

## Bonnie Wickerham

**Wayne:** This is Wednesday, September 1, 2021. I'm Wayne Summers with Judy Williams and we are interviewing Bonnie Wickerham. Also present, is her daughter, **Sue Blizzard**. Bonnie, why don't you start out by telling us when and where you were born?

**Bonnie:** Well, that's a good question because I was adopted. So my folks [**William C. and Mabel D. (Hamer) Westmoreland**] got me from Coldwater, I think. **Flora Miller** was my mother's aunt. She lived down here a couple blocks and she took care of some of the children that needed families, parents, and so on. Apparently, that's how they got my name, but they went to Coldwater--why down there, I don't know--to get me. I originally was from Clinton County, in the northern part.

**Wayne:** How old were you at the time you were adopted?

**Bonnie:** Probably three months, just a baby. To me, my folks were always my folks.

**Wayne:** Where in Clinton County did they live?

**Bonnie:** Who you talking about now?

**Wayne:** Your adopted parents.

**Bonnie:** In Riley Township.

**Wayne:** So you grew up in Riley?

**Bonnie:** Yes, until we moved to town when I went to high school because there were no buses at the time.

**Wayne:** Did you go to a one-room school in Riley Township?

**Bonnie:** Yes, Plowman School.

**Wayne:** Do you have any memories of that school that you'd like to share with us?

**Bonnie:** Oh, yes! The boys. We used to have snow forts and these boys were mean and they would pack those things so solid and hammer us girls. Well, they did! They were naughty! Now, a one-room school was good. If you missed something first time around-- We all went up front, sat on a little bench. When it was our turn, our portion would go up there, and you would hear these questions and then a day or so later they'll have another group up there. You'd hear it again and I do think it helped jar it in your brain a little bit.

**Sue:** Do you remember how many kids were in that school?

**Bonnie:** Thirty-two, I think was the most we ever had, kindergarten through eighth grade.

**Wayne:** Do you remember your teachers?

**Bonnie:** Yes, there was **Eileen (Harris) Taylor**. I don't know now if she's still alive. Vera **Strong**. I had four teachers there. **Glenn Shelp** [?] Who's the other one? Right now, I can't remember her. It was fun. We had a lot of fun. We walked to school, of course, no buses. I had about half, three-quarters of a mile to walk where I was. And I'll tell you something one time that happened: There were two boys, a year younger than I. What did you say? I'm not giving names, if that's what you said. We walked home from school and they thought they were smart alecks. One held me and the other hauled off and socked me in the puss. Their aunt lived right back where all this happened and she come out and I guess you know they didn't do it again. It was kind of funny. We had fun growing up together. I think we were closer. We lived just around the corner off of Pratt and Grove Road. Johnny lived same distance south. We'd ride our bikes down to the corner and play. We always had to play cops and robbers. That was only thing to play according to him but we had a lot of fun doing that.

**Wayne:** Did he grow up to be a cop or a robber?

**Bonnie:** No, he's still alive. He pretty much settled down. He's younger than I am a couple of years.

**Wayne:** What memories do you have of growing up in your home? What was your house like at that time?

**Bonnie:** We had an upstairs and my mother had arthritis bad and she couldn't use certain shoes. She had the most beautiful pair of purple felt bedroom slippers. I'd go upstairs and clop around all up there with those shoes on. I thought I was Queen Tut.

**Wayne:** Did you have electricity?

**Bonnie:** Not until '37.

**Sue:** Something like that.

**Wayne:** What was life like before electricity?

**Bonnie:** Well, we had kerosene lamps. Once a week, we'd have to trim the wicks and wash the globes.

**Wayne:** You wouldn't have had a refrigerator if you didn't have electricity.

**Bonnie:** Oh, no. We had an icebox. Well, first we didn't even have that. We'd take everything downstairs and put it in a big crock and then we'd put cold water or we'd put snow on it in the wintertime, something in order to keep it cooled down so our things everything

wouldn't freeze. We cooked the meat. We'd pour the hot broth on it and it would kind of gel and gelling helped keep it too.

**Wayne:** And when did you get an icebox then?

**Bonnie:** After we moved to St. Johns because we didn't have electricity out there for a long time. That would have been in '38. That was something, open that up--

**Wayne:** Did you have to have an ice man?

**Bonnie:** Oh, yeah. Yeah.

**Wayne:** How about telephone service? Did you have telephone service out in the country?

**Bonnie:** Oh, yes. I don't know if it was four or seven people on a party line. Well, you know, it was good entertainment for the day. They would listen in on it.

**Wayne:** Were your parents farmers then in the country?

**Bonnie:** Yes. In town no, not when we moved. Is that what you asked me?

**Wayne:** First of all, in the country, they were farmers?

**Bonnie:** They were farmers. Yes. They moved to town because there were no buses and they wanted me to go to high school and so we lived at 610 East Walker here in St. Johns.

**Wayne:** They sold the farm and moved to town then?

**Bonnie:** They saved the farm. They rented it to another farmer that lived nearby.

**Wayne:** What job did they take when they moved to town?

**Bonnie:** Dad worked for **Oliver Montague**, Montague Farm Equipment. He drove truck and would go to Grand Rapids and pick up new equipment and parts.

**Wayne:** Then you went to St. Johns High School?

**Bonnie:** Yes, graduated in '42.

**Wayne:** Do you have any particular memories of going to high school?

**Bonnie:** I went there to visit school with Al's sister, later was my husband. His sister, **Ginny [Virginia L. (Wickerham) Merrill]**, I went to school to visit with her and I was to meet her after certain classes exchanged. I was dumb enough I didn't realize there were two stairways that went up to the second floor. So, I missed some of the things I was

going to do with her because I couldn't find her. Whoever thought a little school like that would get you confused but it did if you're a country bumpkin.

**Wayne:** Going back to the farm before you moved to St. Johns, what are some of the jobs that you needed to do around the farm? What are some of the chores that you did?

**Bonnie:** Oh, had to gather the eggs. You reach under those chickens to get the eggs and they'd haul off and peck you one. I remember--it wasn't a job--but back then we had feed ground for the livestock and in these big gunny sack bags, you'd dig around and underneath a little bit and there was little mice nests and I'd put those in my pocket and take them up the house to show mother. I don't think she's too pleased about that but that was fun. There was a granary and there was a corn crib--they were all attached together--big place that they housed equipment and then there was a chicken coop. I'll tell you one thing that was kind of funny: Sundays we used to always have chicken dinner. We had an old block of wood out there with two nails. You're supposed to put your head in there and whack it. Well, I seen my dad to do that. By gosh, I could do that! Went out and got the chicken's neck in between these two nails and just as I got ready to bring it down, the chicken got up and ran away. But in the country was nice. I think your neighbors were closer in the country then they are here in town. I really do.

**Sue:** Then there was that big hip-roofed barn too.

**Bonnie:** Oh, where we lived when I was a kid? Yeah, my grandpa built that, **Alphonse Westmoreland [William A. Westmoreland]**.

**Wayne:** So, Did you have some adventures in the in the barn?

**Bonnie:** Oh, yes. I'd take my BB gun and climb up the ladder, get up in the hay mow and I'd shoot starlings. It didn't take them long to leave the barn nest up there. I got some too!

**Wayne:** When was that barn built then?

**Bonnie:** When was it built? I was born in '25. It was built before that. I can't tell you. I think late in the 1800's, maybe. At one time I could have told you but I can't right now.

**Wayne:** Now, the roads that went out in the country-- How were they maintained? Were they more of a dirt track or were they gravel?

**Bonnie:** Back then we didn't have road commissioners and so on and the county or whoever owned it would take these big road scrapers. They'd park them on the corner. We'll say of Grove and Pratt Road and the farmers would come with their horses or whatever, drag it around, or the farmers would get out and they'd help weight it down so they could scrape the road, but it was done by the people that lived around there.

**Wayne:** I was reading here that, once you moved to town, you would still go back on weekends. Were you to the farm?

**Bonnie:** Oh, yeah. Turned out to be her in-laws in the long run. [Referring to her daughter Sue, who married their son, Bruce. The farm was rented by **Arnold and Martha (Norris) Blizzard.**] Oh, she made the best pineapple pie that anyone could ever make! I should she made lots of food and goulash were her two main things that focused to me.

**Wayne:** What was the reason for going back to the farm on the weekends?

**Bonnie:** Something do, I guess, and I liked it there. It was kind of like, when you lived in town, you go someplace for vacation. I guess maybe that's how you might look at it.

**Wayne:** When you were in high school, were you involved in any sports or extracurricular activities?

**Bonnie:** Not sports. I was into choir quite a bit, anything with music. I didn't play any instruments. I suppose because we couldn't afford them, truth be known. I was in their plays. I was acting in quite a few things. I can't tell you now what they were but there's something there I was always into.

**Wayne:** What was your first job?

**Bonnie:** I worked for the D&C dime store, down here. It was managed by **Ken Dickens**. His wife [**Agnes Davidson**], I think, worked at the bank. They lived out west part of town here and I'd go there after school and I'd empty waste baskets. She had a list of four, five things and I came home with maybe couple of quarters in my pocket. Oh, that was a big money back then! Then I went to the dime store and worked for her husband and he said, "Bonnie, you can work the candy counter" and he says, "You can have all the candy you want to eat." Whoo! Well, after two or three days, I didn't want to look at another piece of candy in the face but, you see, he knew that. He was a very good teacher. He'd teach you to put your money all one way. Today they crumple it up; they throw it upside down, backside to. We had it face, a certain way, and there wasn't tens and then twos. It was systematically done but he was a good teacher.

**Wayne:** How long did you work there?

**Bonnie:** Oh dear. You asked me something I can't remember. I didn't work there too long because from there I went to work for **Ed Fehling**. He was an attorney here in town. I come home one day from work, and I said to mother, "I'm never getting married." She says, "How come?" I says, "I've some people—" I couldn't give any names, couldn't now but I couldn't then either--were getting a divorce." The things I heard just jarred my memory. I was not gonna get married. Well, I stayed there for a while. I worked for Pardee [**St. Clair Pardee**], an architect. Let's just say he went on trips and I was not the roving kind. Oliver Montague, I worked there for a long time when I was single, when I was married, and after I had kids. They lived right across the street from us. He must've trust me. They had a daughter. She's probably three years old maybe or something and then she got a little older. When she got in school--the school kids go to

Lansing on trips--he let me take his car and drive her with the whole carload of kids to Lansing. That was pretty good.

**Wayne:** How did you meet your husband then?

**Bonnie:** At a dance in the South Riley Grange. We used to have township dances. There was Olive and Riley; Bingham; can't remember if Bengal had any or not; South Riley. We loved to go to dances. It was fun, and then afterwards, we'd have food to eat, maybe hot dogs or hamburgers or something. When we washed dishes, you can never guess what we used as a dish sink. We had a great big old round galvanized tub. Water, soap and stuff in there and we'd wash them afterwards. We'd have to sweep everything up. Oh my gosh! The people were upstairs in the dancehall part waiting to come down. We could only seat so many to the tables., so they would come down and...

**Wayne:** Where was the South Riley Grange?

**Bonnie:** I think it's been torn down. It was on Chadwick and--

**Sue:** Lowell Road, I think it was Lowell.

**Bonnie:** Yes, I think it was.

**Wayne:** So it was a two-story?

**Bonnie:** Yes. We had dances there.

**Wayne:** Were these dances sponsored by the grange or --

**Bonnie:** Yes. See, South Riley had them; Olive had them; Bingham had them; Bannister wasn't in our area but they had dances. I don't know if we had any others, I can't remember, but they were alternating, you know, like some on a Friday and Saturday and some other place would be the next Friday and Saturday but that was our entertainment. It was fun to dance.

**Wayne:** Then you married and where did you live after you were married?

**Bonnie:** Well, we worked for **Livingston's** out here on the farm when we first come back. Al was in the service in the Navy and that was back in '45. I think it was, yeah.

**Sue:** They lived in Chicago at that point.

**Bonnie:** Yeah, during when he was in service. He was sent back from overseas and so I went down there. Oh, I wanted to live down there. That was something! He didn't want to. He wanted to come home and farm so we came home to farm.

**Wayne:** You wanted to be a city girl?

**Bonnie:** Oh, I loved it down there. I got a good job down there working for the Simoniz Company. I was walking one day down the street and I was used to always working. I couldn't [take that?]. Hey, there's a store and I thought – Nope, I can't remember now what the name of the store was. I thought Al wouldn't like that. So, I kept walking along and here was this Simoniz place. I loved it. Talk about being clean. You could like this on something, you wouldn't get a bit of dust. They were good people and I had a good landlady. She looked after us. When V-J Day came along, of course, everybody went down to the Loop and went to go out the door and she got ahold of Al and says, "You look after her. It's going to be terrible down there." Well, she knew, but we didn't. You couldn't go a ways and turn around and come back. You'd have to go four blocks in order to get back to where you got into that intersection, to head home. And on the way home, there was Grant Park. Some lady come along. She turned around and grabbed my husband. Of course, he had a Navy uniform on. She grabbed him and said, "I want to pretend you're somebody else." You just run into all kinds of people but I like working for Simoniz. They were very good to you. They offered me a good position but he just wanted to come home and farm. So, we did. Didn't make any difference.

**Sue:** That's when you come back to live at Livingston's farm.

**Bonnie:** That's when we come back to Livingston's. Yeah. I knew them. They went to church where I went to, the Congregational down here. They were good people.

**Wayne:** After the Livingston farm, where did you move next?

**Bonnie:** Next we moved out in Riley Township. My dad and mother bought a house on Airport Road. We bought it from them. That was forty acres and they just lived around the corner and had eighty acres and then he got to farming.

**Wayne:** Was he like a part-time farmer or --

**Bonnie:** No well, he worked at Olds, didn't he, some?

**Sue:** A very short period of time. That wasn't his cup of tea.

**Bonnie:** No, he liked the country.

**Wayne:** What were you doing at this time then?

**Bonnie:** Worked to Montague's as bookkeeper. I worked some for St. Clair Pardee. That was not for me. Montague's, I was there quite a while. We lived right across the street from them. If they'd go away for winter or something, Al and I'd move over there into their house till they come back and watched their daughter, make sure she got to wherever she had to be for school things.

**Wayne:** Were you primarily like a bookkeeper in most of your jobs?

**Bonnie:** Yes, till I got to be Register of Deeds and that was an elected position.

**Wayne:** And when did that happen?

**Bonnie:** 1970?

**Sue:** 1968 I think. '67 or '68.

**Wayne:** And how long were you County Register of Deeds?

**Bonnie:** I started out as clerk and then I became deputy and then the register got ill so I got appointed to that. Then I ran for, oh my gosh, how many elections? Four-year terms.

**Sue:** Four?

**Bonnie:** Four, I think it was.

**Wayne:** Quite a while.

**Bonnie:** Yeah, I liked it.

**Wayne:** So, you were actually in the deeds office for a number of years before you were elected.

**Bonnie:** Yes, but not too many. You see, his health went right downhill and so then I got appointed. I was lucky there because there were some politicians in town, no names mentioned, that thought they were just going to walk in and sit down and take over.

**Wayne:** That didn't happen?

**Bonnie:** That did not happen. I smiled all the way to the bank.

**Wayne:** What were some of the challenges in that job? Were there any particular interesting things that happened?

**Bonnie:** The thing that irked me the most--we had a big counter--we had these, what I call, family tree chasers, that like go back into genealogy. And these old big ledger books we had all the indexes in. I wish I had counted how many we dragged out to that counter for them to put down and try to find the names they wanted. They'd find them and then we'd have to in and drag the old heavy books out so they could look at them and see who bought it, how much they paid for it, all that stuff, but basically the people were very good that come in.

**Wayne:** If it wasn't for the family history people?



**Bonnie:** Well, enough said.

**Sue:** They just created a little more--. Those were big, big books, huge books, very heavy.

**Wayne:** I've seen some of them. Yes, they're gigantic.

**Sue:** And now a lot of that stuff or most of it, I think, is on microfiche now, so it's a whole lot easier.

**Bonnie:** A lot of that was, maybe still is, in the Grand Rapids salt mines up there. Well, you know, life is just what you make it. You can moan and groan and complain or be happy and if you follow those rules, usually you come out on top.

**Wayne:** I know I've seen articles that you used to do quite a bit of singing. Were you part of different groups or--

**Bonnie:** Yes. We had a quartet in high school. There was **Donna (Clark) Love, Beth Ann Wagoner**, myself, and **Willene (Estes) Gutshall**. We had a lot of fun singing.

**Wayne:** Where did you sing at?

**Bonnie:** Oh, high school assemblies that they had. We sang in churches, just wherever anybody would ask us. We had fun, just stood up and sang.

**Wayne:** How long did you do that?

**Bonnie:** I don't know. Hard to tell. You're asking a long, long time ago, sir.

**Sue:** She was still active in the church choir up at Redeemer [Redeemer Church, DeWitt] even after you moved here.

**Bonnie:** Yeah.

**Sue:** And that was in 2002 when you moved here.

**Bonnie:** Drove back and forth.

**Sue:** She's been singing for a long time.

**Bonnie:** I love my church.

**Sue:** I asked her the other night. I said, "What was it you used to do when you went to town on the weekend?" And what did you say?

**Bonnie:** Get ice cream.

**Sue:** And she told me the exact place they went to have ice cream too.

**Bonnie** Yes, but can I now? I want to say now, DeRose's.

**Sue:** What'd you say, Spagnuolo's?

**Bonnie:** I don't know. It's right next to Bruno's, used to be a place there that you could go in and sit up on those little high stools. If we went grocery shopping, we had enough money left, when got done we could go get a treat and get a dish of ice cream.

**Wayne:** What do you remember about some of the stores in downtown St. Johns when you were young?

**Bonnie:** It wasn't a store but it was the theater. I went in there the first time it opened. That was something.

**Wayne:** The Clinton Theater you're talking about?

**Bonnie:** There was a J C Penney store; there was a shoe store; Hick's clothing store; Parr's was on the corner; McKinnon's. There was a Eisler's Superette down on the corner of Clinton and would it have been it have been Higham? They had an old, big register on the floor. That's the way they heated the building. Oh, I used to love to go and stand on that because it would blow your dresses up and it was nice and warm.

**Wayne:** Do you remember what the first show was at the Clinton Theater that you went to?

**Bonnie:** No.

**Wayne:** Or the Steel Hotel?

**Bonnie:** Yes, I've been in there. Barber shop was in the corner there.

**Wayne:** Which churches did you attend?

**Bonnie:** Congregational.

**Wayne:** Even when you were in the country at the farm, you'd come into town every weekend?

**Bonnie:** When we moved out there [Airport Road] though, then we went to DeWitt Community Church. I was quite active there and then I transferred to Redeemer Methodist Church.

**Wayne:** Was Community still in the old building when you first started attending there or had they already moved out?

**Bonnie:** It was in the old building at that time. I've been in the new one but didn't belong there.

**Sue:** I remember at Penney's she had mentioned that before that at one of the stores didn't have a cash register down on the sales floor and your money--

**Bonnie:** Oh, yeah, Hick's Clothing Store.

**Sue:** Your money would be put in like a little tube and it would go upstairs to the office.

**Bonnie:** They'd pull it and it would go down; they'd put the change in, they'd pull it and send it back. That was Hick's [J C Penney's].

**Sue:** They did that even when my kids were little.

**Judy:** Oh, I remember it.

**Bonnie:** I had two fur coats. That was something back then. I worked for Shellenberger [Chalmer L. Shellenberg] at Hick's and I bought a skunk coat, black long. Oh, that was just big stuff and then later I got another one called a karakul which I think is a lamb or something, but it was fun working there, too. But I got to make change and--

**Wayne:** I see a mention here about deer hunting.

**Bonnie:** Oh, yes. My husband liked to go deer hunting. I did not like it. His brother-in-law and his sister, they liked to go. They went deer hunting. Well, they set me on a stump. I was to shoot the deer when it comes through. Well, I had my gun. I had it all loaded and they came out. "How come you didn't shoot that deer?" I said, "didn't see any deer." "Well, it went right!"--! I said, "You told me not to move and I didn't." They said "Don't move." So I didn't. You know that kind of thing.

**Sue:** She was she was really into putting up the garden produce and the fruits and that was one of her prides and joys.

**Wayne:** Yeah, you had a large garden?

**Sue:** Canning.

**Bonnie:** Oh, yeah. Well, Al was raised in a family of seven and they lived out of their garden. So when we got married and worked for Livingston's, I'd haul everybody in, take them downstairs and show them all my canned goods and I thought that was something. The neighbors across the road laughed at us because we made a garden. They said, "What do those young kids know about making a garden?" Well, they didn't realize he come from a family of seven kids. I told you that, I guess. They lived out of their garden, sustained their grocery bills and stuff. I liked to can. I wouldn't anymore. I don't have the go-juice to do it but I canned everything and froze a lot of stuff. We had a couple big freezers.

**Wayne:** What crops did you can and freeze?

**Bonnie:** Oh, pickles, dill, sweet, whatever, bread and butter pickles, peaches, a few pears, not many. I didn't always have access to those. I don't know if we canned applesauce. I think we did, did we?

**Wayne:** Did you do tomatoes then, too?

**Bonnie:** Oh, yeah, tomatoes, tomato juice, chili. Anything that was cannable, I think I did it.

**Wayne:** Did you make sauerkraut too or not?

**Bonnie:** No. I don't think, did we?

**Sue:** No.

**Bonnie:** I don't think so.

**Wayne:** Nothing in the big old crocks?

**Bonnie:** When I was a kid, my folks, they had big old crocks. They put the pickles in there and put the brine in it. Then they'd put a big plate on there with a brick on top of it to hold down in the juice. I can remember that. I used to sneak down there and get some out.

**Sue:** Hard to imagine, I know.

**Wayne:** There were fewer pickles there later in the year then?

**Bonnie:** I had to be careful. She probably knew what I was doing all along. No, I liked growing up in the country. When I moved to town, it was entirely different. You had to learn to live all over again. Town kids are different than country kids. I can't explain why, just different upbringing. They're around different types of people, where in the farm you're just in the farm.

**Wayne:** Did you ever know anybody who became maybe somewhat famous or infamous?

**Bonnie:** Yeah, my brother-in-law, Dr. Wickerham. [**Lynferd J. Wickerham**]. He and one of his colleagues were the ones that found out how to make penicillin.

**Sue:** They developed penicillin. [He was a part of a team that found a way to mass produce penicillin.]

**Bonnie:** He was a smart guy.

**Wayne:** Where was he from?

**Bonnie:** Peoria, Illinois. You'd think he wouldn't know enough to come in out of the rain if you looked at him. He just goes along just happy as a lark. He was a good guy.

**Wayne:** Well, he had penicillin to care of him, I guess.

**Sue:** He traveled the world speaking at medical conferences and everything. He was very brilliant.

**Bonnie:** He was happy as long as he had his lab and he could work at things like that.

**Wayne:** Do you remember any big events from the past in St. Johns, any like major crimes or-

**Bonnie:** Not crimes.

**Wayne:** Fires or celebrations?

**Bonnie:** Fourth of July there usually was a parade or something. I don't know. Have I ever talked about any of that stuff?

**Wayne:** Just throwing things out.

**Sue:** Dad ran the gas station down by the railroad track.

**Bonnie:** Yeah, across from what used to be the B.Z.B. I don't know what it is now, if it's a restaurant or what. It's right on the corner.

**Sue:** It's not there anymore.

**Bonnie:** Then across the street was the gas station. I think Hammond Brothers owned that or at least we leased from them or something. We had a gas station in Lansing too for years.

**Wayne:** Where was your gas station at Lansing?

**Bonnie:** On Saginaw.

**Sue:** On Main, St. Joe, and what was the other street? It was a three-way-- It's now buried under the interstate.

**Bonnie:** Out on the west side.

**Wayne:** How did you happen to get into owning gas stations?

**Bonnie:** Well, my husband started this mess down here on Clinton Avenue and then this big opportunity arose in Lansing. He went over there.

**Sue:** He was a wonderful mechanic but he was too soft-hearted, very easy to take advantage of.

**Bonnie:** We were right on the edge of-- This isn't for your book, but it

**Sue:** Mom, Mom!

**Wayne:** I think you've told us a story that shouldn't be told.

**Bonnie:** Well, it was in a bad part of town. I'll just put it that way.

**Wayne:** You didn't make money off of it, I'm assuming.

**Bonnie:** We did or didn't?

**Wayne:** It wasn't real profitable?

**Bonnie:** Yeah, I guess it was but he wanted to come home and farm. So we came home and farmed. Me too. I'd get out there on the tractor and I'd sing my lungs out, birds going along and pick up the worms out of the furrows.

**Wayne:** Did you ever have more than 40 acres?

**Bonnie:** We rented some property.

**Wayne:** Rent some additional?

**Sue:** Grandma and Grandpa's maybe?

**Bonnie:** Yeah, it was eighty acres there. Yeah, that's probably what we --

**Wayne:** So you really farmed like a hundred twenty acres.

**Bonnie:** Yeah.

**Wayne:** I think forty 40 acres is hard to make a living off of it.

**Bonnie:** Oh, yeah.

**Wayne:** At least in this area, the kind of crops you grow in this area typically.

**Sue:** Well, then dad went to the post office to work after he sold the gas station when the highway came through and that's where he worked till he retired in DeWitt so quite a variety of careers in his life.

**Wayne:** Was he a rural delivery person?

**Bonnie:** He was a postmaster.

**Sue:** He got to the point of being acting postmaster there at one point. He was assistant postmaster for quite a while too. He was inside.

**Bonnie:** I'm real happy that I don't have an ache or pain. I kind of nice place to live. Watchdog [Sue] right next door gives me supper every night. You don't usually get that. I get my own breakfast and lunch a kind of brunch.

**Sue:** Not too bad for 96 ½.

**Bonnie:** No.

**Wayne:** Doing very well.

**Bonnie:** I am. I'm lucky.

**Wayne:** Yes.

**Bonnie:** And these people that whine and moan and groan over some things, I'd like to swat them right on the rump. I really would.

**Wayne:** Do you have any particular memories of living through the depression?

**Bonnie:** Not much. We always had food on the table.

**Wayne:** I think farm families tended to come out very well.

**Bonnie:** My dad would have bread and milk for supper. That's what it would be, bread and milk, a bowl.

**Sue:** You had the rationing.

**Bonnie:** Yeah, the rationing and our stamps, little book of stamps, had that when I was in high school, lived here in town, 610 East Walker. That's been a few years ago but life's been good. Really these people that moan and groan and complain I could just whop them because there's so much in life you can have fun with. You don't have to dwell on all the crap. Dwell on the happy stuff. There's a lot of it there. You sometimes have to dig the chaff away to find it but it's there. You can't just sit on your rump constantly and not expect to dig in and help.

**Wayne:** Well, thank you for sharing what you're allowed to share with us today .