

TRANSCRIPT OF
AN ORAL HISTORY GIVEN BY
LARKSFIELD PLACE RESIDENT
FAYE BERTHOLF MCCOY

Recorded Friday, November 12, 1997

Interviewer: Shakila Saifullah, a graduate student of the Elliott School of Communication at the Wichita State University.

Interviewer: Today is Friday, November 12, 1997. The time is 1:45 PM. I am Shakila Saifullah, a graduate student of the Elliott School of Communication at the Wichita State University. This afternoon, I am interviewing Mrs. Faye Berthoff McCoy, a resident of Larksfield Place. Larksfield Place is a retirement community located in Wichita, Kansas. This interview is taking place in E-214, Mrs. McCoy's apartment. This interview is being conducted as a part of the I-Witness to History Program.

Interviewer: Mrs. McCoy, could you please describe your childhood? Things like your family, your school, and the house you grew up in?

McCoy: I was born in the house my father and mother had built the year before I was born. And it was a very, a very nice house for a farmhouse and it was made of cement block that my father and his brother and probably two of his brothers and neighbors made—one by one. It was a large house, beautifully done and had three bedrooms and closets and halls. Upstairs, an open stairway from the living room and another bedroom downstairs and front porch that went on two sides of the house and an enclosed back porch and really for a farm home of the era it was quite a lovely home, and I loved it. And it was it was a farm home.

And I had a sister who was eight years old when I was born, and a brother who was fourteen years old. They were those ages very soon after I was born and a sort of an interesting comment about my birth, my mother was a very devout woman, a pretty, little woman, very capable, she had gone to Wichita University when it opened as Fairmount Academy. She went the first day it opened and she was a teacher, so she was a very refined little lady, very modest.

And I asked my brother, who I said was nearly fourteen when I was born, what he thought about having a baby sister when he was fourteen years old, and he was probably past eighty when I

asked him that and he looked at me sort of long and he said, you know, Faye, to tell the truth, I don't remember when you were born.

So, I asked my sister we were together, and she said, well, really, I was a little disappointed, because our mother had told me when I went to school that day that she would have a surprise for me when I got home and my grandmother and my aunt were coming to spend the day and I thought they were going to make me a new dress. So, you can see that my mother had never told the children that there was to be a baby. But, in that, she was a rather short woman and rather small, but she always wore a big apron when she worked and I imagine she, I was not a very big baby and I imagine she carried me rather unobtrusively and the birds and the bees hadn't been a great subject they discussed (laughs). And they were both surprised to come home and find that little baby (laughs) but I have to say they never did act as if they resented me for very long, or very deeply. (Clears throat) But our, our...

Interviewer: Could you say a little bit about your father?

McCoy: My father was a delightful man. People tell me that it must be very easy for me to stand up and talk and I say I got that from my father because he was a tall man, very self-assured, who loved to . . . he loved people, and in our church, he nearly always taught a class. He was a very devout man, but a very jolly man who loved people, loved to be with people and my husband used to say, he didn't know how he got every, he didn't know how he got the farming done because if anyone came along the road next to the field, and wanted to stop and talk, pop would stop and talk and give the horses a rest (laughs) because he farmed with horses.

So, I grew up in a delightful home, my brother and sister were very, very sharp kids and with my brother that much older, I really don't remember when he lived at home all the time. I can, I can remember, when he went to college. It was real special when he came home and I can remember how much my mother missed him and my whole family missed him, but, and I have one recollection of him having a graduation party when he graduated from high school and one of the gentlemen whom later we had business dealings with you know, years and years later and I could always tell him that I remember when I was four years old that he held me on his lap because he was one of my brother's classmates. And, see, when he graduated from high school, I was only four years old. So, (laughs) so, my home life was just delightful.

Interviewer: Mrs. McCoy could you tell me a little bit about your school now, the school you went through? How education was at that time?

McCoy: It would probably surprise people at how good our education was. Spivey was a rural school district, but they had two school buildings. The first, second, and third grade were in one building and then across the little town there was a, what they called a rural high school, district number two and it held the fourth, fifth, and sixth, seventh and eighth grades and the high school. The high school was upstairs, the home economics room was downstairs, and it had a basement, it had a furnace. For the time it was a pretty modern building. Of course, there were no bathrooms in it and no running water, but we did have drinking fountains and we thought it was pretty nice.

I started in the first grade and my sister would have been, she would have been probably a freshman in high school (clears throat) and so she was across town, which wasn't very far (laughs), which was probably a quarter of a mile, but I, we drove the horse and buggy. The horse was Pet and we had a buggy and we kept her in the barn that was across the road from the little school house, and I was not real happy at being away from home and sometimes I would slip away from the school ground and go across the road and go curl up in the buggy and cry (laughs) or I would, I would, when you're homesick, you aren't actually sick, It's just a feeling that, overwhelms you and sometimes the teacher would have me lie down on the recitation bench in the front of the room.

I was very small for my age and I was not quite six when I started the school. And she would cover me up with my coat and I would lie there, but I think the teacher kind of smelled a mouse, because one day, when I was lying on the recitation bench at the front of the room, in walked my mother and suddenly I felt a lot better (laughs). I didn't feel very homesick anymore. And my mother could be quite firm and I don't recall what she said or what the teacher said or anything but, after that I never was homesick (laughs).

So, I'm sure it was some effort that my mother came in because we had, my sister and I had the buggy horse, so probably my father had to come in out of the field and drive my mother into town to see about this kid that was so homesick (laughs), that she was sick but anyway, that cured my homesickness, quite rapidly. And, I don't know, I don't think they often do it anymore, but of course I had a big brother and sister and lots of books at home and my mother had been a teacher and so it was determined that I didn't need to take the third grade so, I got to go over to the big school then, after I was in the second grade and went to the fourth grade.

Interviewer: Mrs. McCoy, could you explain this thing like skipping the third grade, how the system worked at that time?

McCoy: I really don't know. I assume that I knew, yes, that I could read the third grade readers, I have the books that we had, I didn't save them, our house burned, I lost all, we lost all our books and pictures. But I have bought them and I have the grade school books that I went to school with that I used. But I assume that I could do the arithmetic and could do the reading and spelling of third grade and so, I don't remember whether it was soon after school started or just when. But anyway, I went over to the big schoolhouse. So, that was easier on my sister. She didn't have to come take care of me (laughs).

But one thing that I remember, I remember quite vividly, was when it must have been, I must have gone almost a semester in the third grade because it was that fall that I was sitting, we had two teeter-totters on a rod, and I must have been waiting my turn, and I was sitting on the rod, and I fell off and I broke my arm and it was, it broke both bones. It was just broken clear in two. And they carried me across the street and laid me on the table and the little town had a doctor and my parents came in and they set my arm and it hurt (laughs). They put wooden splints on it and it hurt a lot and I remember that that night I slept with my parents to comfort me. That was the, I don't remember ever sleeping with my parents, but we didn't have a baby bed. Each of us babies slept with our parents until we could sleep in our own beds. So but that was the last time that I slept with my parents because they needed to comfort me.

And my grade school teacher for fourth, fifth and sixth grade I think I learned more from her than I learned from any other teacher in my life. She was wonderful. A big woman, never married, gave her life to teaching children and I can still hear her tell the things that were wrong with the English language. Like we don't try *and* do things, we try *to* do certain tasks. And I read that and I thank Miss Lipper every time--we don't talk about healthy foods, we speak of healthful foods. Our conversations are now advertisements—entirely against the rules in my fifth grade grammar book (laughs), because foods are not healthy, they are healthful. We don't try *and* do something; we try *to* do something. And so, rules of spelling and grammar and just being good and honest and happy.

And I think she gave me, I have I haven't had much time in my life, until later, years to try my hand at any art, but, she taught us to color a little piece of cloth with a crayon then rub that cloth with crayon on it, across a piece of drawing paper and one could make a beautiful sunset. She taught us how to make an evergreen tree and make it look realistic, she taught us the basics of drawing and art, along with being good kids. She read us stories that built character and she was a wonderful person.

She came to see me. She moved to California and when I, right after I was married, she was back here one time and came to see me and I just loved her. It shows what an influence an older person, and she was not a beautiful woman, she was just a heavy woman with her hair done up on the top of her head and no makeup, but, she was good and we recognized it. The children recognized it. And she didn't have naughty children in her room, she, right, exactly.

And I went on when I was a freshman in high school; the district built a new high school building and that was wonderful. It had running water and bathrooms and a gymnasium and a stage and it was exciting and I played basketball and I had a wonderful, wonderful, wonderful music teacher. She also was a lady that was never married. She taught me a great deal about music and fostered you know, my music education and just made it so much fun and this, this is a qualification of a good teacher that I think is most important. To be an example, and to work with a pupil and to make it a very enjoyable part of your life, whether you're doing algebra or American history or world history or English composition or music or whatever, even home ec and that was not really my long suit. I guess I was too interested in the out of doors and the basketball and things, but since being adult, I've loved homemaking and cooking, but marrying the perfect man (laughs) had something to do with that. I wanted to do it for him (laughs).

Interviewer: Now, Mrs. McCoy, could you tell me a little bit about the influence of animals and pets in rural Kansas life at that time?

McCoy: I always had a kitten and my son asked me not long ago, he said, "Mom wouldn't you like to have a kitty?" They have kittens, and I said, "Roger I'm in an apartment, let's wait until I'm about ninety-three and I don't need to go anyplace or do much and I'll be at home and then you can give me a kitten" (laughs). But I had doll buggies and I had doll beds and I had, you know, all the things that little girls loved and I could dress these kittens and put them in the doll buggy and wheel them around. And we had a hayloft and the mother cats always love to find a little nest in the hay, the hens laid, made nests in the hay. This is prairie hay, in the hayloft and they'd find a nice hollowed out hen's nest up there and then they'd have their baby kittens. Every night I had to go when I put the horse away, I had to go up in the hayloft and see about the kittens. And I always had some of them that we could bring in the house, not to stay overnight in the house.

But I think one of the strangest experiences I ever had with a cat, we had a little neighbor boy that I just adored and the cat had white kittens. And he told his mother that he wanted to give me a kitten. So I went up to their house, and he looked his kittens over, and he kissed one of them soundly right on the mouth and at great sacrifice handed that kitten to me. She grew into a beautiful, white female cat, long hair. We'd let her come in the house when she wanted to.

And one morning, I opened the door to look out. We had a thermometer on the side of the house, and I opened the door just enough to see what the temperature was and Toby, her name, the cat's name was Toby, Toby came in and I didn't think anything about it and went on with the breakfast work. And pretty soon I heard this little noise and it was a very, very cold morning and when I followed the noise, there was a baby kitten under the buffet. The buffet didn't come clear to the floor, and Toby had brought that kitten to me because evidently she wasn't keeping it warm enough and when she came in the house, I didn't notice the kitten in her mouth. And there was the kitten, (laughs) under the buffet, by the door (laughs).

Interviewer: Did she have more kittens?

McCoy: Yes, yes, it was so, we took the cat back out and made her a box. So, I've had lots of kitten and cat experiences and the dogs were always farm dogs. They were dogs to work with the cattle. They weren't housedogs.

Interviewer: And about pets—your horse?

McCoy: Yes, when my mother was married she said her father (parents) used to give dowries. And her mother had died before they were married, that is, before my mother and father were married. Her father was not a wealthy man at all but he wanted to give her something and he gave her a mare. And I don't remember her, but mama said the mare's name was Nancy. Well, Nancy had a colt and that was Pet—it was our buggy horse. And then when I was about fifth grade or sixth grade, Pet had a colt and so she gave that colt to me. And I had read the book, *Black Beauty*, and this colt was black and so he was "Beauty." He was my colt and he was my horse and I don't recall him ever being broke to the buggy, but I rode him and I rode him to school for several years and he was my horse and he was a favorite. Years later, we still had him but it's strange with an animal, they seem to know when they're going to die and they'll usually go just as far away from the barn as they can and lay down and die and that's what Beauty did. He was an old horse—a horse twenty years old is a pretty old horse. But Beauty went back out in the corner of the lot and laid down and died and that was, that was sad.

Interviewer: (Unintelligible)...start with your childhood, your love for music, and your excellent performance today.

McCoy: (laughs)

Interviewer: Could you tell me a little bit about music?

McCoy: Music was music. I would say was just almost the core with our family life. My mother played some. My mother and father both sang—my mother was an alto, my father a tenor and they with some of the neighbors, made up, sometimes it was one neighbor, sometimes a couple of neighbors, sometimes it would be another neighbor because in our little church we had a good choir. But I would imagine that my parents sang for more funerals than anyone in that part of the county--get a good soprano and a good bass and an alto and a tenor, and you have a mighty, a mighty fine group.

But I, I don't know when my parents got a piano, but they had one all of my life. And in the winter as I said the house was rather large and after I was grown and playing the piano was my, was my main interest. The living room was hard to heat because there was this open stairway that went into an open hall upstairs with the three bedrooms off of it, so in the winter we would bring the piano into the dining room where the heating stove was. And it was crowded, but I had my piano. And my brother sang well, and my mother played and my sister played.

Interviewer: So music was very much in the family?

McCoy: Very much in the family and when we had company (clears throat), when we would have people come for supper, we always called the evening meal for, oh, maybe a special supper for someone's birthday or because my brother was home and to visit with him. The entertainment was usually around the piano, and we, we had lots of music and, and we just loved to sing. My sister played and I can't remember when I couldn't play. I could just always play. And I didn't have lessons until actually I was in high school and could drive the car, because my mother didn't drive and we needed to go to Kingman, which was sixteen miles away for a music teacher.

But one day when I came home from school, my mother said, "I got something for you today." And, of course, I was curious and what it was, she had, I think she traded a fat hen for it. That

was a medium of trade. Women didn't always have a lot of cash. But they had things to sell, like chickens and salesman would take the worth of magazines or books or encyclopedias or music lessons or things like this in what we used to call barter and trade. And I said in one of my books that I had music lessons and my mother had a few fat hens, but anyway this was a correspondence course and my mother helped me with figuring out the questions about the time and the notes, and the key signatures. And so on and every week I would have a—well, I would finish the lesson, I would learn the pieces to my mother's expectation and then I would answer the questions and I would mail it to Kansas City. And upon receipt of that, they would send a new lesson.

And it was, I was probably a sophomore in high school before I went to Kingman for some lessons. There was a teacher that was very good in Kingman and I went on Saturdays and then a teacher here in Wichita by the name of Reno B. Myers came out to Kingman and I had lessons from him, oh, maybe one summer. But mostly I have just played. And young people . . . then, I think the elder people, the older people were very, very generous in their, in their ability to let youngsters play, because I know I played for church and I probably didn't have the time real accurate. And I probably missed a note or two. But they let us do it.

Interviewer: Very encouraging.

McCoy: Right, right, it really was and the teacher I mentioned in high school was a beautiful pianist but she let me play and I played for the glee clubs and I played for, I played for things and we had much home entertainment. I mean you know, we didn't, there weren't any movies in Spivey. Once in a while there'd be, somebody would come and show movies (clears throat) in the community hall on Saturday night, but mostly we made our own entertainment. So, there were, there were school plays and there were school musicals and there were school programs, you know, the Thanksgiving program and the Christmas program and the Easter program, the May Day program, the, you know, any excuse and we had chapel and we gave chapel programs. We had chapel once a week so, regardless of our abilities, we performed. And it was wonderful, wonderful training. And I feel, I have said that I hoped that I thanked my mother enough for the opportunity that she gave me, because I'm sure it was a responsibility to help me with the lessons and a lot of times she probably didn't have time, but she took time.

Interviewer: Didn't you say that she was a very devout lady?

McCoy: Yes.

Interviewer: Very knowledgeable.

McCoy: Yes, yes she really was. She was ahead of her time in a lot of respects.

Interviewer: Mrs. McCoy, would you tell a little bit about sheet music, what it was, what were the costs?

McCoy: This was before, before radio, and not, okay, not, not very many people had phonographs and so there were songbooks. There were hymn books at church. Schools had songbooks like one of the famous ones was *101 Best Songs* and they were, they were standard songs really not, not very, not very appropriate songs a lot of times for children. Some of them now we would, well, a lot of them were Stephen Foster songs and they were about life in the South and there was like, *Poor Uncle Ned* and this was a Negro man which, which really wasn't, and *Old Black Joe* and these weren't really good songs for children. And then I remember one that was "Oh, my darling Nelly Gray, they have taken her away, and I'll never see my darling anymore." And I thought Nelly Gray was a cat, was a gray cat and I put my head (laughs) and I put my head down on my desk and cried because that gray kitty had died, all the time I didn't know it was a girl's name. I was probably in high school before I figured that one out (laughs).

Interviewer: Now, that's funny (laughs).

McCoy: But, but anyway people wanted songs that were relatively easy to play because many homes had organs or pianos, but the music had to be quite simple. It had to be inexpensive, and selling pianos in my childhood was—pianos and music, it's like selling big screen televisions now, you know, if you could afford a piano. This was wonderful and everyone wanted to do this for their children. And so, music stores then had what they called sheet music—music made up of one or two sheets—sometimes just a folded sheet with, with a single sheet in the middle, which really gave it five pages. But they were about every, every title, every subject imaginable. Our home burned and it burned all of the family music, I think, I think we all minded that, that and, and my mother's pretty dishes I think were the things that we missed the most. But after a while, a friend asked me if I would like to have some old music that someone had given her and I wanted it. And then, and other people had given me music and so I started a hobby of collecting music and so I have a sheet of music for every year from 1875-1975.

Interviewer: That's a hundred years.

McCoy: That's a hundred years of sheet music and it tells the story of life in those hundred years. The music was very simple and it was, um, it was either about nature or about love. There was nothing objectionable at all in the music. But sometimes on the back of the music, I have one piece, one selection that on the back of the music, it is advertising other music and all the music advertised on the back of that piece of sheet music is music about what an evil thing strong drink is. And it's about . . . I don't remember the titles, but "Father there's no food in the house tonight because you've spent it all on wine." And it's the lament of the children because father has spent all the money on strong drink and it's, it was very affective the music usually taught a moral. Of course, it was about pretty girls, it was about far away places, it was about, I had it divided into categories and some of it was about childhood, some of it was about like the settlers coming out. One of the songs was about the *Shenandoah Valley*. They missed where they had been. It was about *Maryland* or it was about, there's the *Missouri Waltz*, there's *Beautiful Ohio*, there's the *Tennessee Waltz*, there's the *Kentucky Waltz*. Most of them had very simple tunes. And many of the melodies only had three changes, three chord changes because people were playing these on the piano that didn't have much music education. So the music had to be very simple. But it, it had a moral tone and it, it was many times there was a sad thing about someone that died and you miss them so. And, and it was about mother and love and about childhood.

My niece called me one day recently. She said, "Aunt Faye, what are the words to *Mighty Like a Rose*?" And I said, "Sweetest little feller, everybody knows, don't know what to call him but he's mighty like a rose." And it was kind of a lullaby of, of, of mother singing to a baby, and there were lots of those kinds of songs. Many of them were songs with a moral. Yes, yes, and the wars brought a lot of songs. Some of them were rallying songs.

Yesterday a neighbor brought me a copy of *Over there*: "Over there, Over there, Spread--Send the word, Send the word, Over there that the Yanks are coming, The Yanks are coming," and so on and everything is gonna be fine because the Americans are coming. And this was a World War II song. And there's another one that I have that is a real tearjerker. It's the song tells the story about a traitor that was shot at sunrise. And the general ordered it, and it was only after he was shot that he realized that it was his son.

Interviewer: [Unintelligible comment.]

McCoy: Yes! That, that's a tragic story. The war—and, and the, the illustrations were drawings clear almost up to, to radio time. Because there weren't any great artists that everyone knew. And then when radio came and we could hear this voice singing to us, we wanted to know what he looked like.

Interviewer: Um-hmm.

McCoy: So, then, the songs that the artists sang carried the picture on the cover.

Interviewer: Um-hmm.

McCoy: But the songs are so simple but some of them such beautiful harmonies and melodies, but, there were a lot of silly ones, and there, there was one that was very offensive. My mother would, wouldn't have let me bought it, and it was *Show me the way to go home*, "I'm sick, I'm tired and I want to go to bed, I had a little drink about an hour ago and it went right to my head."

Interviewer: (Laughs.)

McCoy: My mother would have—she would have forbidden me. And my mother didn't like dancing either. And, I remember, my sister came to Wichita one time, and she bought a bunch of music. One of the pieces was *Stumbling*, and it was a song about dancing and stumbling all around, and, my mother said, "Why did you waste your money on that stupid song?" So we were, we were pretty well guided in what we bought and thought (laughs).

Interviewer: Your mother was amazing. Mrs. McCoy, I read this thing in your, in your little article that you wrote, could you tell of that story, you know, the song that was mentioned in *After the ball was over*. I thought that was really sad.

McCoy: Oh, yes. I, uh—this was a song that came out in the early 1900s, I believe, or the late 1800s, I'm not sure which, but it was—it was the first song that sold over a million copies, and the story of it was so intriguing. The young lady was engaged to the man, and they went to the ball, and somewhere along in the evening she wanted a drink of water, and he went to get her a drink of water. And when he came back, she was kissing a man, and he would have no part in any explanation. Well, the song begins with saying . . . it's a little child talking to an old man, and "Sir, why did you never have any baby. Why did you never have any wife? Why didn't you have any grandchildren?" And so he told this story in the song. And he said that he was furious. And she tried to explain, and he would not listen. And it was only after her death that he found out, it was her brother that she kissed, and so that's why he didn't have any grandchildren and why he was a lonely old man. And it was just a real tearjerker that it evidently just touched a chord, because that was the first piece of music that ever sold a million copies. Otherwise if a, if a composition sold a hundred or two hundred copies, it, it was pretty good.

Interviewer: Is that . . .

McCoy: Yes. Sheet music, a lot of it was 15 cents, and nearly every town of any size had a music store. You sold the instruments and then you sold the music so you could play it. and here in Wichita some of the dime stores had, had music, and they were usually 35 cents, or three for a dollar. But they'd have a girl that, that would play, they had a big rack of, of a selections, you know, where the music displayed, and they'd have a girl or a boy that played, so the, so the customer could hear how the song sounded. And when I was about 14 or 15 that was my—I thought that would be, oh, that would be the best occupation in the world—was to play the sheet music at Woolworth's, because you have access to all that music, and you could just sit there and play all day (laughs).

Interviewer: (Laughs.) Next Mrs. McCoy, could you tell me a little bit, like we've already started discussing how technology like radio, and then television, and lately computers have influenced and changed your life?

McCoy: The first radios, my husband was a radio expert—he, his, his main job after graduating from college, he worked for several years as, in the engineering department at a local radio station here. And the technology has changed so very, very, much, but I recall that the power came from a storage battery like you would use in your car—a big, heavy, um . . .

Interviewer: Chunk of. . . .

McCoy: Yeah, yeah, I don't know, I can't remember how many volts it carried even, but it was kind of like drinking soda out of a straw—every time you turned on the radio, you drained the battery a little. Then, you had to take the battery and have it charged. And, and the battery was an ugly thing, but it sat someplace under the radio, or something. And, my husband knew all of these terms, but anyway, you had several dials to turn to, to bring it in. And, before it reached its prime performance there would be a lot of squeals and howls and so on.

It was and you had to do a lot of adjusting of the, of the dials, but there were some wonderful programs. The one that I love the most was Jessie Crawford at the organ in New York City, and there was another one that I loved. I could almost say the name, but he was from Kansas City, and he not only played the organ, he recited poetry, and I think I still have some of the books of poetry that, that he recited. When, when radio was discovered and, and I say, my husband was somewhat of an authority on this, that when radio was first discovered, and, and put together, it really was never intended the men that, that perfected it really intend for it to be commercial. They wanted it to be a cultural tool so that people across the country could hear the Philadelphia Philharmonic. Or, or hear the really good music of the country, and it makes me shudder to see what has happened to it now.

Interviewer: That was an interesting observation to think it was never meant to be . . .

McCoy: No I believe the . . . and I'm not sure about this. I believe the first station was in Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania, but it was meant to enhance the cultural aspect of the lives of the people of the United States. And it's sad that a lot of the music and the talk now on radio is everything that is not cultural or educational, or inspirational. That's one of the sad parts of it, but it was wonderful.

Our first radio had, had headphones, and so you could divide a headphone, and then the four of us could each have one ear, one headphone. And then when after I was only sixteen when I started to college, so really, and I never was back home—only one summer, but a number of years later then my husband and I bought the family farm, and so we lived there for forty years. So I went back to farm life, but it was, we went back during the war, and so many things were not available that we were almost like I had been as a child, as far as, as appliances, and, the technological things. We had a six-volt wind charger that furnished our electricity when the wind blew, and we could listen to the hog market or the grain market or the stock market on the radio at noon if the wind was blowing (laughs) (clears throat). And we had a forty-watt bulb hanging down in the living room to furnish some light, but it wasn't very dependable, so mostly you used

lamps, or Coleman lanterns. But, anyway, it brought to the people something away from the community and it was wonderful. It, it's a shame it has been—it's like television—much, much, much good, but it also has brought some influences into the home that aren't needed, aren't wanted, aren't helpful.

Interviewer: Yeah, like every advancement, it speaks for . . .

McCoy: Right. Very, very true.

Interviewer: And then when did television come into your life?

McCoy: My husband was out of radio before television came and our rural area didn't have reception at first. We could get Oklahoma City if we were lucky. Some people got a television and were glad to get it when they could get it, but you weren't sure of it at all. But, we got one when, well, they call it channel 12 now. It was in Hutchinson—it was Hutchinson-Wichita station, but the studios were in Hutchinson. And we had a house that had a living room, and dining room that went straight through with double doors into the living room. And sometimes when the neighbors would all come we would swing the divan around and put the chairs in rows and we had a little theatre (laughs). But it was, it was very, very exciting.

One of the exciting things was that the state fair at Hutchinson. Are you familiar with the state fair?

Interviewer: Yes.

McCoy: The state fair at Hutchinson was always televised and it still is on channel 12. And so, you know, our children were in 4-H [agricultural club] and showed their cattle at the fair, and when our daughter did demonstrations on food preparations, and so on, and so the fair was a big thing for 4-H people, and then, they used a great deal of local talent, and in 4-H club there was a group of young boys—they were in high school, I guess. And, I had a little boys' quartet and they were great kids. And, one time, they were asked to come to channel 12 in Hutchinson and

sing for a program and I played for them, and it was a big deal in our (laughs) in our young lives (laughs).

Interviewer: [Unintelligible.]

McCoy: Sure, sure it is. Television did offer a lot of opportunities for local kids, for local people. You felt as if you knew them. There were women who had house, you know, housewife shows. There was a woman on that channel that just had wonderful things for farm wives and little town wives and city wives. And a lady died recently who had a program here in Wichita that was, you know, everyone just loved her—you felt like you knew them. And the weatherman—he was, you know, the weatherman was one of the family (laughs).

Interviewer: (laughs) Yes.

McCoy: (laughs) Because there he was in your living room telling what it was doing out in Shadrin, Nebraska, and what it was doing in Garden City, Kansas. And, it might be coming this way, so you better watch your baby chickens (laughs).

Interviewer: Tell me about your latest influence, your computer?

McCoy: Well, the computer has been wonderful. Our wonderful grandsons began to grow up, and they began to be in business, and in education, and in all those things. And one day our son called out, and he said, "Dad, Kevin (the grandson, oldest grandson)—Kevin thinks you should have a computer." Well, my husband was a very, very, mechanically/ scientifically minded person, and it really appealed to him. So we came into town and we picked up out a television [computer], and he was absorbed with it from the beginning. we wanted to know how—well, we took it to our office. My husband and son were in business together—in the oil business together, and the girls in the office and the men, too, were learning to, to use the computer. And, so they included us in some of the, of the classes. And then we went out to Pratt to take a class at the junior college out there, but there wasn't enough interest shown, to get enough to have a teacher that summer, but in the fall, they offered a course in Kingman. And, so, we enrolled and we took that semester of computer science, and learned a great deal.

Interviewer: This is which year you are talking about, Mrs. McCoy?

McCoy: And, pardon me?

Interviewer: '80s or 90's?

McCoy: Yes, in the, in the late 1980s—'87 maybe, '88, in there some place. But it was wonderful. You know, we could, we could do our business on it. And my husband (I call him Bill was a very good teacher to me. Of course, I took the course, but it was harder for me than it was for him. But anyway, we learned it together and we did a great number of things on it—put all our business on it, and that was the main things that we used it for. One thing that Bill did that he enjoyed doing there was for the two hospitals in Kingman. And each of them had records of all the babies born, but they wanted a composite record. And so they could give him the books that had the entry of the mothers, and the date the baby was born, and the name, and all of that. Then Bill could put it on, and alphabetize it according to name or year or however they wanted it, and so this could be, I believe, it went into the local library, so . . .

Interviewer: It became a permanent record?

McCoy: It did. It became a permanent record of the babies that were born in every year so it was a good data record for the library, and he enjoyed doing that, and we did—I was involved with a nursing home in Kingman, and we did some little newsletters and, you know, some little publicity things (clears throat)--made some banners, you know, had the fun of, of doin' little . . .

Interviewer: [Unintelligible.]

McCoy: Yeah, so, and then we traded that one for a newer model, and I believe it was Bill's 83rd, it must have been his, maybe 81st birthday, we got, we updated, and got another one. And, then, he died in '86, and in '85 we updated again, and, and, and got a new one. And then we got a color printer, which is fun, and then he wanted me, when we had an advertisement or something about a keyboard, and so he wanted me to have a keyboard for the computer, and insisted that I, I

have that. And, so that was one of the last things that he did for me was to be sure that I had that keyboard for the computer, a musical keyboard.

Interviewer: And that keyboard has contributed a lot to your music, in composing?

McCoy: Yes, yes, yes, it's been wonderful. It's been wonderful. I, I really enjoy it.

Interviewer: What are things that you do now, in terms of music composing?

McCoy: I have a lot of things in my mind to do when I get time (laughs). But one of the things that I really enjoy--recently my ten-year-old great grandson was here. And he could compose a little tune on that. He could place the notes, then he could make up the words, and, and put underneath it. He did it. I gave him some technical help, but he could—he plays the piano a little and he could figure out how to drag those notes and make it work out right, according to the time we selected and the, the music. And, at the end, it was kind of cute. I wanted him to have a, a long note and a short note, and he didn't want it that way. He wanted it to go bum—bummmm (laughs).

Interviewer: Yeah, Mrs. McCoy, we will continue on your topic of music, your interest in music. Can you tell us a little bit more?

McCoy: I, I was so fortunate that this music teacher that I mentioned that I had in high school was from Friends University, and my brother and sister had both gone to Southwestern College, and everyone assumed that I would go there, but I was especially interested in Friends University because of this teacher, and besides, it wasn't as far away from home as (laughs) as Winfield, and I had relatives in Wichita, so I felt very, very comfortable in going to school in Wichita. But I had a piano teacher named Miss Margaret Joy. She also taught harmony and sight singing and ear training, and she was wonderful! Her piano was just marvelous. And, she was—she introduced me to to really some wonderful piano music, and she was a wonderful accompanist herself. And, I've never been even a moderate performer of music. I've mostly encouraged people to sing. I have been an accompanist, and I love to have people involved in music. That's why I enjoy teaching. I never did really enjoy teaching piano very much although I've done a lot of it, but it was just one-on-one. I, I like to hear people sing. I like to see them sing. And here at Larksfield it's wonderful to play the old songs and, I play at the nursing home for a group that

we call the "Golden Oldies," and, and who sing there. but it's just fun to get people to sing. But Miss Margaret Joy and the Singing Quakers were just a, a relatively new organization then, and I learned so much from being in the Singing Quakers, and fortunately, I, I could trade singing in the church choir for voice lessons, and the voice—it was probably wasted effort on my part, but at least, I know some things about singing even though I have no great voice to sing it, but I've always been able to sing harmony, and, and been able to teach it because I could hear it, and so . . .

Interviewer: [Unintelligible.]

McCoy: Um-hmm, Um-hmm. And so, and I've been able to play songs from memory and by ear, and so it's been a an ability that has come in very, very handy because I don't, don't always have to have music, or I can embellish the music that I do see (laughs).

Interviewer: [Unintelligible.]

McCoy: So, anyway, I, just wanted to mention the wonderful music education that I got at Friend's University.

Interviewer: Mrs. McCoy, seeing your interest in music, like music has influenced a significant portion of your life like it's very much interrelated with the aging and the times and the eras you've gone through still today, like you find music very therapeutic in all its aspects like music has influenced and touched your life a lot.

McCoy: Yes, yes. Oh, it really has, yes, it has. And the lovely part of it was that my husband couldn't even match a tone. He would say, sing "Loo-oo-oo" and he could not sing "Loo-oo-oo."

Interviewer: (laughs) But he was so supportive. That dear man has taken me everywhere. He's listened while I practiced. He bought me three different electronic organs. He bought me a new piano. He bought me a keyboard. He even bought me a French harp (laughs) and a ukulele (clears throat). My ukulele burned when the house burned, but anyway, he was so dear to enjoy or, at least, put up with (laughs) my music, and have been so grateful for that.

Interviewer: He contributed also.

McCoy: Right. Right. It's made a big contribution to my life.

Interviewer: You're lucky in the sense that you had an inspiring environment, regarding music in your family, your mother, your parents, your schooling, and then finally your husband, and your children.

McCoy: Right, and, and even here at Larksfield, because I can keep on doing music. I hear so many people say, "Well, I used to play."

And, I can say, "Well, I play!" You know, there's a difference in playing and being a "has been." So, I—my eyesight isn't good anymore, but that doesn't mean that I still can't play, because I . . .

Interviewer: As long as you have the heart, you can play it.

McCoy: Yeah, yeah, so I can play whether I can see the notes or not, so I'm grateful for that.

Interviewer: Um-hmm, um-hmm. Well, has this music thing continued in your future generations—any of your children or grandchildren?

McCoy: Recently I visited my daughter in the Washington area. She said, "Mom (laughs)—she called me, said, "Mom, an organization that I belong to doesn't have a program for when you're visiting. Would you do a program?"

I said, "Carolyn!" (laughs) She said, "Oh, you could do one of those things you do!"

I said, "Well, OK." I said, and then I called her, I said, "Why don't we do a duet?" So and she plays quite well, and so we, we were, we were taking a trip around the world, musically, you know, by the titles of the songs, so when we got to Spain each of us she made us a big dove hat. It was the shape of a dove—two of them cut out and we slipped them down over our heads, and we played *La Paloma*, a piano duet, so (laughs) it's been fun, and you know, the great grandchildren, and our son used to sing quite a little bit, but and, just, you know, my brother still sings. He is almost 98, and he leads the songs for the Sunday evening vestry service in the retirement complex where he lives.

Interviewer: Mrs. McCoy, are both your brothers and sisters surviving still?

McCoy: my sister is gone. My brother and his wife at 98, almost 98 and almost 100 are doing well.

Interviewer: And, Mrs. McCoy, now if we can shift a little bit from music and talk about something—it's a little depressing, but you did mention it twice in your previous conversations. When you talk about your house being burned and all of your precious things going with it, I mean, could you explain a little bit more in detail.

McCoy: (Clears throat.) Well, it was a—I was away from home teaching and my parents were, were at a church meeting, and it was just one of those things that happened quite often in rural life. There were stoves. There were—they really don't know how the fire started. And, you know, I don't, we, we didn't ever conjecture much about it. I had such an admiration for my parents. They were in their sixties and this was this nice house that they had built, and their many, many possessions you know, things that they treasured—the books and the music and the dishes, you know, just a lifetime of, of things they loved. But they didn't ruin their lives. As soon as the cinder were dry—cool, they started in again, and they built another house, right on the same spot, and they were back in it in about eight months, maybe not even that long. Seven or eight months and my mother planted her flower garden like she used to have, and, it was, it was a wonderful example to the community to be able to cope with whatever life brings. It, it was very difficult for them, but they survived it and they lived there they rest of their life and in a lot of ways it was a more suitable house for elderly people than the other house would have been. And the neighbors helped—there was such an outpouring of help and love, and so I lost just like they. I was away from home, but I had very little music with me, so we lost all the family music. We lost the family pictures that I am especially missing now when I'm doing this book on family. And my mother was a saver. We had a big closet upstairs, and any time you wanted a costume,

you could be sure that Mabel Berthoff would have something in that big closet that would work for a costume, and she had saved magazines. There was a magazine called "The Youth's Companion" that had wonderful hero and heroine stories—good, good literature for children. She had taken it for my brother. She had taken it for my sister. I think it was out of print, maybe, when I came along, but she had stacks of those magazines. I read them all. You know, she was—she saved the good things, but she started over and she still saved the good things, so.

Interviewer: Did you have an early experience dealing with your life, not dwelling on the past?

McCoy: Yes. Right it is, and you know, forgiveness not dwelling on the blame on anyone being careless. It might've been someone in the house that dropped a cigarette or struck a match or something, but they went on and never were bitter about it, because there were a lot of people they were, they were kind of the, the senior people in the neighborhood. And they, I'm sure, they didn't want to be a petty example to anyone, you know, they wanted to be strong and they were. They didn't even want to take help from anyone, like from the Red Cross or something but they, they just didn't feel that they should take anything from anyone, that they should just be able to take care of themselves. But they were so generous with other people, and, of course, the people came in and helped them build again and, and got them started again, but they, they were a wonderful example of people enduring a tragedy, but it wasn't the tragedy of lost life. You know, many people have had much worse tragedies. It was just material things.

Interviewer: Now Mrs. McCoy, in one of our previous conversations, you told about how community was very united, and lots of friends, lots of neighborhood, lots of trustworthiness, values—please tell me a little bit about your neighborhood life.

McCoy: It, um—it, it was just a nucleus of caring. As a child it was my parents and their friends that I felt so comfortable with. you pretty well towed your mark because you knew people expected it of you—you didn't want to let anyone down by misbehaving, you know, even though you wanted to, you didn't because you were a little afraid of public opinion.

And then when we went back to the farm in 1943 this was during the war years and my parents were still farming—my father was still farming with horses and he was not able to keep up, and there was no help available, and my husband was not in real good health, and it seemed that going to the farm to help my parents, and for Bill to have a different kind of work was the thing to do. And it turned out wonderfully.

After the, the war, many, many of the sons and daughters of the people who were the adults when I was growing up—I'd been gone for a number of years—they came back to the farm. And, here were maybe 18 or 20 couples of us with little children, all farming, all trying to make a living, and all getting along. We all went to the same church, or practically all of us. And, after Sun—after church on Sunday, we'd stand around and the boys'd talk about the crops, and the girls would talk about, you know, the garden, the canning, and the chickens, and all of this, and we belonged to Farm Bureau, or whatever it was called home economics unit. We belonged to the same church groups. We had a little club that got together for husbands and wives—there were 16 couples of us that had a dinner once a month. And we got together for that, and I used to say our children didn't know which one was the parent, you know, any mother could help bandage a skinned knee, or a, you know, any child could run to any mother because we were just all a big group, and there was a lot of friendship and a lot of companionship, and our children were in the same school. We were in the same church, and, and it was just a wonderful community feeling.

And, now, we nearly—many are deceased, but you could make a pretty good living then on not too many acres. And then as machinery got larger, people could farm more, they went in debt more. Farms got larger and some of the farmers retired and the land was sold. And the older generation died off, and it was not quite the same. The fortunately the oil discovery came in and that brought a lot of people and that was good because there was more money, but it wasn't just the same group. Our children grew up and went away to college, and, you know . . .

Interviewer: Life goes on?

McCoy: And, life goes on, but it, it, it was different and so our, our social lives weren't so centered in the one little area as they were. We, we branched out more to Wichita and to Kingman and to other places, but it was wonderful while it lasted. And probably we've forgotten some of the hard times, and just remember the good times, but that's the way life is, fortunately.

Interviewer: Mrs. McCoy, I read—I went through a little bit of the literature, I you wrote about your life. Now we're going to go a little bit to doctors and medicine and if you have memories of your family doctor. One thing, ouch, that seems so painful, could you just tell a little bit about how they used to remove a loose tooth back in those times?

McCoy: It's rather surprising probably the barest minimum of doctoring. I remember about tying the string around the tooth, and tying the other end to the doorknob, and then having somebody shut the door (laughs).

Interviewer: (laughs) Seems painful considering nowadays.

McCoy: Well, you know, most of us didn't let a tooth go until it was ready to fall out.

Interviewer: It would be wobbly?

McCoy: Yes, very wobbly. But fortunately in my family growing up, there was very, very little illness. I did have my, I, I did have severe tonsillitis. And my parents had my tonsils removed when I was about 14, and I thought that wasn't much fun, but, I can't remember ever being sick in bed, actually, in bed sick. I had the mumps-- was the only time that I was really ever out of school, I think with, with an illness. And the sad part of my having the mumps, neither of my parents had had them. And, I was, my brother and sister were gone from home. I was the child alone at home. And they were so afraid my father would get it that he didn't come in the part of the house that I was in. He could get in the kitchen, and then get into the bedroom through a window, off of the enclosed porch. And, I didn't see him all the time I had the mumps.

Interviewer: Um-hmm.

McCoy: My mother was with me. She didn't get them, but my father did (laughs).

Interviewer: (Laughs.)

McCoy: And, he was quite ill, but there was a doctor in our little town. I remember getting a diphtheria shot. And I remember my sister getting the diphtheria shot and she was a fainter. She would faint at most anything. And after the old doctor gave her the shot, he said, "Oh, oh. I, I used an empty needle. We'll have to do you that over again!" (laughs)

Interviewer: (Laughs.)

McCoy: That didn't go over very big with my sister. But my mother had, I, I don't know. I--her problem, no doubt was ulcers, because she was, she was quite ill, some times. Not dangerously ill, but she didn't feel well. But the only time I ever remember. Well, I remember two times of the doctor being in our home. And once in later years when my mother was very ill. I mean, when I was growing up, and when my father had the mumps. And I, I just never did have any thing, so, but we usually had a doctor in our little town, and I'm told that he was, this old gentleman was so very, very good with the flu patients when the, when that awful flu epidemic during World War I was rampant—that he got on morphine dope in order to keep going. And, it about ruined his life. But, but that, that was just, that's what I heard as a child. But our life was, was very carefree from, from illness.

Interviewer: Hmm. That's a blessing.

McCoy: Yes, yes, it was, because even in my husband's family there was tragedy and there was serious illnesses, but I, I just, I was not a very sturdy child but, you know, I was small, but I, I, I, just never have been sick.

Interviewer: Do you have any memories of your tonsillitis operation? Were you pampered a lot. Were you . . .?

McCoy: Well, we went, we had come to Wichita to visit my aunts and uncles, and cousins and so on, and in the conversation some place my aunt said that there daughter was going to have her tonsils out, I believe it was on Tuesday. This was on Sunday we were there. And so, somehow, the arrangement was made so that I would have mine out at the same time. And I, we were in Wesley Hospital and we were there overnight, maybe two nights, and it wasn't much fun, and I felt, I felt pretty homesick. I think I was fourteen and I was big enough for it not to bother me very much, but it did, because my aunt was a little bit strict, and I thought she was paying too much attention to her child (laughs). Funny thing!

Interviewer: (Laughs.)

McCoy: And, I—because my folks went on home, and then they came after me in a day or two, but I felt, I expect that's when I felt about the most alone in my life, when I didn't have my mama (laughs). But I survived it (laughs). But it was quite, quite exciting to be in a hospital. You know that was, that was a pretty big experience to be in Wesley Hospital (laughs). And, so I wasn't back until I had my babies there (laughs).

Interviewer: Mrs. McCoy, now if you'll move on to things that you've accomplished could you tell me a little bit about your education? Where you studied? Where you graduated from after high school?

McCoy: Well, after high school, I went to, to Friends University, and this was during the depression and we weren't—my parents and I—weren't suffering because we had plenty to eat, and there was money enough to pay the taxes, but there was not any spare money. And I had, I had given piano lessons and so I had a little money and I believe I—this is a long time ago—but I believe my father had given me a calf (clears throat). And for, for helping him. I, I, I helped my dad a lot—worked in the field, and rode the horse to bring in the horses and the cattle and so on. So I had some money, but and even though I had a scholarship, and I, I sang in the choir for my voice lessons, and I waited table for my, for my food, and I cleaned the house where I lived for my room, so I really had very little expense. And I had a scholarship that paid part of my scholarship. There still I needed, I needed more money. So, I stopped to teach after my sophomore year. I had—you could teach in rural schools on an eighty-hour certificate. So, I, I went home the first summer, and gave piano lessons that summer, then the next summer, I went to summer school, and then taught that year. The next summer I went to summer school and taught that year. And the next summer I went to school and by that time Bill had graduated, and so he was ready to get married, and so we were married. So, I don't actually have a degree, I have just about enough hours, but I never did finish a degree. But then during the war, they were short—I taught the three years, then, in grade school. And, then during the war, teachers were needed so badly, and so they allowed people without a degree to teach, if you took extra hours. So, I took extension from Wichita State, I took correspondence from KU, and then I had some work from, later, from Pratt Junior College. And if those were all added up, and I'd take a few more hours—and a couple of years ago when we were living here, Bill said, "Why don't you go back to school and finish up your degree because I think it would mean a lot to you. Well, I really appreciated him saying that, and thinking that but the things that I wanted to take, yeah, you know, I had done without the degree and it, it just had been a matter of pride. I didn't feel it was fair to him, because by then he was very, very deaf, and he needed me. And, I would've had to spend so much time away from him—studying and even being in class, but I thought it was so dear of him to suggest it and he really was quite excited about it, but then when I thought about leaving him, he, he couldn't hear well enough to even talk on the phone, and so, so he was, he had quit driving, so he was completely alone without me, and I didn't think my pride was worth that much.

Interviewer: And, Mrs. McCoy, like I didn't see any necessity like you had enough education, more than enough of your time, and enough to give you a good position in society, to teach other people. 'Til today you've been providing you're needs and . . .

McCoy: Yeah, I, sure, and it wouldn't have meant a thing only that I, right, right. I also took a lot of courses that were non-credit in art, and in painting, and china painting and things like that, so my life has been very rich, and very full. And, and, and I have other than a little bit of pride that (laughs) that I have missed, that I have tried to make it up by community service and by doing things, and, and so, I, I didn't feel that I had lost a great deal

Interviewer: Not at all, not at all.

McCoy: So, so I, you can keep on learning as long as you live.

Interviewer: That's what's important.

McCoy: Yes, yes, right, um-hmm.

Interviewer: Do you want to go ahead and talk about your books—the books you've authored?

McCoy: Oh, well you know, they're amateur, but I feel strongly about preserving family history. How much time have we? My father's family has an aunt, maybe a great aunt of my father's had taken the time to write down what her father-in-law told her about early days in Ohio, when her father-in-law's father had gathered up his nine children, had put them on a flatboat, came down the Erie Canal to Lake Erie, went across Lake Erie to Toledo, Ohio, went out into the woods west of Toledo, Ohio, cut down trees and made a cabin and raised eight or nine or ten children out there in that, in that woods, and she had written this down, and I thought if that dear lady had done that, certainly we could write down the things about our families, and my husband's family. We lived only a little way from where his grandfather, my husband's grandfather had come out from, he had come from West Virginia after the civil war, to Illinois and married a English girl

there, a girl that was born in England, and he had a chance to come out to Kingman County, where there was free range, where, where the government owned the land, and you could pasture cattle on this free land from the government. He came out with a herd of cattle, a herd of purebred shorthorn cattle from the area around Chicago. He came out and made a dugout in the banks of the Ninnescah River that runs through Kingman. And, there were two, two babies—one baby born there. His wife came out on the train to Wichita and he met her in Wichita, took her to this dugout. Later there were, well, the Indians came, for one thing, and stole some things, and there was a drought, and they moved on to Medicine Lodge. Lived in another dugout, and had two more babies there, and he was a carpenter. Went ahead and helped build some buildings. The family turned out beautifully, and I felt that that should be recorded, so I did that story of my husband's family and then, that was the McCoy family. I didn't show you that book.

Then my husband's mother had such an interesting childhood—came out from Pennsylvania when this was still Indian country and went up into Iowa and into Utah, and Nebraska, I mean instead of Iowa and Nebraska and Utah and down into Oklahoma and came up to Medicine Lodge to visit some relatives who had migrated from, from Pennsylvania into Illinois into Medicine Lodge, Kansas, and fell in love with Bill's Dad, and married him. So, I wanted to write that history.

My mother's people had come from Kentucky and her grandfather had been in the Civil War her great grandfather. Her grandfather had died and the mother was left without support and came out to Kansas where there were some relatives. And, I wanted to write that.

And so, and then, I wanted to write about my father's people that had come from Ohio out to just north of where I live now, just a few miles. And, so, for several years, I made this my hobby to write these books and to have dozens of them printed for all the, all of the relatives.

Then I had a second cousin who was especially interested in my father's branch, in the Berthoffs, and well, a little second—little third cousin of mine that lived within a mile of our place, and I took care of her when she was little and I, you know, she was the little neighbor girl, and I just loved her. And, one day, she asked her mother, said, "What relation is Faye to me?" And I thought, "Good Grief!" You know, she's a cousin, and, and, she doesn't even know how we're related, so I visited with this little second cousin's wife who had been back to New York State where our roots were and back to Holland even. And, we decided that it was time to update the Berthoff book that I wrote twenty years ago. So, this is what I'm doing. The nine children of the pioneer Berthoff's that settled here north of Rock Road in, in, in the area there. They're buried north on Rock Road here four or five miles. The nine children had twenty-six children. The nine children of my grandparents had twenty-six children, so I had twenty-five cousins. Three of them

died as infants, but there were twenty-three that have grown, survived, and grown and we've all been close. So, I'm just now finishing up a book about these twenty-three cousins and their children, and their children's children and their children's children's children.

Interviewer: A big, big task.

McCoy: And the oldest cousin is my brother who is almost 98. The next one is past 90, and I am the third one, and I am 84, and if I don't do it, it won't get done, so I am doing it with my son and my daughter, and this second cousin and his wife helping us. So, it's, it's a big undertaking, and a rather expensive undertaking, but it is rewarding, so I love it and I'm just about ready to get it printed—workin' on the pictures. The others haven't had pictures. This one will have pictures.

Interviewer: Mrs. McCoy, could you name the books that you've authored already—the vanity books as you say?

McCoy: Well the one was *The McCoy Story*, *The Stone Story*, *The Bertholff Story*, *The Hayden-Jackson Story* (clears throat)—it was more about my mother's mother's people than about the father's people. I could only go back as far as my grandfather, who contributed a good bit to the history of Wichita because he helped build the old courthouse, and he helped build the Union Station—he was a carpenter. My mother was born here in Wichita, where her mother was working while he was carpentering. My mother's mother was working, doing ironing for people, for rich ladies. but and then (coughs) in 1992, Bill and I, my husband and I had put together the story of our lives. His life growing up on the farm at Medicine Lodge, my life growing up as a child near Spivey, and then our lives together, and we made that book for our family with some pictures included, so this is the sixth book (laughs) the sixth vanity book that I, that I have done, but they've been fun.

Interviewer: I mean, but the bottom line is you did author a book, and writing a book is time-consuming—it takes a lot of time.

McCoy: It takes a lot of time! And some degree of organizational skill (laughs).

Interviewer: Especially biographies—you need a lot of research—you can't just make up stuff, so it is time-consuming. And, next if we could go on, could you tell me a little bit about the wars: First World War, Second World War, and if any members of your family participated in the war, be it the Viet Nam War or the Korean War, and then you can go ahead and talk about the depression.

McCoy: All right. Bill's father was a Civil War Veteran. My grandfather, no, Bill's grandfather was a Civil War veteran with the Union Army. His father was a Spanish-American War veteran.

My grandfather I wrote in my book would have been the age to be drafted for the, or, to have joined in the Civil War on the Union side because he lived in Ohio. But when he was a child, he ran into a scythe, and he cut his leg badly, and he always had a limp, and so he was not acceptable to the Army. My father was a farmer, and was never drafted. Bill was a farmer and we had two children. He was a little bit old. A lot of our younger relatives and friends were drafted. He was just above the draft age, because we had a little boy, six, and a little girl, three. Roger, our son was, I, I don't remember just what they called it, but, he, he had to serve his six months when he got out of college--six months or three months? He could certainly tell you which it was (laughs). But he, he was at, I believe at Lackland, Lackland Air Force Base. My brother was at KU in 1917 and '18 and the flu epidemic was very, very severe, and he said, he thought he just as well enlist and get shot as to stay in school and die with the flu. So he enlisted in the Coast Guard, and he was only in about, I don't know, 60 or 90 days when the armistice was signed, so before, at their 75th wedding anniversary, his daughter obtained some kind of a military citation for him (laughs). And that was a nice surprise because he's one of the few veterans left of World War I. But he really wasn't in very long, but long enough that he had a taste of Army life. So, our, our son-in-law also was in the, in the Army program that took the college boys when they were, when they graduated and, and they served a certain length of time. I believe it was six months—I'm just—maybe Roger was three months, and maybe it was just three months for Ray. I, I'm sure they could tell you (laughs) (clears throat).

But the depression was a terrible thing, but being in the rural area we didn't realize it, that it, I was a child. I mean I was a youngster, so I didn't, I didn't know, and my parents probably to pay the taxes and to pay the mortgage were really, really, really concerned, but it didn't affect me personally much, only that I had to stop to teach to stay in college, and that I didn't have any spending money. But I know that I had relatives who were out of work and one relative, I remember, moved to the basement of their home and rented the upstairs so they would have that rent money. And there were many, many people who were out of work, and even in our little community, there were people who were renters, that rented farms, or even rented homes in Spivey, and just did odd jobs, that there wasn't any money for them. And there was not the relief then, but people were very reluctant to accept relief. It wasn't relief as we know it now, and the term was, you'd be "on the county" because each county had funds to help people who were

completely without funds. But it was a disgrace to be "on the county" and if you were, you didn't want anyone to know it. And, you know, looking back, I felt so sorry for some of the men, you know, who had to accept dollar-a-day work, 50-cents-a-day work maybe some of it was kind of make-do work but you know, their families were really suffering—they just didn't have anything. And, I recall my father my mother telling me that when my father was on the school board, and they always had a last-day-of-school dinner that some of the families were so poor that they were afraid there wouldn't be enough food—they didn't have the food to bring to the basket dinner, and, so, the school board—I don't know whether they used their own money or whether they used the district money—bought food to take to the school dinner, so that everybody would have plenty (sobs) and that was pretty hard to think about (clears throat), that there would be some children who were hungry. But that's, that's the way it was. There was, there was a great deal of hardship, and I was kind of removed from it, but Bill saw a lot of it. He carried Wichita Eagles [newspaper], and he would see people in the rooming houses—he carried papers in downtown Wichita, and he would see people in the rooming houses that were hungry and dirty and ragged and he'd see people on the street, and now we've become almost used to street people, but then it was, you know, their pride was ruined and they hated being indigent, so, it was, it was a sad time for many, many people, but as far as my life was concerned, but I do have a letter that, that I saved that Bill wrote and his parents were short of money, and he wondered I was out in this little town teaching and I stayed all week and came back weekends. And, he was wondering if we could spare \$5 to send (sobs), so that, that was pretty sad, and you, you know how hard it would have been for a father to have to accept money from a child. And, his parents were diligent, hard-working people that usually made a good living, but when the stock market went to pieces, they raised turkeys. When the stock market went to pieces in October that meant the Christmas market for turkeys in New York City—most of it, most of the turkeys were shipped east. There was no market for the turkeys; consequently they didn't have the income that they had worked all year for. So, it affected many, many people.

Interviewer: One of your previous comments was, that the second world war helped the United States to recover from the depression. Do you want to say a little bit about that?

McCoy: Well, of course, some political bent kind of comes in here a little bit. Yes, because we did without so very much during the war that there was such a demand for consumer goods after the war that it put a lot of people to work. And, so it, a lot of, a lot of people felt that the party that was in power then really shouldn't have taken the credit for the upturn in the economy. It was because things were so bad during the war, and it was bound to happen when people got back to work. That there were goods and services and people, people had money again, because they could have a salary again, but it, it was a, a turning point because, for instance, when we went to the farm, we could not get a regulator for bottled gas. So we had to use a wood stove for cooking or a kerosene stove because it wasn't that we couldn't get the bottled gas, the propane, it was that the regulator was a little deally like this that was manufactured to control the flow of gas, but all of that, all of that kind of work was in the war effort. So you couldn't get tires, because we were using the tires—we were using the rubber in the war effort.

There were things that we couldn't get that suddenly we could get, and so this made for lots of, for lots of work to supply the things we had done without, but it was, it was such a sad time for a lot of people because so many lives were lost. And I remember in our little church we had a service just so many of the young men were gone, and we had a service where we had somebody bore holes and we had a candle, we had rows of candles for every boy that was gone. And, I know one of the, one of the local boys wounded with, in the hospital in Colorado Springs—he won the Purple Heart. Another cousin was in the South Pacific on a PT boat. Another one was in Hawaii—his little daughter was born while he was gone, and our, Bill's brother-in-law was in Africa—he was with the Merchant Marines, and it touched all of our lives. It was a hard time, but it, but it did not touch Bill and me and our children and our parents extremely hard because we didn't lose any body. And we didn't have anyone who was in grave, grave danger. So we felt, we felt very, very fortunate, but, but I still feel a terrific debt—I can just, just really get teary over, over the veterans, and the, the Vietnamese War was just a heart breaker. That was one of the saddest ever in our history, and if we're not careful, we're going to have another problem. And the thing, if there was a redeeming value, of course, nothing will ever redeem those lives that were lost, but if there was any, any redeeming aftermath of World War II, it was how we worked together, doing what we could. A lot of us, it didn't amount to a lot more than doing without, and a lot of prayer, but for many people, it was a supreme sacrifice, but we all pulled together. And that was the wonderful part, there was some strength.

Interviewer: Mrs. McCoy, if you could just talk a little bit about the values you were taught as a child? Any important saying or any important phrase that has touched your life or influenced your life. Anything your dad or your mom used to quote has helped you make a life that you wish to pass on to future generations?

McCoy: I think that probably having a, a family around made a lot of difference, because you couldn't get away with anything (laughs). Somebody would tell somebody for sure! (Laughs.) You had cousins and cousins who loved to tell on you (laughs). And I had two sets of aunts and uncles that lived very nearby, and I remember, and this is such a little thing, but I was kind of a tom-boy, and I wanted a pair of jeans, and so my folks said I could have a pair of jeans. My uncle was very displeased with me. No girl of his was gonna wear overalls! And you know, that really bothered me. Uncle Earl was mad at me because I had those jeans (laughs). And so you kind of had family and when I lived in Wichita, I had a lot of family here, and we had one aunt we always said she was kind of the watch bird of the family, but if, if, well, I had two aunts here really and a cousin that was like an aunt, and if they approved of something, it was OK, but if they didn't, you'd better go a little careful. And my parents were very opposed to dancing.

Interviewer: [Unintelligible] . . . were they more conservative?

McCoy: They, they were both conservative—they just thought that dancing just wasn't exactly right—they just didn't want their girl dancing. And, so, one of my friends was having a birthday party, and then we had a lot of local society news. It was more of a small town paper. Wichita just had about 60,000 people in it then. Anyway, the paper, you know, carried a lot of local news, so here came—no, that wasn't the thing. My cousin was going to, it was Fairmount then, going to Wichita U. and his fraternity was having a dance, and he wanted me to go with his boyfriend, and so I went. And, lo and behold, the list came out in the Wichita Eagle (laughs). And my parents were irate. But I had gone with my cousin, you see (coughs), so that, with my cousin's friend, so that kind of eased it a little because my aunt could kind of come to my rescue, but after that if I did anything like that, I had to be sure that my name wasn't in the paper (laughs).

But it didn't hurt me any to have some parental guidance, but there were some things that, and you, I noticed you said something about prohibition. My mother belonged to WCTU, that's the Womens Christian Temperance Union, which kept which kept the amendment prohibiting the sale of liquor in place for a while, but finally, you know, they, they lost, but even when 3.2 beer was made available in Kansas we were, we were still a lot of people were still very opposed to that and I gave a lesson this morning for a church circle about a man in the old testament who got drunk and did some very bad things, so it's been, drinking has been a problem from the very early times. And, my mother especially, well, my father, too, felt very strongly about it. And, I feel somewhat strongly about it. I, I think that a lot of the problems with our young people (coughs) are due to excessive drinking. I think it's made too easy for them. I think it is, it is allowed by a lot of—there is, there is no, no restriction, no social abhorrence of it. It's kind of the "in" thing to do. It, it, it's accepted, and children are going to go just as far as they can go. I couldn't go very far, because there was that, there was that string. And my parents, you see, my father was in this forties, and my mother was thirty-eight when I was born, so I has older parents, and, and I think they, in some ways, they, they were more lenient, but in a lot of ways, they were quite strict, because things had gotten more lenient by the time I came along. And so, I still tend to abhor a lot of things. And, I feel a certain restriction on how much I dare say. So I try to

limit. . . [Audio tape ends.]