

**The David and Barbara Pryor Center
for
Arkansas Oral and Visual History**

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Arkansas Memories Project

Peggy Parks
Interviewed by Scott Lunsford
April 10, 2012
Prairie Grove, Arkansas

Objective

Oral history is a collection of an individual's memories and opinions. As such, it is subject to the innate fallibility of memory and is susceptible to inaccuracy. All researchers using these interviews should be aware of this reality and are encouraged to seek corroborating documentation when using any oral history interview.

The Pryor Center's objective is to collect audio and video recordings of interviews along with scanned images of family photographs and documents. These donated materials are carefully preserved, catalogued, and deposited in the Special Collections Department, University of Arkansas Libraries, Fayetteville. The transcripts, audio files, video highlight clips, and photographs are made available on the Pryor Center Web site at <http://pryorcenter.uark.edu>. The Pryor Center recommends that researchers utilize the audio recordings and highlight clips, in addition to the transcripts, to enhance their connection with the interviewee.

Transcript Methodology

The Pryor Center recognizes that we cannot reproduce the spoken word in a written document; however, we strive to produce a transcript that represents the characteristics and unique qualities of the interviewee's speech pattern, style of speech, regional dialect, and personality. For the first twenty minutes of the interview, we attempt to transcribe verbatim all words and utterances that are spoken, such as uhs and ahs, false starts, and repetitions. Some of these elements are omitted after the first twenty minutes to improve readability.

The Pryor Center transcripts are prepared utilizing the *University of Arkansas Style Manual* for proper names, titles, and terms specific to the university. For all other style elements, we refer to the *Pryor Center Style Manual*, which is based primarily on *The Chicago Manual of Style 16th Edition*. We employ the following guidelines for consistency and readability:

- Em dashes separate repeated/false starts and incomplete/redirected sentences.
- Ellipses indicate the interruption of one speaker by another.
- Double underscores indicate two people talking at the same time.
- Italics identify foreign words or terms and words emphasized by the speaker.
- Question marks enclose proper nouns for which we cannot verify the spelling and words that we cannot understand with certainty.

- Brackets enclose
 - italicized annotations of nonverbal sounds, such as laughter, and audible sounds, such as a doorbell ringing;
 - annotations for clarification and identification; and
 - standard English spelling of informal words.
- Commas are used in a conventional manner where possible to aid in readability.
- All geographic locations mentioned in the transcript are in the state of Arkansas unless otherwise indicated.

Citation Information

See the Citation Guide at <http://pryorcenter.uark.edu/about.php>

Scott Lunsford interviewed Peggy Sue Murphy Parks on April 10, 2012, in Prairie Grove, Arkansas.

[00:00:00]

Scott Lunsford: Well, Peggy, it's a great honor to be sitting across from you, finally. Uh—we've been working on trying to get this done for a little while, and it's—uh—it's good that it's here today, April 10—uh—2012. And we're at your residence, the—uh—Peggy Parks residence here in Prairie Grove, Arkansas. Uh—you're with the Pryor Center today, and we're gonna be—uh—recording this interview in both—uh—high-definition audio and video. And you're gonna get a DVD of all the raw footage for you to look at. You're gonna get a transcript of this interview, and we're gonna ask you to look at both of those things, and—uh—especially the transcript, and we want you to check for errors, like misspellings or s—you know, the wrong place or help us identify—there'll be some questions that the transcriptionist will have for you. And then one—once you've looked at those and—uh—we've edited them and added the information that you've added—um—and you're okay with everything, then we'd like to post this stuff on our website, the Pryor Center website. And—uh—we'll—uh—post video highlights from the interview. We'll post all the audio from the interview. We'll post the

transcript from the interview. And you know, Kris Katrosh is in the back room scanning your family photos. Um—we'll—uh—provide you copies of that, but we'll also post those on the website, as well. So we'll encourage students of Arkansas history, documentarians—uh—hist—historical researchers—uh—to use this material—uh—to help define what Arkansas is really about. [00:01:57] You know, when Barbara and David first started this, they were so worn out with the people in Washington, DC, and New York and Hollywood defining who Arkansas was. And so, they decided to start this program, and here we are. We're talking to real Arkansans all across the state, and we're getting their life stories. And I have to tell you, they're wonderful stories, and it puts Arkansas in a much better light. So, Peggy, if you're okay with all of that—uh—you need to tell me that you're okay with that, and we'll keep going. And if you have any questions, you can ask me now, and we'll—I'll answer them, and then we'll keep going.

Peggy Parks: I'm okay with all of that. I'm highly honored—uh—to do this, and—uh—I'm delighted. I'm just delighted to be able to do it and to have you spend this time with me. I wouldn't have felt qualified.

SL: Oh. [*Laughs*]

PP: But if you all think so—uh—then I'm honored to do it.

SL: Well, thank you. I'm honored to be here, too, and I—I have to tell you the day that I spent with you—uh—last week was just unbelievable for me. And I am so pleased that we're lucky enough to have you—uh—contribute to the Pryor Center in this way because it's—it's cu—it's significant. And I—I just loved all your family history that we got to go over the other day.

[00:03:19] And so, I'm gonna start with—uh—first of all, I need to have your full name. What is—what is your full name?

PP: Peggy Sue Murphy Parks.

[00:03:31] SL: Okay. And Peggy Sue Murphy Parks, where and—when and where were you born?

PP: I was born in Fayetteville, Arkansas, at the Fayetteville City Hospital. Delivered by Dr. E. F. Ellis, our beloved doctor, on November the twelfth, 1927, two years before the stock market crash.

[00:03:56] SL: Well—uh—what were your mother and father's names?

PP: My father was Eugene Gilmore Murphy. He lived in Springdale. Grew up there. But when he started working, he worked for the—uh—Fayetteville newspaper, which at that time was the *Fayetteville Daily Democrat*, later changed to the *Northwest*

Arkansas Times. So he became a Fayetteville resident at that time to be close to his work. My m—mother's name was Emelia Remes Rooney Murphy. And—um—she was a registered nurse. She had been recruited to go into nurse's training shortly before World War I. And she nursed before World War I, during World War I, and then during the 1918 flu epidemic. She nursed until 1921 when she married my father and moved to Fayetteville.

[00:05:06] SL: So she didn't keep nursing once she got to Fayetteville?

PP: No, they—uh—she had been married. The Rooney was a name that she had married when my father—who had met her, but he was in the service. And she married—uh—a Mr. Rooney, and they had a child, and her name was June, Beatrice June. Beatrice for the [*laughs*] queen of Holland. And my grandmother and grandfather had ca—had been raised in Holland and then moved over here to the United States. Um—so—um—she came along. Course, we—in the marriage contract, June came along. And Daddy, my father, raised her like one of his own. But then they had children, and they had five other children. And there were no inoculations for any of the communicable diseases at that time, the childhood diseases. And so, you name it, measles, mumps, chicken pox [*laughs*],

scarlet fever, whooping cough, we had it. And—uh—with a large family like that, my mother continued her nursing duties where we lived on 127 East Dickson Street in Fayetteville, Arkansas. Uh—she—she loved nursing. She hated to give it up. She waited—the—the courtship of my mother and father lasted four or five years because she knew if she married my father, she would live in Fayetteville, have to give up her nursing career at St. Edward's Hospital, where she'd had her training in Fort Smith. And so, she was nursing over there while her mother—uh—my grandmother, kept June for her. And she—it took her that long and then, finally—and then another thing my mother—back at that time divorces were sort of unheard of and not spoken about, and she—she felt that she wasn't a worthy person to marry somebody else, that this was somehow a black mark upon her, and—and the divorce was not her idea, so it wasn't anything, you know, about her, and certainly, in these days we wouldn't think anything about it.

SL: Mh-hmm.

[00:07:36] PP: But it took four years for her family [*laughs*] to encourage her to—to marry my father, whom they just considered a wonderful—would be a wonderful husband, and he was, and a wonderful father.

[00:07:50] SL: Well, now—um—when she—uh—uh—le—when she was divorced from her first marriage . . .

PP: Mh-hmm.

SL: . . . she—uh—moved back in with her mom and dad.

PP: Yes.

SL: Is that right? And so . . .

PP: After the divorce . . .

SL: Mh-hmm.

PP: . . . she moved back with her—her mother and father in Van Buren. And—um—she nursed in Fort Smith at St. Edward's while my—uh—grandparents took care of her daughter, June.

[00:08:16] SL: Well, now—um—you know quite a bit about the lineage of your—uh—of your mom's parents.

PP: Mh-hmm.

SL: Why don't—why don't we talk a little bit about your mom's—your—your grandparents on your mom's side?

PP: Well, it is really interesting because they grew up, both my grandmother and grandfather, grew up in an orphanage in Utrecht, Holland. It was very strict sort of—they said it was like Calvinistic, like for John Calvin.

SL: Yeah.

PP: Very strict rules.

SL: Uh-huh.

[00:08:49] PP: Now, for my grandfather, his father—uh—was captain of—of a ship and—uh—but the ship sank, and the captain went down with the boat. And then two years after that, his mother died. Now, this woulda been great-grandparents. And—um—so he was placed in the orphanage.

SL: Now, what was your grandfather's name?



PP: My grandfather's name was Emelle—uh—Remes and—but it was a longer name at that time and a funny spelling. [*SL laughs*] But Remes is what it finally came down to. [*Coughs*] They—um—so it—while he was in the orphanage, he met Hermina Haarbrink, and they fell in love. And then all the Dutch young men had to serve two years, serve their country, serve Holland. So as Emelle reached maturity, he was—uh—let out of the orphanage and—um—was put on a ship. And the ship took him to South Africa, and when the ship docked, next to it was a ship from the United States of America. And he manipulated things to where he left his ship and got on the ship from the United States of America, telling them that—uh—he was—uh—an engineer. Now, we don't know where he got his [*SL laughs*] training in engineering, but he was very fluent, very fluent in English, always.

SL: Hmm.

[00:10:32] PP: And so, that's how he came to America. When the ship came to America, he jumped off and became an American. And he wanted to marry Hermina Haarbrink, and she was still in the orphanage. And he would write to her, but the orphanage was so strict that Hermina could not receive any correspondence from anybody of the opposite sex. So when he found this out that she wasn't getting his letters, he would send her newspapers. And he would write his personal messages in the columns of the newspaper [*SL laughs*], and that way she got it. And so, they corresponded that way, and he told her he wanted to bring her to America and marry her and—um—but she didn't have any money. So he was working. He had gotten a—a job with the Missouri Pacific Railroad, and he saved his money and sent everything he could—uh—to Hermina—or to her pastor, actually, and—um—then it turned out that not only did Hermina wanna come, but they wouldn't allow her to travel without a male companion or chaperone. So her pastor said he would accompany her, and then her sister, **Ida**, wanted to come, also. So that—he had to send enough fare for three people. But he saved it up and sent it to 'em, and they came over. [00:11:58] And—um—he lived in Pella, Iowa, and the reason he lived there

was because there was a huge Dutch settlement . . .

SL: Mmm.

PP: . . . in Iowa because the countryside—uh—the climate, the soil, everything, seemed so much like Holland that they felt quite at home when they were actually [*laughs*] uprooted and away from home.

SL: Mh-hmm.

PP: So he had settled there, and that's—and they married, and that's where they lived was in Pella, Iowa. But then the railroad decided to transfer him to Van Buren to the s—to the r—uh—ra—the railroad station and roundhouse at Van Buren, Arkansas, where they could service the engines, you know, when they—they needed to be serviced or—or repaired. And—uh—so—and then so they came to Van Buren. My mother was the fourth of seven children, so he brought seven children down to Van Buren, and that's where they lived. Um—they had a very nice home, and people would intentionally walk by his house and look over his fence because of the beautiful flowers. He would—he would save money from other things that he might've spent it for and instead send back to Holland for tulip bulbs.

SL: Oh my gosh.

PP: And people to—course, they hadn't seen tulips over here, or at

least in Van Buren they hadn't, and they were just, you know, so fascinated with it, and they were so beautiful, and he loved flowers so much. But—uh—that's where my mother grew up was in Van Buren.



[00:13:44] SL: Well, now, didn't your grandfather have a—a—get to meet President Roosevelt?

PP: Yes, while he was in—thank you for reminding me. Because while he was an engineer for the—uh—railroad, he was the engineer for a train that was taking President Teddy Roosevelt on a tour of America. And when they told President Roosevelt that there was another Dutchman on board, he rushed up to meet Emelle, and they just got along and became very good friends, so much so that President Roosevelt offered him a job to be his own personal engineering when he traveled—engineer when he traveled. But—uh—Emelle didn't take him up on that, but—uh—President Roosevelt wanted to give him something, so he—he gave him a walking cane that he himself had bought in the Philippines.

SL: Hmm.

PP: So he always kept that and was so proud and would always say, "This was a gift from President Teddy Roosevelt." Um—but you know, I think that nationality means so much when you're in a

foreign land that it's a taste of home when you can visit with somebody from the same country.

[00:14:58] SL: Sure. Sure. That's a great story. So they—they end up in Van Buren.

PP: Mh-hmm.

SL: And—um—now, did all—you said there were seven children . . .

PP: Uh-huh.

SL: . . . uh—and they all lived and . . .

PP: Mh-hmm.

SL: . . . survived? I mean, that . . .

PP: They did.

SL: Yeah.

PP: Mh-hmm.

SL: That's kind of a little unusual with all those . . .

PP: Yes, for that time.

SL: Uh-huh.

PP: Mh-hmm.

SL: And so—uh—your mother was the fourth of . . .

PP: Uh-huh.

SL: . . . those children.

PP: Right.

[00:15:27] SL: Um—did you ever—uh—know any of your aunts

or . . .

PP: Oh yes. Oh yes. In fact—um—they lived—my—my—they lived right next door to my grandmother. And [*SL laughs*]*—um—it was—uh—it—it—now, my Grandmother Hermina never did become fluent in English like her husband had. Uh—their—he had no trouble. In fact, he even—um—uh—took the Dutch Bible and translated it into English. Uh—he—he was very fluent both ways. But my grandmother was not quite that good in English. It was harder for her to pick it up. So my mother, consequently, spoke in both languages when she was at her home. And sometimes at school she would be reciting in class, and she would slip into a Dutch word or a Dutch phrase without thinking, consciously thinking, about it, and the children were fascinated. And they'd tell the teacher, "Make her say it again. Make her [*SL laughs*] say it again." And my mother was really quite shy, and—and it really just kinda made her draw up, you know, and—and she didn't want to ever recite, afraid that she would do—make that slip again, you know. And—but it—if she hadn't been so shy, if she really would have used some Dutch words, it woulda pleased the children and the teacher, I think, just to hear another language.*

[00:16:58] SL: Well, so, now, did you ever get to know your

grandfather on your mother's side?

PP: Not—I didn't know—on either side I didn't get to know either grandfather. Uh—I wish that I had, but—uh—they were both gone before—um—I, you know, grew up. Um—it was—um—and—and so, even my grandmother on my mother's side in Van Buren—I did know her but not—not really well because—remember, when I was born in [19]27 . . .

SL: Wow. Mh-hmm.

PP: . . . and the Great Depression was in the 1930s and peop—I mean, it—they were hard times. [00:17:46] And my—my father always had a job with the newspaper, with the *Northwest Arkansas Times* and—starting with the *Fayetteville Daily Democrat*. But he always had a job. But then there were six children in my family and—um—so times were kind of hard, and you didn't—uh—spend a lot of money on travel and on gasoline and on rubber tires and things like that. So we really didn't get to go to Van Buren very much, nor did my grandmother det—get to come to Fayetteville very much. Now, she did—I remember one visit she came at Christmastime. And—uh—but she got very, very sick. She had a stroke. I was quite young. She—with the stroke she fell on the floor and . . .

SL: Hmm.

PP: . . . course, I thought she was dead. And it scared me so. My mother, being a nurse, realized, however, the extent of—of her illness and that it wasn't fatal, at least at that time. It was kind of an extra expense at that time for the family. But then after the Depression—well, it really hadn't ended when—uh—the Japanese bombed Pearl Harbor, and we were at war. So then there was that, with all of the rationing of gasoline and rubber tires and things like that, so people didn't travel. And—um—my other grandparents lived in Springdale. Now, I never got to know my grandfather, but I knew that grandmother really well, and she was an adored grandmother. Very, very smart. We thought she knew everything.

[00:19:28] SL: Okay, so let's—let's go ahead and talk about your grandparents on your dad's side now. Um—they lived in Springdale.

PP: They—they lived in Springdale.

SL: And—and what were their names?

PP: Uh—Murphy. And—um—John Murphy was—my grandfather's name was Marion Murphy, spelled with an *O-M-A-R-I-O-N*.
Marion . . .

SL: Mh-hmm.

PP: . . . Murphy. And—um—his father, John Murphy—uh—was—uh—

yu—they heard about the gold fever in California . . .

SL: Mh-hmm.

PP: . . . and he got the fever.

[End of verbatim transcription]

[00:20:06] SL: This is your great-grandfather?

PP: Yes.

SL: Yes.

PP: This is my great-grandfather.

SL: Okay.

PP: Thank you, thank you. It was Joh—it was my grandfather's father. So he went off to California to make his fortune, and like so many others, he was never seen or heard from again. And so, then Marion Murphy lived in sp—well, not always in Springdale. He lived in Texas for a while and had children and traded some land for some land in Arkansas in Rogers. Didn't like it when they came up here and moved to a farm about a mile south of Springdale, and that's where they stayed. That became their permanent home and permanent farm. But Marion Murphy was his—he had been married before and had had seven children . . .

SL: Gosh!

PP: . . . by one wife. But she—but the last two children were twins,

twin boys. And she died . . .

SL: Oh!

PP: . . . in del—in the delivery of the babies. And then two months later, the babies died. And they said that—and they were buried along with a sister and two other brothers.

SL: Golly!

PP: Well, I . . .

SL: That's—two survived then? Is that . . .

PP: Two survived. And it was Roy Murphy and Marion Myrtle Murphy. Roy, we never knew. [*Laughs*] He took off somewhere, not for the gold fever or anything, but we never did even meet him. And I don't think anybody really knew where he was after he was grown. [00:22:06] But Myrtle Murphy married Jonathan Pleasant Stafford. Jonathan P. Stafford. And he started, founded, the *Springdale News*. It was at that ti—he started, also, with the Fayetteville paper. He was a newspaperman like my father. [*Laughs*] But then he found out that the Springdale—it was called the *Springdale Locomotive*. [*SL laughs*] It was a paper, just a weekly paper. And he bought it and renamed it the *Springdale News* and put it out, and then it became five-days-a-week paper and then, finally, six, and then, finally, the Sunday paper was added.

SL: You know, what I found remarkable about that is that he—I believe he was only nineteen years old.

PP: Sixteen.

SL: Well, he started at—work at sixteen, but he bought that paper when he was nineteen years old. That's just so young.

PP: It is. It really is. But you know, after they got a little schooling, even up to the eighth grade, they felt like—and sometimes they had to go to work to earn money.

SL: Sure.

PP: Perhaps the father was sick or just needed help with raising large families. And of course, large families came because, well [*laughs*], there were no pills . . .

SL: [*Laughs*] Right.

PP: . . . then. And so, it wasn't as if there wasn't anything but it—but this is how I think. And then I think, too, if you lived on a farm, large families and lots of boys, you know, were—that was really good help on the farm.

SL: Sure.

PP: But large families were so much more . . .

SL: Predominant.

PP: . . . predominant at that time than you would find now.

[00:24:03] SL: Yeah, well, I think help around the farm was a key

benefit, and like you say, birth control just wasn't around back then. And so, you kind of—it was almost a [*laughs*] business to have a large family 'cause it helped you around the house. Well, do you remember much about that farm in Springdale?

PP: Oh yes. Yes!

SL: Well, tell me about some of your time there.

PP: Well, Mother never let us go up and stay like my daddy's—my father's sister did. She—those children would go up a lot and spend lots of time, lots of summers. And she built a playhouse for us. Now, her husband died and—but she knew everything about the farm and . . .

[00:24:54] SL: Now, this is your grandmother or your . . .

PP: My grandmother.

SL: Your grandmother, yeah.

PP: This is my grandma.

SL: Okay.

PP: My father's mother.

SL: Okay.

PP: And it wasn't a long trip. They were a mile south of Springdale and just one or two blocks off the highway. It wasn't a large farm, but it was large to us at the time.

SL: Sure.

PP: And she raised all kinds of vegetables, and she had fruit trees, and she had beehives for honey. You know, she had not only a green thumb, but [*laughs*] she had four green fingers to go with it. She could just grow anything and knew just exactly how to do it, just exactly what the soil needed. And she became really good friends. [00:25:35] Now, the railroad ran just beyond her backyard. And of course, this was really fun 'cause we'd [*SL laughs*] go up there and the train—it was an evening train, and we would run out when it was time for the train to go through. And they would watch for us and the engineer—?but then the? conductor and the—what's the fellow on the last part of the train?

SL: Oh, the flagman, maybe?

PP: No, I've . . .

SL: No?

PP: . . . forgotten. I'll think of it. But anyhow—but they would all—and he'd always kinda come out on the steps, but the engineer'd always, you know, blow the whistle, and then they'd all wave to us, and we'd wave back. And it [*SL laughs*]*—*we just thought that was the most exciting thing. But across the railroad track lived a—he was a man who was always—had never married and he really was a good gardener, also. But the thing that was so

impressive to us, he raised wonderful watermelons.

SL: Uh-oh. [*Laughs*]

PP: And over the track we'd go, you know. And he would let us pick out a watermelon, or sometimes we would take a knife and just eat it there in the field. But he was really—he was a very good friend of my grandmother's. And they traded food back and forth.

SL: Do you remember his name?

PP: Yes, but I can't think—I thought of it at first when I first started the story, and now it's . . .

SL: Well, we'll add that . . .

PP: I'll think of it.

SL: . . . a little later. That's all right.

PP: Oh, I almost thought of it then. But anyhow, it was a f—to us it was like going to Disney World, sort of, because everything there was exciting. And she had chickens and cows and pigs, you know, just everything that you would have on a farm.

SL: Now, this was probably in the [19]30s that, as a child, that . . .

PP: Yes, and I gue—yes, in the [19]30s.

[00:27:24] SL: So back then, now, it seems like I remember reading that Northwest Arkansas was more in the apple business, wasn't it?

PP: Oh, and especially Springdale. And course, she had apples and grapes and peaches, but as far as shipping, as far as a cash crop, it was apples. And they raised a lot of apples and shipped 'em out, which is one nice thing about having the railroad there because they had a way to ship out their produce. But Springdale—of course, one reason—they were more—they had—as far as farming was concerned than Fayetteville because it was flatter up there.

SL: Sure.

PP: And Fayetteville had so many hills, you know, that it—you couldn't farm that easily.

[00:28:16] SL: Do you remember downtown Springdale during those years? Did you ever get to visit Springdale at all?

PP: Well, not a lot because we had to walk. Well, we didn't mind that. I mean, it was a mile, but that was okay, and it was a dirt road at the time. Very dusty. Deep dust. And—but we'd try to walk the railroad tracks, and we'd see if we could walk to town without falling off. [*SL laughs*] Well, nobody ever was able to do that.

SL: Right.

PP: And one time we were so intent. There were two of us walkin', one on either rail, you know, and we were so intent on it, and

we just heard this loud, loud yelling and all. And this was a handcart.

SL: Sure. Yeah.

PP: And we didn't hear 'em, and they were just about [*laughs*] to run us down. But we just—I don't know. There was—we didn't go to—into the town so very much. [00:29:10] Now, I remember my—I had an Aunt Nell, my father's sister, who had been married for a short time and then divorced and went back to live with her mother. And she was the first rural mail carrier with—and on a horse and buggy—that Springdale ever had. And course, then finally got a car to be the rural mail carrier.

SL: And what was her name?

PP: Nell.

SL: Nell Murphy.

PP: Nell Murphy. She went by—she took her maiden name back. But she lived with my grandmother and—but she helped out a l—in so many ways. [00:29:50] One time she took us—we just thought this was fascinating. They used to have meetings of the Holy Rollers.

SL: [*Laughs*] Is that—that wasn't their name, though, was it? The Holy Rollers? Is . . .

PP: I don't know if they . . .

SL: Pentecostal, maybe?

PP: No, they surely—huh?

SL: Was it Pentecostal or . . .

PP: Oh, very [*laughs*] much so. It was more Pentecostal than Pentecostal. [*SL laughs*] I mean! And in a tent—it was always a tent thing, so they were not permanent. But they would come to Springdale every summer, and she would take us. And we'd stand at the edge of the tent, you know, and watch 'em. And it was a show. [*SL laughs*] It was really—they would just get so carried away with the Holy Spirit, I suppose, that we were fascinated. And of course, we'd been raised Presbyterian. And that's—they're sort of [*laughs*] . . .

[00:30:42] SL: Well, did they speak in tongues and . . .

PP: Oh yes. And all the—and not only that, but I mean—and they'd get down and roll in the ground, you know, when they were just completely . . .

SL: Filled.

PP: Yes, filled with the spirit. They would drop to the ground and roll in the ground and speak in tongues, and we just thought this was the best show in town. [*Laughter*]

[00:31:07] SL: Well, it probably was. You never saw any snakes there, did you?

PP: Not there.

SL: Okay.

PP: We—I don't remember really seeing snakes, and I'm not afraid of snakes, so if we had seen 'em, I wouldn't've been afraid.

SL: No, I mean, but there's some . . .

PP: No, I mean—yeah. Oh no, and they weren't doing snakes, either.

SL: Oh, okay.

PP: Yeah.

SL: Okay. [*Unclear words*] . . .

[00:31:24] PP: No, they weren't doing snakes, at least not that we saw. But we did go into town a little bit, but then, you know, these were hard times. And like, we didn't have extra money, like, to go to a show or to go to a drugstore and get a malted milk or to go shopping. And so, actually, when we went to my grandmother's house, that's where we were. Oh, I almost thought of the man's name. But that was show enough. I mean, that was entertainment. There was always something going on. And when she built the playhouse for us, and it had—it was two story, and it had a sloping roo—well, not too sloping, though, on the second story, and s—lots of ti—and we'd sleep out there, and we'd sleep out on the roof overnight under the



stars. [*SL laughs*] And it was just—you know, for a city-bred girl, this was really, really something. [00:32:28] And Mother was very strict raising us with—in lots of ways. In some ways she was very flexible with our playtime and the things she allowed us to do, like bike rides to Goshen and picnics, walking across the Confederate Cemetery and on to Ghost Hollow and taking a lunch, things like that. But as far as at home and duties and responsibilities and manners, she was very strict. And—but at the farm—well, it's not that my grandma—she never—she had been properly brought up, too, but things were looser up there, and we almost thought we were runnin' wild [*SL laughs*], you know, over the farm. But we did help, and of course, we helped feed the chickens and feed the hogs [*laughs*] and all the farm chores that had to be done.

[00:33:30] SL: So she had hogs, too.

PP: Yes.

SL: Did you ever see a hog day?

PP: No.

SL: Never did. It's pretty traumatic.

PP: It is.

[00:33:39] SL: [*Laughs*] You know, I wanna keep talkin' about your grandfolks, but you mentioned a place here in Fayetteville that

hadn't come up in any of my other interviews, and that's Ghost Hollow. Tell me about Ghost Hollow.

PP: Had you never been?

SL: I—you know, I'm not sure that I have ever seen—I've looked for it, and I may have been in it, but I'm not sure.

PP: Maybe only children know how to get there.

SL: [*Laughter*] Well, so . . .

PP: And as I say, from Dickson Street we went across the Confederate Cemetery and then on down to Ghost Hollow, and it really was a hollow. And we'd always take a lunch, and it was—course, the name of it, you know, was fascinating to us. But it really did go down into a hollow, and that was fun because, you know, we were just all there and nobody else was. [*Laughs*]

[00:34:27] SL: Well, did you ever hear the story of how it became Ghost Hollow?

PP: No, I hadn't.

SL: Okay. Well, it—you know, it's—I always heard that it was a lady that had gotten next to the stove or something . . .

PP: Oh.

SL: . . . and was all in flames and ran screaming down the holler and died there in the holler itself. We always—I—we were always looking for ghosts.

PP: Oh, sure! [*SL laughs*] Well, we were, too! [*Laughter*] That was the whole fun of the place. But it also gave us a designated place. I mean, we could even tell people we will meet them at Ghost Hollow. That sort of thing. We also did a lot of climbing on the top and around Mount Sequoyah, you know, for hiking expeditions. And Mother was very free with those things. And as I said, maybe she loved having all of us outta the house and . . .

[00:35:22] SL: A little break, I'm sure. [*PP laughs*] Did you ever find or hear about any caves around Mount Sequoyah?

PP: No, we didn't. I've heard about caves here in Prairie Grove but not in—I can't remember any that we would've known. Devil's Den, you know, we were—had experience with caves but not in Fayetteville.

[00:35:47] SL: Okay. Well, is there anything, you know, back in the apple production days, Springdale was pretty famous . . .

PP: Mh-hmm. Very.

SL: . . . for shipping out apples. I think it had the largest . . .

PP: And grapes, too.

SL: And grapes. But I think it had the largest dehydrator in the world at the time. And I mean, it was—and the—there was also the barrel business was very big . . .

PP: Abso . . .

SL: . . . in Northwest Arkansas.

PP: Well, they had to have a—something to put the apples in.

[*Clears throat*] And then [*clears throat*] to have [*clears throat*] the railroad was just such a blessing for them to transport their apples and their gra—grapes became a very big thing, and grape juice, not as big as apples, but big.

[00:36:36] SL: Well, do you remember any conversations that you had with your grandmother [*PP clears throat*] up in Springdale?

PP: Oh yes, but all of us, all of the grandchildren, who spent a lot of time there, and some of 'em so much more than we got to, we're just sick at heart that we didn't write down everything she said. Everything she said was worthwhile, and it would have—we could have referred to it, to what she had—would talk about as we got older and maybe planted flowers or trees or grass or canned or—well, she—and she canned, and my mother canned a lot. But she just seemed to know about everything and just would talk about it. And she knew all about the stars, you know, and all of—it was amazing to me, but she was a schoolteacher.

SL: Oh.

PP: And one of her children—she had four children. My father was the oldest, and then they had two girls, Aunt Nell and Aunt TZ.

Her name was Clara, but I guess Nell couldn't say Clara and said TZ, and it was TZ from then on. [SL laughs] Just TZ. And then Joe, and Joe never went to school. He—his mother taught him at home, and I don't know exactly why, but she did. And he became a contractor, a very well-to-do contractor, in Springdale, and he was hired, amazingly enough, to build Washington Elementary School and Jefferson Elementary School. They're built on the same floor plan. And—but he did very well after the war.

[00:38:29] SL: Now, your grandmother's maiden name was Harp?

Is that right or—I—didn't Joe marry a Harp?

PP: No, it was—yes! Yes [laughs], yes, yes, I was tryin'—I thought you were gonna go back farther. Yes.

SL: Okay.

PP: And, yes, and it was Mildred Harp, and she's—was the sister of Harvard Harp, who started the Harp's grocery chain. And so, yes, they were—he married her and, as I say, did quite well.



Mildred—you know, my mother was a nurse, and she was always sort of on call to go to the bedside of any member of the family that was sick. And my Aunt Mildred, married to Joe, got sick during—it was in 1945. Her daughter—and we called her Natalie [pronounced NĀ-tə-lē], not Natalie [pronounced NĀ-tə-lē], but

spelled the same way. But . . .

SL: Natalie.

PP: . . . she grew up Natalie—was a senior in high school as—and so was I. Her mother got sick. It was—and my mother sensed it before she even found out from the doctor what it was.

[00:39:48] She had breast cancer. Her mother had died of breast cancer. My mother went to Springdale every day and nursed her until she died. And then her daughter, Natalie, died. She became a nurse, and she died young of breast cancer. So there is that link sometimes that passes down, you know, from one generation to the next. But it all seemed very sad, you know, and at the time, cancer was a word we never heard and we never spoke of. [*Laughs*] It was like if you even named it, if you even called it by name, you know, you might get it. It was—you just wanted to stay very, very far away from cancer. And consequently, I don't remember another person that I knew that died of cancer in that—at that time. That doesn't mean that they didn't, but . . .

SL: Yeah.

PP: . . . I didn't know of 'em.

SL: Right. It was hard to talk about, I guess.

PP: It was very hard to talk about and very hard to understand. And

it really, I can remember going to her funeral, it really hurt my father, you know, for a member of the family to die young like that. My father was a very gentle man, and his heart was easily touched.

[00:41:13] SL: I wanted to ask you about your grandfather on your dad's side. So you never got to know him.

PP: No. He died in 1917, and my father only went eight years to school, and then his father was sick. Their house caught on fire and burned to the ground, and then his father, Marion Murphy, got pneumonia. And so, my father quit—fin—you know, he didn't go on to high school, but he wanted to be sure that his two sisters, Nell and TZ, could go on to high school. So he quit, and he started workin' for the newspaper. And then his—he joined the army in 1917, and he took care of his—he helped take care of his father, but I guess—I think his father died, and then my father enlisted in the army after—because he died in 1917. And then my father went—and course, the war was over in November the eleventh, 1918, and then my father came back and went back to the newspaper office and was there for forty-two years. Loved the printing business. Loved—and the funny thing was that the printing business—of course, with Jonathan P. Stafford starting the Springdale paper, and then his

son, Ellis Stafford, was—and Marty Stafford. He had two sons. And so, Marty and Ellis both ran the paper after their father died. And then my Aunt TZ married Walker Kelly, and they worked for the *Northwest Arkansas Times* as Linotype operators and moved to Little Rock with their two children. And my Aunt TZ worked for the *Democrat*, and my uncle . . .

SL: [Laughs] Worked for the *Gazette*.

PP: . . . worked [laughs] for the *Gazette*.

SL: [Laughs] Y'all were filled with newspaper . . .

[00:43:23] PP: But yeah, I think it was kind of interesting, and then this is what my brother ended up doing. We used to wonder—he was named for our doctor, and he had a very gentle spirit. And we used to think he might grow up to be a doctor. And—but he didn't. He became a printer just like my dad, you know.

SL: Now, is that Jimmy?

PP: That was Jimmy.

[00:43:46] SL: We oughta go ahead and get your brother and your sisters' names now.

PP: Okay.

SL: Were there—there was . . .

PP: Well, June was the half sister . . .

SL: From the previous marriage.

PP: And I think—let me think. I think I was six years old when she married, so you know, and then she was out of the house.

SL: Yeah.

PP: And then came along with this marriage, with my mother and father, Jeanne Marie. We all had double names. And do you know, growing up, we were called by double names? [*SL laughs*] And I felt Mother did a good job on us, but it was Jeanne Marie and James Ellis and Mary Ellen and Peggy Sue and Betty Jane. And we lived on Meadow Street for a while, and then we moved to the house on Dickson Street. [00:44:41] But when I was real tiny and I used to see—her name was Mary Kay Bradford. And her mother lived next door to us on Meadow Street. And she had gone off to Chicago and made a really good life for herself as a seamstress. She did very fine needlework and as a seamstress, and then she lived to be 104 years old.

SL: Golly!

PP: And when—and as she got older, she came back to Fayetteville and reunited with my mother and father that—whom she had known when she, you know, was growin' up. And then I became a good friend of hers, and I was always invited to her birthday parties. Now, she went to live at the high-rise, but you understand, you're taking care of yourself. You know, you're

doing your own cooking and your own laundry but they—it was a place to live. And she would plan her own birthday parties [*SL laughs*], and before she had her 100th, I went to all of her parties and she, you know, she—and I would get an invitation. I would get a letter from her. It was just the dearest thing. And I went to her 104th birthday party, and it was always down there at the high rise, and they furnished the r—they helped her out, of course . . .

SL: Sure.

PP: . . . with the refreshments. And Richard Greer . . .

SL: Yes.

PP: . . . would always come and sing to her.

SL: Oh!

PP: It was the sweetest thing. And she was planning her 105th birthday party when she died.

SL: Golly!

PP: Isn't that amazing?

SL: Now, her name was Bradford?

PP: Uh-huh. Mary Kay Bradford. And she was such a—she traveled, traveled, traveled all over the world. And as she got older, she was a little hard of hearing. But she continued to travel, and they were always havin' to hold the bus for her [*laughter*]

because she was lookin' at this and this and this, and they would call, and she wouldn't hear.

SL: Oh.

PP: So somebody would have to go get her and drag her back.

[*Laughs*] But she loved to travel and just told the most amazing stories about her travels. It was just, you know, such a lesson in global geography.

[00:47:03] SL: Well, you know, that was kind of unusual, wasn't it . . .

PP: Oh, it was.

SL: . . . for a woman to travel like that alone . . .

PP: On her own.

SL: . . . and be that well-versed.

PP: She's the only one I knew who did.

SL: Uh-huh. Well, she probably—she may've had some influence on you, growing up. I mean . . .

PP: Well, in a way, although we weren't that—you know, 'cause I was married and living down in—at—living in Prairie Grove. So I didn't see her. And then she would come and visit with my mother and father when they were both alive, and they lived on Washington Avenue. And I would see her then. And this—that's be—how I got the invitations for her birthday party.

SL: I see. Okay. Okay. Well, that's a good little story.
That's an amazing, amazing woman.

PP: Well, it was to me for her to be that old. And I have a letter from her that I saved, of course, and I couldn't dredge it up. I would love to have included it. I mean, at her age, writing in her own penmanship was just the dearest thing.

[00:48:11] SL: So let's go back to your grandmothers now. The—because you didn't really have much time with your grandfathers. They were . . .

PP: Never met 'em.

SL: Never met 'em.

PP: I was too young.

SL: Too young.

PP: One of 'em died in 1917, and the other one died in 1929, and . . .

SL: Oh.

PP: . . . I was two years old.

[00:48:28] SL: Yeah, so you never knew them. Well, you know, I'm always looking for the oldest story. Do you remember anything that either grandmother—any stories that your grandmothers told you that kind of, you know, just made you—amazed you about them or any hardship stories or—I'm always loo—you

know, sometimes someone will tell me a story about a conversation they had with a Civil War veteran or, you know, a World War I veteran . . .

PP: Oh yes.

SL: . . . or something like that. So—and you don't have to come up with it right now, but if you think of one later on, we can go back to that at any moment.

PP: You know, she was always—she never, and I have realized, she never complained about anything. And you know, it's different. If you grow up in these circumstances, well, you adjust to them. And you don't realize maybe there's more, different, better, easier out there if you couldn't afford 'em anyhow. And so, complaining didn't change anything and just soured your disposition. So she never complained. My mother had a—had, you know, a really hard life in the fact that—with six children and cookin' three meals a day and all the laundry. And course, we helped. All of us had chores, and we helped. My grandparents were—course, the thing about it was—and I ha—I don't think I had ever particularly reasoned it out before. They grew up in an orphanage—on my mother's side.

SL: Yes.

[00:50:21] PP: So who do you parent like? I mean, you know, they

didn't have any idea about parenting because they hadn't had parents, and certainly that orphanage didn't act like benevolent parents, caring parents, loving parents. And I think that I hadn't really thought about it in that respect because I know in thinking about my mother and writing about my mother, even though we at the time thought she was very strict, and she was about so many things, but on the other hand, we honored her by raising our children the way she raised us because it seemed to us the right way to raise children, if they're going to grow up and be productive and not destroy their lives with drugs or excessive drinking or smoking. [00:51:21] Oh, my grandmother in Springdale—she was precious. But as we got older, on Sundays—and we'd generally—you know, lots of times we'd go with my dad, but we would go up to see my grandmother, and we never had a visit with my grandmother that she didn't lecture us, and I mean lecture, on the evils of smoking. [*SL laughs*] And you know, but she did it in such a way that it wasn't—I mean, she really did. And I think for her to have realized and for my mother to have realized the—what might happen to your body, your physical body, from—if too much smoking or drinking. Well, anyhow, I never smoked. [*Laughter*]

SL: And that's a blessing. [*Laughter*]

PP: And of course, now I'm glad.

SL: Yeah. Sure.

[00:52:20] PP: And I used to tell my children, my fourth-grade children, when I taught them that—you know, not trying to lecture them at all but I know that the state inspector one time was—they would come around and visit all of the classrooms, and he kinda took a shine to me and—but he always wanted to sorta trip me up if he could. [SL laughs] And so, he said, "Well, Miss Parks, do you teach the evils of smoking and drinking." And I said, "Oh yes," and told 'em about the health lessons we had and what it can do to your body and so forth. And then he said, "Well, do you teach them the good aspects?" Thinking it would—and I said, "Oh yes, absolutely." [SL laughs] I said, "The other day"—[laughter] it shocked him. And I said, "The other day we were talking about, you know, having a cold and what you'd do." And I said—this little girl in the back of the room said—and her name was Mary Ann McNair, and she said, "Well, I'll tell you what my daddy does. When he gets a cold, he comes up and ha—and makes a hot toddy and goes to bed." And the children said, "Well, what's a hot toddy?" And I said, "Well, it's hot lemonade." [Laughs] What would you say?

SL: Yeah, with a little of this in it. [Laughter]

PP: But anyhow, it really got him because he didn't think I'd have any response. "What do you mean? You know [*SL laughs*], I'm a school teacher." But I used to tell the children—we would—I would try—they were so honest with me, and I could be so honest with them. [00:53:55] I had the most honest relationships with my nine-year-old students than I had ever had with anybody. And—but I would tell them—I said, "If you never—you're too young now to even start it or think about it. But if you never start smokin' and you never start drinking, you'll never miss it." And they would say to me, "Well, Miss Parks, do you smoke?" And I could honestly say, "No, I don't." And then they'd say, "Well, do you drink?" And I could honestly say, "No, I don't," 'cause I don't, and I didn't. But had—but if I had, I would have told them, "But don't do as I do; do as I say" . . .

SL: Yeah.

PP: . . . sorta thing.

SL: Yeah. Sure.

[00:54:38] PP: But because I always wanted to be so honest with them about everything that they would never doubt if I was teaching them something that was important, that it was true. But I just felt like—and I said, and with drugs, I said, "When—as

you all get older, you're gonna wanna be independent and make your decisions, and 'nobody tell me what to do, and I'll decide what I'm gonna do and whether I'm goin' to college or not or go to a trade school or whatever.'" But I said, "If you start doin' drugs, you won't make anymore independent decisions. The drugs will make them for you."

SL: That's good advice.

PP: "And they will determine—they are so aggressive in your system that your system gets so dependent on 'em that it just—it demands more and more and more. And that'll be the end of any, you know—if you really succumb to it" . . .

[00:55:41] SL: That's good—that's really good advice. I—and I wanna get back to your teaching, but before we get into your teaching career, I wanna go back to your home over on Dickson Street. And I want us to talk about your growing up there and the neighborhood and the town and what you remember of—what was Dickson Street like when you were growing up on it?

PP: You know, it's funny. I made a speech at the dedication of the new health center, and I was talkin' about my mother bein' a nurse and that when she married, she had six children, and we had all the communicable diseases show—so her clinic then was on Dickson Street where I grew up. [*SL laughs*] And in the

audience several people laughed when I mentioned Dickson Street. I thought that was so funny, and I kind of paused, you know, and—because—I said, "Well, course, I grew up on East Dickson Street across College Avenue and not the Dickson Street that you think of going towards the university." But Fayetteville was a sm—very small town, ten or twelve thousand. You knew just an awful lot of the people. [00:57:01] The church—the churches were fantastic. The Methodists always had the best preachers. [SL laughs] I always wanted to be a Methodist. [Laughter] They would have young preachers and—that were, you know, full of life and fun, and Presbyterians, course, insist on an educated clergy. And so, you have to have not only university education but then three years in seminary. So six years beyond your high school education that you have to have to be a—and maybe by that time you've sort of gone, "Huh, what's fun?" [Laughter]

SL: Yeah, right.

[00:57:44] PP: But anyhow—and the—and there was a—there were lots of youth activities—lots of young people's groups that, you know, met, and we would visit lots and lots of Bible schools that Mother would take us to or, when we were real little, or that we would go—attend as we became older. It was such a sense of

community, of neighborliness. Our neighbors were fantastic. You just can't—I mean, these were neighbors that if you needed a bowl of sugar, a cup of sugar—you were baking—or a couple of eggs or some—you just went next door. You didn't run down to the store to get 'em. You got 'em from your neighbors, but you repaid 'em. But for the time being, that was a handy source of whatever it was you needed. We grew up—and I'm not sure exactly why—but without a telephone. Well, course, if I told you there were five girls in the family, you might [*laughter*] ascertain why we didn't have a phone. But anyhow—and as my friends would call me, even back in grade school—we were learnin' to play bridge, and when they would call me to come and play bridge, they would call one of the neighbors. And they would go out in the yard and call me [*SL laughs*], and I would run over. They were the sweetest, dearest things. And they didn't mind this. I mean, this . . .

[00:59:11] SL: Who were they? Who were your neighbors?

PP: Well, the Longs were on one side, and the Parsons were on the other. Now—oh, this is a story. Mrs. Parsons just had one child, George. And George was George. And one day there were several of us young ones, and Dickson Street was flat where we lived, but then it went down a hill to College Avenue. So we

were at the top of the hill, and I can't think—I know the boy's name, but he and George were walking—had come from town and they were walking, starting up the hill, and we start singing, "Georgie Porgie, puddin' and pie, kissed the girls and made them cry. When the boys came out to play, Georgie Porgie ran away." And the other boy—and he later became a politician—picked up a rock and threw it, and it hit me. I still have a scar.

SL: Oh!

[01:00:09] PP: Hit me right here on the forehead. Well, if you've ever been hit on the face, and particularly the forehead, blood . . .

SL: Blood everywhere.

PP: . . . just streams out. It just poured out over my face and down my clothes. And course, it was just two houses down for me to get back home. And my father was incensed!

SL: Well, sure.

PP: But we tried [*laughs*] to tell—it was our fault 'cause we were teasing George. And he, course, he had no idea when he threw that rock. He thought it would might scare us or go between us or to the side of us. He had no idea it would hit me in the forehead. And so, he—I don't think my father ever said or did anything about it. But anyhow, on the other hand—on the other

side were the Longs and Jewel Long—there were four children, and as they married—there were three girls and a boy, and as they married, Jewel was left for quite some time, and we were just kinda her family. So as far as calling us over, she loved it, you know, for us [*SL laughs*] to be over there. [01:01:16] And then on the other side of the Longs, there was an alley that went down, you know, and I hope this is all right to say, but I've seen it in the paper, but it went down to Tin Cup . . .



SL: Sure.

PP: . . . which is behind the . . .

SL: Courthouse.

PP: . . . courthouse. And so, this was used as a walkway for the—for those—many of them had domestic jobs in this part of town and in fact . . .

[01:01:44] SL: You're talkin' about the African Americans that . . .

PP: The African Americans.

SL: . . . that lived in—that was a predominantly—that was where they lived in the early days.

PP: And of course, we didn't call 'em that then. We called 'em Negroes, and my mother had cautioned us from the time we were very little never to use the other word ever, ever, ever, ever. [01:02:01] And—but like, across the street, Mrs. Harris

had a cook and maybe another maid. And when her grandchildren would come over from Tulsa or different—and then one of 'em finally moved to Fayetteville. But they would come and visit. And I member one time I was invited over for lunch. Lunch? And you know, the white tablecloth, the white napkins, the napkin rings all ready, the table set, you know, and then bringing in the food and then—and course, we didn't have to help with the dishes or anything. It was, like, "Whoa! What a way to live!" [*Laughs*]

SL: Very formal and very genteel.

PP: Oh, very genteel. Very much so. It was nice to be introduced to it, do you know?

SL: Mh-hmm. Mh-hmm.

PP: Because in a small house with eight people in it and one bathroom. Now, we weren't ungenteel, for goodness sakes. Mother was so strict with us . . .

SL: Right.

PP: . . . and we could never, ever quarrel about anything. Anything. So we really learned to get along. We did things together. We played games together. [01:03:16] I absolutely adored my brother. I would have polished his shoes, whatever.

SL: Lots of people felt that way about him, though, didn't they?

PP: Yes. He was a gen—he was gentle like my father and—but so fair and so—and now my son, David, kind of reminds me of my brother. When you grow up with somebody who is so unbiased and so broad-minded, so fair about things, never accusatory, never finding fault, always believing the best in people, it makes a difference in the . . .

SL: Sure.

PP: . . . in the attitude, in the aura, in the atmosphere of the home. And course, this is what my mother and father, you know, preached. This—Jimmy was so much like my father, and I was pretty much like Jimmy and like my father. And the other . . .

Bruce Perry: Scott . . .

PP: . . . girls were more like my mother.

SL: Kay, just a moment now.

BP: We're outta tape.

SL: Outta tape.

PP: Phew!

[Tape Stopped]

[01:04:30] SL: Peggy, we're starting our second tape. You are now a one-hour victim of the [PP laughs] Pryor Center. [Laughs] But you know, we were talkin' when we changed tapes, and there's already some stuff that we forgot to get to in that first hour that

we wanna go back a little bit. And the first one is about your Grandpa Reme's car accident. Now, tell me about that.

PP: Well, [*clears throat*] he—even though he was an engineer on the railroad, as cars came into being, he was determined to have a car. And he'd got one of the first, if not the first, cars in Van Buren. And he was driving it, and it was coming down that long hill, which is the entrance into Van Buren from the highway or something, and he had a bad accident, and he was hurt badly. And so, they said that they were going to have to send him to St. Louis.

SL: Oh my gosh.

PP: And they wanted my mother, because she was a registered nurse, to go with him, but she had two young children at home in Fayetteville and couldn't make the trip. Because he said—he told his family—he said, "If they ever put me on an operating table, I'll die." And of course, they had to put him on an operating table in St. Louis, and he died.

SL: Oh!

PP: I don't know how he had a premonition that way but . . .

[01:05:58] SL: Now, I wonder how old was he then, about? Do you mem . . .

PP: I don't know. I—if you could look quickly . . .

SL: I'll—we can get that.

PP: When he was born—because this would've been 1929, I think,
'cause I think I said I was two years old.

SL: Yeah, yeah.

PP: You don't see where he was born?

SL: No, that . . .

PP: Yeah, it would be . . .

SL: We can . . .

PP: It would . . .

SL: . . . we can look at that.

[01:06:20] PP: Well, course, he was in the orphanage.

SL: Yeah.

PP: But I still think in that first paragraph . . .

SL: Oh, maybe so.

PP: . . . that it says . . .

SL: Eighteen [*unclear words*]*—let's see. Eight—let's see. Gosh, I
don't see it right here.*

Joy Endicott: Eighteen six [*unclear words*].

PP: It may not be.

SL: We [*unclear words*] . . .

PP: Because he was in an orphanage.

BP: Say it again, Joy.

JE: Eighteen sixty-six.

SL: Eighteen sixty-six?

PP: Eighteen sixty-six?

BP: I believe it's . . .

PP: Okay, well, that woulda been . . .

SL: Well, he was pretty—he had a good life, then. He lived to be . . .

PP: Yes, he did.

SL: Yeah.

PP: Well, he probably shouldn't have been driving. [*Laughter*]

[01:06:57] SL: Okay, now, there was also a story about how your grandmother wanted to go back to Holland, too.

PP: She did. She always wanted to go back. She was homesick, and after she lost her husband, she very much wanted to go back and see her family. And—but by this time it was 1939, and the Germans beat her to Holland, and she didn't have a—could not get into Holland, and she died in 1941 just as the war began for us. So that was a lost dream that she had.

SL: Well, but there was correspondence going on between her and . . .

PP: And some of the family . . .

SL: . . . family in Holland.

PP: . . . who continued to correspond, then, with my mother and the

family of Louis Gottschalk. And we didn't know any of 'em, but later on my oldest sister's daughter and granddaughter went to Holland and did visit with 'em. [01:08:07] But they were in dire need as Holland, after the war was over, tried to build back its infrastructure. They needed everything. Just every—all the practical things that you would think would be available. Dishwashing detergent or soap powder or bar soap or towels or bed—or bed linens, pillows, everything. So they wrote to us, saying if we could help, they would really appreciate it. And we would go [*laughs*] to town and buy these things and make great big packages and mail them to them, and they were so grateful. And Louis Gottschalk would always write a thank-you in reply. He wrote in beautiful English. Just had a beautiful hand—penmanship. But lots of times he would put the verb at the end of the sentence, and it would just be, you know, comical to us. And once in a while, he would write in Dutch or put in a Dutch phrase or a word, Dutch word. [01:09:15] Well, we had a Dutch family, and their daughter was in my class at school. Their names were Kik, *K-I-K*, and he was a professor at the University of Arkansas. And every third year—or after three years here they would go back to Holland and spend a year in Holland. And so, Catherina, my friend, was very fluent in Dutch,

and her mother would knit her the most beautiful sweaters. We were, all the girls, were so envious [*SL laughs*]*—*with not just one color, but with designs, flowers and things like that, that she would knit into it. You had to be a really capable knitter to do this. But she*—*they*—*you know, and the fact that she went to Holland was also like a storybook tale, you know, to us, to be able to do that and then come back and talk about it, although she was kinda shy about talkin' about it.

[01:10:16] SL: Well, now, did the Gottschalks ever come to . . .

PP: No.

SL: They never . . .

PP: Well, two of the children did. Two of the children did and visited. And Wilma and*—*I can't remember the boy's name. But they did come and visit. And I guess I was*—*I don't*—*well, I did meet 'em, but I just met 'em. That was all. We didn't talk. I think they brought 'em down to Prairie Grove to meet me. But that was really, you know, a wonderful way to connect.

[01:10:47] SL: Well, you know, the*—*that's quite remarkable that your mom and dad would get the stuff and box it up and ship it over to Holland, especially in those times because y'all weren't wealthy, were you?

PP: No . . .

SL: I mean, and . . .

PP: . . . no, not at all.

SL: . . . and that just . . .

PP: But they would do without things, you know, if it called for that. Course, by that time—well, no, I guess three of us were not married.

SL: Yeah.

PP: Still at home by the—just the end of the war and—'cause I didn't marry till 1949. My sister had married two years earlier, and then Betty married in, like, [19]53.

[01:11:35] SL: Okay. Well, now, I wanna talk—I wanna get back to your home on Dickson Street. Now, that was at 127 East Dickson.

PP: Mh-hmm. Mh-hmm.

SL: Is that home still there?

PP: No, it was bought by the fellow who had the car agency, and he bought it to put . . .

SL: Hatfield?

PP: Hatfield. And the terrible thing was that the house—we rented the house. Daddy never bought a house, but the rent was twenty-five dollars a month, though. [*SL laughs*] And we didn't have to pay the taxes or the insurance, and with a large family,

so—but they promised da—my father that he could live in that house with his family until he died. And it wasn't written out, but it was, we felt like, a full-fledged promise.

SL: Contract.

[01:12:31] PP: But then when—I can't remember who it—but anyhow, then when she died—who was—Lessie Stringfellow Read.

SL: Oh, okay. Sure.

PP: She lived just a half a block from us.

SL: That's right.

PP: She worked at the office. She and my dad were really good friends. That's why the rent was so low. And I think at one time my dad finally raised it to fifty dollars a month and [*laughs*—but anyhow, when she died—I can't think of—and this was somebody who knew us well, and he was the executor of the estate.

SL: Of the Stringfellow . . .

PP: Uh-huh. [01:13:20] And he sold the house out from under us, out from under my family, to the Hatfield who had the car agency. And to take down—not our house 'cause it wasn't so lovely—but to take down the Wood home that was so beautiful and put cars on it just was a terrible thing to do to Fayetteville.

And course, on College Avenue, the main thoroughfare of the city, but anyhow, my mother and father really were not capable by that time of going out and looking for a place to live. And so, Donald and I said that we would buy them a home. [01:14:05] And we looked, and we looked, and we looked, and we did see this home on Washington Avenue, and the McConnells had lived there, and it was in terrible, terrible shape. And there was no—the wallpaper was just coming off of the—and it hadn't been put on with—not siding. What am I tryin' to say? Sheet wood . . .

SL: Sheetrock.

PP: Sheetrock. There was no Sheetrock, and the paper was put on the studs. [*SL laughs*] And then it was peeling down, and course, then you'd see the studs.

SL: Yeah.

PP: It was terrible. There was food on dishes in the kitchen on the table, and we were horrified. We took—to get the key to it and we went inside. We took my mother and father, and course, they were horrified. And we said, "This would never do." But we couldn't find—they wanted to stay in the neighborhood. Washington Avenue was the best street for them to live on, much better than Dickson with all the traffic. And so, then Donald and I went back and saw it again, and somebody had

come in and cleaned it up.

SL: Oh, it's a big difference.

PP: Probably the real estate agent. And the price was, like, 22,500
[*SL laughs*], maybe. And—but the house needed a lotta work.

SL: Yeah.

PP: So I think Donald offered 'em 15,000, and they finally agreed on
maybe 15,750. And then we spent probably 7- or 8,000 on fixin'
it up, putting carpet in three rooms and wallpapering and
painting. We didn't do as much with the kitchen as we would
have liked, but we did make it—and we put in heat and air that it
had not had and—or if it did have, they weren't working. And
my father and mother had never had this, and this was
wonderful, just to change the temperature by [*laughs*] . . .

SL: Sure.

PP: . . . pushin' a button.

SL: Sure.

[01:16:11] PP: So they really loved it, and there was a great big
tree out in the front yard, and the branches came down to the
ground. And in the summertime my father—he loved baseball
games, and he would take the radio out, get under that tree
where it was so shady and cool, and listen to the baseball
games. And that way it didn't interrupt with Mother, with

whatever she was doing, and she wasn't that crazy about baseball. [*SL laughs*] But it was just the cutest, cutest thing. And there was a big porch, and this is what they loved. And there was already a swing on the porch, and Daddy spent many, many contented hours on the swing just wat—and particularly in the spring, Washington Avenue was beautiful with azaleas and dogwood, pink and white dogwood, up and down the street. And it really was a blessing for them. [01:17:06] And it was an unusual house. It had unusual woodwork in it . . .

SL: I—I'm . . .

PP: . . . that even the present owners now—Owens, did you say?

SL: Owens. Uh-huh.

PP: Kept. I've never seen anything like it in my life. In the hallway and the floor of the hallway and the siding on the hallway, it was beautifully done. And the floor in the dining room was like that. And they interspersed light wood and dark wood, and it was beautifully done. So that was a [*SL coughs*] real . . .

SL: A little gem . . .

PP: A gem . . .

SL: . . . in the rough. And y'all fixed it up. [01:17:46] You know, I wanna talk a little bit about College Avenue and that period of time when [*claps hands*] the car lot went there. I mean, there

was a movement, I guess, even across the country not just . . .

PP: Mh-hmm, after the war.

SL: . . . on—after the war. And it was like, all of a sudden, commercial development kind of ruled.

PP: Exactly.

SL: And as I—I've always heard that College Avenue was a lot like Washington Avenue. It had huge trees and big homes and . . .

PP: And that met over the . . .

SL: That met.

PP: Uh-huh, that's the way it was . . .

SL: It was like going through a tunnel.

PP: . . . when my mother and father moved.

SL: And—but after the war all the commercial property that is there now or has been built upon, all those homes were gone. They just . . .

[01:18:38] PP: I remember I was working with the electric company the year before I got married and—at the invitation of the division manager, E. J. Dyess. He had come to my house and invited me to come and work with them. They were adding an extra girl. And there was a Mr. Murphy, who was an engineer that worked upstairs. It was funny because we had envelopes with, you know, messages in 'em that circulated, and then you

would put—you'd take your message out, and then you'd put a message in and scratch that—your name out and put the name of the person who this one was goin' to. And so, I'd be sending something up to the engineering department, and I'd say, "Grandpa Murphy" on there. And everybody in the company down in Shreveport and so forth in the southern part of Arkansas knew that he was married and had no children. [*SL laughs*] And—or perhaps had one child that was—that never developed. I can't remember for sure. But anyhow, they all knew the story. So they would come up from Shreveport, and they would visit Mr. Murphy, and they'd say, "Well, I just can't believe that you have a granddaughter who's working for the company." And he said, "Well, let me take you down and introduce you." [*SL laughs*] Boy, he carried it off. He loved it. And we had nameplates on our desks. And course—and my desk was the first one you met as you came in the front door, and it said Miss Murphy on it. And he'd [*laughs*] say, "This is my granddaughter. This is Peggy Murphy." And we'd carry on. I'd say, "Well, Grandpa, how are you doin' today?" You know.

SL: Oh, that's so bad! [*Laughter*]

[01:20:17] PP: And we carried this on for a long time.

SL: That's great.

PP: Oh, and he got the biggest kick out of it. And you know, sometimes people, they haven't had a really—it's not that they didn't have a happy life. They didn't have a joyful life. They didn't have a life with laughs and smiles and things like that in it. Well, this was his life, kay, 'cause I can't remember whether it was his wife or they had a child who was not . . .

SL: Never developed.

PP: Yeah, well, but had to be taken care of.

SL: Oh.

PP: And this type of thing really—oh, he loved it. It was just the funniest, funniest thing. And they really—they believed—I mean, here it was. How could you not? [*SL laughs*] They didn't know what he'd been doin' off to the side, I think. [*Laughter*]

[01:21:03] SL: That's funny. That's really funny. So you got invited to work there.

PP: I was invited, and that was—I needed to finish my last year of college. And at the time I was going to Arkansas College, now Lyon College, in Batesville. I had a complete scholarship. And—over there. They paid for everything except travel expenses. And so, I was gonna go back over there and finish, and Mr. Dyess came to my house, to my front door, and asked for me and said that they were adding another position and he wanted

me to come and take that position. And he said, "Now, Peggy, I know that you haven't finished your last year of college. I—we don't wanna spend the time and the money training you and then at Christmastime, you know, at second semester, you will decide, 'Oh, I think I need to go back to school.'" And I told him—I said, "Well, Mr. Dyess, when I decide if this is what I'm gonna do, I do wanna finish college, but if I decide for this year this is what I'm gonna do, I'll stay at least a year." And so, I took the job. Loved it. Just really loved the job. [01:22:15] And Donald and I had been dating—and all summer—because I was home, we had dated and pretty much just each other. And so, then when I didn't go back to school, we contina—continued dating and it got very serious. And about three weeks after I took the job, Donald and I were engaged to be married.

SL: [*Laughs*] Boy, things happen at all at once.

PP: And I told him—I said, "Donald, we have to wait a year. I promised Mr. Dyess that I would stay at least a year," and so, I did. And so, we married in September of the following year. But that was really the training for me. Any job that you do, and particularly any job that works with the public, gives you experience that you can't get any other way.

SL: That's right.

PP: And what you learn in books needs to—ought to be correlated with what you learn with real people and their real reactions to things. And I wouldn't take anything for that year that I worked. And now, that wasn't my forte. I wasn't a businesswoman. [Laughs] That wasn't my gift and my enjoyment. [01:23:25] And—but then I was also invited by the superintendent in Prairie Grove to substitute teach, which I did for one semester in all six grades of elementary school. And at the end of those six months, he said—he convinced the board to hire me to teach full time, without talkin' to me. [SL laughs] And he—so he came and told me that the board had hired me to teach fourth grade full time. I didn't have any education hours, and I didn't have any student teaching. And I said, "Well, do you think I'm ready?" And he said, "I sure do." He said, "I've been observing you for three months. I've never been so impressed to watch somebody like you teach and take on the job and care about the students the way you have done." So it was a—kind of a battle. "What should I do?" But I decided that I would go ahead and take the job and if I did—course, they didn't—he really got a good deal because he got a good teacher and he only paid me [laughs] \$1,800 a year.

SL: Oh my gosh.

PP: That would be two hundred dollars a month. But that was all right because I wasn't even qualified, so I could explain to people who said, "Well, she's not even qualified to teach," that they were getting me for nothin'. [*Laughs*]

SL: Yeah.

[01:24:58] PP: And—but I lo—oh, I tell you what. I loved teaching, and I knew it, and I knew I wanted to be a teacher after I'd done the substitute teaching. I knew it the first week I taught as substitute. "This is what God meant for me to do all along." And somehow I missed the message and turned down one thing and then another. You know, nursing—well, that didn't fit. Business—that didn't fit. What does fit? And . . .

SL: It just came . . .

PP: And the first . . .

SL: . . . came to you?

PP: . . . first week in a public school in a split first and second grade.

[*Inhales*] I said at the end of the week, "Oh, dear God, this is what you wanted me to do all the time." I knew. And I could go ahead and teach if I would take six hours of education until I had taken all the education hours. I didn't—wouldn't have to do a student teaching. They did waive that for me. And so, this is the way I got my degree in education and teaching all the time

and loving it, loving it, loving it.

[01:26:02] SL: Okay, now, we're gon . . .

PP: And taught for thirty years.

SL: . . . we're gonna go back to your—some of your classroom techniques and teachings that I know a little bit about. But this is way ahead of where I want us to be right now . . .

PP: Right.

SL: . . . in our conversation.

PP: Right.

[01:26:16] SL: I wanna go . . .

PP: I jumped.

SL: . . . I wanna [*laughs*] go back to Dickson Street and . . .

PP: I love to go back to Dickson Street. [*Laughs*]

SL: Well, you know, the thing is . . .

PP: It's still home.

SL: It's still home and that part of town if you take away—once you get off College Avenue and you're on Washington and Willow and Olive and all that . . .

PP: You're in the residential . . .

SL: . . . you're pretty much . . .

PP: I'll tell you . . .

SL: . . . the way it was . . .

PP: I'll tell you how I got off on this long trail.

SL: Okay.

[01:26:50] PP: The reason I was telling you about this job was that we used to—this is right after the war, and so, we would talk about it, you know, and about things were gettin' better and business was thriving and business was moving.

SL: Yeah.

PP: And I kept saying, "Oh, I don't wanna see it. I just don't wanna see it. I don't want it to happen to Fayetteville. I don't want business to move into the nicer residential areas and take down the homes and the trees and so forth." But everybody else seemed to think that this was good for . . .

SL: Progress.

PP: It was progress. It was progress for Fayetteville to do this. And sure enough, I lost out . . .

SL: Yeah.

PP: . . . completely. And I tried to tell 'em, "This is why I didn't want it to happen. Look what they've done to College Avenue." And I guess the grocery store was the first thing that moved in—the IGA. Not the IGA . . .

SL: Was it IGA or Piggly Wiggly?

PP: No, it wasn't Piggly Wiggly.

SL: Safeway.

PP: No, it wasn't Safeway. No, it was IGA, I think. And then . . .

SL: Oh.

PP: . . . Safeway was over here . . .

SL: Okay.

PP: . . . and across the street, I think, 'cause I wasn't livin' there then. But it—I just couldn't—I—but I was—maybe I was wrong because we—people did need jobs. And . . .

SL: Well, you know, I guess . . .

PP: . . . and veterans were returning. You know, a lot of 'em were going to college, but a lot of 'em needed jobs. And we did need to expand because we were a very small town with limited job opportunities.

[01:28:19] SL: Well, College Avenue was also Highway 71.

PP: Yes.

SL: And so, the most expedient . . .

PP: Which was—that was . . .

SL: That's where the heaviest traffic was. Fayetteville was not only growing, but Springdale was startin' to grow and—not so much north of Springdale. Those were still pretty small towns. But between the two it was kind of the—the corridor had begun.

PP: But that's how I got off on that train of thought.

SL: That's right.

PP: Yeah.

[01:28:45] SL: That's right. Okay, well, now, let's go back—I wanna go back to early memories at your home on Dickson Street. So how—were you raised in that home, or did you start in Springdale?

PP: No, no, on Meadow Street.

SL: On Meadow Street. Okay.

PP: No, as soon as my mo—my father was already living down here.

SL: Okay.

PP: The interesting thing is that he was renting a room from Frank and Ida Davis, and they at the time were the managers of Carnall Hall on the university campus, which was then a girls' dormitory. And so, when my mother would come up here and visit 'em, you know, they would make rounds at Carnall Hall, you know, making sure that everybody was in and all the lights were out at ten o'clock or whatever their rules were. Mother loved doing this. And so, anyhow, but this is the Ida that came with her mother, with Hermina, and the minister from Holland, from Utrecht. And . . .

SL: That's a small world.

PP: Now, isn't that something?

SL: How did that happen?

PP: And so, he had a room at her Aunt Ida's home, and it was on Spring Street, and so, she came up to visit Aunt Ida, and that's how she met Daddy. And then there was that link with—this was her Aunt Ida that came over with her mother from Holland. And so [*SL laughs*], anyhow, but—and this is interesting, too, because Daddy had seen—now, this is right after World War I, so this was maybe 1916, [19]17. Maybe [19]16. And he had seen a movie in a tent show on College Avenue, and he loved it. And so, when he met my mother, he wanted her to go with him to see the movie, and they were just intrigued with it, with the movie, and saw it four nights in a row in that tent.

SL: That was probably silent film.

PP: Yeah.

SL: I wonder if they had a little piano player that . . .

PP: I don't know.

SL: . . . played with it. That's interesting.

PP: But they loved it, seeing this on screen, you know. Black and white.

[01:30:59] SL: You know, was the—what became the Ozark Theatre, was that still an opera house then, or was it . . .

PP: No, it was a theater.

SL: It became a theater shortly after that, I guess.

PP: Well, I say—now, by the time—course, I wasn't born yet . . .

SL: That's right.

PP: . . . so I'm not sure. Maybe it was still an opera house then. It very well coulda been.

SL: It was pretty opulant, I mean, as far as a small town having that kind of . . .

PP: Well, however, they redid that. They redid the Ozark Theatre probably in the late [19]40s. They came in and redid the lighting. They had that beautiful writi—lighting on the side and it was like this [sweeps hand through the air], you know, and a scroll sort of design . . .

SL: Yes.

PP: . . . with the lights kinda—were back behind it. And that was before Donald and I were married or right after when they really redid the Ozark Theatre and made it a much more desirable place to go, a much prettier place. It was really kind of in wrack and ruin. But I went to the thea—I think I went—in growing up I went to the theater. But see, I—this is not back in the teens.

SL: Right.

PP: This would've been in the [19]30s.

[01:32:12] SL: Yeah, yeah. So the house on . . .

PP: Meadow Street.

SL: . . . Meadow. Do you remember much about it?

PP: No. I remember going next door because—now, Mary Kay Bradford—it was her mother, and I can't think of her name right now, her mother's name, but Mother would let me when I was little walk over there, just walk across the yards, and she would always have a piece of candy for me. [*SL laughs*] Woo, did I love that woman. And—but she would always tell my mother how polite we all were. I mean, she loved all of us, and she just couldn't get over—I always said, "Thank you," you know, and [*clears throat*] Mother was quite insistent on this. And we never asked for anything, you know, but she would always give us—and we—I guess we knew she would. [*Laughs*]

[01:33:07] SL: That's good. So you were just there for a few years.

PP: Oh, very few. And I cannot remember for sure, but when my younger sister was born in 1932—and I was born in [19]27—we were already in the house on Dickson Street.

SL: Okay. Okay. So you were eight years old then. Is that right?
No, you were . . .

PP: [Nineteen] twenty-seven.

SL: . . . older than that. Yeah, you were twelve. Let's see . . .

PP: No, no, [19]32.

SL: Thirty—oh, okay. [*Camera clicks*] So you were . . .

PP: Five years old.

SL: . . . five years old. Well, so now you . . .

PP: And she—that's right because she was born there. And course, I don't know whether you want me to tell about it now, bout the illness that she had when she was . . .

SL: Yes.



[01:33:54] PP: Well, Betty Jane was born in 1932 in March. And when she was six months old, she got pneumonia, and her fever went very, very high to 105. And she began to turn blue, and my mother, as a nurse, really felt like she knew how to meet these emergencies, but this went beyond her capacity. And she just loved Dr. Ellis, and he loved her. He delivered five of us free at Fayetteville City Hospital. Wouldn't charge a fee, and she said, "How can we ever repay you?" And he said, "Well, if either my wife or I get very, very sick, I want Emelia to nurse us." And she did nurse his wife during World War II in her last illness. She went every day to Dr. Ellis's home and nursed her. And sometimes she took me with her, and I cleaned the house. It didn't get very dirty. There was still a daughter living there, but she'd had polio when she was quite young, and so, this was a help to her. But anyhow, she called Dr. Ellis, and when she told

him the situation, he called Dr. Gregg, who lived not too far from us, maybe a couple of blocks, and Dr. Wood, who just lived catty-corner—lived on the corner—to join him. He wanted—because loving my mother the way he did and with the faith he had in her, he didn't—he wanted all the help he could get to diagnose this situation. And so, my daddy was out on the porch and he—the doctors went in and examined Betty Jane and didn't have the heart to tell my mother but came out on the porch, and he said they'd never seen anybody, old or young, live with such a high fever. And they didn't give her any chance to live. Now, whether or not my father told my mother that, I do not know. [01:36:07] But she would not give up on Betty Jane. And so, for two days and two nights, she held her upright so she could breathe. And then she would dip her into tepid water to try to bring the fever down, and finally, after two days and nights of this, the fever did begin to come down, and that's why I have a little sister, a younger sister, to this day, and she and I have always, always been the very best of friends. We still are. We're the closest of any friend that I have, and I think—and it was cute, too, because she would—she kinda idolized me 'cause I was five years older, you know, and so, she'd kinda look up to me about how to dress and how to fix her hair and things like—

or—and I would do it for her lots of times. But then, now, our roles—we've had a role reversal, and she has become my spiritual mentor, and it's—I said, "Betty, isn't this remarkable how God has used each one of us to strengthen the other?" And it really has been quite—such a precious relationship. [*Clears throat*]

[01:37:21] SL: Do you remember your mother takin' care of her when she was sick [*PP coughs*], or was that just a little bit . . .

PP: Only thing I remember—I remember the doctors coming, and I knew—and I didn't think—and I thought my little sister was dying, and that's all I can remember. I don't remember anything specific about it. And they had in the master [*clears throat*—the way the house was—there was a bedroom and a bedroom and a bathroom. And this was the master bedroom, and they had a baby bed—well, and course, a crib and a baby bed there in the master so that she was always with Betty. And [*coughs*] she knew about pneumonia, and she knew about what to do but not when the fever went that high.

SL: Gosh.

[01:38:12] PP: And that's where—and I don't know this for sure, but there was one incident in our house. We never had any liquor in the house, ever. My father didn't drink, and he smoked pipes

and didn't smoke cigarettes, and so, I don't know where that came from. But I rather think it happened—oh, I don't know. I was gonna say when my grandmother came and had that stroke, and maybe they used a little liquor then, you know, to kind of bring her back. I'm not sure. But anyhow, it cou—one of us, Mother said—I can remember her tellin' us this—that she gave, like, a quarter of a teaspoon of that liquor when we were very, very sick, and I just think it had to be Betty Jane 'cause none of the rest of us ever got that sick. We got sick but not to that point. [01:39:13] And my sister Jeanne Marie—and this was unusual, too. And you know, you just didn't hear of it then, and you sure don't hear of it now. But she had typhoid fever when she was ten, and they figured that she had gotten it—Daddy would always take us swimming. He loved to swim. Mother didn't, but he loved to swim, and he'd always take us swimming. And they think that he had taken 'em to the White River, and I don't know exactly where. But they—you know, where would you get typhoid fever? And she was in the hospital for six weeks.

SL: Oh my gosh.

PP: And Dr. Ellis took care of her and prob—you know, without any fee for—to charge my mother. And staying at the hospital was

not anything like hospital fees are now. Not anything like it.
Maybe two dollars a day or s—you know.

SL: Right.

PP: And Mother let me come down there, and I was—I'm four years younger than Jeanne. Let's see—no, five years younger. And so, I was probably five—and let me see her. Now, she wouldn't let me go in—I couldn't go in the room. Course, the room was quarantined.

SL: Sure.

[01:40:30] PP: But they let me sit in a chair outside, and I could look at her, and I could talk to her, but I couldn't go in there. And then it was mealtime, and they brought me a tray and fixed it up in front of me with—and in my little chair, and I got to eat lunch there, and I thought that was the greatest thing in the world.

SL: [*Laughs*] It was.

PP: Hospital food. [*SL laughs*] You know, but it was such a great experience. But Mother was really good about this sort of thing, you know, about in—not hiding thing. She didn't ever want to burden us with things that nobody had any control over. And she never gossiped about anything or anybody. But she really did—I mean, she knew I wanted to see Jeanne, and she just

made it possible.

SL: So you know, you were talkin' about, I always ask these kinds of questions, you were talkin' about when your parents were living on the house on Washington, how your dad would take the radio out and listen to it.

PP: Yes.

[01:41:38] SL: But do you remember a radio being in the house on Dickson?

PP: Yes, we had a radio, and they were still in the house, see, when Donald and I married and did—oh, my father loved the sporting events, and it was a black and white television, and Donald and I had received money back when we paid our taxes, if you can believe that. [*Laughs*]

SL: Sure.

PP: And it was quite a bit of money. And we decided that we would use it, since it was, you know, like picking it up off the street, that we would use it to buy a color television for Mother and Daddy. And so, we did, and this is a kind of a strange thing because I was always aware and looking out for things that we could do that would improve their lives—that would make their lives a little easier. [01:42:39] And I think the other girls—they all had larger families. June had six. Jeanne had eight.

SL: Gosh.

PP: Mary had five. Jimmy had one, and I had one, and Betty Jane had three. So you can understand that with one child—and I was teaching—that we could help financially . . .

SL: Sure.

PP: . . . where the others really could not. And the idea of having just one child was not our idea. We—I had had two miscarriages before we had David. Then when we had David, I went to intern at—we had a hospital in Prairie Grove named the Elizabeth Hospital. And we had two English doctors who had left England and took their medical training in Canada, the Drs. Riggall, Frank and Cecil Riggall. They were very, very smart. Dr. Frank Riggall not only had—was a medical doctor but he had a law degree, too. Very, very smart. And so—I've lost my train of thought.

SL: Well, we were talkin'—you were talkin' about how you guys were better positioned to help your parents.

[01:44:04] PP: Oh, so we bought the color television, and oh, my Daddy was so happy [*SL laughs*] with that and got it all set up for 'em and everything. And—but when we brought it in, Mother said—and this is a story I might or might want—not wanna touch on. But she said, "Well, you can do that for your Daddy, but you're not doing anything for me."

SL: Oh.

PP: Now, why she got that independent spirit, I do not know why or when or how or . . .

SL: Pride maybe.

PP: . . . you know.

SL: Yeah.

PP: But of course, that didn't make any difference to me at the time because we were really wantin' to please Daddy [*laughter*] anyhow . . .

SL: Yeah.

PP: . . . to see the ball games. So he really—you know, that was something he really did enjoy. Now, that was still on Dickson Street.

[01:44:49] SL: Well, now, I—I'm more interested in you as a child, experiencing . . .

PP: Growing up there.

SL: . . . experiencing the radio. Do you remember hearing . . .

PP: Oh . . .

SL: . . . the radio for the first time?

PP: "This" . . .

SL: Do you . . .

PP: . . . "this" . . .

SL: . . . remember the shows you used to listen to?

PP: . . . "this day will live in infamy." [*SL laughs*] Oh, I remember hearing that after Japan bombed Pearl Harbor, and President Roosevelt, you know, said that. And we heard that on the radio. But oh, we listened Sunday night, *One Man's Family*, always, always. As a family we listened to it. And then . . .

[01:45:22] SL: So you all would gather around the radio . . .

PP: Yes.

SL: . . . after Sunday dinner.

PP: Uh-huh. It was in the living room, and we would gather around. And then—but what we really did like and what my father really did like even more than the radio, except, like, for news and things like that, he loved classical music. Loved it. And so, my brother, who was in the service, had bought him a wonderful, wonderful record player, a chairside—it was a radio and record player. Very nice thing. And course, we always bought records for him, like, for his birthday or Christmas or Father's Day, and this is what I would always buy him were records of classical music. And he loved to just sit and listen to it by the hour.

[01:46:11] So that was something that we also did and, you know, it—and then that was good, too, because I realized that my schoolchildren never heard music except [*laughs*] country

music.

SL: Yeah.

PP: And you know, this is what everybody listened to.

SL: Commercial radio.

PP: Yeah. So we would take them to—and at that time the university—the band director would bring the symphony band, like, to Springdale and invite all the fourth grades in the area in Washington County and maybe beyond, in Benton and Madison County a little bit—the fourth grades to come. And they would display and show them how each instrument was played, what it was called and how it sounded individually and how they tuned it and all of that. The children were fascinated.

SL: Well, sure they were.

PP: They loved it. It was such a treat for them. They quit doing this, but it was such . . .

SL: Well, that's too bad.

PP: . . . such an advantage.

SL: I bet it would be really popular now.

[01:47:14] PP: And they had never heard music, you know, that was either classical or semi-classical, and it was just such a treat for them. They lov—you know, loved it. But that's just part of your education, you know. And what you like is what you can choose

when you're a grown person, but you might like something but never know it because you were never exposed to it.

[01:47:40] SL: So did y'all always go to church on Sundays?

PP: Always.

SL: And it was Presbyterian?

PP: Yeah, always.

SL: And . . .

PP: They had not been raised Presbyterian, either one of 'em. And my mother, because of her—the influence of her older sister, Jenny, who was very outgoing, where my mother was very shy—she would go to the Methodist church or the Baptist church, depending on where her friends went. And Mother went where Jenny went. And then my father went to the Disciples of Christ, the Christian church. And so, then when they married he wasn't, you know, leaning toward the Baptists, and she wasn't leaning towards the Christian church, so they decided that . . .

SL: [*Unclear words*].

PP: . . . they would choose a church. And they chose the Presbyterian church, which probably was the best choice they could've made. [01:48:32] But growing up it was kind of funny 'cause I always thought the Methodists had the best preachers.

[*Laughter*]

SL: Well . . .

PP: Paul Galloway was one of 'em that was in Fayetteville . . .

SL: Absolutely.

PP: . . . for a long time.

SL: I remember him.

PP: And, oh, and then there was another one who wore—and it was after I married, so it was in the early [19]50s, and he wore white—what am I tryin' to say? With the brown on . . .

SL: Chaps?

PP: No.

SL: Saddle oxfords?

PP: Saddle oxfords. He wore white with brown saddles over 'em, oxfords. He was somethin' else.

SL: I'm tryin' to remember what his . . .

PP: And he—I had him come down here and do a program for us. Oh, he was so popular.

SL: That wasn't Eggensberger, was it?

PP: No, it—before that.

SL: Yeah.

PP: Probably just before.

SL: Yeah. I'm trying to remember who that was.

PP: I bet it'll come to you.

SL: It will come to me [*laughs*] because I remember him, too.

[01:49:25] PP: But yes, we went to church. We went to young people's meetings ?each? Sunday afternoon. I taught a Sunday school class at—what's on the way to Huntsville on . . .

SL: Elkins?

PP: Okay, not—but on beyond.

SL: Well, there's Crosses . . .

PP: But not Crosses.

SL: St. Paul.

PP: No. Well, maybe I'll think of that.

SL: Patrick.

PP: Well, anyhow, wherever it was, it was out in the country, a small church, and we did a service for them on Sunday afternoons. And . . .

SL: Now, this is you and . . .

PP: Well, the minister, and I taught Sunday school for the young ones. There were maybe four or five us that went out. It was an outpost sun—it was an outpost, really, a—more an outpost Sunday school than a church. But we—and it was on Sunday afternoons. And I [*laughs*] can remember one time when one of the Kappa Sigs invited me to have lunch at the—he came to our church and then—and sat with me and then invited me to the

Kappa Sig house for lunch. And it was just so much fun, but then I had to leave 'cause I had to go to the outpost Sunday school at—oh, maybe I'll think of it later. But—and then young people's meeting . . .

SL: Combs?

PP: No. I almost . . .

SL: We'll think [*laughs*] of it in a minute.

PP: Isn't that somethin'?

[01:50:57] SL: That is somethin'. Now, okay, now, you're talkin' about your college years here, but I wanna get you—what—did you go to kindergarten in . . .

PP: We had no kindergartens.

SL: So . . .

PP: Nobody had kindergartens.

SL: So the first time you went to public school was first grade.

PP: First grade.

SL: And . . .

PP: Came home the first day in tears.

SL: What happened?

PP: I didn't learn to read the first day of school. [*Laughter*] And I just couldn't believe it. "Well, what's school for, you know." And I had a first-grade teacher that was not motherly at all.

[01:51:32] SL: Is this Washington School?

PP: That was Washington. She was good, but the second-grade teacher was perfect. Oh, she was so good. She was softer and just as strict about learning but—and then my third-grade teacher was to die for. It was Faye Warbritton. And my fourth-grade teacher—I'm not gonna say her name, but it was bad. *[SL laughs]* And what happened was that there was an overpopulation in the school, and they had to juggle. And so, several of us skipped a half a grade, and I'm not one who should've skipped.

SL: Oh.

PP: I should've gone—and you know, it—well, maybe it didn't do that when you went. But we went 2A, 2B, you know. And 3A and 3B. And . . .

SL: That's right.

[01:52:27] PP: But anyhow, I skipped part of the third grade—and this wonderful teacher—and went into this—and she was an—oh, she'd been teachin' for years by the time I got her. And she was harsh, and I was sitting behind Aldridge Humphreys, and she demanded four things written on every paper that was turned in, the day, the date, the topic—the subject matter and the topic and your name. And that's five things, but two of 'em went

together. So [*SL laughs*] I didn't know what we were doing, so I was looking on—to—in front of me and I wrote down, you know, "History, Aldridge Humphreys."

SL: Oh! [*Laughs*]

PP: 'Cause a name like that, I could—didn't even know what it meant. [*Laughs*] I didn't know . . .

SL: You never knew . . .

PP: . . . how to pronounce it.

SL: . . . how anyone could be named that! [*Laughs*]

PP: Aldridge! [*SL laughs*] *A-L-D-R-I-D-G-E*. And that's—that seemed okay to write down, and I did, not knowin' it was supposed to be my name [*SL laughs*] and that it was his name. Well, that's how bad it was for me. [01:53:37] And then one time she—I asked—I didn't feel well, and I asked her if I could stay in recess and color, and she said yes. I was coloring a map for one of my subjects. And the girl behind me wanted to borrow my colors, and I wouldn't let her. And the teacher came back and pulled my hair. I mean, really pulled it. If you've ever had your hair pulled, it's not pleasant. And she said, "Why didn't you let her"—well, this little girl was the kind that didn't take care of things, and I knew I wouldn't get any more money for crayons because Mother would say, "We bought you crayons."

What happened to 'em?" And it wouldn't be my fault but the girl behind me. And so, I didn't let her use 'em.

SL: So . . .

PP: And I got my hair pulled.

SL: . . . she punished you for that.

[01:54:23] PP: And I—and you know what? When I started teaching—and I hadn't had—I didn't have any education hours, didn't have any student teaching, then you pattern yourself after teachers you've had. Things you absolutely want to do and be, and things you absolutely will never, ever, ever, ever do. And course, that's the one thing I could really think back that I would never . . .

SL: Never do.

PP: . . . ever, ever punish a child like that. And it was so—I don't know. Not only was it painful, but it hurt me inside, as well as outside.

SL: Hmm. You know, that's interesting that that happened to you in fourth grade, and that's . . .

PP: And that's the grade I taught. [*Laughs*]

SL: Yeah, yeah. That's . . .

PP: And had the poorest example of a teacher.

[01:55:08] SL: Let me ask you a few things about Washington

Elementary grade school. Did the—was the kitchen in the basement?

PP: No kitchen.

SL: No kitchen.

PP: No food. You brought your lunch if you lived in the country, and if you lived in town, you walked home, had lunch, and came back. I did a lot of walking, a lot of walking, 'cause there wasn't any food anywhere, in any of our schools. So it was go home and, course [*laughs*], during the Depression I th—I—you know, we've talked about it. [01:55:38] We had a series of hobos or tramps who would ride the railroad cars on top, and when it stopped at a station, they would get off and move into the town or city where they were and go to different homes. And sometimes people thought they kinda marked homes so that they would know that this was a good one that they could ask. And they—the neighbors seemed to think our home was marked because invariably they would come to our back door.

SL: Sure.

PP: Very polite. Knock on the door. Ask for the lady of the house. Ask her if there was some work that they could do, some honest work outside. Raking the leaves or mowing or washin' windows or whatever for a meal. Not money, but a meal. And course, we

didn't have any money to spread around, but my mother always cooked a big meal at lunchtime because we all came home from school for lunch. And my father came home. So anyhow, we always had plenty to feed the hobos and we always—none of 'em ever left without a plate of my mother's delicious cooking. And she was a very good cook. She wasn't a very good housekeeper, but she was a very good cook. And it was—and when I was real little and they would come, sometimes I would take my plate of food and go out and sit on the back steps with 'em. And . . .

SL: So they ate outside the house.

PP: They always ate outside. They stayed outside. They didn't ask to use a restroom or anything. They stayed outside. Very, very polite. [01:57:12] And I know that my father had been taught this way by his father, you know, to always share. If you have anything more than what you actually need, share with somebody who's worse off than you. And my mother just had that inbred in her. I mean, nobody had to teach her or tell her or—it was just . . .

SL: So they were both that way.

PP: They were both that way. Oh, and let me tell you this. Not only did my father—you know, he absolutely supported this, of

feeding the tramps and the hobos. He picked up every hitchhiker, and this was safe to do at the time. It's not now and hasn't been for years, but it was then, back in the Depression. You—and people who were [*sighs*] down and out and tryin' to get, you know, to a job or to their family or something like that and had no money, they did this. [01:58:07] And Daddy never passed a hitchhiker without takin' him partway to his destination. And one Sunday evening we were driving, and we were on College Avenue on the corner of Dickson, and we didn't turn up on Dickson. On the corner of Dickson and College Avenue was a young woman holding a baby and thumbing a ride. And of course, Daddy pulled over and went back and talked to her and found out that she was tryin' to get to her husband who was in the service in St. Louis. And she had gone to her home to have the baby, and she was tryin' to get to him. Well, you can imagine my—how my dad felt.

SL: Sure.

PP: So he told her to come get in the car, and she did, and we took her home with us and fed her. And she spent the night and fed her the next morning. Oh, I said it was on a Sunday. It was on a Saturday night because this was Sunday, and Daddy didn't have to go to work. And we got up and got in the car, all of us

and the woman and her baby, and Daddy took 'em as far as—
they was tryin' . . .

SL: Springfield?

PP: . . . to get to St. Louis. Springfield. As far as Springfield. Then
he went into the—he had stopped at the bus station, went in,
bought a ticket for her, and gave it to her and some money to
get to her husband. And this—so philanthropy has been always
[sighs] something that I have been very, very interested in. And
of course, when I taught that was [laughs]—it was some
philanthropy in that.

SL: In that. You bet.

[01:59:43] PP: But—and now—it was really funny. I didn't realize it
but when I taught—I've never been much of a shopper. I've
never been one who wanted things or more things or better
things or pricier things. It just never—the way I was raised.
And so, I would—when I would get my check—course, the first
year it didn't amount to much. But when I would get my check,
I would endorse it and give it to Donald, and he would take it to
the bank. I never held anything out. I never wrote a check on
it. I never—and went on about my way. And when I was
teaching school, that's what I did. Even though it was only five
days a week, I was still involved Saturday and Sunday . . .

SL: Sure.

PP: . . . grading papers and . . .

SL: Never stops.

PP: . . . making lesson plans and—I don't know. Shopping just was not a part of my, you know, my life. [02:00:40] I didn't have a car. I didn't have a car of my own till I was forty-seven years old. [*Laughter*] But anyhow—so Donald would come and take me to school, and then I would get a ride home with one—and course, I didn't live too far from the school, but then I'd get a ride home with one of the teachers. But then he thought it would be funny if he brought me a truck [*SL laughs*], an old truck they used to pick up trash, and in the back it had a holder there, and it had a old broom that, you know, was—had worn off its . . .

SL: Bristles.

PP: Bristles. And [*laughs*] I drove it to school, and the teachers couldn't believe it. "Peggy, I can't believe you would drive that." "Well, it got me to school. It was four wheels," you know.

SL: Sure.

PP: And—but that sort of thing is—was more funny to me than embarrassing.

SL: Yeah.

PP: You know, it was just funny to me. And I drove that for a long time.

SL: It sounds kinda perfect to me.

PP: [*Laughs*] It was. [*SL laughs*] And it was perfect for me be—and Donald knew this. I mean, he didn't do this to humiliate me. And I didn't ask for a car. And I can't remember why I finally got one when I was forty-seven years old. [*Laughter*]

[02:02:00] PP: Well, now, let's go back. You know, you remember the hobos and—coming and eating on the back steps and how generous your mom and dad were for those that were in need. What about . . .

PP: And when you think how many children we had . . .

SL: I know. That's another thing. I mean, they were feeding an army to begin with.

PP: Uh-huh. [*SL laughs*] And yet still . . .

SL: I know. But they . . .

PP: . . . you know, just had a heart . . .

SL: . . . that's great . . .

PP: . . . because . . .

SL: . . . that's . . .

PP: . . . they were always—even though we were poor, there were [*laughs*] . . .

SL: It's great faith. I mean, there's . . .

PP: It really was.

SL: . . . something about that.

[02:02:38] PP: And that's the way both of 'em were. And that's the way I grew up. And I am so pleased because that has stayed with me. And I still feel like I'm the—kind of the same person, you know, that I still want to be involved in philanthropic events and invest in them rather than going out and buyin' a new car. My car, incidentally, is ten years old. [*Laughter*]

[02:03:10] SL: Mine's eleven or twelve. [*Laughter*] It may be even older than that. Well, the—I wanna get back to the house. So every Sunday and Sunday afternoon you were involved with church . . .

PP: And Sunday evening.

SL: . . . early on. And . . .

PP: And . . .

SL: And Sunday evening?

PP: Sunday evening.

SL: What happened on Sunday evenings?

PP: Mh-hmm. Yeah, we didn't go—we didn't have church at night. This was the young people's meeting.

SL: Okay. And you remember doing that from your earliest

memories.

PP: Oh yes.

[02:03:39] SL: And was there a Bible in the house?

PP: Oh, absolutely.

SL: And did y'all study that in the house, or did you—were there—did your . . .

PP: Not like you would—not like you might have thought of. We couldn't—we never got everybody all together, actually. We would be more together, I suppose, at noon than any other time because of—if we had members of the family that were in university, you know, and they had labs or things like that in the afternoon or went back at night to study hall or whatever. So—and we didn't have regular Bible reading as such as a family. We all had Bibles with our name on 'em in gold. [02:04:28] But now, when I went to Arkansas College, and I lived with a family for a year—I'm tryin' to think—a year and a half or—I guess a year and a half. I—no, it was just a year. I had a year and a half at the university and then a year and a half of Arkansas College and then didn't have the last year till later on. But when I lived with the family, we did have, every single night. And they raised their family that way, and I, course, I loved it.

SL: Yeah.

PP: And I had met Mr. Fall, who was the one who really wanted me to come and live in their home, at Ferncliff, our church camp. And see, I went there every year, every June. Loved that. Really thought seriously at that time, in those teen years and particularly at Ferncliff and then when I went for leadership training at Montreat, North Carolina—and see, I was thrown with people just like I was—very, very interested in God, Jesus, the Bible, missionary work—and this was what was, you know, given to us at those times. And it's a time in your young life when you're very impressionable.

SL: Yep.

[02:06:09] PP: And there were times when I just knew I was gonna be a missionary. And—but you know, God has a way of opening doors but also of shutting doors. And I've realized more looking back on my life—if I can quote a scripture to you that really—it's in Jeremiah 29:11, I believe. "'For I know the plans I have for your life,' says the Lord. 'Plans to prosper you and not to harm you. Plans to give you hope and a future.'" Well, see, from my standpoint, looking back now, oh, that was so true. God did have plans for me when I was created. But somehow I didn't get on that track, and so, finally, after I married, had two miscarriages, finally had a baby, and David was two, the

superintendent came and asked me to teach. God opened that door for me. I didn't ask to teach. I didn't ever think I wanted to be a teacher. I only did this to help him out. He was just desperate for a substitute. So I only told him I would come for a day [*SL laughs*] until he could find someone. Well, he couldn't find anyone, so I said I'd come again the next day, and I came all week, as it turned out. [02:07:47] And at the end of the week I said . . .

SL: You knew.

PP: . . . "Oh, dear God, this is what you wanted me to do all the time." Well, it turned out, this what the superintendent thought, too, so he hired me full time, and I had—didn't have any education hours. I had planned then to go back to college and get the education hours. Now, see, I'd never gotten my degree. I'd never finished it. Well, this is the way to finish it. 'Cause I'd—if I'd gotten it, it would've been a year of lost subjects.

SL: Yep.

PP: I'd still have to get all the education hours, so this would've worked out perfectly. But he wanted me to start it right away, and he said, "Well, what was your favorite grade?" And I said, "Well, really, fourth was my favorite." [*SL laughs*] And he said, "We [*laughs*] just happen to have an openin' in fourth. [*SL*

laughs] And if you decide to go to college and get your hours, we might not have an openin' in fourth grade for you when you come back and want to teach." So he tempted me. And I . . .

SL: [*Laughs*] You gave in.

PP: . . . grabbed it. [*SL laughs*] And it worked out perfectly.

SL: Out of tape?

BP: Out of tape.

[Tape Stopped]

[02:08:47] SL: So, Peggy, this is our third tape that we're starting now. We just had a great lunch from Brian's Grill and had some wonderful orange sherbet, and we got to hear some more stories. And you got to work with Kris a little bit more on some pictures. You know, I'm tryin' to get you through grade school. [*PP laughs*] We've talked two hours now, and as near as I can tell, we've got you up to about fourth grade. But—and the reason why I wanna do this is 'cause I think you are who you are because of the way you were raised. And I think those early years of—extending all the way through grade school kinda set you on your path in some way or at least gave you the building blocks to give you the compass that you have. So back at the home—I know we've been talking about—we've—we learned that all the children had their own Bibles, had their names in the

Bibles in the gold print just like I did growin' up. When it came time for helping around the house—now, how—let's see. There was one brother and three sisters? Is that right?

PP: Four.

SL: Four sisters.

PP: Five girls and one boy.

[02:10:05] SL: Golly! So how were the household duties divided up? Were they—did you always do the dishes or . . .

PP: I [*laughs*] almost always—I don't know exactly how that happened. No, we didn't have regimented chores that we had to do each day, which really would've been a little bit easier. And if somethin' hadn't been—had been undone, you know, we would've known who was responsible. It wasn't quite that organized, and I wish it were or had been. But—so it ended up, usually, that I did the dishes. [*Laughs*] Somehow [*SL laughs*] everybody escaped, you know, and so, I [*laughs*—and lots of times when we'd had a big dinner or maybe even had a—you know, extended family there and lots and lots of dishes, I'd prop the church hymnbook up on the soap dish, you know, that was right in front of me, and I would sing all the hymns while I washed all those dishes. And it made it palatable, you know. It just wasn't so bad to entertain myself that way. And I usually



was able to do things if a job was something I really didn't like to do. Like, I'd have to sometimes work in the garden, and I did not like that at all. Hoein' the garden or some—I'd sing—oh my—at the top of my voice. [SL laughs] It was really, really funny. But I would usually try to lighten it, you know, and pass—help pass the time so it wasn't just drudgery. We all were responsible for, like, our own bed making and things like that. We all ironed our own clothes. I can't think—and then, course, June got married early on. She was older. And then when Jeanne got married and that—and then Jimmy was in the service, then that just left Mary and Betty and I. Betty was little so nothing—not too much was required of her. And somehow Mary—I don't know. She's a hard worker at her house, and she raises a wonderful garden, and she cans all summer just like Mother did. [02:12:27] But the funniest story [SL laughs] about canning that I can tell you is that Mother was always on call. I mean, if anybody—any member of the family was sick they could call my mother, and she would tend to them. And so, they called one time, and Mother had gotten two bushels of peaches at my grandmother's farm, and we were gonna can those peaches. And then the call came from Uncle Joe that Aunt Mildred Harp Murphy was dying of breast cancer. And Mother



just went immediately, but she left Mary and me with two bushels of peaches.

[02:13:13] SL: Now, how old were you girls then?

PP: Well, we were old enough to date, and we each had dates. [*SL laughs*] And they came to the door [*SL laughs*], and all we could think of was, "Oh, two more pairs of hands to peel those peaches!" 'Cause the cooking of 'em really didn't take much time at all. Peaches cooked up and were tender in a short period of time. But the peeling and getting rid of the seeds, that was the big part of it. And we put them to work, and we got—we canned those two bushels of peaches before Mother came home, and she . . .

SL: Wow.

PP: . . . was so proud of us. But the end of the story is we never saw those boys again.

SL: [*Laughs*] They got a good dose of reality, didn't they?

PP: They got a—they weren't about [*SL laughs*] to get tied into canning peaches again.

[02:14:05] SL: Well, it's so interesting to hear that each of you were responsible for making your own beds.

PP: Mh-hmm.

SL: So you did that every day before you went to school?

PP: Mh-hmm, mh-hmm.

SL: And were . . .

PP: But see, usually two of us slept in a bed.

SL: Ah!

PP: And that made it easier. You know, you could hop on each side of the bed and spread it up . . .

SL: Yeah.

PP: . . . real fast.

[02:14:23] SL: Yeah, yeah, yeah. Did you say prayers each night before you went to bed?

PP: We did, but they were individual.

SL: Individual.

PP: And Mother taught each one of us to kneel by our bed and say our prayers at night, and we would, you know—"Now I lay me down to sleep." And then we'd go through the family, you know. "Bless Mother, bless Daddy, and bless all of the children." And then, course, I just thought this was great, so I'd start on the aunts and uncles and cousins and [*laughs*—but when I climbed into bed, I just thought, "Okay, everybody is safe and protected for the night."

SL: There is . . .

PP: "They're all covered by prayer." But it—I just think it was

important to learn it, and Mother would kneel down by the bed with us when she taught us to do this. And I wasn't sure that there was any other way to pray. I mean, I didn't realize you could walk down the street and be saying a prayer.

SL: Prayerful.

PP: Which, of course, you can.

SL: Yeah.

PP: But I mean, it's not the knee—it's not the posture that's important, and it's not really just the words that are important. It is the prayerful aura of bein' in tune with God, of knowing that you can reach him anytime, anyplace, for any situation, and he's always there.

SL: That's beautiful. [*Sighs*] What—tell me . . .

[02:16:11] PP: Let me tell you about my house.

SL: Okay.

PP: Well, it was a small house and—but several houses were built with that same floor plan. There was one right around the corner from us built on the same floor plan. But you would go into the front door into the living room and by—and then the dining room and then the kitchen was off of that. But there was another entrance that would go into a bedroom and another bedroom and the bath. And then the stairs were in the kitchen,

going upstairs. And upstairs it was—there was an attic, and there was one room, which was my brother's bedroom. He's the only one that got to sleep in a bed by himself. And then there was a big—just one big room. And they had sort of an alcove over at one end for a bed, and then they had an alcove off of one side for a bed. And then we had built-in closets. Then there off of that big room was a sleeping porch. And we had beds out there, which we didn't use in the cold weather, but in the summer we slept out there. And it was always fun. You could hear the birds. I mean, you were really outside. It was screened in, but that was all. [02:17:26] And what was the name of the boxer that was—the black bo—Joe . . .



SL: Louis.

PP: . . . Louis. If he had a fight [*SL laughs*] and he won, then Tin Cup, which was just very close to us, would just erupt . . .

SL: Erupt.

PP: . . . in celebration. And it was so much fun to hear them. Oh, they would get so excited. And it was fun to hear the—just the celebratory situation, you know. I wasn't interested in Joe 'cause I wasn't interested in boxing, period. But for them to be so happy over his win, I just thought, "Oh, if he could just know [*laughs*] how excited people are."

SL: I love that description. I love that. That's so—that sounds so good to me to be out there on that porch at night and hear that.

PP: Oh, it was. It really was. We just—we had two beds, and four people could sleep out there. [02:18:29] And then [*laughs*] one time I was upstairs, and I was reading *Gone With the Wind*. And Mary came up, and she was interrupting me—my reading—and she kept on and on, and finally, I looked up from the book—this is the only time I've ever done this—and I said, "Shut your damn mouth!" [*SL laughs*] And I knew I was goin' straight to hell.

SL: Oh my [*unclear words*].

PP: Oh my word, I wanted to bite off my tongue. I felt terrible about that. I felt so bad about it that I never would use that word again. I just thought, "This is unforgivable."

SL: I bet Mary's face [*PP laughs*] dropped, as well.

PP: She was amazed. [*SL laughs*] She was—we never used any kind of bad language, any swear words, any—nobody in the family did. My parents certainly didn't. My brother didn't. And I was the only one. [*Laughter*] And I don't know. I mean, it was reading that book.

SL: Yeah.

PP: I mean, you know, "Frankly, my dear" . . .

SL: "Dear, I don't give a damn."

PP: . . . "I don't give a damn." [*Laughs*]

SL: There you go. [*Laughs*]

[02:19:41] PP: And I mean, that shows you how easily influenced your mind and your emotions can be through something you've read.

SL: Sure.

PP: You know, television, yes. But reading? But yes, it can really—but I just thought that was one of the best-written books I have ever, ever, ever read.

SL: Sure, it is.

PP: It was fantastic. And reading the book—reading *Gone With the Wind* was almost better than the moving picture . . .

SL: Yeah.

PP: . . . of it.

SL: Mh-hmm. That's . . .

PP: The descriptions . . .

SL: . . . most always the case, though, isn't it?

[02:20:16] PP: Well, the descriptions were just so wonderful. And you just think, "How could somebody express all of this beauty in words? You know, do you have that many words?" And—but I just thought it was a great experience to read it, except for that. That slip. [*Laughs*]

[02:20:41] SL: What about the heat in the house? Was it . . .

PP: Well . . .

SL: . . . a floor furnace.

PP: Oh, well, yes. This is—it was a poor house, actually. But at first we heated with coal. We had a little coal stove in the kitchen for heat, and then we had a larger one in the dining room. The dining room table was here and the—but this big stove was here. And we got coal, bituminous coal, 'cause, you know, it's softer and heats faster. The anthracite holds the heat longer, but it takes longer to get started. [02:21:16] And on a cold morning, you can't wait [*laughs*] . . .

SL: Yeah.

PP: . . . when you're tryin' to dress for school. And we would really—from upstairs there wasn't any heat. And from upstairs we would gather up our clothes and come down by the stove and dress. And Mother would also put flatirons on the top of the stove and then put a li—a small blanket around 'em or a—maybe a pillowcase or something and we would take them up and put 'em in our bed to heat the foot of the bed. And so, that helped. But it was a problem. We had a—we had the garage for one car, and then, course, that's all we had. But then we had a little coal house, and that's where the people who brought the coal would

place it in there. And we would take a bucket out and fill it with coal. [02:07:06] And then we didn't have a hot water heater for the longest time. [*Laughs*] You just can't imagine what life is with—how much better it is with a water heater [*laughs*] than not having one.

SL: Sure, I can.

PP: So we would take a big vat and put it on that little coal stove in the kitchen and heat the water. And then we'd carry it into the bathroom and pour it into the tub, and then we'd have to scurry, you know, to . . .

SL: Sure.

PP: . . . jump in the water real fast before it cooled down. And so, that was, you know—but if that's all you know—if that's all you ever had, well, then, you just do it. And you don't complain because this is the way it's done here. [02:22:47] I think that growing up that way did two things for me. It made me content with little. And it—but it also made me appreciate everything. I mean, things that you ordinarily would take for granted and that people now really do take for granted. But when we did without and then got it, it was just the most marvelous thing in the world. But I think that's a—you know, that's not a bad way to grow up, really—to be appreciative, to be thankful, to really

appreciate each thing that makes your life easier. It—I just think gratitude is the best way to be.

[02:23:42] SL: So in—at Washington Elementary grade school, you did—you were pretty happy there until you got to the fourth grade.

PP: Well, bless her heart. That teacher was old, and she didn't have much patience at all and she really—by this time she'd taught fourth grade for so long she wanted to, you know, spill it out and have everybody get it and then go on to somethin' else. And not everybody got it the first time. And I—that was one important lesson I learned as a teacher that it does take some children longer. They can get it. They're not stupid; they're not dumb, but it takes longer for them to catch on to a new thing. And then you go over it and over it for those and then when they do catch on—for instance, maybe it's long division or something—and then they real—and they really get it. They are so excited.

SL: Yes.

PP: You know, it's just a gift to the teacher to see how pleased they are that something that they could not do, it was just too hard, and all of a sudden, now they've conquered it. But the thing about it—she didn't understand how hard it was for some children to be double promoted and not know exactly what was

expected and not know how to find out.

SL: Yeah, you got kind of gypped out of half a grade.

PP: Uh-huh, and I really was not one that should have. So—and then another sad thing that happened was that then with my classmates who had—you know, there was—it wasn't just a few of us. It was the whole section got double promoted. They went to summer school to even up . . .

SL: Wow.

PP: . . . so they, you know—because otherwise they would be graduating at midterm. [02:25:36] And I got sick. And I was in bed and could not walk for three months.

SL: Golly.

PP: That was . . .

SL: What happened?

SL: Well, Dr. Ellis came, and he didn't know what it was. And he called it summer complaint. And Mother had carried me out to the front porch. Course, the weather was nice and—to be on the swing there so that I could be in the fresh air. And somebody came by and wanted—had brought something, and I said, "Well, would you bring it to me?" And they said, "No, you come get it." And I thought, "Well, if that's the only way I'm gonna get it." So I took a few halting steps, and then down I went. But later Dr.

Ellis told Mother—he said he was just almost certain that I had had a light case of infantile paralysis, of polio. And that would—was the time when it was, you know, running pretty rampant. They would close, like, the swimming pools and the theaters, anyplace a crowd would gather. They didn't close the churches, but in places where there would be crowds—and they just closed 'em up and—knowing' that it could be passed—this could be passed around.

[02:26:58] SL: So this is, like, in [19]37, [19]38? Nineteen . . .

PP: Somewhere in there.

SL: Yeah.

PP: Uh-huh. [02:27:06] And it really hurt me because then all my friends were ahead of me, and I was back with another class and uneven. And then it—I didn't go to summer school until the eighth grade, and that's when I made up that other half year so I could enter high school with my friends that I'd been with all the time but not between those times when they went to summer school ahead of me. It was—but you know, it's funny how children do adjust, and they do, and I did. I adjusted to a new class, and it wasn't so bad. But I was really glad to get back with my old class and old friends. So many of 'em lived in the same area that I did, and you know, I was with them that

way but not in school.

[02:27:54] SL: What about the neighborhood kids? Did you have . . .

PP: Oh, they were—we had things goin' all the time. It was just so much fun. We, when we were little, we would put on bathing suits when it rained, you know, and made puddles, and we would splash in the puddles. And then as we got older, we would skate, and the Wood house had a round driveway in the back, and the driveway was on Dickson Street. And we would go up there, and we would skate around that circle. That was so much fun. And [*SL laughs*] then we got scooters, and we'd ride scooters around it. And they didn't care. They had a maid named Effie, and she was such a friend of ours. And really—and then the Woods were not—they were in—they owned Campbell and Bell with some other members of the family. And they were really well to do but not . . .

SL: Is that Merry-Ship?

PP: Huh?

SL: Was Merry-Ship one of the . . .

PP: No.

SL: . . . owners?

PP: Hm-mm.

SL: I remember some . . .

PP: No, I will think of it in a minute. Whitfields, I believe.

SL: Whitfield and—but there was someone else, too. I'm tryin' to—
go ahead.

[02:29:15] PP: But they just had one child, Mary. And the
interesting thing was that Donald, my husband—and course, he
was eight years older than I was, but he was coming and dating
Mary Wood while I was out in her driveway skating around
[laughter] the circle in braids.

SL: Oh! Oh brother.

PP: If he'd seen me then.


SL: That's funny.

PP: I'm afraid that would've been the end of the story.

SL: Oh no.

PP: I, and course, I didn't know that till later that he had dated Mary
Wood. But . . .

SL: Yeah.

PP: . . . not much. Not a lot. But it was—and then, course,
bicycles—we rode bicycles and all over. You know, up and down
Washington Avenue, that was perfect. [02:29:55] But the
 saddest story for me—my brother bought a used—what he called
putter scooter. And I don't know whether there was a better

word for it or not, but it seemed to suit this down-in-the-mouth
[*laughs*] rig.

SL: Kind of sounds like a moped.

PP: Oh yes.

SL: You had . . .

PP: Yeah.

SL: . . . to pedal it or push it to start it.

PP: Well, we had to push it to start it. Yes. We sure did. For
blocks, maybe [*SL laughs*], to get that engine to turn over. And
Mother had absolutely forbidden me to ride it. And I am here to
tell everybody mothers know best.

SL: [*Laughs*] Oh no.

PP: But one Sunday afternoon [*SL laughs*] Jimmy was with his motor
s—with his putter scooter and I was out there, and so, I wanted
to ride it. And so, he said, "Well, it's really hard to start." And
he showed me what you had to do, and really, we ran for two or
three blocks before the thing—and I—and then I jumped on it.
[02:30:57] And then he went over to talk to one of my friends
that turned out that I thought the penguin—the pigeon club was
only males. But it turned out that Janice Adams and Mildred
Davis were members of the pigeon club, and there's a picture of
'em.

[02:31:18] SL: Okay. Now, we gotta get back to the pigeon club 'cause we haven't talked about that yet.

PP: Okay, I'll get back—but anyhow . . .

SL: But let's finish this . . .

PP: . . . so I'm on the putter sc—so we—and I jumped on it. Well, but see, Jimmy—we didn't talk about how to stop it. [*SL laughs*] And we were on Washington Avenue, and it was Sunday and very little traffic and during the war, and so, I would ride down to Dickson Street, and course, Washington Avenue stopped there because then it turned into an alley—a dirt—a narrow, dirt alley. And I'd turn around and go up Washington Avenue to Davidson Street where it ended. And then I would turn it, and I did this all afternoon. And I didn't know where Jimmy was. He'd gone to see Mildred Davis, and they were in her backyard on Washington Avenue. [*SL laughs*] And then it got late, and then it got dark, and there was no light on the putter scooter.

SL: Oh no.

[02:32:21] PP: And somehow Jimmy just forgot all about me, and so, I was coming up Washington Avenue, and there was a car coming up Lafayette.

SL: Oh no.

PP: And I knew absolutely if we both kept on—and he couldn't see

me because it was dark and I had no light, and so, he didn't know I was coming up. I knew he was coming up. So I knew if we kept on, we were gonna meet in the middle of the intersection, and I'd be done for. Probably killed and run over. So I swerved, trying to make a tight turn, but I hit him in the driver's . . .

SL: Door?

[02:33:04] PP: Door. And then the putter scooter stopped and turned over on top of me—on top of half of me. And I was—oh gosh. You just can't imagine how horrible it was. Well, Jimmy heard that 'cause it—it was not far from where he was. So he came running out to see what had happened, and course, all the grease spilled out, and I knew I had really hurt my left . . .

SL: Leg.

PP: . . . ankle. And so—and I was crying. But he said, "Peggy"—and I didn't know who I'd hit. He stopped, and I know he came back to see about me, but then I somehow didn't [*laughs*—I mean, I coulda just gone through a hole in the pavement. So anyhow, David—Jimmy said, "You go on home." And it was—on one side of the street on Washington, it was just a block. On the other side, it was two blocks 'cause Sutton Street . . .

SL: Yeah.

PP: . . . came up, but it couldn't cross. So I went down this side. It was just a block from home, and I thought, "I can't let anybody see, you know, that I've been hurt." So I wiped all the tears away like this [brushes face] so they couldn't tell that anything had happened, and I was gonna sneak in the house and sneak upstairs. [02:34:26] And I walked in, and there were some—I don't remember who of my sisters were in the living room. And I walked in the door, and they said, "What happened to you?" And I said, "How did you know?" And they said, "Go look in the mirror." And of course—probably everybody's caught on to this by now—I had wiped grease all over my face. [Laughs] I—course, all the grease spilled out, and then I . . .

SL: Yes.

PP: . . . was in it and then, you know—and I had—I would've been hurt worse, but my mother had made me a heavy wool skirt, and it was really heavy. It cut the skirt.

SL: [*Unclear word*].

PP: But it didn't hurt me.

SL: Oh!

PP: But I skinned my leg clear to the bone.

SL: Oh!

PP: Oh, it was terrible.

SL: Oh!

PP: Terrible. Terrible. And sprained—just a really bad sprain in my ankle. It could've been broken, but it wasn't. And so [*PP and SL sigh*], then Mother . . .

SL: What'd your mom do?

PP: Well [*SL laughs*]—and course, she'd strictly forbidden me to ride it. And of course, I had. And I was crying again, and she said, "Peggy, we've got to clean that." He said, "We cannot let that leg heal with all that black grease because it'll heal over it, and you will have a black leg." But [*SL laughs*] bein' a nurse she knew how painful this was going to be to have to wash it with soap and water and with alcohol.

SL: Ooh!

PP: And it was terribly, terribly painful, so she didn't punish me. [*SL laughs*] I think she thought this was punishment enough. [02:35:56] The next day she took me to the doctor, to Dr. Ellis. And of course—and he said the ankle wasn't broken, but it was a really, really bad sprain. Took, really, years for it to completely heal. I had to wear an electric s—electric. Elastic stocking for a long, long time to brace it. But anyhow, like Mother, he said, "We've gotta clean all that out." And he said, "I'm sorry." And of course, he gave me a tetanus shot. And I thought, "Well!

That wasn't bad at all. I didn't even feel it." I did—it's the only tetanus shot I've ever had. But it's after they take the needle out that the pain hits. [*Laughs*]

SL: Yes. Yeah.

PP: So anyhow [*SL laughs*]— but he cleaned it, and it was—oh, it hurt terribly, and I really tried to be brave. And I just, course, felt terrible that I'd been forbidden to do this, and I did it. And I was paying for it. And Mother just thought that was the only punishment I needed—that, "Now do you see that you have parents to protect you and to tell you what, you know, is best for you to do or not to do? And [*SL laughs*] if you disobey, this is what happens. You pay for it."

[02:37:17] SL: I just picture you going up and down [*someone coughs*] the street 'cause you don't know how to stop the thing. [*Laughs*]

PP: Isn't that pathetic?

SL: [*Laughs*] It's funny.

PP: And you know, I tend to be that way, even to this day.

SL: You just go off and get somethin' started . . .

PP: Yes.

SL: . . . and you don't know how it's gonna end.

PP: Exactly [*SL laughs*], exa—I mean, I have [*SL laughs*] and I

just—I don't know all about it. I don't know all about my car right now. And I never learn all the fine points, you know, of anything that I do. [*SL laughs*] If I can run it, I'll run it [*SL laughs*] whether I know how to stop it or not.

SL: That's good. I like that.

PP: Or get the best out of it.

SL: I like that.

PP: Well, you can see it doesn't always work.

[02:37:57] SL: Okay, now, wait a minute. I wanna hear about this pigeon club. Is this somethin' that your brother Jimmy started?

PP: Well, yes. He and Herbert Lewis. There was . . .

SL: Herb Lewis.

PP: Yeah, Herb Lewis and Tommy Lewis.

SL: And Tommy.

PP: And—but there were a whole bunch in the neighborhood, and I don't know what made them think about this—a pigeon club. But they actually wrote off—and maybe somebody had read about it—but they wrote off and—to ask what kind of pigeons they could buy and what, you know, could they expect of 'em and how to keep them, you know, safe, what to feed 'em, when to feed 'em, all of that. And they kept up all the time, and they had—I can't remember what all kinds of pigeons they had. They

had homing pigeons. They had pouter pigeons, the kind that would pout, put their chest out, you know. They had fantail pigeons. Just exquisite, beautiful pigeons.

SL: Now . . .

PP: You don't think of pigeons as bein' anything but an annoyance, you know, on the post office roof or something. But actually, these were beautiful, beautiful birds.

[02:39:05] SL: So were they all in one place, or did each . . .

PP: So they put the cotes . . .

SL: . . . child have a . . .

PP: . . . for 'em that they kept 'em in in Leroy Heerwagen's—he was one of the starters, too . . .

SL: Heerwagen.

PP: . . . on Sutton Street.

SL: Yeah.

PP: Put 'em in his backyard. And then when he moved, they moved 'em to our backyard. And—but then—and I don't know how long—I don't know when it started, and I don't know how long it lasted, although it was a long time. But then what happened, see, the boys grew up and graduated from high school and were off to the service because this was the war time, or else off to university, one. And—but when they brought 'em, the cotes, to

our backyard, some of the little squabs were not eating, and Jimmy was afraid they were going to die. So what we did was we took the grain, Jimmy and I did, and chewed it up and moistened it and chewed it up so it was very fine. And then the squabs would put their beak in our mouth and eat from our mouths. And I know that sounds terrible, but it wasn't terrible. I mean, it was sweet and precious, but the squabs lived, and that's the—that was how we figured out—they wouldn't take it from our hand, but they would take it from our mouths.

SL: Take it from the mouth.

PP: It was so funny, and yet it was so—it made you feel you were giving such a gift of life to another creature by doing this, so it didn't bother us at all to have this happen.

SL: I wonder if that's how their mothers would feed them.

PP: I don't know.

SL: I . . .

PP: I do not know.

[02:40:43] SL: That's so interesting. And so, what did they do with the pigeons? I mean . . .

PP: Well, now, this is what I don't know because—I know they were still in our backyard, and I don't know what Mother and Daddy did with 'em. But they either sold 'em or gave 'em away to

another group. But it was an unusual thing for Fayetteville to have. And [*SL laughs*] a marvelous thing for boys to do . . .

SL: Yeah.

PP: . . . to be involved in. And where they thought of it, I don't know. And why they invited those two girls who were in my class to join the pigeon club and didn't invite me—I don't know about that, either. [*Laughter*]

SL: That's hilarious. That's really fun.

PP: Well, you know, it was—this is what growin' up was. It was adventures all the time.

[02:41:42] SL: Tell me about Wilson Park.

PP: Well, of course, it was City Park at the time.

SL: Yeah.

PP: And my mother took me down—and she probably did it with the others, too, but she would take me down for Red Cross swimming lessons and—that were free. I think you paid to get in the pool, and then that was all . . .

SL: That's right.

PP: . . . you had to pay for. And it was my—because she was not a swimmer. My father loved swimming, but she'd never learned to swim, and she was determined that her girls were gonna learn to swim. So one by one, you know, as we grew older—and so, we

would go down, and she would sit there on the bench while I took the lessons and then dressed, and she would always bring raisins to give me [*laughs*] strength and energy, you know. Because going down to City Park was all downhill for us but goin' home was all uphill. But for her to take all that time out of her morning when she was so busy with so many children to concentrate on one child to be sure that I learned to swim, it was just a remar—well, you know, when I think back about it. But even at the time I was very appreciative. I really wanted to learn how to swim. And did.

[02:42:58] SL: So it, by that time, it was a regular swimming pool.

PP: Oh, it was a regular swimming pool. Same size. I'm sure it's the one it is now. And—but it was a gift to our end of town, and it was wonderful to have one that you could walk to, and lots, of course, lots of people did. But I would always—every summer—would swim, you know, a lot. It was a great thing to look forward to.

[02:43:27] SL: Well, now, how much time did you spend on Dickson Street on the other side of College—on the west side side . . .

PP: Well, course, I had to walk there every day to—goin' to high school 'cause it was on School Street. It was that big, yellow building on School Street. And so, I would be that part of—

that—you know, that's not down to the railroad tracks, quite,
but . . .

SL: Yeah.

PP: . . . but anyhow, that far down. And see, I would walk to school
in the morning, home for lunch, back after lunch, and then home
afternoon. [02:44:07] And then when we graduated and I went
to the university [*laughs*] . . .

SL: You walked up Dickson Street all the time.

PP: I walked up—I—and course, one half would be downhill, and the
other half would be uphill. And I would do the same thing over
and back and ov—and then home for lunch and then back and
then—in the afternoon. Then if I went back to study hall or
something like that, that'd be six—and it was only . . .

SL: Trips.

PP: Not quite a mile, but almost a mile. That'd be almost six miles a
day. And course, lots of times friends would stop, you know,
and give me a ride. But I—oh, if you could've seen me in the
morning tryin' to make an eight o'clock class. [*SL laughs*]
Running down the [*laughs*] first half of Dickson Street and
panting all the way back all the way up the other side of it. It
was funny. And I know one time in—I had doctor—ooh, for
science, for zoology—I loved him. But anyhow, I came flying in

a little bit late. He was standing there at the door of the classroom, and he looked at me, and he said, "Go in the restroom and comb your hair!" [*Laughter*]

SL: Boy, you probably don't get that anymore.

PP: Oh, oh, it began with a C. I just almost could say it. But any—I guess he's before your time.

[02:45:37] SL: So I wanna maybe go over some of the businesses that were on Dickson Street at that time.

PP: Well, there were not so many—Jerpe's. Do you remember Jerpe's?

SL: Jerpe's?

PP: Did you ever know about Jerpe's?

SL: I don't think I ever knew about Jerpe's.

PP: Foulest smelling. And I don't remember now exactly what it was, but it was terrible—just the odor that they put out on Dickson Street. And then you'd come up to Shipley Baking and the smell of the baking bread—oh, it was so wonderful. There were not so many—now, Palace Drugstore was there.

SL: Now, Palace was up on the Square, wasn't it?

PP: No.

SL: Colliers, you mean, maybe?

PP: No, Palace.

SL: It was Palace?

PP: This was Palace.

SL: Okay.

PP: It really was Palace.

SL: Okay.

PP: And it was on the north side of the street and pretty much towards the railroad station.

SL: Okay.

PP: And—but a pretty big drugstore, and you know, you could go in, and they had a fountain. It was before Colliers ever moved on . . .

SL: Okay.

PP: . . . on Dickson Street.

SL: Okay.

PP: It was the only drugstore, as I recall, on Dickson. And then they had laundry.

SL: Across the street from . . .

PP: It was on the corner.

[02:46:53] SL: Uh-huh. Well, now, wasn't—didn't that used to be a hotel a long time ago, Scott Hotel? Wasn't there a hotel there? I think it was . . .

PP: Where the laundry was? Where the . . .

SL: Yeah, which became the . . .

PP: But what family had the laundry? I knew 'em. They went to our church. I think it began with a *W*.

SL: Woodruff?

PP: Woodruff. [*Laughs*] Ah, yes. Let me see what else. They had bookstores.

SL: George's?

PP: Oh, always.

SL: George's Majestic Lounge.

PP: Always. Always. Always.

SL: Course, the train station.

PP: Uh-huh.

SL: And was Piggly Wiggly . . .

PP: Now, that I don't remember.

[02:47:34] SL: It was later. And then what about—well, of course, Central Methodist Church . . .

PP: Yes, where . . .

SL: . . . was there.

PP: . . . just where it is now.

SL: Yeah.

PP: The Baptist church and . . .

SL: Not nearly as big, but . . .

PP: Yeah.

SL: . . . it was there.

PP: Yes.

SL: And was the Baptist church . . .

PP: Yes.

SL: . . . there on the corner?

PP: Mh-hmm.

[02:47:51] SL: And then, let's see. What about City Lumber?

Wasn't City Lumber . . .

PP: Well, it wasn't on . . .

SL: . . . on the right . . .

PP: It . . .

SL: . . . goin' down . . .

PP: . . . it wasn't quite on Dickson, was it?

SL: Well, they had a door on Dickson, but the yard and everything was back behind. I think that's the way it was.

PP: Uh-huh. Yes, it was there.

[02:48:14] SL: Tryin' to remember what was in—oh, the icehouse.

PP: The what?

SL: Icehouse.

PP: Oh yes. And see . . .

SL: And . . .

PP: . . . we used to buy ice and . . .

SL: Let's talk about buying ice.

PP: Well, we [*laughs*] took milk. We got raw milk, and you would know the dairy if I could think of the name of it.

SL: Coleman?

PP: No.

SL: Foremost?

PP: No.

SL: No.

PP: No, I think it's maybe . . .

SL: Gone.

[02:48:43] PP: And we got—but it was raw milk and had cream, you know, there, which Mother took off first for Daddy's coffee.

SL: Now, did they deliver that?

PP: They delivered it on the front porch, and we'd put little signs out, you know, if we wanted extra cream or, you know, what—or not so much milk or whatever, or more. [02:49:02] And then ice was delivered. And course, they would take their big ice . . .

SL: Block.

PP: . . . their big picks, you know, and carry it around to the back and up the back stairs and on the back porch, and there was our icebox—and put fifty pounds of ice in the icebox, and that's what

we used for ice for making ice cream or tea, iced tea. It was . . .

[02:49:29] SL: Did you have a refrigerator that had an ice storage on it?

PP: The refriger—this icebox had ice over here [indicates adjacent spaces], but this was the refrigerator. This was the cool part over here.

SL: Okay.

PP: And the ice cooled it. And I don't remember how often it was delivered but every two or three days. And the milk was delivered. And then the mail was delivered. And see, we thought these services were just fantastic, you know . . .

SL: Well, they were.

PP: . . . that they would bring it to us.

SL: They were.

PP: And yet, of course, we helped them, too, by take—buying their wares, which they delivered. [02:50:07] But it was—I don't know. And my father bought groceries. Almost every week he would go on Saturdays, and he would buy all the groceries. And somehow, either Mother kept a list for him, or he just kept up . . .

SL: Knew what to get.

PP: . . . and knew what we needed. And—but on Saturdays it was

kind of fun because he would buy sandwich stuff, and we would have sandwiches on Saturday at noon, which, see, we always had a cooked meal, a balanced meal. Lots of vegetables and meat and potatoes every day at noon. But on Saturdays we had sandwiches.

SL: Sandwiches.

[02:50:50] PP: And somehow, eating a sandwich seemed sort of—well, I don't know—illicit or somethin'. [*Laughter*] And then he would buy candy bars for us.

SL: Uh-oh.

PP: And that was what—be what we'd have for dessert. [02:51:03] Now, Mary loved to bake, and she would bake on Saturdays lots of times. And another interesting thing that we did—why the neighbors loved us so was that Mary would bake sugar cookies. And we would put 'em in sacks and sell 'em to the neighbors for ten cents a dozen.

SL: Wow!

PP: Less than a penny apiece. Well, they did love that. [*Laughter*] Homemade sugar cookies.

SL: Sure.

PP: Yeah. But Mary really did—she always loved to cook. She loved to can. She loved to garden. She was my mother's child and—

but she would off—she often would bake, you know, like, maybe a four-layer cake, you know, and ice every layer just—she just loved doing—it was kind of an artistic creation for her, too.

[02:51:52] SL: Well, sure. You know, we've talked a little bit about your father, and I know that you were close to your father. And I know having—I knew going in, and I've read some about your father, but he worked for the Fayetteville paper.

PP: Always, always. Starting when he was young.

SL: And it was the *Northwest Arkansas Times*?

PP: It was the *Fayetteville Daily Democrat*.

SL: When he first started.

[02:52:21] PP: Yes. I remember when he came home and told us, and I guess it was in the [19]30s, that they were changin' the name to the *Northwest Arkansas Times*. It sounded like it would run all the way across the paper and drop off. [Laughs] It sounded like such a big, long name.

SL: Yeah.

PP: But it, anyhow, it was—I think they want—I—and it seemed—I suppose they thought it would have more appeal not bein' the *Democrat*, you know. [02:52:46] And course, Roberta Fulbright was a Democrat, and Bill Fulbright was a wonderful Democrat. But anyhow, they changed the name.

SL: So you mentioned the Fulbrights because the Fulbrights owned the paper.

PP: Yes.

SL: And did they own it when it was the *Democrat*?

PP: Yes.

SL: And . . .

PP: And he—it was Mr. Fulbright who bought it, and when he died . . .

[02:53:12] SL: Now, we're not talkin' about Bill.

PP: Ful—no, we're talkin' bout his father. And when his father died, Roberta then had to take it over. And she [*laughs*] wasn't sure that she—now, she wrote a column for the paper called My Day, and I always read her column. And she did a lot of philanthropy in Fayetteville. She really cared. She really cared about Fayetteville and the university and goodwill for the town and the university. But she got crossways with Governor Adkins, and I expect that she—and even in the paper wrote an editorial, probably suggesting that people vote for—not for Governor Adkins but for whoever was running against him. [02:54:03] And I don't remember who it was, but Governor Adkins won, and in the meantime, Bill Fulbright was named president of the university.

SL: Oh yes.

PP: And he'd been president for three or four years and was . . .

SL: And then he got fired.

PP: He was a very popular president. Very smart. He was a Rhodes Scholar . . .

SL: Football player.

PP: . . . and football player, football hero, you know, just . . .

SL: Field-goal kicker.

PP: . . . everything. And so, then he was president of the university, and Governor Adkins fired him for no reason, and everybody knew there was no reason for it. They knew it was strictly—it was revenge for . . .

SL: [*Unclear words*].

PP: . . . his mother supporting whoever ran against him. And this was—this hit the town hard. And so, then when Governor Adkins decided to run for the Senate, well, in the meantime, Bill Fulbright had run for the House of Representatives.

SL: Yes.

PP: And—but he didn't like it. I mean, four hundred and thirty-five or . . .

SL: Thirty-five. Yeah.

PP: You know, I mean, what can you have—what can you say? How

can you do anything? [02:55:14] And so, he decided he was gonna run for the Senate, but also, Governor Adkins declared that he was not gonna run for another term and he would run for the Senate. So it was Adkins against Fulbright. And course, that pleased people in Fayetteville . . .

SL: Absolutely.

PP: . . . especially Fulbright supporters, you know, and course . . .

SL: Yeah.

PP: . . . I don't remember what the vote was. He—I don't—it wasn't a landslide for Fulbright, but he won handily. And course, the rest is history.

SL: Yes.

PP: I mean, you look at his career and how important a senator he was and the—all of the goodwill that came to Arkansas because of him. People respected him, and no doubt under Kennedy, President Kennedy, he would've been named probably secretary of state. [02:56:01] But he, course, he had to vote for the Civil Rights Act, and you know, he explained, "I have to. I can't do anything if I don't get elected, and I won't get elected in Arkansas unless I voted against the Civil Rights Act."

SL: That's right. That's probably the only blemish . . .

PP: And that—you know, but he had to do it to get there.

SL: There was that . . .

PP: People had to understand that. They didn't always, you know, but they would—and course, it was used against him.

SL: Yeah.

PP: But oh, you know, you just—we just felt like he'd probably be president someday.



[02:56:39] SL: Well, now, the Fulbright family, not only did they have the paper but they had . . .

PP: Woodworks.

SL: . . . the wood products. And they had—I know they had a beer distributorship . . .

PP: Yes.

SL: . . . as well. And did they have the Coca-Cola Bottling . . .

PP: I think they did, maybe.

SL: . . . Company, too.

PP: Mh-hmm. They were well off.

SL: They had lots of—I wonder how they became so entrepreneurial and so success . . .

PP: Well, I think it was Roberta's husband because she really felt, I think, a little lost after he died. And she—here she was. And—but she was smart, too, and she—you know, it was kind of like Katharine Graham when her husband died, and she felt like, "I

cannot run the paper," but she could. She not only could but did. And did a wonderful, wonderful job. And this was during Watergate. People—lots of times women because of the way they were brought up don't seek out managerial positions, and other people don't think of 'em in terms of managerial positions.

SL: Sure.

PP: But when they're placed in 'em and there's no other person to put there that would be logical . . .

SL: They ri—they . . .

PP: . . . they rise to the occasion. They really do. And I think that happens in lots of cases. And I know—I think I have heard this—that the presidency makes the man. You know, you rise to that. If you—if people didn't think that you were, you know, prepared for it, but you rise to it as you serve. [02:58:28] It was—and then Mrs. Fulbright was so kind always to us. Always on Thanksgiving and Christmas, she'd bring us a big turkey.

SL: Oh my gosh.

PP: And that was the nicest thing she could have done for such . . .

SL: She . . .

PP: . . . a big family.

SL: . . . she came to your door?

[02:58:44] PP: Oh yes. And then when—and then she was a really

good friend of Jim Parks, my husband's father, here in Prairie Grove. And he was a big Democrat, and my father was a big Democrat, but he didn't talk about it, and he didn't—but Jim Parks all but emblazoned [*SL laughs*] his shirt, you know, with it. And all the Democrats in the county who were running for office would come to him first and want his endorsement. And if they had that, they felt they could win because everybody so respected Jim Parks. [02:59:18] So when Donald and I got married, here were two big Democrat fathers, you know, that she knew about. And she gave for a wedding gift a beautiful tablecloth—still have it—twelve matching napkins and an antique, cut-glass . . .

SL: Oh my gosh.

PP: . . . that had been in her family—silver sugar and creamer. And I have treasured 'em always, you know. And I—it's been sixty years since I've been married. It was—and then wrote me the sweetest card, and I have it. I don't know exactly where it is, but I know I still have it. And it—you know, the uniting of the two families. She was so pleased about that. But she all—she took an interest in the employ—in the people that were associated with the paper. She wasn't high-hat, you know, or—now, we were not close friends, but we were friends, and she

certainly thought a lot of my dad. And they had an old, at that time, an old printing press, and it broke down all the time, and only my dad knew how to fix it. And he worked overtime so much and—but she told him—she said, "Gene, you know, we just couldn't put out a paper without you." And literally, they couldn't 'cause they could—never coulda gotten it printed, you know, if he hadn't known how to fix that old press.

[03:00:52] SL: Now, there were some other neighbors down the street from you that also worked at the paper. Didn't David Gearhart's daddy . . .

PP: Well . . .

SL: That was later, though, wasn't it?

PP: No, no, no. This was what was really interesting because Lewis Epley and David Gearhart and I—David Gearhart wanted to replace the old health center at the university. Wanted to remodel it, take off part of it, add some to it, remodel what they had, and make a—enlarge the building because they were having to turn away every semester men and women who wanted to be nurses, who had very high grade points and wanted to be nurses, and they couldn't take 'em because they didn't have room. They didn't have the space, the teachers, the money, the books, the—whatever. And he came down—

Chancellor Gearhart came down and talked to me about this and—knowing that this was a burden on my heart 'cause I had been to a committee meeting of the College of Education and Health Professions, and they had mentioned there that they had to turn away nurses. And I said, "I can't believe it." And they said, "We don't have room." They had very frugal, hardly passable facilities.

SL: Yes.

[03:02:29] PP: And he wanted so badly to do this building and do it right and do it big, and they wouldn't have to turn away any nursing students anymore. So I gave a contribution to it, and Lewis Epley did, and they named the facility for Lewis Epley—for his wife. She was a—for Donna.

SL: Donna.

PP: She was a nurse. And then they named the floor where the nursing students will be on the inside for my mother, in memory of my mother. And [*laughs*] so, we—so Chancellor Gearhart had a luncheon—I mean, a dinner party—and there were other people there, and David and Pam were there, but there were other people there. But it was Lewis Epley and Chancellor Gearhart and Peggy Parks. And I said, "Do you all realize that Lewis Epley's father and Chancellor Gearhart's father and

grandfather and my father all worked at the newspaper at the same time? So here we three are, and we've also had this other connection." And it just seemed like it was meant to be. It just seemed like such a precious touch that the three fathers had worked together. And course, actually, Mr. Sam Gearhart was there most of the time that my father was, and George came in later. So I'm not sure that he was there when my father worked, but he was when Mr. Epley did. And my father was Mr. Epley's boss. So—and I knew about Lewis. I didn't know him personally but I—and I—he had polio when he was young . . .

SL: That's right.

PP: . . . when he was in high school. And—but it just seemed like it was such—to share this situation, you know, as well as the past situation with our fathers, was a sweet tie-up.

[03:04:23] SL: Now, the high school—I mean, let's see, now. You were at Washington Elementary one through six.

PP: Eight.

SL: Eight. So that was also a junior high—what . . .

PP: Mh-hmm.

SL: . . . would become—be considered junior high school.

PP: Mh-hmm.

SL: And . . .

PP: And then four years of high school.

SL: And so, you started high school in ninth grade.

PP: Mh-hmm.

SL: And that high school used to be where the high-rise . . .

PP: Mh-hmm.

SL: . . . is now . . .

PP: Mh-hmm.

SL: . . . in Fayetteville.

PP: Mh-hmm.

SL: So really, you didn't meet many kids from any of the other Fayetteville schools . . .

PP: Until high school.

SL: . . . until high school.

PP: Mh-hmm.

[03:05:06] SL: So what—who were some of your classmates when you got to high school?

PP: Well, now, you mean the ones—well, they would've gone through element—for Washington Elementary, also.

SL: Yeah, but there was also Leverett school . . .

PP: So . . .

SL: . . . right?

PP: Okay, but when you said classmates, see, we didn't know 'em

when they came, and we had to get to know them . . .

SL: Right.

PP: . . . and did, of course.

SL: Mh-hmm. Yeah.

PP: But from Jefferson and Leverett—and I don't think Westside was still operating. I think it was just Jefferson and Leverett and maybe Catholic school.

SL: The Catholic school.

[03:05:46] PP: And then there was another private school, Miss Campbell's school, that was on Dickson Street.

SL: That kinda sounds familiar. That kind of . . .

PP: It was on Dickson Street, up at the mountain—at the first part of the mountain, I believe. Now, that was early grades.

SL: I can't remember that.

PP: I bet they were—it's gone.

SL: But the name is familiar.

PP: I bet she's gone. But it was right above Big Springs, just right there. But we just didn't know those others, you know, until we got to high school.

SL: Well . . .

[03:06:20] PP: In ninth gra—and the funny thing—you know, we've talked about it, but I said—when you think about it, we went

eight years to elementary school during the Depression, and all of the problems and the lack of things and, you know, maybe the lack of jobs. And then our four years of high school are the exact four years of World War II, and so, it was another time of deprivation. And I know when I did another interview and this Russian videographer . . .

SL: C. F. Hyatt.

PP: Hyatt. And I'd never met him. And at the end of it, he said, and I just think he was precious to say it, but he said, "You know," he said, "you talk about how hard things were, you know, growing up during the Depression and then World War II and all that it brought." And my brother was missing in action for a while, and that was devastating to the family. And he said, "But in spite of the deprivations, you make it sound like it was a dream"—how did—is that—I can't remember what he said—"a dream place to grow up." And I said, "We think so, too." And I said, "It isn't just me. It's my whole class feels that way, and that we grew up, in spite of the deprivations, that we grew up in the best time in Fayetteville. We were very naive all the way through school. We concentrated on schooling. We all—we tried hard. We were good students. When the war was going on, when it had just—it was just like that big, yellow high school was

sort of a haven of protection for us. And when we got inside of that, we concentrated on our lessons. And we didn't talk about the war. And I can remember asking my father, who worked for the newspaper, "What on earth would you print in the paper if the war weren't going on?" 'cause the war took up the whole paper. And [*sighs*] I couldn't imagine what kinda news was worthy enough for a newspaper besides a war. [*Laughs*] I just couldn't imagine what it would be. [03:09:01] And—but we didn't talk abou—and I so appreciate our teachers 'cause we had wonderful teachers in high school.

SL: Let's talk about them.



PP: Well, they really cared. They really cared. And of course, with the war and the rationing things, and they asked the school to help with the rationing because it was such an enormous job to get people enrolled and get them the ration coupons that they would need for sugar and gasoline and rubber tires and meat and chocolate. I mean, there were a—so they asked the school to help. And the school—if there were students that were keeping up with their work and not falling behind and could do—could handle this they chose them to work in the rationing. It was considered quite a, you know . . .

SL: An honor.

PP: . . . a compliment to be chosen to work for it. And . . .

[03:09:56] SL: What did you—what did they do? What did . . .

PP: Well, we enrolled 'em, and I can't remember exactly how we did—how we distributed these but we knew—and course, you got so many coupons according to how many were in your family. And course, there were seven in my family. My oldest sister had already married, so there were seven in my family. And I can remember Mother on—across the stove she had six little jars of sugar, and this was for coffee or cocoa in the morning. [*Laughs*] And this way—you know, I told you my mother would never let us quarrel, and this is the way she, you know, kept us from quarreling because, you know, you just know that one child's gonna say, "Well, so-and-so got some out of mine," you know. And when she would make cocoa for us in the morning or if they wanted coffee, if they were that old, she'd take a spoon out of . . .

SL: Each one.

PP: . . . each little jar. [*Laughs*] And then if people gave us gift boxes at Christmas of chocolates—same thing. Seven rows. And everybody, you know . . .

SL: Was equal.

[03:11:02] PP: And that's important to plan ahead. I mean, she's

like a general, you know. If you don't wanna have problems, you gotta think about this and plan for it and do it a certain way, and then you don't have any reason for any problems. But it was—I was so glad because we were serious about our lessons. We were just a good class, and we didn't—you know, there—no drugs, no drinking, no smoking. We just didn't cause problems. We wouldn't have disappointed our parents for anything to have done something and brought disgrace on the family. And this is the way the Oriental people feel. They don't have any prob—in—where—California—you know, where they had big settlements of Orientals . . .

SL: Sure.

PP: . . . and no problems.

SL: Yeah.

PP: Well, that's it. They will not bring disgrace on their family.

That's the worst thing they can do. [03:12:08] And I think we sort of had that same feeling without it being discussed, that it would be too embarrassing to do something really bad and then have our families, our parents, find out about it and be so disappointed in us. We always wanted to make 'em proud. And so, here we were, going through freshman, sophomore, junior, senior, and really getting a lot of honors on Honors Day that

were not just academic but extra things. And I, for one—my—most of my honors were [*laughs*] on extra things—oratorical contests, essay contests, things like that where I had won prizes. And they—it would come—it'd be announced on Honors Day. But Louise Bell, who was our . . .

SL: Running out of tape?

BP: Outta tape. [*Unclear words*] change.

SL: Okay. We're gonna change tape. Let's stand up.

[Tape stopped]

[03:13:07] SL: This is tape number four, Bruce?

BP: Yes, sir.

SL: So you're bout, what? Halfway through? [*Laughter*] You know, we were talkin' about high school, and I do wanna—we can keep talking about that, but I wanna get back to your dad, too, because . . .

PP: Okay, I wanna tell you one more thing about the high—see, I think I was getting ready to tell it.

SL: Okay, okay.

[03:13:31] PP: But Mrs. Bell—Mrs. Bunn Bell, who was our . . .

SL: Yes.

PP: . . . English teacher.

SL: Yes.

PP: When she came to our first class reunion—and I think we waited forty-five ye—[*laughs*] I think, you know, that it was a long time. But anyhow, she said, "You all were my favorite class." And we were good. [03:13:49] We—and we were serious students, but the funny thing was that on V-J Day when the war was over the two—two of the best boys in the class who had never done anything wrong or bad and made top grades and one was president of the class his junior year, and the other one was president of the class his senior year, and they wanted to celebrate the day. And how do you celebrate? The war is over. You've been in it nearly four years, and it's over, and things are gonna go back to normal, and how do you spend this day, you know. You just gotta do somethin'. So they made three bombs, and they took one to the Root gymnasium or Root school and tried it, but it bombed. So they did a few—a little adjusting and then they decided to take 'em to Springdale. [*SL laughs*] So where nobody would know 'em. [03:14:51] And they took 'em to Springdale and set off those two bombs, and these worked, and I thought, "Here I've told everybody we never did anything bad. We just wouldn't do it. We wouldn't embarrass our parents and disappoint them that way!" And here are the two best boys in the [*laughter*] class who made bombs. But you

know? You just had to do something wonderful that was—would mark the time—mark the day. Before, they had put out extra editions of the paper when Roosevelt died and on V-E Day and now on V-J Day, and I would go up and help them sell the extra editions of the paper. And I can't remember—I guess I did go up that day. But you just had to do somethin'. It was just fantastic.

[03:15:42] SL: Well, now, did you know guys that were in the war? I mean, besides your brother or . . .

PP: Well, yes. However, my class, see, was graduated in [19]45. And through that summer some of 'em were already, you know, expecting to be called up. And we've already had V-E Day, so if they were called up, they would have to go to . . .

SL: To go to Japan.

PP: . . . the Pacific, which would be awful. And nobody knew about—even Harry Truman didn't know about the atomic bomb because Roosevelt had really kinda secluded Harry Truman, and so, when Roosevelt died, Harry Truman didn't know about this. And they had to tell him, "Well, we're working on something, and we're testing it, and it might be something that would bring an end to the war." [03:16:43] And so, they kept him informed, and when they really did have the atomic bomb—they

made three. And course, he had to, you know, battle with his conscience because they were so devastating. And to drop one of those over a town would just completely obliterate it, and yet he had to think about fighting a war in the Pacific, and the Japanese would never give up—to the last man. And to save our boys, he felt like he had to use the bomb to let them know that we have this great power, and we can use it against you. We don't want to, but we can. So he ordered the Enola Gay to carry the first atomic bomb to Hiroshima and dropped it, and course, Harry Truman was—"Please. Please give up 'cause we've got more." [*Laughs*] But he was sayin' that to himself. They didn't know how many we had. But he already had figured out if they didn't—if we didn't drop two pretty close together, then they might think, "Well, this is all they've got," you know. And so—but if we drop two, it's like, we've got this one and this one and this one and this one." So they . . .

SL: What city's next?

PP: . . . so they dropped it on Nagasaki, and the Japanese surrendered.

[03:18:20] SL: Do you remember where you were when that first bomb fell?

PP: No, I don't, and I knew people who thought it was an—a very

immoral thing to do because it just killed everything. But all bombs do bad—kill children and women and sick people in hospitals. But I don't remember other than the fact that even in the newspapers they were saying, "This could bring about an end to the war," and that seemed to be the most important thing. And then when they dropped it again—and course, I didn't know how many they had and—but apparently they had three, but it didn't take all three, thank goodness. But the Japanese said later, "You know, we don't blame you—the United States for dropping it. If we'd had the atomic bomb, we would've used it and wouldn't have really worried about it."

[03:19:28] SL: You know, that stuff is topical now. Nuclear warfare is topical now. It's really quite a threat all the time.

PP: And you know, if you just sit around and think about it, you could just live your life in terror and just not wanna go out and not—you know, just kinda huddle up in a cave somewhere. But I think it's really important to live each day as fully as you can in reaching out to others, by being with them, a telephone call, a letter, an email, Twitter. [*Laughs*]

SL: Yeah.

[03:20:15] PP: And yet I really think, in a way, that when Hyatt said that the things I had talked about made life seem so hard back

when I was growing up, and it was hard. But he said, "But you make it sound like a dream life," and that's the way we felt about it. And way we feel about it now, that it was a dream life and that all the things that we learned to appreciate and not to take it for granted helped us to be the men and women that we are. When we had our first class reunion, each person wrote up a synopsis of life after graduation and up to that particular point. And I promise you nearly every one of 'em were involved in some kind of philanthropic or some kind of giving situation—giving time, giving money, giving whatever that they had to help other people. It was amazing to me that it—just almost the entire class.

[03:21:32] SL: You know, you mentioned Miss Bell. And you did so because—I know 'cause I've always heard what an incredible teacher and person she was, but people listening to our conversation probably have no idea who Miss Bell was. Can you talk a little bit about her?

PP: Well, she—her husband, Bunn Bell, was the comptroller or the— at the university. In charge of money. And a very, very good position. She had always taught and she—I ca—I don't know whether you would know that name or not. I cannot remember. But they said he was such a difficult boy to teach. He just hated

school and hated that they made him go to school and—but the only one that—whose class he would go in and sit and learn and be respectful was Louise Bell's class. And he . . .

SL: It could've been my brother. [*Laughs*]

PP: No, it was a different name. It was an . . .

SL: Okay.

PP: . . . entirely different name.

SL: Okay.

PP: And it was not anybody that I knew, but they would always tease—and it may be someone that came after me, but they would always laugh about it that she commanded such respect in the classroom that you just didn't—that there was just—you just wouldn't do it. You would just make a complete fool of yourself, and you wouldn't be getting the class's attention because they wouldn't like you at all because they had so much respect for the teacher. [03:23:10] And I know the highest compliment that any student can say of me is that we had such respect for her in the classroom. And I know Dr. Andrew Bain is my dentist, and I taught him in the fourth grade, and he'd had a bad third grade and hated school. He was real smart, but he and his teacher—she was too easy for him. And he was bored and frustrated and when he got—came in to fourth grade, everything changed

'cause I was a tough teacher. [*SL laughs*] And I taught eight solid subjects and we cou—we di—went into all eight of 'em thoroughly every day. And the minute that they came in, while I was taking the roll, they had papers on their desk to start on. And they would have a math sheet. They would have a language sheet. They would have spelling words. So while I'm takin' the roll, instead of that being lost time, they were already at work.

SL: Workin'.

[03:24:14] PP: And the room was quiet. And then—and we checked—and I always checked everything they did. I never let them think that I—they did it, and I put it in the wastebasket. I—it was always graded and then sent home for signature if it was not a good paper. That sort of thing. But Andrew Bain went home—I guess, after the—bout the first two or three weeks of school and told his mother, who was a friend of mine, and said, "Mother, from now on I'm gonna do everything just perfectly." And he did. [*SL laughs*] Not only in fourth grade, but when it came time for high school, he went into Fayetteville High School and the ni—for the ninth and for the tenth, eleventh, and twelfth grades. Graduated the top of his class. [*Coughs*] Went to college, graduated the top of his class, and went to dental

college and graduated the top of his class. And you know, he was such a—and he is such a smart boy. He was mayor of our town and, oh, loved it—would continue to be mayor, but he moved out of the limits, and he can't serve as mayor now.

[03:25:32] But what also—and then I have another student who went in the service and—in the Navy. He got—he went to the naval college for college and was in the submarine service. And he worked up to bein' a commander of a submarine. And I would get notices of, every once in a while, of his promotions and things like that. And then they had a ceremony that I was invited to and would've loved to have gone for the change of commander because he had been upgraded.

SL: Promoted.

PP: Had been promoted to the Department of Justice.

SL: Hmm.

PP: Department of—no, Department of Defense, DOD . . .

SL: Okay, okay.

PP: . . . to the Department of Defense. Imagine.

SL: Prairie Grove.

PP: Prairie Grove. And he didn't—he applied, and we got Senator Bumpers's recommendation for the naval college, and he didn't get it. But his father had graduated from the naval college, and

so, he had a second chance. And—but what happened was—the reason he didn't get it—his grades were fine, but he hadn't had some of the upper math courses that in bigger high schools they teach and we didn't teach. And so, he took that year off and went to Rensselaer College in New York, took all of these classes, found a student across the hall from him, an Oriental student who was really, really, really smart, and he tutored him in some of these things that he didn't quite have the background for. And when he applied again . . .

SL: He got it.

PP: . . . he got it. But I told him—I taught him not only in fourth grade, but I taught him in Sunday school, and I told him—I said, "Now, Robbie, you better have a plan B. You know, just because you get Bumpers's recommendation doesn't mean you're definitely gonna get in," although we thought it would. "But you need to have a plan B in place so that you won't be devastated and you won't think your life is over and 'What'll I do now?' But get it in place now." And he said, "We already have." He said, "I have enrolled at Rensselaer if I don't get in."

SL: There you go.

PP: I was so proud of him.

SL: Oh!



PP: Oh, so proud of him. And course, I'm so proud of him now. My goodness! [03:28:10] So that's another thing about a small town. You really get to know your students, their families, and they keep up with you. [*Laughs*] And you think, you know—not that you had any part in the fact that they did so well. I mean, it was in 'em to do well. They had the promise of it. They had the wherewithal to work with if they so chose to do it. But just to think you were a small part of it and you got to see them succeed in life and do so well and be honored for it. And it just—it's not a sense of pride, except pride in them, but it's a sense of being grateful that you got to be a part of that person's life and then to see how everything worked out. I just wouldn't trade it for anything.

[03:29:17] SL: You know, I would think that one of the most rewarding things about teaching would be when you get to see that light turn on.

PP: Oh yes, and it does. [*Laughter*]

SL: I mean, it, you know, it's kind of a vague, you know, unfocused presence, and then all of a sudden [*snaps fingers*], somethin' happens, and you can just see it come across their face and their language and their—the way they sit and the way they—their work changes and everything . . .

PP: And their whole attitude about life changes. Now they know that in order to get ahead, they've got to put a lot into it. They also know that that's where you feel good about not only yourself but your life. Because if you can meet a problem that's difficult and you can overcome it, you can handle it, you can take charge of it, it does something inside of you to fulfill you and just give you that feeling. "Yes, I can do it. I can make a difference in the world." And maybe not for a lot of people. Maybe just for two or three. But for those two or three, you don't know where they're gonna go. I just—I think that teaching is such—it's such an opportunity to instill in youngsters the fact that you may not do as well as this one over here in a certain subject, but you do better than this one over here in another subject. But you begin to learn about your strengths and your weaknesses and what you need to fill in the blanks. And all of a sudden, you realize there's a great purpose in life. It's not just makin' money, even if it's a big pile of money and even if you gave all that money away. It's not just that. It's what it does for you—what it makes—how it makes you feel about yourself, how it makes you feel about life, how it makes you feel about using your time.



[03:31:36] And I think now at my age, I am so grateful. I am so grateful to have lived this long and to have had these

wonderful experiences. And you know, I just—not—it's not anything like I would have anticipated. And when I saw old age in people that I knew growing up, it isn't at all like I feel or like I can do. And I think that it's given me a whole new outlook because if you have reached an age that seems old to everybody, you have so much experience behind you, and you have so much gratitude, and you have so much desire to keep on living and doing and serving and being. And it's just—I don't—it's hard to express but I just—my life is just completely filled up with gratitude for everything that's happened in my life.

[03:33:02] Now, I had to have a big operation for suspected ovarian cancer. And when the doctor told me they've—there are no symptoms. If there were symptoms, it's already too late.

But I had gone in just for a regular physical. And Dr.

Montgomery, my doctor—and he would always say when he

gave me a physical—he'd say, "Now, this is gonna hurt because I press real hard." And I'd say, "But that's what I'm here for."

SL: [Laughs] Yeah.

PP: And so, in pressing real hard, he found a problem with the right ovary and sent me to have a sonogram, and sure enough, what he felt was there. And—but then to have the surgery, I had to have a gynecologist to do the surgery. He couldn't do the

surgery.

SL: That's right.

PP: So he had to pick out one for me. [*Laughs*]

SL: Yeah.

PP: And so, he chose a surgeon, and I went to him, and he didn't find anything. He said, "I wanna do my own pelvic exam." "Okay." He said, "I don't find anything. I have a sonogram in my clinic. Let me do a sonogram on you here." "Okay." "I still don't find anything." And then I'm just in a sea of confusion.

SL: Sure.

PP: I mean, this is his territory. And so, then he said, "I hate to ask you, but I want you to go back to the radiology clinic and have another sonogram." "All right." I'm just one who doesn't ask questions. I just—"If you—I have faith in you, and if you think this is what I need to do, I will do it." [03:34:44] So I went back, but I got the same technician, and she said, "What are you doing back?" And I said, "It's not my idea." And she said, "You know, I told you. You were fortunate that you go to the doctor you do 'cause," she said, "most doctors would've missed this." And the doctor whose territory it is, and he should know it like the back of his hand, missed it. So when they were goi—ready to do the sonogram, they called him, the gynecologist, and he

came down, and they found the problem for him. [*SL laughs*]

And I thought, "You know, my doctor is just an internist, and he always apologizes when he gives me a physical that he presses so hard that it might hurt." And that's how he found what saved my life. And you know, before I—and actually, you don't know till you have the surgery. You just don't know. And the surgery is really something for a woman. But I had it, and the funny thing was—and I—I'll never quite understand, but I'll never forget this. But before I went in for that surgery, the night before, I hadn't called anybody to pray for me. Nobody in my church. No pastor. No anybody. And I said, "Lord, I want you to know that however this turns out"—thinking of that verse in Jeremiah, "For I know the plans I have for your life." Okay, if this is something that God had planned for me for a reason that I couldn't comprehend of at this point but I would see later on, if this was it or if it turned out to be—if the surgery turned out that it wasn't malignant—but I said, "Lord, whichever way it goes, I want you to know right now that I will accept it as part of your plan for my life and that if it comes out and it's a bad report, I know that you will walk with me through it all and guide me and lead me and let me feel your presence." And with that I went into surgery. [03:37:44] And it was an enormous incision and—

but it turned out well. And I felt so grateful, but I knew if I didn't decide ahead of time that I could accept it either way, I would just be a shambles if it turned out bad. I would just be—I would be completely undone. But if I make up my mind ahead of time that this is part of God's will for my life and I will accept it either way—so when the doctor dismissed me, I told him—I said, "Well, either you're a great surgeon or I'm a great patient [*laughs*] 'cause I could walk outta here, even with that long incision." And he said, "It was your attitude." He said, "I wish all my patients had your attitude." And I said, "Well, it took me [*laughs*] three weeks to get it, but I got it. I knew it was necessary for me to have that attitude before you ever touched me with the knife." You can imagine me living each day now in such utter gratitude.

[03:39:08] SL: [*Unclear words*]. You know, I'm thinking back over all the stuff that we've talked about, and it just seems to me that somewhere along the line you really got a big dose of faith. And I don't know—I mean, did you ever think when you were . . .

PP: It's . . .

SL: . . . singing the hymns washin' the dishes or singin' the hymns hoein' the garden or . . .

PP: Well, I've always had that close feelin' with God, but on the

other hand, look at my mother teachin' me to pray when I could barely talk, sending me to not only our Bible school but the one at the Christian church and the Baptist church and the Methodist church and then going off to our church camp at Ferncliff. And I did church work so that I was elected president of the young people in the state of Arkansas in the Presbyterian Church US. And I went around the state making speeches to young people, and that's why I had—I got to go to Montreat for leadership training. And then from Montreat they picked three of us to go to a seminar on world order in New York City at the brand-new United Nations, which was still out at Lake Success at that time, and I was one of the three picked. And I went—I—it just seems like I've had this kind of training all my life. Well, I did think that I was going to—when I went to—and I went to our church college for a year and a half. [03:41:02] And I did think maybe I was gonna do full-time Christian work. But it just didn't work out. And—but then teaching, God opened the door, and see, there it was! And yet, I didn't preach to those children at all, and we didn't read the Bible in the morning. And the only time that we ever prayed was when the mother—the child was not in my room, but she was in my reading class. And her mother committed suicide.

SL: Oh my gosh.

PP: And I prayed with my children. And you know—and I said, "I want you to think how you would feel if you went home and you had lost your mother. Your mother! The one that you always say, 'Mother, I'm home.' I mean, you know, and . . .

SL: Yeah.

PP: . . . it—the one you depend on." And I said, "I am going over to see the family, and if they ask me what to do, keep her home, send her to school, I'm gonna say, 'Send her to school.' And I'm gonna depend on you all. You don't see her all day, but in reading class, but at recess, I want you to include her in your games. I want you to express your friendship to her. I want you to—if you wanna say 'I'm sorry,' but don't drag it out. Don't ask any questions. Don't say, 'How did you feel' or 'What did your mother'—or blah, blah, you know. And I don't want you discussing this with anybody else on the playground. I don't want you giving theories and"—'cause they were making up all kinds of . . .

SL: Sure.

PP: . . . terrible things that her mother had done, which she hadn't done. And—but I said, "You know, we're not really supposed to lead you in prayer, but I'm going to this morning, and I want

you to listen to every word I say. And then I want you—that to be the last of it that I hear from any of you except what you're doing to make her life happy." She didn't come back the next day, but she did the next. And it just—they did exactly what I said—what I asked them to do. And—because that sort of thing can become gossipy, and nobody ever knew why. And it was a very difficult thing to go through, as far as I was concerned.

[03:43:51] SL: Well, it's nothing that you ever are entirely through.

PP: And you don't know . . .

SL: I mean, it's with you . . .

PP: . . . you don't know exactly how to handle it, you know. And—but I think we did the right thing. And when I did go see the family that afternoon after school and they said, "We're really wondering what to do. Should we send her back to school, or should we keep her home?" And I said, "No, send her back to school. She needs to get back into that. That's her routine, and she needs to get back into that routine where she does what the other children are doing. She's with the other children, with her peer group and with her very close friends." And I really feel like both fourth grades prepared their children for her coming back. But that's the sort of thing—and—but it's just so strange that pare—that children make adjustments. [*SL sighs*] And she

did.

[03:44:53] SL: Well, I think maybe you didn't take up the—or take up officially a Christian endeavor, but I think the quality of attention that you gave your children in your classroom was certainly spreading some goodness that . . .

PP: You know, we always—it was—I had kind of forgotten this, but we always sang a little song, "The Lord Is Good to Me." The Johnny Appleseed song. "And so I thank the Lord for giving me the things I need, the sun, the rain, and the apple seed. The Lord is good to me." We always sang that before we went to lunch.

SL: There you go.

[03:45:39] PP: And then when this whole thing came out, you know, no Bible reading, no prayer, no whatever. And—but we kept on singin' this before we'd go in to lunch. And I asked my principal about it and then my superintendent, and they said, "Keep on doin' it until some mother or father" . . .

SL: Complains.

PP: . . . "threatens to take you to court. And then you can make your decision."

SL: Mh-hmm. No one . . .

PP: But he said, "Until that happens, keep doin' it." And . . .

SL: Did anyone ever . . .

PP: No, never.

SL: Of course not.

PP: And they didn't—they really didn't think they would, and so many of the parents told me how much they appreciated that we did this.

SL: Sure.

PP: And it was just a kind of a ditty of a song, but still it brought their attention. "The Lord is good to me."

[03:46:26] SL: Okay. Now, we've skipped way ahead again. It's easy to do because, you know, I know that your love and your calling was this teaching that you got to do here in Prairie Grove, and so, it's easy to go back to it. I mean, it's—it was your gift that you gave with the time that you had to spend then, and by all accounts you did fine [*laughs*] with it and were remarkable with it. But I wanna get back to young Peggy Sue in high school, and I also want to get back—I wanna spend a little more time about your father. I mean, we've gotten pretty good glimpses of your mom, some nice images and some good stories of some of the things your mom did and how well respected she was. And we heard praise about your father's work for the newspaper and how kind he was. But I wanna—were there any

conversations that you may have had with your father that was kind of a aha moment for you or . . .

PP: Not really. Now, my mother and father never had a quarrel, ever, and they loved each other deeply. When my father proposed to my mother—she had been married—while he was in the service, she had married another man and had a daughter. And then when he came back and wanted her to marry him, she didn't think she was worthy since she was a divorced woman.

SL: Yeah, there was a stigma back then.

PP: And he loved her so dearly. And it took four years for the family [SL laughs] to convince her that [laughs] this was the thing to do.

SL: Well, that . . .

PP: Well . . .

SL: . . . tells me your father . . .

PP: But . . .

SL: . . . was persistent. [Laughs]

PP: But they loved each other so much, and course, you know, that's what they say. The best thing a father can do for his children is to love their mother 'cause that's where they get the whole idea of family and love. And so, but I was al—and my father was so gentle, and he worked so hard at the newspaper office.

[03:48:46] And he loved—his whole idea of a good time was to get—round up all the neighborhood children and we had this Dodge car a ki—a boxy car and we could put a kitchen bench between the front seats and the backseat.

SL: Now, wait a minute. A kitchen bench.

PP: It was just a bench, just a bench like that [indicates a narrow bench]. And I mean, this was a big car. It was a big, ugly car. [Laughter] But he loved Dodges. But anyhow, and we would gather up the neighborhood children and we—he would take us swimming, he and my mom, and we loved it. We would go to Lake Wedington. It was brand new, and at that time it had a white, sandy beach. It was gorgeous. He would take us to Devil's Den. They—the CCC boys were still working on this. And we'd always take a lunch, and Mother would make either ice cream or maybe pineapple sherbet in, you know, a hand-cranked—and she would offer some of her pineapple sherbet to these CCC boys and, oh, were they appreciative 'cause it was so hot and dusty. But Daddy loved to do this. This is—I mean, he didn't—he always said he would kinda like to play golf, but he didn't play golf. [03:50:06] He did go to university ball games. Now, when I was young, he took me to the university basketball games. Just the two of us. And I loved it, and I loved

basketball, and I loved to go with him. That's [*laughs*] when they played in the armory [*laughs*] that . . .

SL: The men's gym?

PP: Yes.

SL: Yeah, that's—yes, the—yeah, it's . . .

PP: Long time ago. And—but anyhow—and then, course, when he left he always kissed my mother goodbye in the morning, always. And you know, that's such a sign for children to see that—you know, it's just a sweet, dear thing. But then I would always kiss him. Course, I'd kiss him on the cheek, and if I had lipstick on, it would leave a lipstick print, you know. [*Laughter*] And he would leave it on there till [*SL laughs*]*—*and then go in the front door of the office so everybody could see it.

SL: Yes.

[03:51:01] PP: But I always—I think I—I think my brother and I both took after my father, more like him and not li—not as much like our mother. Now, Mother was very energetic and worked really hard and had to at the house with, you know, six children and all that big laundry. And we had a wringer washer.

SL: Yep.

PP: And then two pans, two big, large pans for rinsing. And putting them through the wringer each time and then taking 'em out and

hangin' 'em up.

SL: On the line.

[03:51:33] PP: And then bringin' 'em in and folding 'em and ironing 'em and—I mean, it was a big job.

SL: A big job.

PP: And so, she worked really, really hard, but she did have a kind of a great deal of energy and—I guess just 'cause she knew that—but she was always up in the morning and dressed and making our breakfast and sending us off with breakfast. Fixing our lunch and having it ready when we came in from school. And then at night, also, another meal. And then Daddy did help out. She didn't drive. She—later on, she would go to the women's association of the Presbyterian church. She would go to their meetings in the afternoon sometimes. But mostly, she was just home. And I'd go in the front door and, "Mother, I'm home," and she'd say, "I'm in here," and she'd be in the bedroom sewing, making us dresses. [03:52:37] And one time my brother said, "Well, Mother, you've never made anything for me." And she made him a shirt.

SL: Oh.

PP: And it was funny because he was feeling really left out. She sewed . . .

SL: Huh.

PP: . . . for five girls and . . .

SL: Well, sure.

PP: Yeah, and not for that boy. [*SL laughs*] But it was—I don't know. He was—well, and then we'd take the newspaper.

[03:53:02] Now, we wrote a paper, but we had to be in journalism class to do it. We didn't write a silly little school paper that had who's goin' with who and who's, you know . . .

SL: Right.

PP: . . . what and blah-blah. That little gossipy sorta thing. We were not allowed to do any of that. We wrote news. And we wrote our own headlines and our own news, and we made the mock-up of the paper, and we called it the *Junior Times*, and they published it in the *Times*.

SL: Oh, that's neat.

PP: But it had to be right.

SL: Sure.

PP: And so, our journalism teacher was—you know, she was very exact about all of this.

[03:53:39] SL: Do you remember her name?

PP: Yes, in a minute.

SL: Okay. That's all right. Keep goin'.

PP: And Mary Lou Campbell had polio when she was two or so, and she still walked with a elaborate limp. But she was real smart. Real smart. She was our valedictorian. And so, it's—but she could drive a car. I mean, she had to—she lived too—way too far and she—but she couldn't've walked that far anyhow. She couldn't have walked from my house to school. So she had a car, and she and I would be chosen to take the paper up to the newspaper office to my dad. Well, we absolutely loved it. I mean! And he'd tease us, and we'd, you know, get—have such a good time with him. But he loved young people coming in, you know, and being flirty and all of that. And one time [*SL laughs*] when we did this, we decided to just drive around the Square before we went back to high school, which was on School Street. So it turned out that there was a man on the west side of the Square, and he was stopping people and doing instant, you know, conversations with 'em, and we thought—and he was live on radio.

SL: Oh, I see. Okay.

[03:55:03] PP: We thought this would—oh, this'd be the funniest thing to do. And we got out. "Shall we?" "Yes." So we got out, and of course, when he saw two young, giggly girls, you know, he came over to us. [*SL laughs*] And we told him—he said,

"Well, what are you doin'? Why—shouldn't you be in school?"

"Yes." And we told him we'd brought the newspaper up to be printed in the Fayetteville newspaper and then we just happened to spot him on the Square. And so, then, of course, he talked to us and teased us and all, and then we went back, and we were gigglin' all the way, and we were—we could hardly wait to get in the building and tell all our friends what we had done because, as I told you, we didn't ever do anything bad. This is as bad as it ever got. [*Laughter*] And so, we thought we'd really been brave. And so, we went—got to the front door and standing right behind us, right behind the door, was the principal. She'd had the radio on in the office. She heard the whole thing. [*SL laughs*] Oh, we didn't get to tell anybody. It was just . . .

SL: Oh!

[03:56:10] PP: So—and we were punished. I can't remember—it wasn't terrible. It wasn't a spankin' or anything like that, but we were punished. And—but it took all of the funny out [*laughs*] of it 'cause we didn't get to tell our friends.

SL: Yeah, I bet your faces fell when you saw the principal.

PP: Oh, you can't imagine. [*SL laughs*] And we wondered if we—you know, then if she really knew about us—or why was she at the door? I mean, she coulda been there for some other reason

and . . .

SL: It . . .

PP: But she wasn't. [*Laughter*]

SL: You knew quickly that [*laughter*] it was about you.

PP: She said, "Girls, I have the radio on in my office." "Oh!"

[*Laughs*]

SL: Oops! Busted!

PP: Oops! [*Laughter*] But anyhow, it was funny. And—but Daddy did love us comin' up there.

[03:56:57] SL: You know, you mentioned somethin' about not gettin' a spankin' or anything. That kind of reminds me. Back then teachers did have some disciplinary latitude.

PP: Discretion, yeah.

SL: Yeah, especially in grade school. So did you ever see or hear much of that?

PP: Yes. I mean, we knew about it. And we knew [*laughs*] enough not to en—you know . . .

SL: Encourage it.

PP: Yeah, to risk it. But I do think maybe—I'm not sure, but I think maybe I got a spanking, and I'll tell you why.

SL: [*Laughs*] Okay.

PP: Okay, our first-grade teacher was so strict, and we could not

stand up in the swings. You know how you can make your . . .

SL: Sure.

PP: You could make it swing better that way.

SL: Yeah, yeah.

PP: Well, we couldn't do it. But then our second-grade teacher said we could. And so, in second grade we were standing up in the swings, da-dum, da-dum, and then we were brought in to the first-grade teacher, and she spanked us. And she wasn't our teacher, and our teacher had given us permission, and we tried to tell her that, but it didn't matter. And I just know I got a spankin' then, but that was it. But it wasn't really my fault.

[Laughs]

SL: But you didn't stand up and swing anymore.

PP: No. And maybe that's a good . . .

SL: May—that may . . .

PP: See, you never know.

SL: Yeah, that's right.

[03:58:29] PP: You know, and that's what I—why I keep goin' back to that verse in Jeremiah, "For I know the plans I have for your life." [Laughs] And I think, you know, to have a loving God who has created you in a way to fit into a purpose that will give you satisfaction and make you feel like a whole person, make you

feel like that you really do have something to give to the public. And it's so funny because Mother was recruited to get into nurse's training 'cause they were so desperate for nurses. I was recruited to teach by the, you know, the superintendent begging me to come in and fill in as a, you know, a tr . . .

SL: Substitute.

PP: Substitute teacher. And I just thought, "Isn't this funny? Here we were, created"—'cause we knew the minute we got into it that this is what God meant us to do all the time.

SL: Yeah.

PP: And yet, not only did he create us that way but he had to follow us and open the doors for us.

SL: Yeah.

PP: Good heavens, girls. [*Laughter*] And I think about that, and I just think, "God doesn't give up on us. He just doesn't."

[03:59:58] SL: [*Sighs*] So it seems like there was something else that you brought up that made me think of another question about your growin' up. Oh, you know, when did you start to drive?

PP: Never.

SL: Never? [*Claps hands*]

PP: Never. [*Laughs*] Daddy didn't teach any of us to drive. We only

had one car, and he needed it and so—and there wasn't driver's ed then in school. And so, it wasn't until I went to Batesville and I was at Arkansas College—now Lyon College. And at the same time that I entered at—after this—the first semester. I entered at the beginning of the second semester. [04:00:46] At the same time that I entered Arkansas College, five Chinese boys from Hong Kong entered. And we at—and this, to have Chinese boys at a tiny, little college in the middle of . . .

SL: In Batesville, Arkansas.

PP: . . . nowhere. And we asked 'em how in the world they had found Batesville, much less Arkansas College. And they had written to all these different colleges and, you know, beginning with A. [*Laughs*] And said, "Arkansas College was the first one to respond," and they answered immediately and said, "We're coming." And two of 'em were the sons of a very wealthy, wealthy banker in Hong Kong. And so, when they got over here, they bought a car. [04:01:35] And it was one of those boys, Eric, who taught me how to drive.

SL: How bout that?

PP: How bout that. From China! From Hong Kong!

SL: From China.

PP: And then he wanted to get into engineering, and course, then I

didn't go back after that semester. But he—I think he went another year, and then he came up here to the university 'cause he wanted to get his degree in engineering. And then he was going from here to—where am I tryin' to say? In the East—engineering?

SL: Engineering? Well, there's Lehigh, Bucknell, MIT.

PP: MIT.

SL: Okay.

PP: Then he was gonna go to MIT to get his master's—maybe his doctorate. [04:02:16] But when he was at the university, he wanted to buy a car. He didn't have—he did—he'd sold his car before he came up here, and so, he went to the Chevrolet place and picked out a car and took out a check and was going to write a check. And they said, "Now, wait a minute." And they said, "Is there some number we can call?" Because Hong Kong—I mean, how would you know? And they said, "Yes, you can call the president of the bank." And they gave the salesman at the Chevrolet place his name and the number to call. And they called it and said, "We have a customer here, Eric Li." And actually, in China it would be Li Eric. They give the last name first. But up here—and then he chose Eric. He wanted an American name when he was here, and then he went back to the

Chinese name when he went back. "But it's Eric Li, *L-I*, and he wants to write a check for"—however much the car was gonna cost. And the president of the bank said, "Unlimited resources."

[*SL laughs*] Unlimited!

SL: Unlimited.

PP: And yet he wasn't spoiled. He didn't wanna write—you know, and spend a lot of mo—but he did want a car. And it just—I mean, the car agency [*SL laughs*] was just, like, "Oh my goodness," you know. "We" . . .

SL: "Let's move you up to a Cadillac." [*Laughs*]

[04:03:47] PP: Yeah, I was gonna say maybe move it up to a different car. But we kept in touch, and I was president of the—what word we call—but it was a church-related—all churches—it was an organization, and I was elected . . .

SL: Ecumenical Council or something?

PP: Yes, uh-huh. Uh-huh.

SL: Yeah.

PP: And it was a meeting, and I asked Eric to come down and speak, and he did. And also, this Methodist minister, who wore the saddle shoes—he came down. And I'm tellin' you, they thought I'd worked up the best program they'd ever had. [*SL laughs*]
But Eric, I told—what I told him I wanted him to talk about was

that his father gave him permission to come over here to school, but before he left, "If you become a Christian, I will disinherit you." And said it to Eric and his brother. And this brother was a half brother. The father had two wives, and they lived on different floors of the same house. And the other boy's mother was the first wife and he—and so, Eric had to call her Mother but call his own mother Aunt.

SL: Wow.

[04:05:07] PP: And Eric was a handsome boy, and the other boy was not at all. But a very, very handsome boy, and I think this was a young, beautiful wife. And so—but anyhow, the father said that he would disinherit if they became Christians. Okay, they came at the semester, and pretty soon we had religious emphasis week. This is a Bible college that I went to. This is a Presbyterian college.

SL: That's unu . . .

PP: Not a Bible college but it was a Presbyterian college.

SL: Sure.

[04:05:40] PP: So we were required [*laughs*] to go every night to religious emphasis week. And the Chinese boys went, and before we knew what was happening, they went to the front of the sanctuary to profess their faith.

SL: Oh my gosh.

PP: And when you think—and they knew. They knew well what would happen when they went back to Hong Kong. And so, afterwards we were with them, and we did a lot of things with them because this was strange to all these boys.

SL: Sure.

PP: This, you know, this whole—everything. But they were all fluent in English and—but we asked 'em why they did it, and they said, "Because we wanted what you have." And you know, if every Christian made an impact like that, like those students at Arkansas College made an impact on foreigners, so much so that they craved to have what it is you have that makes you like you are. Well, it was a really fantastic moment for us, all of us.

[04:07:03] SL: Do you know whatever became of Eric?

PP: Well, after he came to the university, then he went to MIT. Then—and then—from then on I never heard from him. He went back to Hong Kong. I don't know what happened with his father, but I daresay he did not disinherit him. But I don't know. And then I had a friend at Arkansas College, and she dated one of the Chi—not one of these two but one of the others. Married him and went back to Hong Kong.

SL: Oh my gosh. Little Batesville, Arkansas.

PP: Batesville, Arkansas.

[04:07:37] SL: You know, but that college has always had a great reputation, academic reputation. And I think at one point it may have been . . .

PP: Well, it was started the same year that the university was, I believe. They thought—Batesville thought they would get the university because of the White River, the transportation.

SL: Yes.

PP: At the time, it really meant something, back in the early . . .

SL: Yeah.

PP: . . . back in the 1800s. And—but they didn't get it. They—you know, Fayetteville was chosen, and so, they . . .

SL: Well, [unclear words] outbid them.

PP: Yeah. [*SL laughs*] And so, then they just said, "Well, we're gonna have a college," and so, the Presbyterian Church built a college there. And it has grown, and I'm tellin' you, now it has—not anything is there that was there when I was there. All of the buildings are new. They were all beautifully laid out. They're all red brick. It's beautifully landscaped. It's just like—it's the most exquisite-looking college you would ever hope to see. You just can't imagine. If I were a [*laughs*] student all over again . . .

SL: You'd go right back.

[04:08:46] PP: Oh my goodness. I'm just so impressed. And I met the president of the college. He came up to see me, and I was so surprised. They called and said he wanted to come and would come at eleven o' clock on—and such a day, you know, and so, when I opened the door—ah! There was the tallest, very handsome man, and I was [*laughs*] really surprised. There wasn't anything like that when I was there. [*SL laughs*] And such a nice man he is. And his name is Weatherman. And he just—I don't know. He was—I was so taken with him, and he said, "You've got to come and see the new campus." But he said—so when he—we talked about my experience at Arkansas College. It was right after the war. [04:09:40] And they had to bring in those things that had been used during the war, those makeshift buildings.

SL: Quonset huts?

PP: Yes. Things like that for us to meet in. I mean, it wasn't—there wasn't any elegance or beauty or anything about that campus at all. But anyhow, so we had ta—we talked about that. And then when he went back, he convinced the alumni and whoever else would be in on this to make me an honorary alumni—alumna of Lyon College. And I thought that was the most precious thing.

SL: That is neat.

PP: So—but I couldn't go unless David would [*laughs*—and Pam would take me, but they said, "Oh yes, we will." So they did.

SL: It's a long drive.

PP: We had—it is. And it's long—because if you look at a map, here [points] is Fayetteville, and here [points] is Batesville. It's like this, as the crow flies.

SL: Yeah, but . . .

PP: But you have to go way down to Conway and then come up. But then . . .

SL: You can go through Harrison.

PP: Well, or through Harrison.

SL: Yeah.

PP: But then it's real windy. We came back that way. It's real wi—after you leave Harrison and go down, it's that kinda road. So—but anyhow, it was just, you know, so different. Well, he convinced whoever the powers that be that they were gonna do this, and so, David and Pam said they'd take me down there, and they did. And now it's interstate, so at least it's not—you can go a lot faster. You don't go through all of, you know, Beebe and all those towns that we actually drove through the main part of town to get there from Little Rock. But—or you can cut off at Conway, actually, and—but now it's an interstate, so

we just zipped along, and it was just like—well, okay, they're there—they're over there. [*Laughs*]

SL: [*Laughs*] Yeah.

[04:11:38] PP: That city's over there. And so, it was a lot better. And then to see that college like that. I—we were just blown away. And it was just the sweetest, sweetest thing and they—you know, just to think that he wanted to do this just for an individual was very impressive. So then the next year he called me, and he said, "I wanna come and see you and take you to lunch, and my wife wants to come along, too." And I said, "Well, I think that would be wonderful. And how would you like to have lunch at Crystal Bridges?" [*Laughs*]

SL: [*Unclear words*].

[04:12:15] PP: He said, "Well, let me ask my wife." [*SL laughs*] I'd already been. And so, he—oh, she was tickled to death. Well, they had a—Dr. Churchill in Fayetteville? He's on their board. So they were coming up to Fayetteville, and they were gonna have breakfast with Dr. Churchill at seven o' clock. So I figured that they would have breakfast from seven to nine and then go back to their place and whatever and then drive, and they'd be down in Prairie Grove at ten o' clock, and we'd take off, and we would be at Crystal Bridges at eleven. And we could see part of

it. Then have—you can eat there, you know. You can—so—and have lunch there and then see the rest of it and we—perfect day. Perfect.

SL: It's beautiful.

PP: Perfect outing. Oh, and they were so pleased, and I'm so glad I thought of it because, as I say, I had seen it, and I just was so impressed. But it made such a—they were just so delighted to see it. You know, I—that's just the way things have worked out for me, it seems. They have been so special, and I'm so grateful. And I'm—I still wanna be around, you know, and enjoy it some more.

SL: Well, you're lookin' awfully good. I think you're gonna be around for a while. I think you're doing fine. You know . . .

BP: Scott, we're runnin' out.

SL: Oh, we are?

BP: Yeah.

SL: Well, maybe we should stop here.

PP: Okay.

[End of Interview 04:13:43]

[Transcribed and reviewed by Pryor Center staff]