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U.S. Department of the Interior

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Farming in the Valley: 2011 Oral History Project

The following are transcripts from six audio clips in the **Raising a Family** section. Visit <http://www.nps.gov/cuva/historyculture/raising-a-family.htm> to view the entire page.

Josephine Davis, who grew up on her parents' farm in Brecksville, talks about living through the Great Depression and how her father's decision to move her family to the farm helped them survive. She also describes her love for the farm and the times she could spend with her family.

Father's Decision to Buy the Farm

"I always thought he was pretty smart to buy that little farm, because it was just great. It carried us through the Depression. We had just about everything that we needed there, as far as food was concerned. We had several rows of grapes. We had just about every fruit tree that you could think of. 'Course we had a garden every year. We survived on that! In other words, the only thing we really bought, that I can remember, were like, flour or sugar or things that we couldn't raise on the farm. We had chickens and we had cows and we had horses, and we churned our own butter, and my mother made cotta (sic) cheese, so we were kinda self-sufficient."

Always Enough Food

"During the Depression years, most of our relatives that were still living in the city used to come out and take any extra fruit, or my mother would always give them extra eggs that we had. There were more than just our family that survived on that farm, especially during the Depression years. In fact, sometimes, you know, when I think about all the good things we had, you know, the fruit pies, and I loved cotta cheese, and we had all we wanted of that. And we had all the sweet cream and the sour cream and cakes and pies. We usually . . . of course we made everything from scratch. I think we were living on . . . I thought we were living on gourmet food! ~laughs~ And I didn't realize at that time that we were even poor. Of course, I knew that my parents had, you know, some worries and tough times, but when you're a kid you were free and you played and you laughed and you didn't have any big responsibilities so, you know, I can say today it was good!"

Fun With the Family

"The minute we got home from school, we changed clothes and went out there did whatever had to be done. We had a pretty good routine. You pretty much knew always what was expected of you. And of course when the work was done, we had that big wrap-around porch and we'd all sit out on that wrap-around porch and rest and talk and laugh. The kids would maybe play games, horseshoes or baseball. Like I said, it was a good life!"

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Mother's Cooking Skills

Willis Meyers and his son Ronnie describe Willis' mother's amazing cooking skills, and how farmers' wives were known for their meals.

*Ronnie: "His mother was a good cook. I mean a *good* cook! She could make doughnuts and noodles and just anything."*

Willis: "There was no such a thing as a recipe. They didn't need any. Them ol' farm women got it in their head and they'd never forget it."

Ronnie: "We'd go around and thresh at different families. There was about seven different farmers. This was even after I was helping. And each different farmer was famous for . . . one of 'em would make good chicken and the other one would roast beef, and they always furnished lunch whenever you were working threshing. And you always looked forward to whatever that lady was good at making, having that for your lunch that day."

Hazel Broughton, who grew up in Everett, describes her mother's roles in the household and farm during the 1930s. She also remembers the sense of safety she enjoyed while raising her own family in the valley during the 1940s and '50s.

A Mother's Role

"My mother, well, my mother was a jack-of-all-trades. When we lived on Sand Run, she had a big garden. They grew everything and she canned it, or we ate it in summer, in season. She sewed. She took adult clothes and cut them down for us, my sister and I, to make children's clothes. We didn't have much. We didn't have electric. We didn't have a bathroom, no running water, a pitcher pump, her gasoline washer sat on the back porch. My mom had a hard life, but of course that was the '30s."

Raising Children in the Valley

"It was a wonderful place to raise children. We didn't lock our doors in those days. And my oldest is . . . he was born in '49 and my youngest was born in '54. And I look back and I think, we didn't lock our doors, we trusted everybody. We had a bread man, and we had a milkman that delivered. So, you know, it was really a wonderful place. And we've often talked about that since. Our neighbors were good, good neighbors, and we all lived peacefully."