

# Travis Oral History Interview

## With some of the Originals

By

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**BARRY:** We're live, as they say. The first question is that fairly obvious one, starting with your name and the circumstances surrounding your birth that might be different or unique or of interest. Who would like to start?

**JULIA:** I'm Julia Anna Travis Closson. I was the first girl in the family, the fifth child. I was born in the afternoon. Ralph and Lee were the two that were in school, when they came home, of course, they were thrilled to death that they had a little sister. Roland and Percy were still at home. Of course, I don't remember any of this, just hearing what people say, but Lee, I know, was telling the whole crowd one time, one family reunion, that he helped Mama have me, so I corrected him the last reunion about that. I told him that mother said that they were in school and when they came home then, besides, he'd be only about 7. How could he help birth me, or whatever you want to call it. So that's what I remember about my birth.

**BARRY:** What time of year was that Aunt Julia?

**JULIA:** It was November (Barry: so it was in the Fall) and all of the harvest (Vera: I always associated her with Thanksgiving) Uh huh, that makes sense (Vera: maybe she doesn't but I do), with what, Thanksgiving. Oh yes.

**BARRY:** That's a nice kind of addition Uncle Leslie, that kind of association with some special time of the year. You want to take the next one yourself? About your birth and any circumstances surrounding your birth that stand out or that people have told you about.

**LESLIE:** Not particularly. I guess. Oh that feeling memory is too far away from us. Uh, of course I was probably one of the earlier ones maybe, who else was born on my own birthday? I soon tied up with Shakespeare real fast. I was born in a sod house.

**BARRY:** So, you were the last one born in the sod house?

**LESLIE:** No, the first one. (He was the last one born in the sod house.) There were just four of us born in the sod house. Percy, Julia, Glen and Leslie. Well, where were the others born?

**JULIA:** Ralph and Lee were born in what was called the old homestead. A frame house of some kind? I never did we ever know what farmhouse or not. It was across the road from where Everett used to live. And then Roland was born in Denver. **Father and mother were working in a grocery store there.**

**BARRY:** Who's next?

**PEARL:** I'm Pearl Emma Travis Davies. Max and I were twins; we were born in October. I was told I was born an hour before he was born and my mother couldn't imagine what was happening because she still having pains but my brother came rump first. Is that okay to tell that?

**BARRY:** Sure.

**PEARL:** Let me see if I remember anything else. Judy should tell this story. The rest of the story. Mom didn't know she was having twins, she didn't know so that was the reason she was really wondering why she was still in labor so I was always an hour older than Max.

**VERA:** I would like to add this little comment, okay. When Mary Amy was born, she was younger than the twins. First Pearl came in to see the new baby, because we always were able to come in one at a time or so to see the new baby and she looked at the baby and she thought it was nice and then she kept looking around all over, round on the other side of mother and on the other bed and what have you, and finally Mama asked her what she was looking for. "Well," she said, "where's the other one?" So then when Max came in she was interested to see what his reaction, and it was the same. He looked at the baby, it was a nice baby, he was ready to keep the baby, but he began to look around too, and wanted to know the same thing, where was the other baby? And that story was told many, many times.

**NELL:** Before you get too far from the twins, uh Julia better tell what (keep it over there with Julia) Glen, cause it was always one of his biggest, hilarious stories was about Julia in the kitchen with Uncle Abe (Uncle Everett) preparing breakfast frying the apples and what happened and Julia is the one that can tell em.

**JULIA:** Before we leave Leslie though, we did have a frame room built onto the sod house and he was born in that room and I remember going in to see him. I think I was about 4 years old. I wanted to put that in about Leslie before we got away from him. You better get on to that about the apples. Oh, Glen thought that was one of the funniest things. He told that so many times. I'll never forget that. And he would exaggerate, too, my brother, Glen told a good story though. Well, he made a good story out of everything. Well, you see, about being the last of October, we had thrashers and I don't remember but what we had about a team of four, didn't we usually at thrasher time, that came and stayed all night? We had others come in from the neighbors and so forth, but to help during the day but they'd stay all night so they

were there for breakfast, besides the rest of the family. But I was 13 when they were born, but I was getting the breakfast and, of course, Uncle Abe. Uncle Everett was always there, always helping around with many things that the rest of us might want him to do, poor man. And I don't know what time of the day, do you remember what time of the morning you were born? (Pearl: it was early in the morning). Yes, because the thrashers had to get out early to work. Well, I don't know who must have gotten me up that morning, it must have been my father. Anyway, I had the potatoes peeled and on and I just cored the apples and probably just getting them started when Pop came out with a blanket to warm in the oven and said we have a baby girl. And I kept on cooking the breakfast and then about an hour later, when the potatoes were all fried crispy and put in dishes to serve with the rest of the stuff, and the apples in a skillet up like this in the air ready to pour out in the dish to serve, Pop comes out with another blanket and puts it in the oven and says we have another baby, a boy. Well, I was so dumbfounded I just kept pouring the apples, I thought, in a dish, but they lighted in front of the stove on the floor. And on the floor was a layer of nice fluffy, the fluffy stuff that comes off when you first ground corn through the mill, just all that nice fluffy stuff. Well, of course, that all got mixed in with the apples and our Uncle Everett said "Julia just scoop them right up and they'll never know the difference." So he and I got spatulas, I suppose, and dipped up all those apples and put them in that dish and they ate every one of them. They thought we had a special relish on em. (Barry: Was that they're most productive day?) That was kind of a story of the morning we had the twins. Well, we were all thrilled with the twins though, but we had a time with them, too. In a way, especially with our little Pearl there.

**PEARL:** I was just 4 lbs. I forgot to tell you, 4 lbs., maybe plus, and, of course, Max was bigger and huskier and we always figured he got more milk than I did. Mother nursed both of us on one breast. (Barry: On one breast?) She had ulcers on the other breast.

**BARRY:** Thinking about those kinds of things that were going on in the family. What kinds of roles did each of you play? You have talked a lot, Aunt Julia, about what you were doing as a 13 year old, when Pearl and Max were born. If you have other recollections, any of you, of what other brothers or sisters were doing or what stories, describe them around your birth.

**JULIA:** Well, when I was 13 when the twins were born, Ralph and Lee must have been at Graceland that Fall. Well, Roland wouldn't have been at Graceland yet, would he? He might have been. 'Cause you see that was 1916. And they would have all gone to school in September. I think Roland was there, at Graceland. So, I think at least the three older boys wouldn't have been at home. But I don't remember what Percy would have been doing cause he would have been only 15.

**VERA:** Well, he would have been still in high school or just starting, whatever. Did he go into Imperial High School? How did he get there? I don't know. They had that little house Glen always talked about. Oh well, yeah, that's where we went to high school, but I don't remember. You see, the reason the older boys went off to college, we didn't have a high school. Well, now remember that Percy went to high school at Graceland.

**JULIA:** He went a semester because our high school was closed down from some sort of an epidemic. I've forgotten what it might have been. So, Percy went to high school a semester at Graceland. I don't remember when. It must have been when he was about a junior because when he was a senior, I was there and I never did go to the Graceland Academy. He graduated from Chase County High School. Oh yes, and he was in the graduating class. Then he went back to Graceland for a semester of college. He decided that college was not for him, so he came back to farm.

**NELL:** Must have been small classes weren't they because I think Glen said he was in a class of six. That was the smallest class both before and after. (The smallest Uncle Leslie) I think ours.

**LESLIE:** I still remember my older brother and sister in school that time, always reflected that there were six of 'em.

**NELL:** Glen mentioned he started grade school when he was 4, little young, and then he skipped a grade, Glen skipped a grade, then he skipped another maybe cause he said he started college when he was 16. Well, he was 17 I think, well, might have been. He talked about that long walk to school and he'd get these sideaches and how he hated that. But he must have been a pretty good student though.

**JULIA:** He was. Glen was smart.

**NELL:** Everett, your Uncle Abe, said that he was a fast learner and that your dad had said he was one of the fastest students as far as fast learning, so that was one of the things that Uncle Everett mentioned.

**BARRY:** Let's backtrack a little bit. We missed Aunt Vera in terms of recollections of your birth that you've heard over the years and what was going on in the family then.

**VERA:** I'm Vera Travis Rasmussen Welden and I was born September 30, 1910. The things that were told me was that I was born at 8:00 in the evening and that I beat the doctor, although they had called him and he was from Imperial and didn't get there in time.

**LESLIE:** He drove horse and buggy.

**VERA:** And that I cried all that night. And then they said I was one of the best babies after that. I got all the crying out of my system and was, seemed to be, a happy child or baby from then on. And I don't remember of them telling to see who would have been home, that was in 1910.

**LESLIE:** I was, other than from Julia on down, I don't remember ones being there at all. The boys, but they did tell me about how thrilled Julia was that this was a girl, that she finally had a sister. She'd had all those brothers all the time.

**JULIA:** She was the first one born in our new frame house. And she didn't get a chance to cry after that even if she had wanted to because every time she cried, I picked her up, walked her around over the yard or anything. I don't think she really liked me very well. I stopped doing that and I probably stopped her doing other things as well. Big sister.

**VERA:** I remember playing a little trick on my sister. Just once. Oh well, I know there were many others, but I remember this one vividly. She, of course, had been the dishwasher. She was in charge of the dishwashing. So this one time there were stacks and stacks of dishes standing out there getting dryer by the minute in that dry Nebraska air. And I took a very dim view of doing those dishes and she kept trying to get me there to get started on that. I think she even fixed the water in the pan for me to get started.

**BARRY:** And how old were you at this time?

**VERA:** Oh, I could probably get my chin over the top of the sink. I don't know how old I was. (6 maybe 7) Anyway, I wasn't about to do those dishes so I developed a real sore foot and I hobbled out in the yard and then I hopped down behind. We had a long chicken house, hopped down and got beyond that. Then, when I thought I was out of sight, I just tore out for the grainery and just as I was going around the corner of the grainery. I heard her yell and I looked up there was Julia and she said "I knew it, I knew it all the time." But she didn't come after me. I don't know why.

**BARRY:** She was going to let the guilt work on you.

**PEARL:** When Max and I were about 4, course we used to quarrel, you know like some children do, and I still remember this: We'd get so angry with each other and so we'd run into Mama and I still remember asking her, "Mama will we still be twins when we grow up?" I didn't want to be at that moment.

**BARRY:** Any other childhood memories like that would be fine to chip in Pearl. That's kind of next on my list of next remembrances. I'm thinking more in terms of pre-adolescent, pre-teen years, rather than your teen years. Mom, (Mary Amy) I'll use that material you made on that other tape in terms of your birth.

**MARY:** I'm Mary Amy Travis Jones. I don't remember, as Barry said, I made another tape but my words are, of course, from Judy, my oldest sister Julia. And she always said it was a beautiful summer Sunday afternoon, I think afternoon, and Mother started labor and was getting real restless so she wanted Judy to walk her, take her for a walk. So they walked all over the south pasture. No, some pasture. Judy kept saying "Mom we have to go back to the house, we have to go back to the house. "No", mother would say "no", she'd keep walking and walking. Well, I guess Judy finally got her back to the house. So when she gave birth, I was born and Judy has very proudly told me several times she gave me my first bath.

**JULIA:** Pop handed you right to me. Pop brought you out in a blanket.

**MARY:** So, of course, at 16 I'm sure Judy was pretty good at all this. Experienced by then. So she's just kind of been my mentor every since. I don't remember that, of course, but I always have the memories of Judy telling me.

**JULIA:** I'll tell you one other thing about the evening. It finally started to rain, it just poured and the doctor didn't make it either, for her's either. I think Papa finally went up and got Vera. Do you remember the lady up north? I was trying to think of her name. Rockwell. Was she a midwife? She could have been. Anyway I think he got a midwife to come down. She got there before the doctor finally got there. Dr. Stewart was the one. Remember he signed the birth certificate "Stewart". But our Aunt El was there. She was the sister of Papa. She'd never had any children and Aunt Ella was in hiding. (Did she faint?) No but she could have almost fainted because I thought that she would have been the one. She was an older woman, you know, one you would expect to help out with all this. With the baby and everything but we didn't see hide nor hair of Aunt Ella 'til the next morning.

**NELL:** She wouldn't have been any help because she didn't know what was going on anyhow.

**VERA:** The memory I have of Mary Amy's birth was mainly before she was born, I think this was the first time that I was aware that we were going to have a new baby. I don't think that I was 6 years old you see with the twins. I wasn't really too much aware that we were going to have new babies in the family. But at 10, I was aware that we were going to have another baby and I remember that toward the end of the pregnancy that Mom would just kind of move from one chair to the other. I remember like it was just so tiring for her. I do remember that.

**NELL:** Yeah, I think your Uncle Everett mentioned too that he was around there too at that time and it was such an effort for her to get about that she would move from one chair to another to get a little relief. He mentioned that too.

**MARY:** Vera always told me too that I was raised by everybody. I says what do you mean by everybody? "Well", she says, "when one of us got sick of you, we'd give you to the other one." So I always kind of figured you know being passed around like that., I got a little confused as to who was what and I can fall back on that for some of my foibles.

**BARRY:** How about nicknames during those early years. Did you develop nicknames for each other? I know that people refer to Mom as "Babe".

**MARY:** Our father did that.

**LESLIE:** The kids (twins) developed a language of their own.

**BARRY:** So they had a little label for everybody, Leslie, that nickname kind of label?

**LESLIE:** They carried on a conversation that we couldn't understand. Carried on a conversation we couldn't follow.

**JULIA:** They did say some words though that carried over because they called Everett, "Abbidy" until we decided that wasn't too grown up for him when he got grown up. The twins started calling him this because they couldn't say "Everett". We called him "little Everett" though, because of Uncle Everett.

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**LESLIE:** "Little Abe" too.

**PEARL:** But our Dad, though was the one that nicknamed everybody. He nicknamed me "Pully". Julia, did he nickname you?

**JULIE:** Yeah, “Julie”.

**MARY:** And she's “Tooly”, Vera is “Tooly”.

**PEARL:** So when Mary Amy got to high school, she says I'm not “Babe” anymore

**MARY:** But you know it was Julia that helped me with that though, and I thought you know she's right. I don't really want to be “Babe” over there, but as I got older I didn't mind that.

**LESLIE:** Babe stuck right with you.

**MARY:** Leslie still always called me “Babe”. Glen said he used to always say???? That didn't start til he went to college.

**BARRY:** Then Leslie was called “Cracky”?

**NELL:** When Leslie went they called him “little Cracky”. It started out Glen “Cracky” because Glen said I used to go around saying "By Cracky" all the time and then he went on to school and Leslie picked up the Cracky. Except there was another name that was in there that you had too. What was the other one?

**JULIA:** Well, I always called Leslie “Bub”. The other day we were just talking about that Glen.

**MARY:** Well, Pop used to call Glen “Shoey” and Leslie “Kady”. “Old Man Shoey and Old Man Kady” Why did he do that?

**LESLIE:** Well, there were two old pioneers that lived out in the Champion valley and they were kind of lazy I guess. Just sat around on the benches down there at Champion. Well, Pop always called Max, Jim. Pop never used the name Max.

**JULIA:** But our mother named us our names and we were supposed to be called those names. She called us by our right names.

**VERA:** I don't ever remember her calling me Tooly. But Pop never called me Vera.

**JULIA:** He never called me Julia either that I know of. Did Percy or Roland or any of those have any nicknames? “Rolly”, But Percy never did as far as I know. Well, what about “Duncan”? Did they used to call Percy, yes that was a favorite for any of the people Pop thought would be a little bit lazy. “Duncan”.

**BARRY:** I wonder if Grandpa ever had a nickname for Ralph? He was the first born. Maybe not.

**JULIA:** I know Vera says he did but I don't remember that he did or Lee either. They called each other names, had names for each other. Lee called Ralph, "Rudolph", and then Ralph called Lee, "Gimlet". But that didn't really stick with the rest of the family too much. I think that was just their pet name for each other.

**BARRY:** Kind of an inside name.

**NELL:** Well Glen and Leslie had the grandfather, father. Yes, that's right, calling each other. I don't think I ever heard Glen call Leslie, Leslie. Probably not. Always Grandfather or Father. They were always exchanging.

**LESLIE:** But that was sarcastic.

**BARRY:** Think for a minute about a memory of school in Nebraska, just maybe one memory that stands out.

**LESLIE:** Oh, I can tell you that. It was April before I was 5 years old. I started worrying about what will I do when I go to school. What am I going to do to pass the time of day and all that stuff. Of course, I took some subjects, they just took care of themselves, but boy I was worried.

**BARRY:** Was that like first grade Uncle Leslie?

**LESLIE:** Yeah that's all we went. They didn't have kindergarten.

**BARRY:** Were you worried about reading?

**LESLIE:** I was worried about how I was going to pass the time all day.

**BARRY:** Just sitting there?

**LESLIE:** Yeah. No chores, nothing to do.

**MARY:** You mean your older brothers and sisters didn't inform you of what you did at school.

**LESLIE:** I think that was the trouble, they told me too much.

**PEARL:** Well, Max and I started school in Imperial in kindergarten. I remember the second or third day I talked or whispered and I had to stand in the corner. I always remembered that. And then at our Grade School #8, we were all in the same room and we used to ride in a sled. Remember that Mary Amy, we would run out with the snow on the ground all winter long and we'd run out and get in it and go to school? And one morning we sunk down through the snow to the water and our feet were wet. They were just frozen. When we got to school we had to stand around the old wood burning stove to get warm and dry.

**MARY:** I remember my first day at school. I was five and I was just terrified. Justifiably so, you'll remember Miss Morgan, Pearl? She was mean. No matter how you looked at Miss Morgan, she was mean. Here's little ole 5-year-old me and I was scared to death. Well, apparently I lived through that first month and then it got cold. It must have gotten cold really early out there in Nebraska. I don't think it was the morning on the sled going in the snow probably, but it was just freezing and I was crying, frozen to death and she came back and shook me in my seat real good and I thought Everett was going to hit her. He was my protector, see. Thank god he didn't because I don't know what she would have done. She probably would have expelled him and when you expelled them in those days you were expelled for a while. Well, I survived it and I guess after that I got to like school and liked the teachers, but I still remember that.

**PEARL:** At least you were riding by yourself on a horse, later after we left.

**LESLIE:** You were kind of a special responsibility though for your older brothers I suppose. I can remember yet taking you to school.

**JULIA:** Weren't so many of you went to first grade at five years old.

**LESLIE:** Well I was five in June and I was in school that fall. See that would be just right for kindergarten, but you see, we didn't have kindergarten.

**JULIA:** You had to wait until you were six to go to first grade. I had to wait until I was six. I was six in November.

**PEARL:** Well, we lived in Imperial that year when we went, yeah, but that was in town though.

**JULIA:** But I can remember after my older brothers went off to school, I'd stand at the back door and cry. Didn't see why I couldn't go.

**PEARL:** Then when we were in eighth grade, Julia taught us and we used to drive in this old hack. They called it a real tall wagon. The horses were named Hi and Kate. Julia, Max, Amy and I and we had a neighbor boy, Andrew.

**VERA:** I remember the time so often we would walk, we had a time anyway. That year we rode.

**LESLIE:** About half the time we ran too.

**JULIA:** Yeah, to get there on time.

**PEARL:** Well, then one year we all four of us rode. We have pictures of it without lunch boxes and the four of us on the back of Rose.

**LESLIE:** The "Travelers Express".

**BARRY:** O.K. We're kind of moving on to more later day kinds of recollections now. Think about your experiences growing up on the farm and your later life when you reflect back on the farm and your later life and the all the things that you've done. Do you see any affects, any connections, between the farm and the way you do things now or the way you've looked at things over the years. Does that question make sense? Everybody is a little different I imagine.

**JULIA:** You mean after we left?

**BARRY:** Yeah, after you left.

**JULIA:** As we look back on as how it was when we were there?

**BARRY:** For example, how did doing all those dishes, Auntie Judy, affect you?

**JULIA:** I don't remember that though see. That isn't a thing I remember. I just remember having a very happy childhood there. Feeling very secure and knowing that my father and mother both loved me and knew that they had all of us but you know you think of yourself. I knew that they were probably always thinking of me and keeping track of me.

**BARRY:** So there was always a sense of continuity for you.

**JULIA:** That in spite of my distance from the farm, I always connected with the folks and everything that I experienced there and the family.

**VERA:** I think one thing that my early life of growing up on the farm and away off by ourselves, not really any close neighbors, we didn't have neighbor kids that dropped in and played with us. It was quite an occasion if we did have some of the neighbors come in. That was really an occasion that I think what it did to me was that I resorted to my own resources. To pass my time and reading became very important and very prominent in my life. I read everything. The books that had been brought home from the older boys and we put them in this room, what we called the library. It was really two living rooms and what they amounted to but one was where we had most of the books. And I absolutely read everything. I read Shakespeare, Chaucer, everything that was in there. I read the Bible when I couldn't find anything else and so I think it did that to all of us. That we began to appreciate the outside world through what we read more than through actual experiences. And that I think it made us all more resourceful when it came to working out what we would do with our spare time, and as I raised by own family later, you know, I would have them ask me - Well what is there to do around here? Of course, we had a lot of chores to do and were always looking forward to the time that we were free to be on our own and to do this reading and to do these other things that we wanted to do and I do think that it made us all quite resourceful.

**PEARL:** I think it helped us in self-discipline and then we'd do chores and work we didn't like but we had to do it. And we had to get it done and do it as well as we could and I think that's an important thing that we learned as we were growing up.

**BARRY:** So that you just kind of took that for granted as the years went on.

**VERA:** But I think there was imprinted in all of our minds that the idea that we were going on to school. I don't think that I ever had any other idea in mind but what I was going to finish college and I know that Pop drummed it into me that I wasn't going to stop with a BA. And I didn't. So there was just that idea of self-betterment that was implanted very early to take advantage of the opportunities that we had not to misplace and misuse our time, was our time, make a good accounting of ourselves and boy we brought home good report cards.

**LESLIE:** I don't know about the part of you were saying, but I know that there was more than 100 books.

**BARRY:** When we stopped the tape, we were just talking about ways that growing up on the farm in the family affected our later life and Vera was talking about the sense of being independent and self-sufficient and always able to kind of entertain herself and find something to do through reading and other activities similar to that. Does anyone else have any thoughts about this?

**LESLIE:** Are we on tape now?

**BARRY:** We are on tape now.

**LESLIE:** We were pretty close and we had great respect for our father. We all did but I'll have to tell you one of the things that I sure do remember and so did Glen. We were all in the Big Foot Forest, you remember Julia, and Pop came out of the house and asked us if we had got done certain chores that he had told us to do, course we told him what we'd forgot about.

**BARRY:** Is that kind of the dry sense of humor, that of the subtle little humorous jab that seems to be real common in the family. I think even my generation, even among the first cousins that tends to be a way of saying something that is humorous, but right to the point at the same time.

**MARY:** There's something I've wondered, were you through Leslie?

**LESLIE:** Yeah.

**MARY:** That I've kind of wondered about in my own life that has to be the influence of our life out home, of course Pearl would remember more of this since we were the last ones, is that in my living I have to have some solitude and I can't stand a constant din and racket around me and of course Pop couldn't either. If we got too loud, we were quieted immediately at home and so, say I have a house full of company for five or six days, might even be if you would come with your family, might even be if Julia comes with her family, wonderful. It's just wonderful while it's going on, but if I wouldn't eventually get my solitude back, I think I would I don't think I could take that. Where it's peaceful, it's quiet, you know exactly what's going to happen. Which we did out home, and as Vera said, you went off and did your own thing, which was reading and we devoured everything that came into the house. Leslie, every book that you brought in of Edgar Rich Burroughs, I read at least once. The planet of the Apes, all of the Planet of the Apes, his Moon stories, Tarzan, read all of those. And we'd read the Pathfinders, everything that came in the house. Read the Almanac and we did this for quiet, for solitude. You were in control of what was happening right by you and I seem to have this need. And I've just wondered if that is not a carryover. I would think it has to be.

**BARRY:** It makes sense that it would be.

**LESLIE:** There wasn't a book much less an Almanac in the house that most of us had read about as quickly as we got it there.

**BARRY:** Did you talk about the things that you read after, say, there were a number of you at home?

**LESLIE:** Just private memories more than anything else.

**MARY:** I think Pearl and I would talk about some of the books. See, because we would be the last two and maybe we'd be playing awhile at something and then we'd get into these books and quit playing more of the childish things and we'd maybe discuss our books. But beyond that, I never discussed any of that with my parents.

**VERA:** In all of this sober talk about our reading and we pursued that, I'd like to inject a little humorous thing that in here that our Uncle Everett, that we've mentioned before, a bachelor uncle and we were really his family. He was with us more than he was with any others and he liked to play poker and he was good at it. He would play with the fellows there in Imperial I guess and he was real good at it and so Everett and I used to play with him much to my mother's discomfort. I don't really think she, she didn't really tell us not to.

**PEARL:** She didn't appreciate it.

**VERA:** But we knew she really didn't like it. I mean we just knew by looking at her that she really didn't like it. So we would get the matchbox down and, of course, I think that bothered her about as much as anything else and that was what we bet with. She didn't care how many matches we bet, there was no skin off of our nose and so we would just really fake it and maybe he would be sitting there with a full house and maybe we would just have a pair or something and we thought that just the greatest thing that ever happened, to do that with him and we did that quite a bit in the evening I remember, especially one summer. Then also about the reading, I remember that I used to want to read so much and, of course, we had our lights were not the best, and I think they worried about our eyes and then besides they wanted me to get to bed. So, I would get up in the morning and do what I was supposed to do...

**LESLIE:** You must be my sister.

**VERA:** And that I can remember my mother calling me maybe a dozen times, you know, "Vera", put out that light and go to bed and then I wouldn't really do it until I heard her getting out of bed and then I would say I'm going and I'd blow out the light and go to bed.

**JULIA:** To bring back those cards though, I didn't know that you shouldn't play with face cards until I went to college because we had always used them at home. I, we didn't have any other kind did we? We didn't have Rook or anything like that we just had those face cards and that's all we played with.

**MARY:** That summer she beat me all over the place.

**JULIA:** So, she didn't have too much of a thing against them, she didn't like em to take up too much of our time because she didn't think they were worth it.

**VERA:** Well, I don't think she liked the idea we were betting.

**JULIA:** Oh, that might have been it.

**VERA:** I think that might have entered into it a lot more than the cards.

**BARRY:** The gambling part of it.

**VERA:** I think she thought, you know, that gambling that that was strictly a no-no, that was something you were never supposed to do.

**JULIA:** And I didn't know that you shouldn't play baseball and do all that kind of stuff on Sunday either until I went someplace else. Whether it was mingle with other people that didn't believe in it or just what. She always believed it was better for us to get out and play a game of baseball as long as we didn't quarrel with each other or something and horseshoes.

**VERA:** We played a lot of horseshoes and I can remember playing hide and-go-seek at night and Mom would sit out there on that back step up from the kitchen and she had a better time than any of us. She'd just laugh her head off, you know, different games that we'd play.

**BARRY:** Shifting gears, slightly, you've answered this question to some extent as we've been talking. It has to do with the roles of Ed and Mary in your educations. How they kind of supported that, how they spoke to that. Vera, you mentioned, for example, in the last tape that Grandpa really implied or communicated to you in some way or another that you were going to go on to college and probably beyond that.

**VERA:** Oh yes, very much so. I was going on beyond that. I can remember that very much.

**JULIA:** That was later years though, but Mama was the one that got us started off to college though originally. But, of course, Pop agreed or he wouldn't have footed the bill. But you see, he was the, wasn't he the County Superintendent of Schools at one time?

**VERA:** Yes.

**BARRY:** Superintendent of schools?

**VERA:** And he was always on the board of education as far as I know of the grade school out in the country. And he was also the president of the school board in the high school.

**JULIA:** The high school was in Chase County. Chase County High School. It was a county affair.

**MARY:** He signed both my diplomas from 8th grade and high school.

**BARRY:** Would he help you with homework when you came home from school?

**JULIA:** Both parents did, both did. Mom helped with mathematics and Pop helped with history and geography.

**VERA:** He used to drill us in geography and one teacher that we had in, when I was, Leslie can remember him, Schultz?

**LESLIE:** Yeah, he didn't go to the war, he wasn't drafted in the war because he fought, he was the only brother left at home to farm and so he taught our school. So our regular teacher left or something, something happened. I don't remember and they had him come in and finish the year and he made us memorize all the presidents so that we could just say them. We had a little song, George Washington the first of all, by Adams was succeeded, we went right down the line and then we also had to memorize all the counties in Nebraska. So Pop thought that was great because he was very interested in that and when company would come, why Father had us recite those. "Come on say the counties for us or say the presidents. 92 counties."

**VERA:** But they were interested and you always knew that if you asked a question, that they'd help you with it.

**JULIA:** You see, Mama took a Normal Training Teachers Course. She was going to teach and then she got married instead. But she always wished that she could teach.

**PEARL:** I don't know if Mary Amy and I got that much help because they were older when we came along.

**MARY:** I used to get some though and I remember the math. We'd come home with these problems of wall papering an 11 x 16 room that was 10 feet tall to the ceiling and the rolls were so wide and how much wallpaper did you need. Well, I didn't think the teacher could even work em, but mother could. So, I'd go back with this all written out and I would tell Mr. Pucket, I would tell him my mother had done this and I think he was tickled to death. He grabbed his paper.

**VERA:** He probably couldn't do it himself.

**MARY:** No, and he knew how to work the problem. Boy, I hated those problems.

**JULIA:** Oh, I realize that there's a difference between the time probably from Leslie on up, maybe Vera, but especially Leslie that there was a difference between Mother and Father. You know their ages would make a difference in how they could instruct us when they were younger and healthier, etc., than the younger ones and it would make a difference I think.

**VERA:** Well, we sat around this big dining room table with our homework, the work that we we're doing, we only had probably this one lamp, light that was really adequate, it was the only light we had, doing our homework. We had to do that first before we could read what we wanted to read. I don't think that I was impressed with the idea that I had to, that is I didn't feel that way about it, them saying that. I think you just felt their expectations. That it was expected of you.

**JULIA:** And with everyone sitting around the dining room table it was a heaven sent opportunity to crawl under there and tie your legs together or tie your legs to the table legs.

**VERA:** Now, that's my sister Julia, I never did that. But I do have a real early memory, may I express that? The family was all gathered around the table with this one light and they were really going over, in my infantile mind it seemed like to me, it was some kind of a map that they were working on, some project that they were all kind of working on together. And I couldn't have been more than probably four years old at the most, in fact, they even told me I couldn't remember it but I did, because I told them what happened. But I wanted up there to see what was going on and so I crawled up on the table. Well, that was a no-no. Absolute no-no when there was a light on the table for anybody to get up on the table and, of course, fire hazards were certainly reasonable as I look back on it. But I wanted to see what was going on. I was determined I was going to so Pop picked me up gently and put me down. I got up the third time on the table, he picked me up, he took me outside and sat me down, not too gently on the back step, he went in, he closed the door. And it was dark out there and we had a great big old dog that we called Bump, because he was black. We had other dogs but

he was big and black and he came around the corner and in my childish imagination, I though well he surely must be a bear. Because my older brothers Leslie and Glen were always telling me the bears would get me if I didn't behave or if I didn't do this or that or something other thing that they wanted me to do. So I thought for sure that that was what it was. And so finally, I thought I had been out there just as long as I wanted to. I was getting more scared by the minute so I though I would try it. Being an aggressive child, I opened up the door and went in. And no one, absolutely no one, paid me the least bit of attention and they were all kind of around the table so that I couldn't have gotten up there if I had wanted to. And that was the end of that little episode. I don't remember from then on other than the fact that no way did they pay any attention to me and no way could I have gotten back up on the table.

**BARRY:** That must have been an early version of a time out procedure that is now done with kids.

**VERA:** It was a good disciplinary action without any violence or words. Very effective no question about it.

**BARRY:** Speaking of those kinds of early memories, did Mary and Ed ever tell stories about their early years before the family started. I don't think many of us can in your generation of children.

**JULIA:** I can just remember parts of some of the things they'd say.

**BARRY:** Anything stand out Grandpa? For example, coming across the country with his family or anything like that?

**JULIA:** I don't remember any of that at all.

**VERA:** I remember more of my Grandma Travis. I used to have to go and stay with her, which I think every one of you probably had a turn of going and staying with "little grandma."

**PEARL:** I didn't even know her.

**VERA:** She would get to reminiscing and when they lived in Kentucky and they had slaves and the tales that she would tell and the little stories that she would tell about that. And she was the one that told me about Grandpa being in Sheridan's march to the sea and how he hated him. Thought it was the most terrible thing that ever happened. That nothing could have been worse for this country or could have ever happened to those farms and the way the people were treated and so forth. And I really don't remember my Grandpa Travis other than of this tall man, whiskers, white beard, long white beard, and other than that, I don't have any remembrance of his personality or anything, but this tall man was my grandpa.

**LESLIE:** We came along too late in his life to enjoy some of the things he might have had.

**VERA:** I do remember Mother telling her birthplace. It was in Red Oak, Iowa and I've stopped there several times. Well, Glen has too and went all through the records there and couldn't find a thing.

**NELL:** When was it that he mentioned one of the ancestors that had this pig ranch. I mean it must have been in Kentucky, had a huge herd or quite a lot of pigs and somehow he lost this group, some sort of gambling debt or something, anyhow, or word of honor or he gave his word on something and it wiped him out financially. Do you remember him talking about that? There was something about one of the ancestors way back. I know Glen talked about it and I think Uncle Abe. That was when we were out there on that old farm and he was getting reminiscing about some of these things, so I'm rather vague about that but except that there was some comment about how he was such a man of honor, he lost everything in order to pay this debt and it took everything he had. Because they gave their word at that time, if you gave your word it was as binding as a contract, see that was what they were bringing out.

**BARRY:** The question that came up since we've all been here in Colorado that some of the other family members were interested in, and there are many ways to phrase this kind of a question, it's something like: What practical details of everyday life back on the farm stand out in your recollections? You've shared a lot of those things already but when that kind of a question is thrown out, explain the details of everyday life that stand out.

**LESLIE:** Milking 16 cows. Everyday, twice a day.

**JULIA:** It was routine.

**VERA:** Well, Leslie did that himself.

**BARRY:** My word, 16 by yourself.

**LESLIE:** Well, Mom would help me sometimes. If she wasn't too tired.

**PEARL:** I always went out and helped Max milk before we went to school.

**BARRY:** And were there still 16 cows then?

**PEARL:** No, I don't think we had 16 cows. Then we had to help do dishes and milk that I always kind of resented because Max didn't have to come in and help with the dishes, but I had to go out and help him milk.

**VERA:** Though I can remember I didn't do too much milking. I was spared that for some reason. I don't know why but I had to turn the separator and I had to wash that cotton-picking separator. That was one of my chores through time.

**JULIA:** I used to herd the mules. Out of the field and we only had a fence that high around but that didn't stop the mules. So it was about knee high. Yeah, and over they would go, of course, that would keep out the cattle though and it would keep out the other horses, but the mules went right over it.

**VERA:** I think we all had to herd because I can remember Everett and I doing that together and "old Rose" and "Alec". Rose was a nice plump riding horse, she was a crossbreed between that beautiful "Pansy" and a Perchiron, her sire. And Alec was skinny and old. Cattle and herd them if they got where they weren't supposed to go.

**JULIA:** It seemed to me like I had to go out in the field all day, out in the prairie there putting them into a new pasture, you know that didn't have any fences. The horses and cattle both.

**PEARL:** I used to go after cattle every night. Did you Mary Amy?

**MARY:** Yeah, I used to go after the cattle on this little black mare. One time I was sick and Pop had gone to the sale in Holyoke and he came home with this little black horse. So that's one of the things I always think of when, like you said what do you think of your older brothers is with Ralph because he said I used to kind of get away with a lot of things. So when Pop came in I said did you bring me the horse and he said yes and I couldn't believe it. But I was used to ride the herd. This is what I wanted to tell. I often wondered if my father knew this. I used to ride herd to get these cattle and we had a short horn bull that was real cross and he did not like my horse. Well, he probably didn't like me either but it was mainly the horse so he would run at her and I couldn't get the saddle on so I would ride her bareback. It was just

too heavy for me, big stock saddles. So I would just jump on her bare back. Well, if I weren't watching him and she shied, I could go off right in front of the bull. And a couple of times this happened, but fortunately, I kept one rein in my hand so she didn't get away and I usually had a hard time getting back on her, but not with the bull coming. I could put my foot on a knee hock and I was over that horse's back and we were off. Well, then, that's all the bull wanted was for us to get out of the area.

**PEARL:** Well, that's what happened to me but I always had this little 3-legged dog going named Scotty. He'd chase the bull away and I had nightmares for years of that bull chasing me.

**MARY:** So, then after you'd go around and get the cattle started home, the bull wouldn't bother us.

**JULIA:** The cows would come in by themselves anyway.

**MARY:** But he wouldn't bother us anymore, but he wanted no part of us coming out there and thinking we were going to round up his cattle I guess. I don't think Pop knew that. I never told anybody, that was just part of the job. I had to get the cattle, so I went and got the cattle.

**PEARL:** That was after I did, you took my place. Horse, bull and all.

**LESLIE:** Did you ever get bucked off a horse by a bull.

**MARY:** Not knocked by the bulls, it was from the horse shying because the bull was coming at us.

**LESLIE:** I have.

**MARY:** I never had that Leslie. I didn't want that.

**LESLIE:** I was rounding up the stock there on the North 80. I don't know whether you remember that or not.

**MARY:** Pop talked about it.

**LESLIE:** I came up pretty fast.

**MARY:** The bull actually hit the horse?

**LESLIE:** I guess this bull didn't like that, he hit the horse and the bump sent me off on the other side. Course I made sure I made the other side.

**MARY:** No the bull never hit us.

**LESLIE:** After that I was very careful about giving that bull any opportunity to hit me.

**JULIA:** Speaking of bulls, do you remember the time the bull chased Pop around the telephone pole.

**MARY:** I was just going to say that, and it was his, Vera mentioned earlier about his voice, well he could throw his voice.

**JULIA:** Well, that was half a mile away when this happened.

**MARY:** And this bull got him and all he had between him and the bull was a pitchfork and a post.

**VERA:** Well, he was setting post, building a fence. I don't think he had a pitchfork. I thought he had something, and he called.

**MARY:** We could tell by his voice and I don't know who went after him.

**VERA:** Percy went and got him.

**LESLIE:** Percy came and showed the bull how to be respectful.

**MARY:** I'll bet.

**LESLIE:** He chased that bull for a mile.

**VERA:** I have a memory of Percy breaking the horses and that Everett and I were coming back in from some chore, I don't think we had been herding because it was in the evening or else we already had. Probably had the cows already in and we were just poking along. It was along the lane north of the house, you know that went north of the house, we always just called it the lane, didn't we?

**JULIA:** No, it ran east and south.

**VERA:** No, it ran east and west.

**LESLIE:** No, that was the road at the end of the lane.

**JULIA:** The lane ran north and south.

**VERA:** Well, O.K. We were just poking along and again we had this famous pair, old pokey Rose and Alec and here came Percy with a wild team on a spring wagon.

**LESLIE:** That was Rose and Pansy.

**VERA:** No, we had Alec. Julia always got Pansy, we never had a chance to get on Pansy.

**JULIA:** Pansy died the first year I was in college. I had ridden her nine miles a day the year before for eight months, I'd ridden her nine miles a day. She was just like part of me and when I went to college the next winter, she died in the cornstalks. Just like losing an arm and a leg. I felt real badly about that.

**VERA:** Anyway, here came Percy down that road yelling at us to get out of the way. Well, we didn't need a second warning and we turned around because those horses were coming like you know what and we just made it with our pokey, one on one side and one on the other, and Percy went through with his wild team.

**JULIA:** Well, I thought we always used a lead horse to break the wild horses. Old Ned we used to use him you know.

**VERA:** Well, Percy didn't used to always go by the rules.

**JULIA:** Well, he got em hitched up, true.

**MARY:** Percy had his own rules.

**VERA:** We digressed.

**BARRY:** That's fine. Those are all recollections that stand out. Speaking of recollections, neighbors. Did neighbors play any role in your family life?

**VERA:** Oh yes.

**PEARL:** The Rollers, Fred and Cloe.

**VERA:** First the Kleins built that house over there. A family by the name of Ed and what was her name, Julia?

**JULIA:** I don't know, I don't remember. I thought we just called her Mrs. Klein. I don't know.

**VERA:** Oh yes. We had to call them Mr. and Mrs.

**JULIA:** That was our mother.

**VERA:** They built the house and of course we thought that was wonderful to have a neighbor that close and they were wonderful neighbors. They didn't live there so very long but they did have a son that was Everett's age. He was Donald. No, it was Arland Klein and he was just Everett's age. He went to District #8. And that he would, I can remember Mrs. Klein saying to my mother you know how much she enjoyed our family, and he couldn't imagine why he was the only one when those Travis' were over there with all those kids and having such a good time.

**BARRY:** Would he come over?

**VERA:** Oh yes, he'd come over and of course the kids went across over there to play with him but I don't think as much as he came over because he would come over to see Everett. And then they rented the farm to the Rollers.

**JULIA:** Oh the Rollers didn't own that place?

**VERA:** No. Now they may have bought it later. Did they?

**MARY:** No. I guess they never bought it. It always belonged to the Kleins. It was the Kleins that Everett and Jean bought it from. Somebody still in the Klein family.

**JULIA:** But we all thought a lot of Fred and Mrs. Roller and we called him Fred.

**BARRY:** As I recall did he kind of tease you, Mr. Roller?

**JULIA:** No, not especially, but see our father called him Fred, oh he did, so the rest of them called him Fred.

**VERA:** I didn't.

**JULIA:** Well, I did.

**VERA:** To his face?

**JULIA:** Well, I guess so.

**VERA:** Well, I remember him complaining that he came to the house, he was in the house one day and he'd brought someone else with him and as the introductions were being made or the exchanges he said now in this house I'm Mr. Roller and he didn't say it like he felt good about it. Implying that every place else he was Fred.

**JULIA:** Well, Pop called him Fred, but we called Mrs. Roller, "Mrs. Roller."

**MARY:** So did mother.

**JULIA:** Mrs. Roller: I wrote to her 'til she died, Christmas time.

**VERA:** I did too.

**JULIA:** And I heard from her too 'til just three or four years before she died.

**VERA:** This is one trip out not too long before she died before she completely lost her memory.

**LESLIE:** That was after she moved down there to the south part of town.

**VERA:** Didn't know anyone. I guess she got so she didn't even know what was the name of the boy the adopted, Alvin. She got so she didn't even know Alvin.

**JULIA:** Whatever, Jeannie kept us posted on Mrs. Roller and how she was.

**BARRY:** What kinds of esthetic or for lack of a better term, kind of artistic influences were there. I know that you often sang as a family in the evening, you would sing a hymn or two, were there others, and that was kind of a musical influence, of course?

**MARY:** Julia played the violin and Pearl played the piano.

**JULIA:** I took a few lessons when I went to college.

**PEARL:** Uncle Everett used to play the violin a lot. Otherwise, I don't remember we had very much.

**JULIA:** No, we didn't.

**LESLIE:** That was western style too.

**MARY:** Mother used to play the organ some. You know that thing would have been invaluable if anybody had moved it out of there and kept it.

**JULIA:** Well they sold it.

**MARY:** Everett did?

**JULIA:** It was sold to Mr. Klein-Mead. It was second hand.

**MARY:** I mean now. Oh yeah.

**BARRY:** One esthetic influence that just comes out in our discussion this afternoon is all the reading that you all did. You were reading everything under the sun. Shakespeare and lots of other classic authors.

**JULIA:** Ralph and Lee would bring their college books home. We'd go through them, it didn't matter what they were.

**LESLIE:** Those college books would go back and forth.

**BARRY:** Did anyone ever express themselves in visual or graphic art, painting or drawing?

**VERA:** Max could draw anything. He got really good. I took some painting classes my first year at Graceland. I guess I got them from Mrs. Garver and I did some painting but it was, you know, for my own.

**JULIA:** I have some beautiful swans on paper that large, that Max did about three or four storks, not swans, what brings the babies? Storks. I said a little old thing that I'd made up when I was going to have Mary Jane and I thought it was cute. We sent out to all of you to let you know that I was going to have a baby. All of you. Here came in the mail in a big folder these lovely drawings that Max had drawn. Storks lighting on the chimney and some just in flight. Beautiful.

**VERA:** Well, when I taught him when he was in 8th grade that was the thing to watch out for all the time. Because to keep him working because he'd be back there drawing pictures of all the kids.

**PEARL:** He could put the expression in the faces of animals.

**VERA:** He was very good at animals. You could just swear that their muscles were moving right in front of your eyes, in the way that he would draw them.

**JULIA:** But he was the only one I know of that did anything like that of the family we had some good singers.

**PEARL:** Leslie used to sing and Glen and Lee.

**JULIA:** I don't know if Roland sang or not.

**BARRY:** Did the singing start at home Aunt Judy, did it?

**JULIA:** Um, no.

**MARY:** Most of the folks were good singers.

**JULIA:** Our father and mother both sang. They were good singers. And when Pop, I can remember him walking me and then some of the younger children, singing. Pop would sing, what was that song he would sing?

**MARY:** Old ones, his old ones. The Lone Cowboy. Mom sang "After the Ball was Over."

**VERA:** So did Pop.

**JULIA:** And Mom would sing "Poor Little Joe, Lost in the Snow, no one to love him, no place to go." They had some sad ones. It was a pretty tune.

**MARY:** Pop had some sad ones about Suzy. It was a funny name, wasn't Suzy, poor little Snoozy out it in the snow.

**JULIA:** Leslie, tell about your car, the car stuff you and Glen used to do.

**MARY:** Did you work on the car.

**JULIA:** No, they were in a dealership.

**BARRY:** Oh, they were selling cars together?

**MARY:** Where did you do that Leslie? Where did you sell cars? Was it in Imperial?

**LESLIE:** Oh, I think it was mostly we'd pick up some old cars that needed repair work.

**JULIA:** Regular dealership. No, kinda on the sly?

**BARRY:** Was that more for fun, you just did that out of curiosity or were you really earning money doing that?

**LESLIE:** We earned money.

**NELL:** Didn't you win a car at one time.

**LESLIE:** Yeah, brother did that, Glen. He had the winning ticket so to speak.

**BARRY:** In a raffle of some kind?

**VERA:** Yeah. He won that up in Iowa City.

**LESLIE:** His last year of school was up there.

**BARRY:** You were thinking about Glen.

**PEARL:** Yeah, he was always the funniest one. We always had more fun with him. We'd sit at the table eating ice cream, he say let's all put pepper on our ice cream, then one night we were all planning for a party. We used to have a party once in while. And we had tablecloths on the table, already and we watched for the people to come and when we saw the lights coming, he said now lets all run and hide under the table. He'd do things like that. And he was always had this joke: "Um, I never went anyplace but once and I had to hold the baby," and he used to tell us that. He was always asking which one of your brothers you think is the funniest? And I'd say "now Glen."

**JULIA:** He was going off to play a high school basketball team and I was going over to the next county to play, Clay County, I think. He played basketball and here was Jim left in our little house in Imperial.

**VERA:** Everett and I as we grew up were very close. I always felt I was his protector. I was three years older and, of course, they told me how I used to rock him in his crib when he was little but I don't remember that. But I always felt very protective of him. And we had gone in to live in town and we, of course, were going to the town school and I would have been in I think 6th grade and Everett would have been in about 3rd and there was a teacher there that

had been there for years in Imperial system, Miss Jackson. Very strict and as she was there right in the middle of some kind of class that I don't remember what kind of a class it was and there came a little knock at the door. She was the principal besides being the teacher. They called her out and when she left that room I thought she's going to go out and spank Everett. It just came over me like somebody had told me and I just about got up and followed her. And I could hardly do anything the rest of the afternoon till found out and sure enough, that's what she'd done and I didn't like that woman the rest of the time. I couldn't stand her because she'd spanked Everett. When I had to stay home one year because of the depression and we were talking about the effects of the depression, I had really forgotten that. But after I'd graduated from Graceland, I taught school, District #8, and then I went back to the University of Iowa and I had plenty to take me through that year and some left over for the next year and then I had wanted to teach two years but Pop said no that's enough. He said I want you to go on to school so then he had said that, he said you know I've saved all my money practically from teaching and they wouldn't take any board and room from me. They wanted me to use it to go to school, so I did. He said you just go ahead, you go ahead and go to school and I'll see that you'll be able to finish and get your degree. So he felt real bad, that's the first time I think that I ever thought I was going to cry was when he told me he couldn't send me back and I said well that was all right that it would be alright because I knew. It just broke my heart to look at him and then, later on, I did take some correspondence courses and I spent a lot of that year taking care of Pearl and Max and Mary Amy.

**PEARL:** We were batching.

**VERA:** They never had it so good. They had a cook and a housekeeper.

**PEARL:** We knew it was hard on you though.

**VERA:** I was a babysitter, what have you, and so but I do remember that Everett was really a good, this all started out with Everett, reflection of a sibling. He was a real good football player and so I had to something, you know, to make life a little more interesting. So, I devised that I was going to have Everett's football team out there, I was really gonna fix up a just bang up meal for his football team and **Phil** was not playing football but he and Everett were thick as thieves and good friends so I insisted that Phil come for that dinner too. Well, I really out did myself. It was really a dinner to be proud of and I know that I can see Everett yet, he was so proud, it was great.

**NELL:** That must have been the occasion that made such an impact on Phil about Vera. He thought she was the greatest thing that ever walked. You must have fixed a pretty good dinner.

**VERA:** I must have fed him up very well. No we all liked Phil. He was a neat guy.

**NELL:** He liked all your family. But you're special.

**JULIA:** When I was a senior in high school, Mama fixed, see there was six of us in my senior class and we had Mr. Crawford. He was our sponsor and I had asked Mom if we could have, well maybe she offered to, I don't know. But I wasn't there to help her and I don't know Vera had been of an age to help, but I don't even remember what happened to the other children when you got out there. But you know I worried all the time, I wonder if Mom's having help and if she'll have everything fixed up nice and when we got out there it was just perfect. And I was so proud of her. White tablecloth and our best dishes. It was our only dishes probably, but it was so nice.

**MARY:** She had a good set of dishes.

**JULIA:** So lovely for us to all go out there and do that then out on the farm when we kids were living in town going to high school.

**BARRY:** You shared one memory of Percy, Vera, you mentioned kind of a real vivid image of Percy behind that team of horses coming roaring down the road there. Are there any other recollections that stand out about Percy? Somebody said the other day that he was a fast driver, that whenever he was behind the wheel you moved right along.

**MARY:** That's the one I would have of him as a child playing in our front yard and sometimes I would be playing with Stan and Larry, his two oldest boys was always speed, it was always a speed. He'd flash in the driveway, I'm surprised he didn't kill one of us in that driveway and it seems like he had a little black Ford of some kind, whether Model Ts would have been in then, and slam out of that car and slam into the house and whatever he came to settle with either one of the folks and he'd tear back out. Maybe he'd look at the three of us and maybe he wouldn't or may if he looked. One time I remember he was a little put out with me because I was pulling the boys in a wagon, he says get them out of that wagon, they'll freeze to death. But by my recollection it was always speed. Where ever Percy was things were moving and fast.

**VERA:** Now I don't remember that at all about speed, particularly of driving fast, but I do remember hearing my mother say that the only reason she wanted to learn to drive a car was to take Percy for a ride.

**MARY:** So she could scare him to death probably. Get even.

**VERA:** But what I remember about Percy was his abundant energy. He never, I don't remember him every being tired. I don't ever remember him not having an answer for everything.

**LESLIE:** I don't remember when he wasn't busy.

**VERA:** And he was always busy. Always doing something, he never sat around. I don't remember him sitting down and reading.

**JULIA:** I think he did quite a bit of reading.

**VERA:** Now, I do remember him taking a course by correspondence that he did very well with it, so he would have had to. But he would take that off into another room so I don't remember too much about that. But what I do remember was this abounding energy and I recall one time here during this get together someplace along the line of being by myself and staying in this little house going to high school. Percy was supposed to check in on me but those were real speedy check-ins and that he had this big German shepherd, beautiful big dog but I didn't particularly care for him. In fact, I was a little bit afraid of him and I think he began to have feelings that he probably should be with me more often and what have. After he'd pace around awhile and then I finally remember one time he left the dog with me and that was the last thing I wanted and put him out in the kitchen and closed the door. And, of course, when Percy came to get him he was howling. Percy didn't like that a bit, he scolded me for that.

**MARY:** I don't remember Percy at home, I just remember him after he was married. I used to like to go down and see them. I thought that was great. Percy and Winnie were married, of course we all liked her so well right off.

**JULIA:** Well, Percy taught a week for me when I taught a country school for eight months and I hurt a knee and couldn't ride my horse. But Percy rode in his car and when I did start back to teach he took me a couple days in his car. But after that, then I took to riding Pansy again.

**VERA:** He was a very good organizer. He knew just what he wanted to do and how to do it. He gave very good directions.

**MARY:** I think one thing Percy had in common with our brother Lee. Presence. Just like I was always aware in my contact with Lee. When Lee entered a room, I always knew it. I think everybody else knew it. It was the same way with me with Percy.

**VERA:** He had a very strong personality.

**MARY:** There was a presence. You knew when he had come into the room.

**VERA:** But I can remember following his directions

**MARY:** He would walk from the kitchen, through the kitchen, through the dining area maybe if one of the front rooms were open, if not he'd turn around and have his hands in front of his overalls and singing these songs. Did you ever see Papa jig, yeah, I liked that or maybe he'd whistle, I'd like that. I'd get over on the bench behind the table and I'd listen to that all the time he was doing it. I knew all the words to all those.

**JULIA:** Wasn't That Lonesome Cowboy his favorite though? I forget.

**NELL:** Cattle Call, are you talking about that where he did the yodel with it.

**JULIA:** No, it wasn't that one though. That was my Dad's favorite, I thought maybe he'd, no they both sang that one though.

**MARY:** Remember he was a real good bass and Mother was a tenor?

**VERA:** Oh yeah, he had a beautiful bass voice.

**MARY:** Didn't Lee sing someplace and get paid for it.

**LESLIE:** In Iowa City.

**MARY:** I thought he did at some church. He got paid for it. Boy nobody offered to pay me for singing.

**JULIA:** Pay you for not. Ha.

**BARRY:** How did Grandma and Grandpa relate to each other? In terms of their husband and wife kind of relationship. Were they affectionate for example?

**JULIA:** Yes, I don't think I have ever heard a crossword between them. Now that's saying something isn't it? And I can remember them walking down from the house to the well, down that way holding hands, lots of times.

**MARY:** I don't know that I heard a cross word Judy, but there were times that I knew there was friction.

**JULIA:** Oh probably, but I don't think they let us know it too much.

**MARY:** But what I always also knew, I think this has effected me in probably my family life with Roy, which is kind of natural. It was a patriarchal family. Pop was in charge. Now mother, like you, Judy, had such a strong influence that I'm sure she never felt dominated, not against her will anyway because, like you, said she was the one that led the education. Started all the children and had so much influence I think in the finer things that took place in the house. This was Mother's doing and Pop never tried to change that. He was in full accord but of course here, again, as I said my memories of Mother was with failing health so naturally, maybe he was more and more taking over. I don't quite know where that line falls but I would have said in all my studies in psychology when you act that it was a patriarch.

**JULIA:** Oh, I think so to. She left a lot of things up to him to decide on, I know.

**BARRY:** How did they handle discipline with all of you. Vera gave a real example of her experience with Grandpa's discipline when she was a preschooler. Kind of what I use to label, I labeled it as a kind of time-out procedure in today's terminology. Would you get a swat on the behind or you mentioned kind of a sarcastic comment Leslie of Grandpa said to you and Glen that time?

**PEARL:** I did. I got a spanking once. I didn't come home from school on time and everybody left. Winnie and Percy were living there so I got home and it was before they came and then I had to go to bed. So, then the next morning here come my dad and he took down the blanket and switched me a little bit on the bottom and that was it.

**VERA:** I never got touched by neither one of them.

**JULIA:** Well, I did by my mother. She slapped me like that, just easy and I was ready to pack up and leave.

**BARRY:** How old were you then Aunt Judy?

**JULIA:** I was about 9 or 10.

**BARRY:** So it had a real impact. I mean when that did happen.

**JULIA:** Oh yes. Well too, I think it wasn't Mom's responsibility to punish me this time because my Daddy told me be sure to tie the windmill down, you know the wind blew. It would get out of hand and then it would go off the pump. So I forgot and sure enough it did so I ran and told my mother and she said you'll just have to wait 'til Pop comes home. You know and

she said you tell him yourself. So I worried the whole hour and scared you know and thought I was gonna get a good whipping. When he came home I ran to him and told him and that time he didn't do anything. I think he thought well that I had the courage enough to come and tell him.

**JULIA:** I don't think they ever did like some parents do "wait until your father comes home". "Go ask your mother". I don't think they ever passed off on each other at all.

**LESLIE:** Well, they didn't really believe in physical punishment.

**JULIA:** No.

**MARY:** But I remember with my two.

**LESLIE:** Boy and boy, when she said something they did it.

**MARY:** I had a little guilt over with Mother, like Vera said, she might call me 1, 2 or 3 times and you knew by the 3rd time you better come. But by then I was feeling bad I knew I had done wrong. But there was no worry. But if my father called me there was no hesitation. I took off. There wasn't a second or third call.

**JULIA:** I think they both had a little insight don't you, on things, ahead of their time.

**MARY:** Oh, I think they were.

**JULIA:** I think Mom did in her cooking, nutrition.

**MARY:** She really understood nutrition.

**JULIA:** So we always had lots of food, lots of fruit, vegetables.

**MARY:** Of course, we butchered our own pork and beef, but she'd bring in fish.

**JULIA:** She wasn't so great on the meat, although we had plenty because we had chickens and turkeys and we did butcher. But the main thing that we see we are gung-ho on now are the fruits and vegetables. We really got a lot of.

**MARY:** She always did. Pop would bring them home by the crate.

**VERA:** Buy apples by the barrel and put them down in the cellar.

**PEARL:** We had apples and popcorn every night during the winter.

**JULIA:** I don't know how you folks did your popcorn later on but we just, we just had scorched field corn on top of the stove for our popcorn.

**VERA:** I don't ever remember having popcorn when I was little. That's a later development because we had this field corn and we put it on top of the stove and scorched it and we simply forgot all about it and then we ate it.

**JULIA:** Poached corn and then what was good if you had any left was to grind it in the food grinder and eat it with cream and sugar.

**BARRY:** It's almost like grits or something like that.

**JULIA:** Sounds like grits.

**NELL:** It had a distinct flavor of its own.

**JULIA:** It didn't taste like grits at all. You never crunched on any of that. I kind of liked it. Oh it's good, well we thought it was good. I don't know whether I would like it now or not.

**BARRY:** I have a couple of last questions to kind of wrap up and summarize a little bit. Maybe we can kind of take these together rather than trying to separate them out. One would be memories today that you have of your brothers and sisters if you were sitting apart from this group and somebody said tell me a story about so and so or tell me a story about somebody else. That kind of memory and a related question then is turning points. When you think back over your lives, are there turning points that stand out in terms of the course of your life, and how it went one way or another way or something like that. Ideas that make sense, the idea of turning points? For example, the Great Depression might be a turning point. Maybe something happened during the Depression that changed the course of your life.

**JULIA:** There was a time in our lives when we didn't see each other.

**MARY:** You mean because you didn't have money to travel?

**JULIA:** Yes. It would be years that we wouldn't see one another.

**MARY:** I don't remember much of that at home. I was aware of some of it happening to some of our friends that go to school. But I remember during the Depression that our father bought wheat. He had the money to buy wheat. It would be a form of speculation from the other farmers and he would pay them three or four more cents a bushel and he would store them in these big, well, 'til the grainery was full and these big elevators. Well, they were fences. It was over by the grainery, these fences with thick wire and the stocks, snow fences, like that maybe a little heavier and thicker. I don't know where he got those or who put them up but he'd store it in there and when he would go to town, he say now Babe you watch this. And I said what do you mean watch them. He says if a truck pulled in, you see they were so desperate to get wheat and they could take and sell it and they would make pure profit. But he would store this you see for the few extra cents. He gave the farmers a better deal than they'd get at the grain elevator because he could afford to store it and then if it went up, then he'd sell it and get his money back. He wouldn't make much, but he'd help the other farmers. He was, like I said, I'm sure you would call it a form of speculation, but he didn't do it so much to make money. He was kind of helping them. But I thought that was terrific. He'd stand out there, anything that was coming, you know the few cars that you heard, make sure it wasn't a truck that was gonna pull in and load up and carry off Pop's wheat. But I never, I don't think we felt the Depression much because of the farm life and I guess.

**LESLIE:** It was talked about a lot.

**MARY:** Yes, it was talked about a lot.

**VERA:** I think we just took it in our stride. I remember going to the University of Iowa. I never had a nickel in my jeans but it didn't bother me any. No one else did. I worked for my board and room and had enough for tuition and books and enough to eat. If somebody was going down to Lamoni, some of the Lamoni people were driving down from Iowa City to Lamoni, I'd bum a ride and go down and see Julia and Gene and come back up, go to school.

**LESLIE:** It was more or less taken in stride. Right?

**JULIA:** I don't think it was the people in our circumstances that suffered as much from the Depression as it was people that had money and lost it all.

**BARRY:** And didn't have the resources, internal resources to fall back on.

**NELL:** Well, I think I can remember people across the road, the ones that we would call the laborers that worked for the farmers, that they felt the pinch pretty good because they maybe didn't have the resources or maybe they weren't knowledgeable enough like

your mother or mine that and Dad that would store up. We always had canned goods, mother raised the garden, we all worked in there and we canned, preserved, butchered, but these people didn't have that type of resources. That's where I learned about poached corn, from my neighbors that were working for the farmers and they had it pretty rough. So there is a different level below that suffered but if you were farm people like our family situation, we never knew what it was like to go hungry like the people in the cities. That's another group that suffered. So we were in a pretty good comfortable position to weather out the depression, if you were willing enough to get out there and raise a garden, preserve, put things aside.

**LESLIE:** If you were willing to eat poached corn, you know.

**PEARL:** I think back to the turning point in our lives, the big turning point in my life was right after my folks died. I'd been to Graceland College and went home but then see, we were all alone. Mary Amy and I were when I went down to Independence for nurses training. That was the biggest turning point in my life on that, what was I? Of course I had contact with Judy and Glen and so forth, that was a definite change.

**JULIA:** Well, a person has so many changes in his life I wouldn't know what was the biggest change. I think the biggest change was when I got married in my life.

**NELL:** But you still had your mother and dad then.

**JULIA:** Yeah, they were still alive.

**BARRY:** Were you in school when you met Gene?

**JULIA:** Yes, Graceland.

**PEARL:** Course that was a change for all of us when we got married.

**BARRY:** Think about the other members of your family for a minute. Maybe those who aren't with us physically anymore but certainly in spirit. Recollections of them, maybe little anecdotes or stories. You were mentioning this afternoon, Leslie, some memories about Glen. When you think about Glen on an afternoon like this, what interesting memory comes to mind about him?

**VERA:** I can remember one time in his, at his ranch that he wanted to stop there on one of our trips with them and he wanted my car into a very definite place and I always hated to back into something, back into a carport. I have to go in forward. I don't like to back in. Well, he backed me in there, his directions were precise you know. I just went in there straight as a die. When I got out I thought you know no reason to be proud of this because I was just following him.

**BARRY:** You mentioned thinking of Max, you mentioned the drawings of storks he sent you when you were pregnant.

**JULIA:** I don't these younger ones unless they came through Lamoni. I had contact that way. I lost track of them because the twins were six when I was married, so I wasn't out there all that time that they were going through maturity.

**MARY:** One thing Max did that Pearl will remember well too, he had great interest in bodybuilding and he built hurdles and pole vault. He used to do that by the hour.

**PEARL:** Yes, he surely did.

**MARY:** He used to kind of fascinate me, this was one thing our father never objected to and even for kids and I think. "Do you think that's kind of a waste of time, Max down there doing that?" But he sure built up his body and pretty good athlete, he played football on a scholarship, didn't he for the Teacher's College in Cedar Falls?

**JULIA:** Well, he's a wrestler.

**MARY:** I just want to throw this in because it just fascinated me and I think this is why Pop put up with this and enjoyed it. Uh, Winnie was telling me once, I said I knew there were a lot of things I didn't know about our Father that I wish I knew, and she said, well, what do you want to know? And I said, well, you know some of the things that he might have done in his youth for amusement. So she said one time the boys had set up about four or five hurdles down in the south of our home. There was kind of an open stretch of ground. So Pop had watched the boys foolin around with these hurdles most of the afternoon, Winnie said. So, after they left Pop went down to the end of them, took a good look at em, and just sailed right over all four or five of them. Said she never saw anything like it. Just as easy as if, so he must have had some natural athletic ability that was never displayed otherwise. So I think that's why he was interested, he probably was watching Max just to see what he was doing, but this is one thing Max did and really enjoyed it.

**BARRY:** And he later became a pilot of course. He was a pilot during the war?

**MARY:** I think he flew the Grumman Avengers. He would have stayed in. Max would have stayed in the service but they had kind of a government financial crisis of some kind as I understood and they let a lot of them go. And Max was one of them.

**JULIA:** Before they were even out of the service though he used to fly with the generals, the brass different places.

**VERA:** They asked for him. They would make special requests that he fly them.

**MARY:** I think that was a real jolt for Max when he was let go out of that. I think he thought that was going to be his work for life.

**JULIA:** But he did teach flying you know, too, later on. That's what did him up physically more than anything else. Anything got on his nerves and everything was teaching (the other green pilots). I think he was still in the service when he was doing that. He said when you get up there you didn't know whether you were going to get down.

**BARRY:** They only gave those instructor jobs to the best pilots, too. That was a real feather in his cap. Did the folks or anyone ever tell stories about Lee? I know he and Ralph were gone fairly early on. I remember reading in that American magazine article about his being caught in a stall, squeezed between a horse and the side of the stall. (Lee?) Yes, and that Grandpop saved him and Lee had recollections of being saved many times over the course of the years.

**MARY:** Yeah, I remember he said he just came in so calm and just slapped the horse on the rump and says move over. Of course, I think Lee thought he was a gonner.

**JULIA:** The older boys, I know, used to get out and jump, there wasn't anything to jump. They'd jump barbed wire fences, course, they'd tear their overalls and get home... you didn't tear your overalls?

**LESLIE:** I cleared those fences with six inches. A shot went right across the top of my head. He was white as a sheet, Everett was.

**VERA:** He didn't think it was loaded.

**JULIA:** No, he didn't. Well, he didn't know I was coming up the steps either until I got there see. I'll tell you a little story about Everett too. He was three, we lost him. I don't know whether any of the rest of you remember or not. The older ones would. We were panic stricken. We had hunted all over the house of course, first, all over the farm and all the buildings. Finally, one of the boys decided they would get up on top of the house and we could do that easily by getting out on the porch roof and climbing up onto the top of the house. And here was Everett, out across the road lying in the deeper grass sound asleep. Were we relieved to find that little three-year-old!

**MARY:** I thought you were going to say he was on top of the house.

**JULIA:** No, Everett wouldn't be that adventurous, I don't think.

**VERA:** You were mentioning Lee. My best memories of Lee, of course, was after he was an adult when he was established in his work and what he was doing up at Iowa City and that I took courses under him. He was a marvelous teacher, a very dynamic lecturer. And that he could make anybody understand, very explicit and in the way that he phrased things and said things to that it was easily understood. He did not talk above. He had the vocabulary to use any kind of phraseology he would have liked to have used but he never talked above the student's head. They all knew what he was saying and it was a real learning situation to be in his class. And that he did, I think he made everyone feel that they were a person. A worthy person within themselves, and that was one of his great attributes. Anybody that came into his presence felt worthy, felt that they were a person of account, you might say. He never made anybody feel, of all the different honors that he had received all through his life, I don't think he ever made anybody feel that ever came into his presence that they were any lesser of a person.

**JULIA:** Ralph was kind of bossy, you know that?

**LESLIE:** He was a top sergeant.

**BARRY:** In World War I?

**LESLIE:** Yeah.

**JULIA:** Well, I don't mean he was bossy that he was obnoxious about it or anything (no) at all, but when Ralph goes to do something, because I don't, see Pearl didn't know him, Mary Amy didn't know him. Well, you did later when you got older, but when he told us something to do, we did it.

**VERA:** Well, Mary Amy would probably have better recollection of him than anyone because she was there in Waterloo for a school year.

**MARY:** Well, when I think of Ralph, it's just almost like a word flashes in front of me - "integrity" as I see it. I actually see it and very consistent, very stable. Anything that he would have said he could repeat ten years later because that would have been the truth and what was right at the time. And I learned a little bit about his life in politics there in Iowa the year I lived there. I was a junior in high school and he could have run for Attorney General and had the office, but he could not play the political game. He couldn't do the little dirty tricks that so often go with politics. And very, very strong personal influence there in the life of Amy and his daughters, Maxine and Shirley. And here, again, I saw this same thing that I experienced with my folks, Amy might have to call him two or three times, but not Ralph and Micky. Maxine had started every night after school stopping with her friends to have a Coke so this had to come out of her allowance. Well, she had run out of her allowance one time so she was asking her father for money. He wanted to know what for because Ralph didn't just hand it out. You explained what you were going to do with this, although he had a very successful practice but you didn't waste it. So in the course of this discussion, Maxine had to admit she had to have money for this Coke every night coming home from school. Well, that was the end of that Coke, believe you me. Ralph says right now, no more of those, because she really was whether it was mental or physical, she was addicted, it was a habit. Well, she broke that one and I think it probably helped her in the future if she had some habits she had to break, but this was just what he stood for. Honesty, integrity, always knew who he was and he lived accordingly and, of course, Amy had a real good family life as far as I could observe, a real good family life. Very stable and I think probably when he lost Amy that was big blow to him. I expect when he did die, what two or three years after that?

**LESLIE:** No, seven.

**MARY:** I have an idea he went very peacefully, because I think Barry asked me, wasn't it heart, they found him sleeping the next morning. The cleaning lady found him. Very peacefully, but I think it was his heart. I don't think it was the sugar diabetes he had. But as I said, just this solid memory and I think of Ralph. Of course, that was a good opportunity for me to know him and to learn to love him.

**BARRY:** One of my first recollections of Ralph as a boy, I can't remember how old I was, I must have been 11 or 12, took me up shooting. I was interested probably before, but that certainly crystallized my interest in that and that's been a part of my life since that point. That's just one of the little influences that has been a thread throughout my life.

**MARY:** I remember that, you were right because your sister, Julie, was four and he was so good with her that trip too, I remember.

**NELL:** Well, I can remember Ralph and Amy coming back from a shooting meet that he went to and stopping over, but I also understand Shirley got into the shooting (she won medals too) through the tutelage of her dad I'm sure. They would stop by and we'd get to visit with them, usually after one of those meets. Shirley was right there with her daddy on that stuff. He really ate that up too. Maxine, I didn't get the impression she was interested in that. Maybe she was but I never heard of it.

**MARY:** She never shot that I know of. I never heard that she did. Doesn't mean she didn't, but I never knew of it.

**BARRY:** Well, we've pretty much covered the set of things that I wanted to use to discuss with you this afternoon. Is there anything you want to add or summarize by saying or anything spontaneously? This has been real satisfying for me.