

K-14

MARYBELLE SNIPES KIRK INTERVIEW

NOVEMBER 18, 1985

BY LYNN HAESSLY

TAPE ONE (of one), SIDE A

LYNN HAESSLY: I just hope we can relax and have a little chat. (MK laughs) What I'd like to ask you about is if you can start in the beginnin and tell me where you were born, who your parents were...

MARYBELLE KIRK: I was born a mile down the road and my daddy was William Manley Snipes. Everybody knows William Manley Snipes.

LH: Can you spell that for me?

MK: M-A-N-L-E-Y-S-N-I-P-E-S. And May was my mama's name. She died when I was 18. [pause] I was working at the ration board in Hillsborough when that happened. So after that I just stopped -- I was 18 -- and I stopped and started keepin house for my daddy. So he was on a dairy farm. And some mornings I'd have get up and help him milk because the hired hand was off on a big drunk. [both laugh] And at 5 o'clock that wasn't very nice to get up and do -- we was milking by hand. And then one day, I'll tell you the experiences I had, one of the first ones I had -- keepin house. We got a 10-gallon can of milk back. They thought it had a little onions in it and they wouldn't keep it in the dairy then. Daddy had to go on to the field and he told me to churn the milk. I said, "What do you do?" And he said, "Pour it off and then churn." So I went out there and poured the thick cream in an old bucket and poured what was left in the bottom out in the churn. And I churned and I churned allll mornin lonnnngg, and I didn't get any butter. So I went to the field and

told him what I had done. He said I was supposed to keep the cream and churn that for the butter. [laughter] So that was my first experience in keepin house.

LH: You churned the skim instead of the cream.

MK: [laughter] Mmmhmm. I didn't get any butter. So that's just about how little I knew about housekeepin.

LH: Were there other children?

MK: I had two sisters and they was older. And they was in Chapel Hill workin. So they had a better position in workin than I did. I just told em I'd stay home. And it wasn't but about three years that I married my husband that lived right over there. So we went to high school and grammer grades. Our mamas and daddies was best of friends the whole time. So I just knew what farmin and dairry life would be. It has really been a good life.

LH: Can you tell me a little bit about your childhood? What it was like to live on a farm and growing up with your sisters.

MK: Oh! They would pick on me all the time! [laughter] Just different things like that. They dearly loved me, you could tell that.

[laughter] I just don't hardly know what to say. [pause, LH starts to ask question] We had hens and things, and we would get out and tend those, things like that. Other than that, I kept, around the farm, we'd work in the garden, most of the time, one of my sisters would clean up in the house and my other sister and I'd get out and work in the garden and mow the yard and cut the hedge and stuff we had around. After I got married, I just moved up here and started doing the same thing. And now, on weekends a lot of the times -- they [her husband and his brother alternate milking chores for weekends] milk every other weekend -- and every other weekend when my husband's on I

go over to the barn and help him, feed the calves and things like that, and mess around over to the barn. I keep my two grandchildren, when they mama's to work, look after them.

LH: Do you like to be in the barn?

MK: Not nec[essarily]- not in the milking barn. Well, I hadn't ever been in the milking but about one or two times, really, after I got married. See, we had three sons and they took my place in the milking barn.[laughter] But I wouldn't mind it if I had to, now like if it was just my husband. I'd be glad to go over there. But since they have so many hired help, and his brother and his son works over there, so.

LH: Now some of the women, some of the people in the community, the women in the family do help with the milking.

MK: Mmmhmm, yeah, they do. unnhnn.

LH: But Mr. Kirk over here told me that because this is a double family that was why.

MK: Unnhnn.

LH: Do you think that's right?

MK: I imagine so cause I go over a whole lot more than Martha comes over. She hardly ever goes over to the barn. But that's just up my line to go over to the barn and mess around and do things like that.

LH: What do you mean by "mess around"?

MK: Just be around in the barn, with my husband, Merritt, helpin him feed the calves, and I'll get on the back of the truck and ride up to the other pasture where he's afeedin heifers. And I help him get the feed out of the back of the truck and that, carry a bucket of feed and dump that while he's adoin somethin else, I'm feedin that bunch

of calves.

LH: Was your daddy always a dairy farmer?

MK: Ummhmm, yeah. Up until -- well, a little while after mama died he was a dairy farmer, but not too long.

LH: Had his father been a dairy farmer?

MK: Ummhmm. yes. Not a -- not a dairy farmer, just on a farm. They didn't have too many cows, then, just two or three, something like that.

LH: When did they get into the bigger dairy farming, do you know?

MK: No, I sure don't. [pause] Maybe I was [pause] seven or eight [about 1932 or '33] or something like that, I may not have been that old when he started into the dairy business. I just don't remember.

LH: Why do you think he changed?

MK: Well, he just really didn't have any help. At one time he had a whole bunch of horses, real pretty horses that he plowed the corn and things with. And -- I believe that was after mama died -- I'm quite sure it was. Well, anyway, they got into the silage and got poisoned. And all of em died. So then he just gradually got out of the dairy business. And then at one time he was a night watchman down at the milk plant.

LH: Was that Long Meadow?

MK: Ummhmm, yeah. At Chapel Hill. Then he built a little store down here at the -- he remarried and built a little store down here at the corner. And done that until he died.

LH: What did he farm before he went into dairy? What kind of crops did he have?

MK: I imagine corn and wheat and things like that. Just a small fields -- until he started into the dairy business.

LH: Did the girls help to milk very much -- the older girls?

MK: Yes, when they was there, they did.

LH: But there was usually a hand who helped?

MK: Ummhmm, yeah. Then they went to college and I didn't. After they come back they went and got their jobs at Chapel Hill. And since I didn't I just took the job at the ration board in Hillsborough.

LH: What did you do there?

MK: Rationed out gas and sugar! [laughter] Just for give em, send out coupon --. Two-three of the men would have a meeting and tell how much gas this farmer ought to have and how much this one ought to have. Then they got little coupons. And we would fill out, send them, mail em the coupons they was supposed to have to go get the gas.

LH: Did people come and tell you their hard luck stories?

MK: Sometimes they did, but we couldn't do a thing about it! Cause the other board of directors or whatever would have to tell em how much gas. All we could do -- . Then we was supposed to burn up the other little coupons. And it was hard to do! To stand there and burn up coupons when -- like my boyfriend then didn't have any coupons to get gas with. But I never did get him any! Burn em in that little heater there! [laughter] I wanted to but I didn't! And after I got married we had a house full -- a big house full of chickens across the road and I would tend to those, and he would help me some.

LH: Well, it must have been a few years before the boys were big enough to help in the barn.

MK: Yes, I stayed here and tended to them. They would go over to barn and play around. I cooked dinner for all of em, and still do! Most of the time. One of em still lives here. And the other one lives in the

house, the log house up here. His wife's a nurse, and when she's at work, he comes in and eats lunch with us. And I tend to the little girls.

LH: Bobby? [R.L. and Martha Kirk's son, who has a newly-made house in the woods] Who just had a baby?

MK: No, Bobby and Bob, they live over there. That's Merritt's brother and his son. And I have two sons that's working on the farm, Kenny and Don.

LH: Can you tell me more about learning how to keep house? What kinds of things did you have to learn?

MK: [laughter] I didn't do too good a job at the churnin! It wasn't anything but just cookin and cleanin house, just takin care of the children. And havin a meal on the table for em, I guess is about all you'd have to do. And then I mow the yard all the time. Now that's what I enjoy, gettin out in the yard.

LH: Do you have a riding mower?

MK: Ummhmm, yeah. And we have another one, that's a smaller one, that has a bag on the back to get the leaves. I like to get up the leaves. They have one for mowin the yard and one for gettin up the leaves. Once in a while the one [th]at lives here gets out and helps me get up the leaves.

LH: Did your mother teach you how to put up food or did you have to learn that after?

MK: No, I learned that mostly from Merritt's mother, after we got married, because I didn't do too much of that. Well, one of my aunts would help me some, like when we would have wheat thrashings and the silo fillings and things. We'd cook lunch for the helpers, and she would help me after mama died, until I moved up here.



LH: What kind of ways did you learn to put up food?

MK: Oh, cannin tomato juice was about the first thing that I really did. I didn't do too much canning. Well, right after we married we would get the corn and go to the White Cross community building. I'd carry his mother and we would can the corn down there in tin cans. That was one of my first experiences in cannin, was carryin it down there. And I believe string beans. We canned string beans and corn down there.

LH: And it went into tin cans?

MK: Ummhmm.

LH: Was there special machinery to do that?

MK: Ummhmm, yeah. They had a great big tank thing that they would put just a whole lot of em in there. And then they would cook a certain length of time, and then they would take em out and dump em in a great big container of cold water to cool em off right quick. A lot of the times we would come back home and then go back late that evenin and pick em up, because you'd have your name written on the top of it. That was just about my first experience really doin that. And then from there we just started freezin most of the stuff.

LH: Do you can at all any more?

MK: Yeah, I can string beans and tomatoes and corn and the tomato juice. Freeze the butter beans and freeze corn now. Peas. That's about all. we really freeze. It's much easier than cannin. [laughter] I still have the big pressure coker that I pressure the string beans in. But most of the time the tomato juice, I just cold water that. [truck passes] I just like it [tomato juice] better anyway.

LH: It must be hard to stand over the hot stove to do all that

canning.

MK: Oh, no, you don't have to stand over it. There's --when you have the pressure cooker on, you just watch the pressure and not let it go high or anything. Don't have to stand over a old hot wood stove anymore! [laughter] Like we did at one time. Now we had the wood stove before we got married.

LH: When you were a girl or when you first got married?

MK: No, when I was a small child, we had the wood stove. After we got married --- We [her parents] was about the first ones down there to get a Delco light plant, lights in the house. We got all that when the others still had the old-type lamps.

LH: Kerosene?

MK: Ummhmm, yeah.

LH: Were you closer to where the line came out from the university [of North Carolina]?

MK: No, we just, they got it, and had some kind of motor in the basement, it was run by that. The first lights, I remember that. Then Merritt's mother got some kind of a gas motor for her washing machine, she had that, about the first one around . Now I don't remember when we got our first washing machine.

LH: Do you remember when electricity came through?

MK: Ummhmm, sure do!

LH: Can you tell me about that?

MK: Oh, well I don't remember too much about tellin. I just remember when they was puttin up the light poles and runnin wires and things. We was tickled to death that we was goin to have lights. But we had already had the other kind of lights. That wasn't anything new, really, to be gettin that kind of lights for us because we'd done had



it.

LH: What other kinds of things did electricity help you have?

MK: Oh, refrigerators was one of the main things. I don't remember, I don't guess. Now for the ranges, I don't remember if we [she and her father] got one of those before we [she and her husband] were married or not. Just don't remember. But I do remember the refrigerator was one of the --. Then runnin water in the house. That was one of the main things. We didn't have that! And when we first got married we didn't have water in the house. We just still had our pan and bucket and dipper. We just gradually had to get in to it. And we have everything we need!

LH: When you got married did you live in your own house or did you live with Merritt's parents?

MK: No, we built this one and had it built before we moved up here. See, it wasn't anybody at home but my daddy, and Merritt and I just lived down there [truck passes, lose a couple words] from March til October while they was building this house.

LH: Who built it?

MK: Merritt and his daddy. And we had some carpenters, too, to help. But they built bout all of it. They dug the basement with an old, with some kind of an old dirt pan and a horse. [laughter]

LH: That must have been a job.

MK: It was! We didn't have any money to get a bulldozer or anything. Well then they didn't have bulldozers around. That was 30-some years ago, 37, I believe, how long it's been. That's just about it, I guess.

LH: Did your daddy sell out his farm then pretty soon after you left

[pause] to carry the Kirk name on. [laughter]

LH: Well, both of these brothers -- Merritt and Robert --

MK: Merritt and Bob -- Robert -- work together, unnhnn.

LH: Right. And they both have sons that are interested in carrying on the farm [MK: Ummhmm.] after them.

MK: Well, two of -- our two works here, and Bob's works here. And then the other one, my oldest one, did work here and he just decided he would get out, and so the farm was big enough for them [the younger two brothers]. He went to work at Mebane Lumber Company. But if he needs to be, if anybody's sick or anything like on the weekends, he fills in and does the work. However, they -- Merritt cut his hand, his finger, real bad, and Ronnie did do his outside work. He doesn't milk anymore -- Merritt, he just tends to the calves and runs the silage and things. So Ronnie done his work for him that weekend. He's like that -- if anybody needs for him to fill in when they're sick or anything, he fills in.

LH: Now, I found out that Robert Kirk doesn't milk anymore. Is that--  
?

MK: Ummhmm, that's -- he does the same thing. When Merritt's on of a mornin, Bob is off. He does it that evening. Then when Merritt's on of a evenins, Bob does it of a mornins. And then every other weekend -- the outside work. And the three sons -- my two and his one -- they have one hired hand, does the milkin.

LH: Is that sort of a thing where the older men, milking is a harder thing, or not as much --.

MK: Well it's harder.

LH: It's harder to do.

MK: Ummhmm. So, they gettin to be old men, and they're gettin out and do the easy part! [laughter]

LH: Well they're also -- they're payin the boys to do it, too --

MK: Oh, yes! yes!

LH: And they're sort of the boss and they can say who does it, and they can pick what job they want. Is that--?

MK: Who -- Merritt and Bob?

LH: Right, they can pick which job they want.

MK: Yes, they can pick which job they want. Cause they've already had their hard days.

LH: Why is milking harder?

MK: It just is. That's just kind of a hard job.

LH: What's hard about it?

MK: [pause] Just havin to be there all the time, I reckon. They milk bout a hundred-and-eighty-some I believe is what they have on test. They have a whole lot more there, dry cows and heifers. And they save all the -- keep all the heifers, they raise -- that are born. They raise them. And when they get old enough to milk, they sell some of the older ones. That's Merritt and Bob's job -- is to feed the calves and raise them. That's what I do a whole lot, go over and help Merritt feed those little baby calves.

LH: Do you keep most of the calves that are born on the farm?

MK: They keep all the heifer calves. They have 70, 80 in one pasture and -- oh, bout the same in another pasture. And that's all of those, what they've raised.

LH: And what do they do with -- would you say "bull calves"?

MK: With bull calves. They carry that to the FCX stock market in Hillsborough.

LH: Are those then used as feeder calves? What do people buy those for -- for beef cattle?

MK: I don't know what they do with those. I haven't heard em say. A lot of the times they do buy the small ones and raise them to be beef calves. And my son, he always raises two pigs every year. And I help him up there sometimes tend to his pigs. If he's on vacation or anything, I'll tend to his pigs for him.

LH: What does he do with his pigs?

MK: He kills em! Makes sausage and ham! [laughter] Good old tenderloin!

LH: You sound like you like that.

MK: Oh, I do! But Merritt [pause] has had a heart attack, five years ago, I believe. And he doesn't eat any of that. But Donald and I sure do! [laughter] But we carry it to the Farmer's Exchange in Durham, and they grind the sausage and salt the hams, and cure the hams for us.

LH: So you don't do it.

MK: No, we don't do it. But I do sack the sausage, make the sacks out of cloth and put the sausage in that.

LH: Is that the air-dried sausage? [MK: Ummhmm.] And it gets a little bit hard?

MK: Ummhmm. And then we freeze that. And then I freeze the tenderloin. Just sausage and tenderloin. And then we have the hams. That's salt-cured. So we still the old-timey ones with the pigs, anyway. [laughter] And then he does raise a few calves once in a while. I'll help him tend to those if he's on vacation.

LH: What kind of garden do you grow? What do you grow in your garden?

MK: Oh, potatoes -- now that's my main -- I like the potatoes that we grow. And peas and butter beans and we have the sweet corn. We usually have two fields of sweet corn, one early and one late. And string beans, just ordinary things. I reckon that's about all we really plant.

LH: And that's all for your own use? [MK: Ummhmm.] You don't ever have any extra that you carry to market.

MK: No. It's for our own use. And tomatoes, we have those. I get out and have a big place back there in the back where I plant my tomato seed. And then I have the plants to plant. That's one thing I get out and mess with is plantin the tomato seed and havin my own plant -- tomato plants to plant in the garden.

LH: Do your sisters still work in Chapel Hill? [MK: Ummhmm.] Do they live out around Orange Grove or do they live in town?

MK: They lived in town most of the time. They'd come out weekends, before they got married. Both of em got married. [pause] Both of em's husbands are dead now. They live alone. [pause]

LH: But they -- did they pretty much leave farm life when they went to town?

MK: Yes, they did. They left it altogether. They just left me with daddy and what little knowledge I knew of housekeepin then.

[laughter] But my oldest sister would come back home every weekend and help me clean up the house and do things like that.

LH: Do you think the older girls were -- learned a little bit more about housekeeping by being older?

MK: Yeah.

LH: And learned more from your mother by being older?

MK: Ummhmm, they did, more than I did.

LH: Well, that really must have been a fix for you to find yourself in.

MK: Well, it was, it sure was. [pause] But it gradually come to me. Merritt's mother helped me more than anybody I guess because mama died when I was so young. What time she [Merritt's mother] wasn't out in the kitchen or out in the garden, she was sewin, girls' dresses and things. I guess I kind of inherited that from her because whenever I have spare time I sew right much. For my two grandchildren and me but not for anybody else.

LH: Where was their house?

MK: The Kirk house? Just right across the road.

LH: So then this was built just right across from their house.

MK: Ummhmm.

LH: So you were probably back and forth all the time.

MK: Yeah, back and forth all the time. Whenever she needed to go to town to get her groceries, I'd carry her, most of the time. [pause] I thought the world of his mother.

END SIDE A



LH: Well, how does your life work now? What kind of schedule? I know they milk em here, they do their morning milking starting about 3:30.

MK: Ummhmm.

LH: Do you get up?

MK: No, I don't get up until around seven, when my little granddaughters are comin down to meet the school bus. And then, I'll fix her a little bite of breakfast, and then her daddy comes in and he eats some, too. Just routine, fixin breakfast. And then they'll go. And I'll clean the house, And then I'll start thinkin about fixin somethin for lunch.

LH: Does your husband go over to the barn that early in the morning? Or is that just the milkers?

MK: No, he don't -- they don't go until 5 o'clock. The mornins that they have to feed, they go at 5 o'clock and get through about 8.

LH: So the cows are fed after they're milked -- is that the way it works?

MK: Ummhmm. Well, no, when they turn out, some of em, they have the silage already run. The ones that's already been milked, they go out and eat. Then they feed the calves, too, of a mornins and run the silage for the milk cows. That's what he does. Then he'll come in, eat his breakfast and then go back.

LH: Then they do field work after that.

MK: Ummhmm, yeah.

LH: Has -- they used to milk not quite so early in the day, years ago. Is that right?

MK: No. they didn't. Well, they didn't have that many to milk. They have a whole lot more to milk now, so they start about 2:30 of a

evenins and get through around -- oh, 5:30, 6, somethin like that.

And of a mornins they start at 4 and get through about 8.

LH: How many cows did your daddy have?

MK: Oh, 25 or 30 maybe.

LH: And milked?

MK: And he milked all those by hand. Didn't have the milker machines then.

LH: And he never went into the -- [dairy machinery]?

MK: He didn't go into the big dairy part [truck passes, lose a few words]. And when he was in the dairy business, they just put em in 10-gallon cans. And it was four of em. One would take it one day [by truck to the processing dairy] and one would take it another day. And every fourth day, my daddy would take his turn. But now they have those great big machine -- now there's a big improvement -- to have the great big machine on a truck come to [the farm to] pick it [milk] up.

LH: Now, did your dad never get any kind of milking machines?

MK: No, hunnunn. Just the hands. Everything by hand.

LH: When do you think he sold out, sold his cows?

MK: Oh, gracious. [pause] Maybe in '45 or somethin like that.

LH: So it was before you were married.

MK: Yeah, it was before I got married.

LH: Well, that was about the time when, most of the people who were in dairying, that was when they were starting to buy the big, the newer equipment.

MK: Ummhmm, yeah. Goin into the bigger dairying. Well, no, my husband and them milked by hand a good while after we got married.

LH: When do you think they got their machinery?

MK: Maybe in '49, somethin like that. They got the smaller ones, then they variously got bigger outfits. Just kept tryin -- kept agettin a little larger and a little better you'd say in the way they was milkin, everything.

LH: Do you think when your dad was deciding to sell, it was at a point where there was a choice either to get a lot bigger or to cut back?

MK: Ummhmm, cut back. But then he didn't have anybody but -- didn't have anybody there to help him. It was either that [machinery (?)] or the hired hand. So he just decided he'd get out of it. [pause] Now when, then -- when they was havin the dairies, they would have to go to the field on a wagon and two horses. And bring the corn in that way. Now they have greet big trucks. The corn is already chopped up, it's cut down in the field. That's a big improvement.

LH: Did you ever have to go out and work in the field when you were a girl?

MK: Oh, law, yes! Had to -- I guess you'd say transplant, or REplant -- REplant corn. When it didn't come up? You'd have to go and walk up and down the rows and when you see where a grain of corn didn't come up you'd have to dig a hole and drop one in. And then when I was little I'd have to keep the fertilizer bucket filled up. So when they would go from one end of the row to the other, they'd run out of fertilizer. Then I'd have that in the bucket for them to put in their planter.

LH: Did you hoe?

MK: Hoe the corn? No, I didn't have to do that, thank goodness.

[laughter]

LH: That's a hard job.

MK: That is a HAARRD job. All I had to do was replant the corn. But it's fun. Me and my two sisters, well the sister who was next to me was the one that did most of that. And the other one would stay at home and help mama -- at the house.

LH: How was that decided -- the way two of the girls went out?

MK: Daddy'd just tell us. Just say, "You two go to the field and transplant -- replant the corn." That's what we'd do.

LH: But -- did your mom get to say which girl she wanted to keep in with her?

MK: No. [pause] Oh, we'd have to bring in a whole lot of wood, the stove wood, what we cooked with. That was our job.

LH: Who carried the water? Who carried water in?

MK: [pause] I never did have to do that too much. I think mostly my mama would do that or the -- my two sisters would do that. But I had to bring my part of the wood in for the wood stove, the cook stove. Now we have electricity. We [father and her] [were] bound to have a electric stove before we [she and Merritt] got married, bound too.

LH: You've got a wood stove back again.

MK: Ummhmm and that's what I do! That's my job, abringin in the wood for that! [laughter]

LH: I bet you thought when you got rid of one wood stove you'd never ever have another one again.

MK: [laughter] It really does give some good heat, though. But I enjoy it. Now on Saturdays, I go to the woods with Merritt and Donald and help em. They have a wood splitter. And I just pull the leaves while they split the wood. That's my job, pullin leaves. Then I bring

in the wood. Donald and I are buddies at bringin in the wood.

[laughter] Just things like that, anything I can do outside, I'm ready to go do it. I don't want to stay in the house.

LH: Well that's one reason why it must have been hard for you to start keepin house, for your dad then, cause you'd rather be outside.

MK: Rather be outside, ummhhh. When I knew that I had to, it wasn't too bad. Now but my oldest sister would help on weekends all the time, then I'd have all the weekends free, I'd just let her take over.

LH: What kind of community activities have you been involved in out here?

MK: Oh, I go to church every Sunday.

LH: What church?

MK: Cane Creek [Baptist]. Just over the hill [south on Orange Grove Road]. And I would help in the vacation Bible school, with the little ones. And I was one of the smaller [children's] Sunday school teachers. The summer that Merritt's mother got so sick is when I give all that up. And I just never did start back in. I'm still in the choir. I go on Wednesday nights for choir practice. Other than that, that's just about all.

LH: There was a ham-and-grits supper at the [Cane Creek] Community Building, [the previous weekend].

MK: We didn't go there. Because my husband's not supposed to eat the ham and eggs. So we stayed at home. We'd love to [have] gone. But we knew better than to go down there and him eat it. So we just didn't go.

LH: It must be hard to keep him on a diet.

MK: No, he is real good at it. He just knows it's for the good of his

health and he just sticks with his diet. Now it was hard, very hard at first to start cookin for his diet. But now that I've got used to it, it's the only way I know how to cook.

LH: Do you cook separate? [pause] Do you cook separate for you and your boy?

MK: Oh, no, hunnnn. No, we eat what he eats. And then if it's anything that he's not supposed to eat and we'd like to have some, we'd wait until he'd come out here and then we'd slip back in there at halftime and eat that. [laughter]

LH: Does he know you do it?

MK: Sometimes he does. But it doesn't bother him now. We just hated to eat it in front of him when we knew he wasn't supposed to have it and would like to have some. But when we have our ham after Donald has it cured, he eats some onnnccce in a while but not very much. He doesn't ever hardly eat the eggs because he knows that's just against it, against his health. So he sticks to his diet, right good.

LH: He must have gotten to a point where he's thought about turning over the farm to his boys.

MK: Well, he is. He would have, gradually, when he gets out of it and bout ready to retire and everything.

LH: How's he -- has he made any plans to do that?

MK: Well, nothin except just talk. They just know they will get his part when he gets through with it.

LH: Do you think the boys will buy him out?

MK: Yes, I think they will. Ummhmm. Cause they both enjoy dairy farmin and that's all they've done. The two that's here now, that's all the kind of work they've done, is dairy farmin. The oldest one



can do just about anything he wants. He built his house -- his log house -- up there, with the help of his daddy and neighbors. They come and helped. But he done bout all of it himself. [pause] There's the pasture of calves. You'll have to [stand up to see through the door] -- that they raise. Now that's what we do -- get out and feed them, the dairy feed and hay. That's the jobs that Merritt and Bob does -- feed that kind of calves, and the little baby calves out of the bottles. [pause]

LH: How do you think -- Now, I know that it was Merritt and Bob who bought out their dad.

MK: Ummhmm.

LH: And that was probably a little bit before you got married, from what I could figure out.

MK: Yeah.

LH: Maybe during the war.

MK: About the same time, ummhhh, yeah.

LH: I'm just wondering, if you'd had all girls instead of boys, what difference do you think that would make in --

MK: Oh, I don't know. I don't have any idea.

LH: Do you think it would be more like what happened with your dad?

MK: Probably so. [pause] Oh, no, Merritt wouldn't have gone out, I don't believe. I believe he'd have just stayed on with it because he liked that kind of work. I don't know how it would have worked out if they'd been all girls. I don't have any idea.

LH: It's a hard thing [pause] -- if the boys are wanting to participate more in the farm or to have more ownership than -- and their dad still wanting to maintain...

MK: No, they just have their freedom. They know that what has to be

done. They'll go right on and do it. So just the work that has to be done. They'll pitch in and go on and do it. They know that the farm has got to go on.

LH: Well, it must be nice to see that it'll go on, like instead of your dad's farm, which stayed in, part in the family, but not his children.

MK: Yeah, it is. It means a whole lot to see it go on that way. Now, my daddy's brother didn't have any girls. He had two boys. And they kept right on the farm. But daddy just quit because he didn't have any [pause] boys.

LH: Was he sad to give it up?

MK: In a way, I believe he was. But he just knew that he didn't have any help and it was time to give it up. And it's goin to be kind of sad, like when Merritt and Bob has to quit, when their retirement age comes. But they know it'll be carried on!

LH: Sounds like that's one reason he watches his health so carefully now -- because he wants to keep on.

MK: Ummhmm, keep on just as long as he can. He is really devoted to his farm over there!

LH: Well, if you have a desk job, you don't have to be quite as careful of your health, I guess. Cause you can sit at a desk when you're not healthy a lot easier than you can --

MK: Well, he keeps up with the -- I guess you'd say the bookkeeping of it, Merritt does that, keeps up with the bookkeeping part of it. That's not too bad, keeps up with the income tax papers and things like that.

LH: But it's easier to do a desk job in an office than it is to keep

doing farm work if your health isn't good.

MK: Oh, ummhm. He was out bout two months, I reckon, when he had his heart attack. But the others kept right on goin! Like if any of em is sick in that length of time. The others just keep it agoin while the one is out. Yeah, they work real good together.

LH: Well, it must be a satisfying life to have your children so close by.

MK: Oh, it sure is! Two of em in walkin distance and the other one at home. I told the one that is livin here, if he ever did get married, it would be the saddest day and the happiest day of my life.

[laughter] Cause I sure would hate to lose him. Lots of the things I do I decided I couldn't do if it wasn't for Donald ahelpin me. Like bringin in the wood, and helpin me mow, things like -- if I need some rich dirt brought over from the barn on the tractor, he's right there to do it for me, bring it for my flowers and things, [pause] Yeah, that'd be a sad day if he was to ever leave. [laughter] And I don't believe he will!

END OF INTERVIEW