

**January 2008**

**Interview with Elizabeth Pleasants Brown**

**by Rachel Koeniger**

**Rachel Koeniger:** My name is Rachel Koeniger, and today is January 31<sup>st</sup>, 2008. I'm here today at New Providence Presbyterian Church with Betty Brown, who's going to share some of her memories with us for the Brownsburg Oral History Project. You want to tell me your name to see if we pick up on it?

**Betty Brown:** Elizabeth Betty Brown.

**Rachel Koeniger:** So what can you tell me about the Haliburton family?

**Betty Brown:** Well, we're talking about Dude Halliburton. He was Edna's [Edna Haliburton Pleasants] brother, which was my grandmother. And they both lived out on the hill as far as I know.

**Rachel Koeniger:** Where was that?

**Betty Brown:** Well, our home was in-between. Dude, his home was down below on the right hand side. And my grandmother, Edna, lived up the hill in the left hand house.

**Rachel Koeniger:** And where was this located?

**Betty Brown:** It's still there. Right up above the Ervine place on Sterrett Road [1913 Sterrett Road].

**Rachel Koeniger:** So who was Dude Haliburton's wife?

**Betty Brown:** Maggie, and she was a Pleasants. She was a sister to Glasgow Pleasants, who lived in the home where the Stewart family lives now, Leroy [Still Alley in Brownsburg]. They lived in that house, the family.

**Rachel Koeniger:** Isabelle [Chewning] wanted to know about the children, if they had children, or if they took children in to raise. Do you know anything about that?

**Betty Brown:** Aunt Mag and Uncle Dude had none. They didn't have children. But Aunt Mag had a sister that had foster children that lived in Washington [DC], and during the summer months they would come down and stay all summer.

**Rachel Koeniger:** Sort of like a summer camp.

**Betty Brown:** Yeah, and then we had relatives, which was her brother, which was Glasgow Pleasants, his children would come down for the summer. And of course, children brought children.

**Rachel Koeniger:** This was your dad's?

**Betty Brown:** No, that was more my grandmother's side, yeah.

**Rachel Koeniger:** Do you know about any of these children that might have been named Pinky?

**Betty Brown:** Yes.

**Rachel Koeniger:** Can you tell us about Pinky?

**Betty Brown:** Her name was Margaret, really. Pinky was a nickname. And she was Aunt Winona, which was-- well, she was Maggie's sister. And they lived in Washington.

**Rachel Koeniger:** So who was Pinky?

**Betty Brown:** Pinky was Winona Horton's daughter.

**Rachel Koeniger:** And Winona was Maggie's sister.

**Betty Brown:** Uhm hm, yeah.

**Rachel Koeniger:** What about Aunt Laura?

**Betty Brown:** Now there were two Aunt Laura's. One was a Preston. Laura Preston, now I don't know how she came into the family. I don't know whether they were cousins between her and Aunt Mag.

**Rachel Koeniger:** Now was she the teacher?

**Betty Brown:** She was the teacher from Rockbridge Baths. She lived in Rockbridge Baths. But somehow she finally ended up down here. And she lived with Aunt Mag and Uncle Dude.

**Rachel Koeniger:** What was your mother's name?

**Betty Brown:** My mother's name was Cora Evelyn. She was a Brown. And she came from West Virginia.

**Rachel Koeniger:** Who was Edna Haliburton Pleasants?

**Betty Brown:** That was my grandmother.

**Rachel Koeniger:** Grandmother. We've already covered that. I should've reviewed these questions before. I don't know enough about it to even re-do the questions, so I'm just gonna ask them the way.

**Betty Brown:** That's all right.

**Rachel Koeniger:** And Edna was Dude's sister.

**Betty Brown:** Yeah. His sister.

**Rachel Koeniger:** And then there's Estelline Haliburton Franklin.

**Betty Brown:** Now that goes back beyond me.

**Rachel Koeniger:** That was not his sister?

**Betty Brown:** They were relatives, but I don't really know. I'd have to look on paper to find that one.

**Rachel Koeniger:** You can get back to me.

**Betty Brown:** I'll get back to them.

**Rachel Koeniger:** Were there other brothers and sisters, or do you know?

**Betty Brown:** They were the closest ones that I remember. That's the ones that you seen that would come and visit every once.

**Rachel Koeniger:** Can you tell me anything about Leo Pleasants?

**Betty Brown:** Well, I talked to him last night. He lives in Texas, but as a young boy, he was raised the same place dad was, up the hill in the log house. But he went to Lexington to live with Glasgow when they moved, Glasgow Pleasants. He went there so he could go to school. So he never was around very much.

**Rachel Koeniger:** And who is he to you?

**Betty Brown:** He's my uncle.

**Rachel Koeniger:** And so where did he go to school?

**Betty Brown:** He graduated from [Lylburn Downing in] Lexington. And then he left and went to Hampton, Virginia, to Hampton University, and from there he went into the service. And he retired from service, retired lieutenant colonel. And then he brought the principal to school somewhere in Texas. And he still resides in Texas.

**Rachel Koeniger:** And how old is he now?

**Betty Brown:** He's in his 80s.

**Rachel Koeniger:** He would be a good one to interview.

**Betty Brown:** We had said something to him, and he said he didn't stay here long enough to really.

**Rachel Koeniger:** Probably doesn't remember much. He was young. Well, that covers the genealogy portion of the interview. We're gonna stop and let me get my other questions out. How long have you lived in the Brownsburg area?

**Betty Brown:** All my life, for 68 years.

**Rachel Koeniger:** Who were your parents? What were your parents names?

**Betty Brown:** My mother was Evelyn, and my father was William Howard Pleasants.

**Rachel Koeniger:** And you said earlier that your mom was from West Virginia.

**Betty Brown:** From West Virginia. She came here when she was 12. Her mother died, and my aunt took her. And they lived around the road from me up on the other end of Brownsburg.

**Rachel Koeniger:** On 252?

**Betty Brown:** On 252.

**Rachel Koeniger:** Was your dad a native of Brownsburg?

**Betty Brown:** Oh, lord, yes. He had his roots, too.

**Rachel Koeniger:** And where was his family home?

**Betty Brown:** Well, at the log cabin out there on Sterrett Road.

**Rachel Koeniger:** Were you born at home, or were you born in a hospital?

**Betty Brown:** Fortunately I was born in the hospital. But at the time they were working for the Brown's, which lived down below you. Who were the people?

**Rachel Koeniger:** Across from Bill and Adair [Dunlap]?

**Betty Brown:** Uhm hm, in that house [796 Hays Creek Road].

**Rachel Koeniger:** They were working there?

**Betty Brown:** They were working there when I was born.

**Rachel Koeniger:** What hospital were you born in?

**Betty Brown:** Stonewall Jackson, I guess it was. But I was lucky to be one of the ones that got to sleep in the bureau drawers before they got the beds.

**Rachel Koeniger:** Oh, that's neat! Now what date were you born in 1939?

**Betty Brown:** August 20<sup>th</sup>.

**Rachel Koeniger:** August 20<sup>th</sup>, 1939. And they put the babies in the drawers?

**Betty Brown:** In the bureau. I was one of the lucky ones.

**Rachel Koeniger:** That's neat. And where did you grow up, what house?

**Betty Brown:** Well, mom and dad worked for the Brown's. I believe-- I can't remember her name. They were there until I was about three, and then we moved back to Sterrett Road. So we moved back.

**Rachel Koeniger:** So you don't really know what brought your dad to Brownsburg in the first place? He's just been there.

**Betty Brown:** His family has always been here.

**Rachel Koeniger:** Can you tell me what your first memory of Brownsburg is?

**Betty Brown:** Whoo! I wouldn't know. I couldn't remember. I guess coming on Saturday nights we would come to the store. That's when you got your groceries, and you would come into Brownsburg and I'd go to Swope's Store. It was Supinger's then. And that's on Saturday night. That's when we'd get our groceries.

**Rachel Koeniger:** Did you all have a car?

**Betty Brown:** No, we had to walk. And of course, it was bikes. You know, and you didn't do too much of that in the winter. But in the summer that was your pleasure.

**Rachel Koeniger:** Was that mainly groceries?

**Betty Brown:** Yeah, it was mainly groceries. He had some clothing, had some, I guess what you wore back then.

**Rachel Koeniger:** Tell me who else was in your family.

**Betty Brown:** Just me.

**Rachel Koeniger:** You're an only child!

**Betty Brown:** I thought you would've known that by now.

**Rachel Koeniger:** These only children are dangerous. So you're the only child?

**Betty Brown:** The only child, and I adopted all the other children for my mother and father.

**Rachel Koeniger:** That's good.

**Betty Brown:** When he drove the school bus, because whatever I got, if I had friends that took time, he had to buy for them.

**Rachel Koeniger:** I know Dot [Martin] had said that her dad drove a school bus. Janis Ayres said her dad drove a school bus. And they had to buy their own bus. Did your dad do the same thing?

**Betty Brown:** No, he drove for Mr. Fulwider, from over at Raphine.

**Rachel Koeniger:** So he owned the bus and you dad drove it.

**Betty Brown:** Dad just drove it for him. And then after he got through driving for Fulwider, Mr.-- the man from Fairfield – bought it, Borthwick bought it and drove it.

**Rachel Koeniger:** Where did he drive?

**Betty Brown:** Okay, when we left home, you would leave Brownsburg. [The African-American children were bussed to a segregated school, Lylburn Downing, in Lexington.] We would leave from Sterrett Road, come to Brownsburg there where Doris Lunsford lives, turn around there, and pick up children. Then we'd go from there to Raphine. We would go to Fairfield. Then we'd cut off at Mackey's Lane and go to Timber Ridge.

**Rachel Koeniger:** Wow!

**Betty Brown:** And go all the way around through that, back roads, to Lexington. It was from 7:15 in the morning to quarter of 9:00 we'd ride the bus.

**Rachel Koeniger:** So school started in Lexington...

**Betty Brown:** At 9:00.

**Rachel Koeniger:** At 9:00. So you don't ever remember the [colored] school in Brownsburg, or do you?

**Betty Brown:** No. I've heard of it, but I don't remember that, no, no.

**Rachel Koeniger:** How many would he, the bus, pick up?



**Betty Brown:** We'd have a full bus. And I know it had to be 30/35. And our bus was one of the older ones that had the seats down the side, one long seat, and one down the middle. And that was no fun to try to <inaudible>.

**Rachel Koeniger:** No seatbelts?

**Betty Brown:** No seatbelts.

**Rachel Koeniger:** And no handles?

**Betty Brown:** No handles.

**Rachel Koeniger:** Tell me about who some of your neighbors were on Sterrett Road.

**Betty Brown:** Well, the two most important neighbors I had was Carolyn and Lou Martin. I played with them. And then Mrs. Dice which lived down there where the, I guess, Thorne girl [Katherine Helmick] lives now [2081 Sterrett Road]. She took in orphaned children. And I had a friend, Stella Edgars, which I think is still living. I saw her maybe eight or ten years ago. She came to Brownsburg to see me. But those are the ones I believe that...

**Rachel Koeniger:** What sort of things did you all do? Did you all play outside or play dolls?

**Betty Brown:** And Lou and Carolyn educated us on the cows. And we played in the barn in the hay. Baseball. Things like that. And swim in the creek.

**Rachel Koeniger:** Where was the swimming hole?

**Betty Brown:** Wherever, 'cause we didn't care that much for deep water. But see, what I would do, I would go across the road, and go through the creek to go up to Lou's and them house [1913 Sterrett Road], and that's where we'd go-- call that swimming hole.

**Rachel Koeniger:** So you never went to school in Brownsburg?

**Betty Brown:** No. I went to Lexington. Well, I went to Fairfield first. Because at the time the county kids were still going to Fairfield. [The African-American school was located somewhere near the site of

the current Moose Lodge at 6363 North Lee Highway.] And I think I went over there a year. A year or two. And then we had to go to Lexington.

**Rachel Koeniger:** That was a long day. What time did you get out of school in the afternoon?

**Betty Brown:** Now where're you talking about?

**Rachel Koeniger:** In Lexington.

**Betty Brown:** Three o'clock. We didn't get home till 5:30.

**Rachel Koeniger:** That's a long day for little kids.

**Betty Brown:** And if we wanted to join anything, or be in anything, we wouldn't get home till 10:00, because daddy would have to come home, do what he had to do, and then come back and get us.

**Rachel Koeniger:** What sort of work did he do besides driving a school bus? Did he farm?

**Betty Brown:** Well, we had cows and hogs and the regular farm animal. And then he would work at Washington and Lee.

**Rachel Koeniger:** What did he do there?

**Betty Brown:** I guess more like janitorial work. 'Cause he was only there from like 9:30 to about 2:30.

**Rachel Koeniger:** And how long did he work there?

**Betty Brown:** For as long as he drove the bus to Lexington.

**Rachel Koeniger:** So he'd drive the bus in and work, and then he'd drive home.

**Betty Brown:** Uh huh.

**Rachel Koeniger:** Well, that worked out well.

**Betty Brown:** Uh huh.

**Rachel Koeniger:** What about your mom? Did she work?

**Betty Brown:** Now she worked for the Powell's, which lives-- they lived in the log house above us where Jane Singleton lives there now [1926 Sterrett Road].

**Rachel Koeniger:** Okay, where the Herrs lived?

**Betty Brown:** With the Herrs and all those people. I can't remember.

**Rachel Koeniger:** So she worked there.

**Betty Brown:** She worked there. See, that was their summer home, because he was the professor at Mary Baldwin. And during the winter months she would go to Staunton with them. They lived down in Staunton. And she'd work, and I would stay with my aunt during the week, and mom would come home on the weekend.

**Rachel Koeniger:** So she was away from home during the week in the winter.

**Betty Brown:** In the winter.

**Rachel Koeniger:** She was home in the summer.

**Betty Brown:** Yeah, uhm hm.

**Rachel Koeniger:** And where did your aunt live?

**Betty Brown:** In Brownsburg above me, where I live now. On the Turnpike.

**Rachel Koeniger:** What was her name?

**Betty Brown:** Agnes. Agnes Alexander.

**Rachel Koeniger:** When did you finish school, what year?

**Betty Brown:** '58, 1958.

**Rachel Koeniger:** And what have you done since then?

**Betty Brown:** Raised children, and then I went to work for the Post Office.

**Rachel Koeniger:** Tell me a little bit about your family. Your husband's name is...

**Betty Brown:** Louis Brown.

**Rachel Koeniger:** And when did you all get married?

**Betty Brown:** '59.

**Rachel Koeniger:** <inaudible>

**Betty Brown:** We always lived in Brownsburg.

**Rachel Koeniger:** Is he a native of Brownsburg?

**Betty Brown:** Yeah, uhm hm.

**Rachel Koeniger:** Where did he grow up?

**Betty Brown:** Brownsburg, he grew up up around the curve, too.

**Rachel Koeniger:** Same area.

**Betty Brown:** Same area.

**Rachel Koeniger:** All right. Tell me a little bit about your children. How many children?

**Betty Brown:** Oh, gosh! I had three boys and three girls. The oldest boy is dead, deceased. And let's see, Elizabeth lives here in Brownsburg. One's in Staunton. Gary's here. Jennifer's in Roanoke. And Becky's in Lexington. I think I got them right.

**Rachel Koeniger:** So you said that you had farm animals.

**Betty Brown:** One of each.

**Rachel Koeniger:** Did he-- you had a cow?

**Betty Brown:** Yeah, we had cows to milk, uhm hm. And we had raised hogs, and we butchered those. And raised chickens.

**Rachel Koeniger:** Had eggs?

**Betty Brown:** Eggs.

**Rachel Koeniger:** Did you all have gardens?

**Betty Brown:** Oh, yeah. That's when you had those acre gardens, because you grew everything that you ate.

**Rachel Koeniger:** Did you help in the garden?

**Betty Brown:** Oh, I thought I did. I won't say for sure. I thought I did.

**Rachel Koeniger:** We can't ask your parents.

**Betty Brown:** And our biggest thing in the summer was we had cherries and peaches. We had the trees, you know? We picked those, and then we canned-- mother would can those. Apples.

**Rachel Koeniger:** I guess you don't remember the cannery. Do you remember anything about the cannery?

**Betty Brown:** I remember where it sat, [near the intersection of Brownsburg Turnpike and Old School Lane] but I never...

**Rachel Koeniger:** Your mother never used that?

**Betty Brown:** Yeah, well, mom and them did.

**Rachel Koeniger:** Did she?

**Betty Brown:** Uh huh, they did, but I didn't know anything about canning, no.

**Rachel Koeniger:** Isabelle [Chewning] had said on the other set of questions to ask you about Camp Briar Hills. Did you help there or work there some when you were younger?

**Betty Brown:** I worked two years, I think, there. I worked one up on the hill. And then they had another where Camp Maxwellton was back there. And I worked a year out there.

**Rachel Koeniger:** At Pisgah?

**Betty Brown:** Uhm hm, in Pisgah [657 Pisgah Road].

**Rachel Koeniger:** What did you do?

**Betty Brown:** We worked in the kitchen, helped to prepare the meals, and got ready to set up for the dinner, and then for their supper, the meal.

**Rachel Koeniger:** Do you have any stories that you remember about anything that happened there?

**Betty Brown:** The only thing that I remember about was the snake that was in the bathroom.

**Rachel Koeniger:** I would remember that, too!

**Betty Brown:** I won't dare to tell about it. That's about the only thing I remember about that.

**Rachel Koeniger:** How old were you when you were helping?

**Betty Brown:** I had had two children, I think, then. So I had to be about, I think, 23?

**Rachel Koeniger:** Who else worked?

**Betty Brown:** Louis's' mother worked. That's how I got to go to work. 'Cause she didn't have a way to work. And I drove her, so...

**Rachel Koeniger:** What were his parents' names?

**Betty Brown:** Katherine and Opie. She was a Stewart, and he was a Brown from-- they were from Newport.

**Rachel Koeniger:** Do you want to talk about when mechanization first came to the farm? Did you all have tractors?

**Betty Brown:** Oh, no, no. Nothing like that.

**Rachel Koeniger:** Just the animals.

**Betty Brown:** Just the animal.

**Rachel Koeniger:** Did you ever milk cows?

**Betty Brown:** I never learned. I thought it was a girly-- beautiful for somebody to do it, but I never could-- I never.

**Rachel Koeniger:** What about gathering eggs? Did you do that?

**Betty Brown:** Oh, yeah, we gathered eggs. And they always asked me to gather the eggs when I was happy.

**Rachel Koeniger:** So you wouldn't break them?

**Betty Brown:** I think we had like maybe 12 to 15 chickens we would have. And I can remember when we ordered them, you know? And you'd go over to Raphine to the Post Office and pick them up.

**Rachel Koeniger:** Little bitty chicks?

**Betty Brown:** Uh huh.

**Rachel Koeniger:** You said that you had a peach tree, and apples trees?

**Betty Brown:** Well, there was loads-- we had a lot back behind, up back in there.

**Rachel Koeniger:** And cherries?

**Betty Brown:** And cherries! The black cherries! Oh, I'm telling you!

**Rachel Koeniger:** And you canned those.

**Betty Brown:** Canned those. It was a terrible cherry tree! Whoo! Goodness six or seven of us would get up in the tree, and we still wouldn't see one another. And like I say we had a peach orchard. And apple trees. Raspberries. Strawberries. Just loads of fruit.

**Rachel Koeniger:** And do you know what sorts of things you grew in the garden?

**Betty Brown:** Oh, you had to have those potatoes. And you had cabbage, potatoes, corn, string beans. We didn't do much with squash. I can't remember squash. I know we tried a hand at sweet potatoes once. And I also did that when we were in Brownsburg, we used to have a patch of sweet potatoes. They were good.

**Rachel Koeniger:** Here's a good one. I think you can probably talk about this one. Have you ever attended any of the area churches?

**Betty Brown:** I've enjoyed them all. Everywhere I go, you know, everybody seems just so loving and caring and friendly.

**Rachel Koeniger:** So tell me a little bit about your church.



**Betty Brown:** Asbury [United Methodist Church in Brownsburg]?

**Rachel Koeniger:** Uhm hm.

**Betty Brown:** That's on the hill. Well, I don't know what to say, except we tried to be a loving, caring church. And sharing. And our main objective is first of all to learn the word of God, to praise him. But our main thing is we really do our socializing all together. We're just like one big family, because wherever, if someone is participating or drawing into something, we all try to support them.

**Rachel Koeniger:** How many members do you all have up there now?

**Betty Brown:** Well, it was 30-some on the book, but we have an average of 18 to 20 on Sundays now.

**Rachel Koeniger:** That's good. How does that work? Do you all share a minister?

**Betty Brown:** A minister, yes, uh huh. Three-charge. It's Asbury, Lawson and Community, which is in Staunton.

**Rachel Koeniger:** So your Sunday church services, how does that work?

**Betty Brown:** Our church services are on the first Sunday and the third Sunday, we have the minister. And then on the second and fourth Sunday is the Sundays that we can do our Bible study, and we do anything else that we need to take care of, because people have so far to travel. Like Gwen Porterfield comes from Charlottesville. Frank Shoultz comes from Staunton. Linda [Daughtery] comes from Buena Vista. So those two Sundays we take to do our necessary things.

**Rachel Koeniger:** So they don't have to come back in.

**Betty Brown:** Yeah, <inaudible>.

**Rachel Koeniger:** Who's your minister now?

**Betty Brown:** Conchita Holtz. And her husband [Harry Holtz] was born and raised right out here near the mill, near Gibbs Run now. That's where he was from. Their little house sits down, you know, you're going on Gibbs Run, and the little house down over the hill, old house, that's where he was born.

**Rachel Koeniger:** Oh.

**Betty Brown:** Now, I don't know where she really came from. But now they're back. She was from over near Crimsfield [ph?], somewhere over in there.

**Rachel Koeniger:** Did you grow up in that church?

**Betty Brown:** Yes, uh huh.

**Rachel Koeniger:** So your parents went to church there?

**Betty Brown:** I can remember going to church on Sundays with that little white dress with the pinafore with that horrible, horrible knot in the back!

**Rachel Koeniger:** The bow right in the middle of your back.

**Betty Brown:** It was right...

**Rachel Koeniger:** It made you sit up straight.

**Betty Brown:** Little tight white shoes.

**Rachel Koeniger:** What sort of-- do you remember anything that you did at church when you were little? Did you all have...

**Betty Brown:** Well, now when-- we had a lot of programs. And as I say, we had a minister always from the West Staunton charge. And we had things like Harvest Home. And the church was actually packed. It's a lot different.

**Rachel Koeniger:** Well, your singing. You've had good crowds for your singing program.

**Betty Brown:** Speaking of that, I have something to tell you about that. <laughs>

**Rachel Koeniger:** But it was sort of the same way. Years ago, you shared ministers?

**Betty Brown:** We shared a minister. And like I say, on the West Staunton charge, and then we went to Lexington. I think we were with Lexington maybe eight or ten years, but we've been with West Staunton charge the biggest portion of that.

**Rachel Koeniger:** Well, it's a very active congregation. Did your parents ever have a car while you were growing up?

**Betty Brown:** They never had to have a car, because Uncle Dude [Haliburton] had a car, and dad would always drive for him, and grandma's-- well, his brother had a car, so whenever he wasn't using it, we'd use it. So there wasn't any need to buy a car.

**Rachel Koeniger:** So anytime you need a car, you had one.

**Betty Brown:** You know, one of them was there.

**Rachel Koeniger:** You said when you were younger you came to Brownsburg on Saturday night to Supinger's Store. Tell me some about some of the other stores that you remember in Brownsburg.

**Betty Brown:** That's about it that I remember except for the shop up there. You'd go there to get some things. The gas station, but that's about it.

**Rachel Koeniger:** What about the Post Office? Did you have your mail delivered to the house?

**Betty Brown:** Yeah, it ran. It came from Raphine, just like it still does. Yeah. It's making a noise.

**Rachel Koeniger:** Did you all go to Staunton very often, or did you do most of your business and shopping and everything in Lexington?

**Betty Brown:** Whenever we wanted to go to Staunton, we would get on the-- it was called the creamery truck, which was driven by R.W.'s father, Wade Swisher. He took cream down to the creamery.

**Rachel Koeniger:** In Staunton?

**Betty Brown:** In Staunton. And he had a big covered truck, and if we needed, if anybody needed to go to Staunton, then you could ride down with him.

**Rachel Koeniger:** Well, that's neat. How many people would go?

**Betty Brown:** Well, it'd probably be but two or three of us. Mom and myself, I know we've done it. And Dad never did. I don't know why he never went to Staunton, but mama did. Well, we had relatives there, so we'd visit.

**Rachel Koeniger:** And then he would come home.

**Betty Brown:** We'd come back-- we'd know what time he wants to come back, and we'd catch him. And also the lady, Mrs.-- she was a mail carrier when they stopped doing-- when Mr. Swisher stopped doing it. The mail came out of Staunton to the Whitesell's Store, and you could catch her if you wanted to go to Staunton and ride down.

**Rachel Koeniger:** That was neat that they were willing to take passengers.

**Betty Brown:** And that's providing you needed to go before anybody was at home to take you.

**Rachel Koeniger:** Did you ever ride the train or the bus or anything?

**Betty Brown:** Oh, yes.

**Rachel Koeniger:** Where did you go on...

**Betty Brown:** For every Easter, my mom and I would catch the train in Staunton to go to Cass, West Virginia. You looked forward to that every year.

**Rachel Koeniger:** Is that where she was from? She was from Cass?

**Betty Brown:** Yeah, her father was brought up on the mountain, and what's the name of the mountain?

**Rachel Koeniger:** I just know the Cass Railroad, we went over there.

**Betty Brown:** Uhm hm, yeah.

**Rachel Koeniger:** That's neat.

**Betty Brown:** They lived in the flats where the old houses for the workers lived. That's where.

**Rachel Koeniger:** It's a neat little village, restored.

**Betty Brown:** Uh huh. We were there three years ago. We drove and we took a tour.

**Rachel Koeniger:** Oh, you did?

**Betty Brown:** Uhm hm.

**Rachel Koeniger:** We went when Anderson [Koeniger] was small, you know, he got a kick out of the railroad.

**Betty Brown:** Well, we went every year. We'd catch-- now, the difference in going to Cass now it only takes what, two hours. We would get on the train in Staunton at 4:00 in the morning, and we wouldn't get to Cass until 12:00 that day, because you had to stop in Roxemburg [ph?], and you had to stop in Whitesail [ph?].

**Rachel Koeniger:** People get on and get off.

**Betty Brown:** Of course, the train didn't move very fast either.

**Rachel Koeniger:** Well, it beats walking. What about any individuals that stand out in your memory, any characters or people that you really remember from Brownsburg?

**Betty Brown:** Mr. [Mc] Sterrett was one. He would always, when I'd walk to Brownsburg, he would always have something nice to say if he saw you out, you know? If I was in the middle of the road, "Girl, don't you know better than that?" Things like that. He was about the one, see? And Miss Margaret Wade. Oh, how I remember her. And of course, Penny. Oh, yes, I will never forget her.

**Rachel Koeniger:** Tell me a little bit, because I think you were probably the second person I met after we moved to Brownsburg. Mrs. Jen [Heffelfinger] was in our house the next morning. It was a Friday morning, and we needed a babysitter that weekend. I called her, and she said, "Well, you call Betty. Talk to Betty." I think you might have been at her house.

**Betty Brown:** Yeah, uhm hm.

**Rachel Koeniger:** You're one of the-- and you were helping her. How did you get started...

**Betty Brown:** Well, my mom worked for her for years. And mom got sick, and then she asked me one day, she said, "Would you go down and work for Mrs. Heffelfinger," and I said, "Mother, I can't do that. I got two baby children." She said, "Oh, it won't be hard, just do what she needs for you to do, and then you can come home." Which was true. And then, I don't know, I just felt home with her.

**Rachel Koeniger:** How many years was that?

**Betty Brown:** Oh, gosh, I don't-- I guess I started helping her in the '80s. Had to be in the '80s. In fact, it was quite a while. I can't even exactly remember how long. We did everything together.

**Rachel Koeniger:** She was fun.

**Betty Brown:** Everywhere. Wherever you wanted to go. And I actually, I can't say I done a lot of work. We was always gone, you know, gone away somewhere. I even met-- what's the-- is he a senator? Not a senator, but from over across the mountain. Deeds? Was his name Deeds?

**Rachel Koeniger:** He's the state senator.

**Betty Brown:** Well, who did it before him?

**Rachel Koeniger:** Was that Putney guy?

**Betty Brown:** Well, Putney was here, but Reid-- I can't think of his name. But anyway, but we went to his house. I'll never forget, I had to go with her for whatever <inaudible>.

**Rachel Koeniger:** She always had something going on.

**Betty Brown:** Yes, uh huh. And I'd go and I'd stay fully sat and waiting on her.

**Rachel Koeniger:** And you were with her right up until she...

**Betty Brown:** Really got to where she couldn't, you know. I couldn't take it any longer.

**Rachel Koeniger:** Well, you weren't around during the Depression years, so we'll move on to the next place.

**Betty Brown:** Oh, thank you. I'm on my way on this one.

**Rachel Koeniger:** Do you remember anything about World War II? You were awfully small then. You don't remember?

**Betty Brown:** No, because my dad never went to service. He wasn't in the service.

**Rachel Koeniger:** And you don't remember any the rationing or anything like that.

**Betty Brown:** Only thing I can remember about rationing, now, we had to pay \$5.00 for a bag of sugar. I remember that. And the reason I remember that is on that Saturday night we had come to the store, and I dropped that bag of sugar. And I remember...

**Rachel Koeniger:** They were not happy with you, were they?

**Betty Brown:** So that's what...

**Rachel Koeniger:** Expensive.

**Betty Brown:** Yeah. That was \_\_\_\_\_.

**Rachel Koeniger:** Several have remembered air raid drills. Do you remember anything like that where you'd have to close your-- pull blinds down.

**Betty Brown:** Probably, but I don't...

**Rachel Koeniger:** You were small. What about electricity? Did you all always have electricity?

**Betty Brown:** No. No, we didn't have electricity until I'd say early part of the '50s is when we got it on the hill out there.

**Rachel Koeniger:** So you just had like...

**Betty Brown:** Lamps, kerosene lamps. Yeah, yeah. You'd be very careful. You had to do your homework before dark.

**Rachel Koeniger:** What about water?

**Betty Brown:** We had to carry our own water, which was a spring across the road from us, down the road. We'd have to carry that water.

**Rachel Koeniger:** Good old days.

**Betty Brown:** Good old days.

**Rachel Koeniger:** What about the roads? Were the roads paved? Or were they dirt?

**Betty Brown:** They were dirt roads, but in later years, I don't know what year that they did that. Can't remember that one.

**Rachel Koeniger:** What about telephone?

**Betty Brown:** No, didn't have a telephone. I didn't get a telephone until I got to Brownsburg. But I tell ya, I can remember that I had-- somebody was having a sale in Brownsburg, and I went. They had a sofa. And my mom had sent me-- now, why she sent me, I don't know-- but anyway, she had told me if I saw a sofa, call her. And I went into the telephone office, and you know where that was, up above, the back of the bank. Anyway, and I called to the Powell's. I got out there before the phone call really, because I had the lady to-- after we tried to call them, and never could get them, I ran home. So I made it home before Mrs. Ocie [Supinger] got mom. So you know how fast...

**Rachel Koeniger:** That was fast service.

**Betty Brown:** That was bad service.



**Rachel Koeniger:** So she was Mrs. Ocie was the telephone operator.

**Betty Brown:** Yeah, and Miss Mattie was a Wade.

**Rachel Koeniger:** And did she get the sofa?

**Betty Brown:** Yeah, we got the sofa, we did, yeah.

**Rachel Koeniger:** What about the location of the roads? Are they still pretty much laid out the way they were when you were little?

**Betty Brown:** Yes, uh huh, pretty much the same. Nothing different that I can remember.

**Rachel Koeniger:** What about the bank? Did you all do much business with the bank?

**Betty Brown:** Yes, uh huh. That's where you put your little change. Have a book. I had one, but I think when our house burned, I think I don't have it. I don't remember seeing it here.

**Rachel Koeniger:** Now what house that you lived in burned? Was that after you got...?

**Betty Brown:** It was on the corner. Uhm hm.

**Rachel Koeniger:** Married, or when you were small?

**Betty Brown:** No, after I'd gotten married. Let's see, Jennifer was still at home.

**Rachel Koeniger:** Oh, so it hadn't been that long.

**Betty Brown:** No, hm uhm. It was in, I think, \_\_\_\_\_.

**Rachel Koeniger:** What happened?

**Betty Brown:** Chimney fire. And it was a day like today. Very windy. And the girl that was babysitting, she said she put a-- you know, the wood in the stove, and she said she cut it off. But the chimney caught fire, and of course, the whole wooden frame house, it just...

**Rachel Koeniger:** So where did the fire-- did the fire department?

Dave Franks: OH, yeah, they came. Fairfield and-- our department reached \_\_\_\_\_ at that time, too.

**Rachel Koeniger:** Just didn't get there in time to do.

Dave Franks: It was like-- like they say, it was an old frame house, so it didn't take much.

**Rachel Koeniger:** Get everybody...

**Betty Brown:** Got everybody out. I was working at Jane Colby [in Fairfield] at the time when that happened.

**Rachel Koeniger:** Well, that's sad.

**Betty Brown:** Hm uhm, but at least we have lives!

**Rachel Koeniger:** Yeah, that's right.

**Betty Brown:** You can always get something.

**Rachel Koeniger:** That's right. What do you think is the most significant or important even that happened in Brownsburg during your lifetime? That's up until today. Anything that you think is memorable.

**Betty Brown:** Oh, gracious. I've been involved in so much. I couldn't really tell you what stands out. I have nothing in particular for that one. And I just think of the times when the children would get-- we'd have ten/fifteen people playing ball, and that was the team, you know?

**Rachel Koeniger:** You were telling me a story one time about how you-- what? Did you hit a ball and hit the principal's son in the head?

**Betty Brown:** We were playing ball, softball-- well, you might as well call it stickball-- up in the field above me. And it was 15 or 16 of us playing. And Willie [ph?] got up to bat. No, he didn't get to bat, he was pitching. And got up, and that's when the stick, I guess, it flew out of my hand and hit him upside the head, and he just...

**Rachel Koeniger:** Knocked him out?

**Betty Brown:** Knocked him out, and there wasn't a person left in the field!

**Rachel Koeniger:** Everybody got out.

**Betty Brown:** I remember I ran home, across the fence, and I guess his daddy, somebody came and got him.

**Rachel Koeniger:** He came to, I guess.

**Betty Brown:** I wonder does he remember?

**Rachel Koeniger:** That's a funny story. Do you have any other good stories like that that you remember?

**Betty Brown:** I had gotten a new bicycle, and we were up on the school route playing. And you know, you share with everybody. And this little Walters boy-- I can't think of his name, but they called him, well, he was Walters-- and he asked to ride the bicycle, and I said, "Fine!" We were playing ball. And we kept on playing, and he never came back. Kept on playing, he still hasn't come back! So finally, maybe an hour, hour-and-a-half and someone says, "Where's your bicycle?" And I said, "I don't know. Wherever he is, I guess!" So we went looking for him, and he was coming up the street carrying the bicycle. He wrecked it and tore it all to pieces, and he was limping. And I \_\_\_\_\_.

**Rachel Koeniger:** Well, I don't blame ya. What did he hit?

**Betty Brown:** I don't know. We never did find out what had happened.

**Rachel Koeniger:** Did you get it fixed?

**Betty Brown:** Yeah, he got-- his mother got it fixed. But, <laughing> I remember that one.

<recording cuts off at 43:02 till 43:20>

**Rachel Koeniger:** Yes, you do.

**Betty Brown:** Brownsburg was a beautiful place to grow up. Like I had gotten roller-skates, and I roller skated all the way from where we lived on Sterrett Road to Brownsburg, and got right there in front of where Casey's [Gwyn Campbell] house is now [2685 Brownsburg Turnpike], in front of the Green's [2682 Brownsburg Turnpike], and Mrs. [Letha] Green was sitting on the porch. And she said, "How're you today, girl? You doing okay?" And the next thing I knew I done fell out! Just fell back and cracked my head.

**Rachel Koeniger:** You weren't paying attention to the skating.

**Betty Brown:** Nah, I was so proud that she noticed! And I fell! And every time I'd see her, she'd laugh. She'd say, "Skating today?" "No."

**Rachel Koeniger:** So you skated from your house up to Brownsburg?

**Betty Brown:** Uhm hm.

**Rachel Koeniger:** Who were some of the other people that lived in Brownsburg that you remember?

**Betty Brown:** Now I would come in and play with Louis and his sisters, and Alice Carter, and let's see, the Stevenson that lived over on the hill. And who else was there? Who else? That's just about it. That's just about all I knew was there. We'd play, play there. Now the Porterfields were younger than we were, and all them. So we didn't get to play that much with them.

**Rachel Koeniger:** So did you go to school with Louis?

**Betty Brown:** For a while, yeah, for a while, uh huh. I went on and he didn't. He didn't finish; I did. Had to. 'Cause Louis had to go to work because of his father went into whatever you call the service at that time.

**Rachel Koeniger:** What sort of work has he done?

**Betty Brown:** Who? Louis?

**Rachel Koeniger:** Uhm hm.

**Betty Brown:** Okay, he worked for the State, and then he was in service, and then let's see. After he went from service he came back, and I think he went to VMI, and then he worked at-- he drove-- can't think of what you call them things. He worked for the contractor that did 81. And he worked on that. And then finally he ended up in Modine, and he was there for 30-- well...

**Rachel Koeniger:** He's retired now.

**Betty Brown:** But retired, working at the school.

**Rachel Koeniger:** That's good.

**Betty Brown:** Part-time janitor over there, uhm hm.

**Rachel Koeniger:** What about any of your family? Do you have any family that served in the Civil War, or do you know any of your...

**Betty Brown:** No. I'm sure we did, but...

**Rachel Koeniger:** You don't know any stories about that?

**Betty Brown:** No, huh uh.

**Rachel Koeniger:** How did you all get along with the black people that lived in Brownsburg? Did you all play together? You've always been very friendly.

**Betty Brown:** I didn't know the difference.

**Rachel Koeniger:** That's wonderful!

**Betty Brown:** We didn't. There was no difference. We never had any problems, hm uhm.

**Rachel Koeniger:** So they were just friends.

**Betty Brown:** Uh huh, and whatever they had, we had.

**Rachel Koeniger:** It was a wonderful place to grow up.

**Betty Brown:** Uhm hm.

**Rachel Koeniger:** When you think about some of the people in other areas of the country.

**Betty Brown:** I wouldn't trade it for nothin' in the world. When you go somewhere and come back, and you see those little six lights in the night, you know you're home. You're safe.

**Rachel Koeniger:** I think that's wonderful to grow up and live in the same place your whole life.

**Betty Brown:** Yeah.

**Rachel Koeniger:** It's just-- not many people get to do that anymore.

**Betty Brown:** No, they have to end up leaving. Yeah, they do.

**Rachel Koeniger:** What about the doctors? What can you tell me about any of the doctors in Brownsburg?

**Betty Brown:** Well, I guess Dr. Taylor would be the one. Dr. Bosworth, Dr. Taylor first, and then Dr. Bosworth was here for a little while.

**Rachel Koeniger:** Where were their offices?

**Betty Brown:** Now, Dr. Taylor was in the house where Ag [Patterson] lived first [2744 Brownsburg Turnpike]. And then he'd go up there where Mr. [Dick] Barnes lives [8 Hays Creek Road].

**Rachel Koeniger:** There was a doctor there.

**Betty Brown:** There was a doctor there, uhm hm, so.

**Rachel Koeniger:** So those're the ones you remember. Do you ever remember going?

**Betty Brown:** No, I don't remember. I was probably so scared I can't remember.

**Rachel Koeniger:** There's a question here about did your mother or dad have any home remedies or cures that they used to take care of?

**Betty Brown:** Vicks Salve and that hot thing that you put on your chest.

**Rachel Koeniger:** Mustard plaster? I think they work, don't they?

**Betty Brown:** Yeah, they work! And I remember when you had babies, they had-- they used to make you wrap yourself in a towel, because to uphold everything.

**Rachel Koeniger:** Oh!

**Betty Brown:** A home remedy! <laughs>

**Rachel Koeniger:** Was there midwives around here for people that didn't go to the hospital and have their babies?

**Betty Brown:** Yeah.

**Rachel Koeniger:** Do you remember any?

**Betty Brown:** I think the woman's name was Ms. Fisher. Ms. Mariah Fisher. I think she was the one.

**Rachel Koeniger:** Where did she live?

**Betty Brown:** She lived in-be-- you know where Lois Key built her house [2508 Sterrett Road]? It was off that driveway. It was off, a little house sitting there.

**Rachel Koeniger:** So she lived there on \_\_\_\_\_.

**Betty Brown:** Uhm hm, on Sterrett Road.

**Rachel Koeniger:** Did your dad take care of the animals if they needed doctoring, or did he have a vet that he...

**Betty Brown:** No, he took care of those, yeah. <inaudible>

**Rachel Koeniger:** What about holidays? Do you remember how you all celebrated Christmas or Easter?

**Betty Brown:** Easter was when we went to West Virginia. We would always go on the train, every Easter. We'd go on a train for that. Holidays were in between the houses. You know, you'd go and you'd be at somebody's house, but you didn't stay very long, because you'd always want to come home to...

**Rachel Koeniger:** Sort of make the rounds.

**Betty Brown:** Yeah, but you'd make your rounds. At early morning you did that.

**Rachel Koeniger:** What about Christmas trees?

**Betty Brown:** Yeah, we always had a Christmas tree.

**Rachel Koeniger:** Did you go cut it?

**Betty Brown:** Yeah, cut it back out behind the home place. Yeah.

**Rachel Koeniger:** What about Thanksgiving? Did y'all ever do anything?



**Betty Brown:** Always had a meal together at grandma's up at the log cabin.

**Rachel Koeniger:** And everybody would be there?

**Betty Brown:** She had the most beautiful, I guess it was oak, round table that had the claw feet. And I always wanted that, and somebody got it before I did.

**Rachel Koeniger:** Snagged it before you got it.

**Betty Brown:** Yeah.

**Rachel Koeniger:** And that's where you all'd have Thanksgiving?

**Betty Brown:** Yeah, she would have that spread out.

**Rachel Koeniger:** How many cousins did you have? Lots?

**Betty Brown:** More than words could \_\_\_\_\_. Lots and lots and lots. See, 'cause you had from out in Lexington, you had to come. And if you had anybody from Staunton, they came. Now nobody came from the big-- Washington, Maryland. Nobody came at that time. They were always here during the summer.

**Rachel Koeniger:** What sort of things did y'all do in the summer?

**Betty Brown:** Oh, we'd swim, go swimming. And of course, you got to come to Brownsburg.

**Rachel Koeniger:** 4<sup>th</sup> of July kind of a big holiday around here?

**Betty Brown:** You would go to Staunton for the 4<sup>th</sup> of July, yeah. That...

**Rachel Koeniger:** So the cousins would come to Brownsburg, and what all would you do in Brownsburg?

**Betty Brown:** Well, if we'd take them to Brownsburg, they'd be happy. And they were always so afraid of cows, and then when you'd tell them that that's where you got your milk from, you had to go through-  
- ask them the questions of which cow gives what color milk.

**Rachel Koeniger:** They really didn't have a clue, did they?

**Betty Brown:** No, does the brown cow give the brown milk? The chocolate milk, rather?

**Rachel Koeniger:** Not exactly. Although I think it works that way with chickens, doesn't it?

**Betty Brown:** <laughs>

**Rachel Koeniger:** Anything else you want to tell us?

**Betty Brown:** No, nothing I can think of.

**Rachel Koeniger:** Let me see. All right, you worked some for the Post Office. How long have you been working for the Post Office?

**Betty Brown:** April the 11<sup>th</sup>, 1991. What would that make it?

**Rachel Koeniger:** It's been almost-- well, it'd be 17 years.

**Betty Brown:** Okay, there ya go. I'll make it to the 17<sup>th</sup> year.

**Rachel Koeniger:** Do you enjoy that?

**Betty Brown:** I really do.

**Rachel Koeniger:** What do you like best about that?

**Betty Brown:** The people. And it has really been a pleasure, because I've met so many. Each post office is different, entirely different.

**Rachel Koeniger:** And which ones do you work for?

**Betty Brown:** Right now, just Brownsburg.

**Rachel Koeniger:** So you're not helping Fairfield.

**Betty Brown:** No, I'm not helping in Fairfield. I've been to Middlebrook. I've been to Steeles Tavern. I was at Stuart's Draft, Rockbridge Baths, and Brownsburg.

**Rachel Koeniger:** Talk a little bit about the Brownsburg Post Office for people that were here...

<overlapping conversation>

**Betty Brown:** Never a <inaudible>. The hours are great. Good thoughts, good thoughts.

**Rachel Koeniger:** And it's a little Post Office. They don't deliver the mail out of the post office. You have to come pick your mail up.

**Betty Brown:** Have to come pick up your mail and conversation. That's one of the things that's needed, conversation when you come.

**Rachel Koeniger:** And that's one of the first stops, I guess, when people move into the community.

**Betty Brown:** They have to come to the Post Office to reroute the mail.

**Rachel Koeniger:** Got a big fire in the winter.

**Betty Brown:** Yeah, and fruit and vegetables in the summer.

**Rachel Koeniger:** It's unique.

**Betty Brown:** It is. It really is.

**Rachel Koeniger:** Are there any other people you can think of we might need to talk to about growing up in Brownsburg that could tell us some stories.

**Betty Brown:** Well, I think you got the ones that kind of would really want to give a little \_\_\_\_\_. You've gotten the ones that are available, because most people, as I said, they left here when they were young. They don't exactly remember all the things that was here.

**Rachel Koeniger:** I was gonna ask you-- you said your mom helped Miss Jenny [Heffelfinger] before you did. Was that after she was married.

**Betty Brown:** And down here, uh huh. And she-- mom also helped the Wade's some. Ms. Margaret, yeah, uh huh. And her sister Kate.

**Rachel Koeniger:** So she was...

**Betty Brown:** Around there, uh huh. She was around here.

**Rachel Koeniger:** And did she enjoy...?

**Betty Brown:** She enjoyed, uh huh, yeah. I guess she learned a lot doing that. Because both of them were sick. So it took a lot of sitting with them.

**Rachel Koeniger:** That's neat. All right, Betty, thank you very much. I've enjoyed it!

**Betty Brown:** I've enjoyed it! Whoo!

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