshments, of course. But I don't know of but one person besides myself that's living that went to go to that club.

H: Oh yes?

P: Oh, unless some of the children [are still living.]

H: Right.

P: There was Apla Love. She's living. Her mother and father went to the club and she and her brother were little children, and Apla came to see me the other day here. I hadn't seen her for years.

H: About how old is she? In her sixties or so?

P: Oh yes.

H: Is she?

P: Oh yes, she's past--oh how old would they be? Oh yes, she's probably in her sixties.

H: Does she still live in Mecca?

P: No, she lives in Cortland. She has a good many grandchildren. No, I hadn't seen her [for years].

H: Who else belonged to that club?

P: I can see them.

H: You can see them.

P: But I can't [recall their names].

H: Did you and your husband dance?

P: No.

H: No?

P: We didn't dance. Some of them danced. We didn't dance. We were too clumsy.

H: Oh!

P: Yes.

H: No, you weren't!

P: He wasn't any hand to dance and I wasn't, but his mother was in her young days. They used to have a dancing club, dancing school and she was one of the good dancers.

H: Yes.

Can you remember Lathrop Palmer? That's Jenny's husband.

P: Lathrop, that was my father-in-law.

H: What was he like? Was he a nice guy?

P: Oh yes, he was. He was a good man. He was a great singer.

H: Was he?

P: And Jenny was a singer. She was a pretty good musician and a good singer. They used to sing, Lathrop and Jenny, they were very popular, very popular at their crowd of young people in those days. It was different.

H: Yes. Let's go a little bit. Let's move on a little bit in time. Do you remember when they put in Mosquito Lake?

P: Do I remember! Oh, I certainly do remember!

H: What can you tell me about that? Were you happy to see that lake being built?

P: No, I wasn't happy.

H: Why?

P: Well, I was a farmer and I hated to see the land covered with water, and it's a terrible place up at the north end of the lake now where all those geese are. It's just so terrible, and all those trees. It has just grown up to brush and stuff. It's an awful looking place--and great big trees.

H: Yes.

P: Well, around our old place there, it has just grown up so it's an awful looking place.

H: Have you been back there? Do you go there?

P: I don't get over there very often. Oh, I lived there for a long time. I lived there after my husband died and I lived there alone.

H: Do you miss it?

P: Of course, I always lived on the farm and that was what I liked even though the farm was lots of hard work and all that.

H: Do you miss it?

P: Do I miss it? Yes, I do.

H: Do you?

P: Yes. Out of my window here, I can't see anything green.

H: Yes, you're right.

P: There's no way to get out and no one to go anyplace.

H: Yes.

P: But still, that's the thing I liked best was farming.



H: Was it?

P: Growing stuff. Thinking about the gardens, yes. No, I wasn't happy when they put the lake in. Of course, they didn't give us as much money as we should have had for the land.

H: How much did they give you or don't you remember?

P: I can't tell you. I don't know.

H: Yes.

P: I can't tell, but we had to take what our government would give us. We couldn't fight the government, but some people did and the one's that fought with the government, they took them to Cleveland finally, and they got their price. Then the government give them their price, but there was very few that held out but what sold out in the beginning.

H: You didn't do that? You didn't take them to Cleveland?

P: No.

H: No?

P: We just took what they gave us. Of course, my sister wasn't able to do anything so in a way, we thought we were getting rid of the place.

H: What did you do after that? Did you farm after that?

P: Oh, we weren't able to farm.

H: Yes. Where did your husband work?

P: Well, he worked on the farm as long as he lived, as long as he was able to work. Of course, when he wasn't able to work--George was gone so we had to hire help, but we didn't make any money. We just tried to keep things going and make the taxes and all. Before he died, the lake was in and we just rented the land out and people farmed it and paid us rent for it.

H: Do you have any of that land left now? Did you sell everything?

P: Oh yes.

H: You sold everything?

P: We sold everything. He sold the last of it to Greenwood, and I don't know the people's name that live and that have the house now. They don't live there; just in the summer they come from Cleveland.

H: You just said that you had to take care of the old people in Mecca, right? Who did you take care of?

P: Well, they always did; younger people, we always took care of the older people. We never had rest homes like this that we lend out to take care of them. The government is taking care of them.

H: Who did you take care of? Do you remember?

P: Oh, I helped to take care of my husband's grandmother. It was at our own home, now. Grandma Boone and then Grandma Palmer, my husband's mother, then my husband for all those years that I took care of him. That's pretty near enough to take care of.

H: Can you remember when you got your first T.V.?

P: Yes.

H: Were you excited?

P: No, I wasn't so much excited. Well, I didn't care so much about the television, but George brought it. My son got it for us.

H: Yes.

P: And but I can remember some lots of things that I had seen over, especially, the things that I loved is on the farms and the horses and the cattle, things like that. And they are beautiful on television. I've seen some beautiful animals on television then. Now, I don't see anything. And in fact, I can't hear good enough to hear the music. The music don't sound good to me at all. So, all I care most about, that I can read in the newspaper and look outdoors; I can't see anything green out here.

H: That really bothers you, you really miss the farm?

P: Yes, of course, that is my love. Of course, I was born and raised on a farm and lived there all my lifetime.

H: Describe that farm for me. Tell me what that farm looked like.

P: What did it look like?

H: Yes.

P: Well, it looks pretty bad now all grown up to brush. I can't tell you. I can't explain to you

H: Is it a big place?

P: Yes.

H: How many acres?

P: Oh, we had 150 acres on the west side there that went into the lake. The lake didn't get all of it. You see, we had some left and we sold that. Oh, you can't think what farms look like.

H: No. That's the reason I'm asking you. I never was on a farm. I wish you were younger. You could take me on a farm.

P: Well, farms aren't anything nowadays. You don't find very many farms where they have cattle and stuff out here, at least not where I've lived in lately. But there's always lots of work. We always had horses, horses to do the work.

H: Didn't have a tractor, huh?

P: We had a tractor finally, but we had horses and we couldn't do the work fast enough with horses. Then we got a tractor and then George wasn't satisfied. He got old enough that he wanted to do something else. There wasn't money enough coming in on the farm. So, we got a tractor, put money in a tractor and we sold our horses. Our horses went to buy the tractor, and he was gone.

H: Did you ride horses?

P: Ride horses?

H: Yes.

P: Oh yes, we used to ride.

H: Was that fun?

P: We used to ride to most places

H: Yes, because you didn't have a car at first and that was your transportation.

P: That's all we had to do, is to drive.

H: Yes. I bet you that was fun though?

P: Well, of course, we enjoyed it.

H: In the winter, did you have a sleigh?

P: We had a sleigh.

H: Oh, I bet you that was fun.

P: We didn't get out to play. We always had so much to do! If you had a bunch of cattle, you've no idea what it is to take care of them and feed them. It isn't once a day, it's three times a day.

H: What time did you get up in the morning to work?  
Five o'clock?

P: No.

H: Earlier?

P: Oh, one year we had to get up and have our milk ready at six o'clock. We had to get milk.

H: What did you do with your milk?

P: Oh, we sold our milk to the factories, a milk factory. We didn't go to the cheese factory very long. Then our milk was sold to a milk company, and the milk went to Cortland.

H: Yes. So, what time did you get up in the morning?  
Early?

P: Oh, you have to get up. You have to get up early to have your milking done by six o'clock in the morning. We have to get up early here, though.

H: Why?

P: Why? Well, you have to get up early because the people that come and do the work and wait on us, they have to get their work done and they go home.

H: What was the first thing you did when you got up in the morning when you were on the farm? You milked your cows?

- P: Well, the first thing you did was to get up and get the fires going in the winter time. Get out and milk the cows. Feed the cows and milk them. Get the milk ready to go to the factory and, oh, it was always late before we got in to have breakfast. There was nothing but work, work, work.
- H: What did you have for breakfast?
- P: What did we have for breakfast?
- H: Bacon and eggs everyday?
- P: No, well we didn't have bacon.
- H: Oh?
- P: We had eggs. Of course, we had our own meat. For breakfast in the wintertime we had buckwheat cakes for breakfast. Did you ever eat buckwheat cakes?
- H: Good.
- P: We had buckwheat cakes in the wintertime and we always had eggs, we always had milk. We used all the milk we wanted, eggs; we raised all our own vegetables; did our own cooking and baked our own bread.
- H: What did you do after breakfast?
- P: After breakfast? Wash the dishes usually.
- H: Then back out on the farm again?
- P: Yes. When Frank's mother was living and able, why she did most of the housework and I worked out on the farm. I was working. I guess that's what kept me living so long.
- H: Oh, I'll have to try that. I'll have to try that.
- P: No, you couldn't work on a farm. You wouldn't find a farm to work on. You couldn't learn to do anything outdoors.
- H: Then you came in for lunch?
- P: Well, I came in for dinner whenever it was.
- H: What did you have for dinner?
- P: No.

P: We always had some potatoes at dinner time and we had our own . . . You don't know anything about how it would be like. We had our own cattle and pigs. We had our own pork for bacon and everything that way because, why, we would kill it ourselves. So, we had all those things. So, this one neighbor used to say when we were on the farm--this was during the Depression--she said, "All we have to buy is our tea and coffee and sugar." And most of the rest we produced on the farm; baked all our own food.

H: Yes.

P: Oh, you'd never know. You'd never know anything about that.

H: No.

P: When you want some eggs, you didn't go to the store. When you want things from the store, you go to the store. You pay plenty of money for it nowadays. It didn't take so much money then. We didn't have that much. Things didn't bring that much money. We didn't get that money.

H: Well, how much money did you make then? Did you make money from selling eggs and milk and all that?

P: Yes, yes we did.

H: How much?

P: How much money?

H: Yes.

P: Well, at one time we sold eggs for ten cents a dozen.

H: (Laughter) Ten cents a dozen?

P: Yes. Would you believe that was in the Depression. If you could sell them. If you found somebody that wanted them at ten cents a dozen, you sold eggs to them. And that's some work to produce, take care of the chickens and do all that work. You've no idea about the work.

H: What was your favorite animal?

P: What was my favorite?

H: Yes.

P: Well, the cow was most my favorite. We always had plenty of horses; horses and cows, pigs, chickens. Everything that was on the farm.

H: How much did you sell milk for?

P: Well, at one time we sold milk for 50¢ for 100 pounds, at one time.

H: Wow!

P: But later then, we'd get more for our milk. I don't know what they get for milk nowadays. They don't produce milk now the way they did then.

H: No.

P: They have big dairies and big quantities.

H: You belonged to that club. What else did you do? You didn't have time to do a whole lot did you?

P: Time?

H: Yes. Your time was spent just on that farm and that was it.

P: Oh yes.

H: That was it?

P: We didn't have time. We didn't have time to go visiting and spending lots of time places, no.

H: Did you travel? Did you ever leave Mecca?

P: No.

H: No?

P: I never was out, never was out of the state but once.

H: Where did you go?

P: Oh, went to Buffalo. I didn't get much out of that either. We went down to the train, I suppose. That was before automobile age.

H: That's unbelievable.

P: Yes, it's unbelievable what life was like before we had all these things.

H: Do you like all the conveniences now? Had you wished that you had all those conveniences when you were farming? Made your life a lot easier, huh?

P: We couldn't have had these things. In fact, we didn't have money enough to have bought them anyway.

END OF INTERVIEW