



Mazie Young

Interviewed by Anne Kimzey

1. Working on a farm (00:48)

Young: We worked a farm way [over [?]] in the country and, uh, he would get on his mule and ride the mule and I would hoe hands, two or three women and their children in the car and we'd go over there and we'd work all day long. We'd come in at night and he'd milk the cow and feed the hogs and I would go to the garden with a lantern and, um, pick beans and [unintelligible] potatoes and things. So I'd cook our lunch for the next day and we'd go and stay all day long. It was a wonderful life, I enjoyed it, most city people wouldn't enjoy it, but being a country girl and all I knew was out on the farm. That's exactly what I enjoyed.

2. Working at the mill (00:59)

Young: I went to work and worked in Greenwood Mill about a year. And- my- Wesley wasn't taking care of the children, wasn't taking care of like I thought they ought to be, so I quit work. I didn't have to work but I wanted to.

Kimzey: Um-hum.

Young: So I came home in 1948, our third son was born, John Cowan Young. And, uh, of course I didn't work then for a good while and then I started back to work at McCormick Mill, in spinning, I don't remember exactly what year but I think it was in, uh, '54, and then I worked there till I retired in, um, I believe it was '80.

Kimzey: Um-hum.

Young: But I retired there, I worked there 22 and a half years.

3. Necessity of hog killing (03:00)

Young: When you kill a hog, you don't want to kill an old [unintelligible], you want a hog that has been fattened and it's round and plump. And the way we did that we usually put it on a wood floor, and fed it grain and water, mostly corn, And we kept it up like that

about six weeks and then we'd have it killed. And most of the time they killed the hog by shooting it with a rifle right between its eyes in the head, and just as soon as it falls over, they grab it and cut its throat, and then they take a long blade knife to go down to its hear and they let it lie there and bleed. And then when it gets through bleeding, they have a big rolling pot of hot water and they dip that hog in that hot water, and then they pull it out, and, uh, take a knife and scrape all the hair off of it real good. Clean its head, ears, and all. And when they get all the hair off, they take and put a stick between its hind legs, cut the- cut the leaders to put the stick in there, and then they hang it with a pulley. And they take water and they wash it down real good, till all the hair, the dirt, blood and everything, gets off the hog. And then they start cutting it. Between the hind legs and go down and cut the whole middle of the hog open to remove the intestines. They have a big bucket, uh, tub to catch the intestines and they get all that out. When the intestines are removed, they take water and wash all of that blood and everything [unintelligible] real clean out of the inside of the carcass of the hog. When they get that done, they take it and they lay it on a table and they start cutting it up. You cut the front legs off, and hind legs off, and then you have your middling. And, uh, if you want just ribs and backbone, you pull the ribcage out of the hog and then you chip it up, maybe in three inches or four inches length, [unintelligible]. And then you take the backbone out, and you chop it up in about each section of the backbone. And then of course you have your ham, your shoulders, and the middlings. You take all these- when trimming the ham and the shoulder and the middling, you take all that lean meat, you take the lean part of the ham [unintelligible] and you grind all that up in sausage.

4. Sugar vs. salt curing (01:35)

Young: When my husband and I- we married- all- we always, as I said, always was very congenial. He had a hog and I had a hog. So when he killed his hog, he said "I'm going to clean- cure my meat, my dad always cured his." So he salted it down, covered it in salt, and put it in a box. And he let it stay six weeks. And, uh, I said "Well, when I kill mine, I'm going to sugar cure mine." And, uh, he- well, I killed my hog and I sugar cured it, we hung it, and I had- we had an upstairs we didn't use, and I put a pan under it to catch the bloody water that dripped from it. And about four weeks, I went up and a shoulder of

mine- old hog, and brought it down, and I could not get into the thing, my husband was [unintelligible], he couldn't wait to see the meat. And the skin was just as soft and the meat was just as pretty than anything you saw. And from then on, he says "Well, I'll tell you one thing, we're not curing no more meat, only like this." His skin was so hard you couldn't even cut it with a knife and the meat was so salty you couldn't eat it. So that's where I- when I started, uh, sugar curing meat.

5. Different weather (00:57)

Young: Our weather is not- it takes certain- cold weather to sugar cure, to hang and save meat we don't have- it's hot today and freezing tomorrow. That doesn't do.

Kimzey: Um-hum.

Young: You can't- you can't cure meat like that.

Kimzey: Did it used to stay cold all the time? Or....

Young: Uh, yea- it would turn cold [unintelligible] two or three weeks. If it snowed, snow would stay on the ground. I remember the year that I married, uh, it came a big snow- I married in December and [unintelligible] January, it came a big snow and we go to look at some old chickens, and their beak was frozen to the limbs of the trees.

Kimzey: Oh, no <laughs>.

Young: In the woods. It stayed cold. You could cure meat then, but you can't- [unintelligible] you can't now.

6. Lived off land (02:09)

Young: You went to the store and bought your coffee and sugar. And that was just about the limit of what you, you know, would buy without- maybe you- and- well, if you went fishing, you caught your fish. And my parents and, uh, my- I had four older brothers and they were big hunters. And they would keep rabbits and squirrels, possums, and all that. We had, you know, it was all at home. And I remember when I was just about five or six years old, my father and the boys would be in the field plowing, they'd come to the house early for lunch and we had a little branch down in our pasture, and they'd take crocus bags and make [seines [?]] and go down there and they'd come back to the house with perch and little catfish and everything. A washtub full.

Kimzey: Um-hum. With the- you said crocus bags?

Young: Um-hum. And they'd put a hook on it and make a [seine [?]]. And the Momma would dress those fish and that would be what we'd- no refrigerator, no ice, or no nothing like that. And that's what- we'd have fish for supper that night. See, we lived at home.

Kimzey: Um-hum.

Young: And we had a- Momma always had chickens, turkeys, geese, ducks.
[Unintelligible].

Kimzey: You had a big variety.

Young: Yea. And then we had, uh, they planted sugar cane and we'd make- handmake the big barrels to put the syrup in, and have a spigot at the bottom of that barrel and you'd want syrup, you just go take you a [unintelligible], whatever, jar and fill it full and then cut the spigot off. It'll sit there till the next time you wanted syrup.

Kimzey: Um-hum.

Young: See, we lived at home. But we had- we didn't have fancy things but we had plenty to eat.

7. Church homecoming (00:38)

Young: Well, you know we have homecoming every year at my church.

Kimzey: Um-hum.

Young: At Lower Long Cane ARP Church.

Kimzey: Um-hum.

Young: We'll have it the first Sunday in August. And, uh, we have it every year. And we have our revival Friday night and Saturday night and then all day Sunday.

Kimzey: Um-hum.

Young: And, uh, we have homecoming- send out letters, we have, uh, lunch and then in the afternoons we have some kind of preaching or films or something or other. And we do that every year.

8. Quilting (01:37)

Young: You take and you get you a pattern of a quilt that you like- there are so many, many different pat- styles of patterns.

Kimzey: Um-hum.

Young: They- they- it's the "Trip Around the World" and the "Monkey Wrench" and the "Log Cabin" and the "Friendship" and the diff- you pick out your pattern and of course you cut your scraps and pieces like you want and you piece those together. You get so many a box, you usually- they're- pretty good size box you usually use about 20, four across and five down, you strip them with the color you want to put [unintelligible] and then you'll have to have a color you'll strip that with, so together [unintelligible] you try to get a line to cover that. And then when you going- get you- all fixed, get the top fixed, you'll have four big long- they call them quilting frames. And you fix them in block [unintelligible], and then you sew your lining in that quilting frame, and then you put your cotton batting in it, and then you put your top on it, and then when you get your top pinned down, tacked down on top of all of that, then you start quilting and you quilt around each block [unintelligible]. They call it "quilted by the piece" and you quilt like that.

9. Senior quilting (01:35)

Young: Now we have, um, pieces and quilted three different quilts and sold chances on that, and that's how we have money.

Kimzey: Oh, another- another fund....

Young: Yea, another fundraiser. And that's how we do for our senior citizen crowd. We have about 20.

Kimzey: And everybody quilts? Or everybody pieces?

Young: Oh, everybody- most of the time we meet and we piece the blocks [unintelligible] pieces them. And then, uh, maybe, uh, one of our members- we call- her name is Nellie Walker, and she- everybody calls her "Ma" and she usually puts it together for us. And then we meet and she's got the old time quilting frames, and we put it in and then we quilt. Now, there are not too many of us that quilts....

Kimzey: Um-hum.

Young: Uh, usually, we'll- we- it takes us about- oh, I'd say two and a half days- it would be just about, let's see, about six or seven of us that quilted.

Kimzey: Um-hum.

Young: [Unintelligible] be working.

Kimzey: Um-hum.

Young: And most of the time, some days we go over there, and everybody will carry a little something and one or two will come and warm it up and set the table and fix for us, you know, serve us.

Kimzey: Um-hum.

Young: And we'll eat and go back to quilting and all- we have a good time of it, we enjoy it.

10. Making molasses (02:22)

Young: But you just plant your cane in rows and just plow it- work it like you do anything else, and then when it gets to a certain stage, [seeds [?]] on that stalk gets ripe, then you know it's time and then you strip all that [fodder [?]], the leaves off and you tie it up so you feed that to your cows and, uh, horses.

Kimzey: Yea.

Young: And, um, then you cut it down and lay it and stack it in piles. And then you have to cut the heads off, and load it on the wagon, and carry it to the mill. And it's- all of its stacked just smooth. And then it's run through these rollers to get the juice out. Back in the olden times it was pulled by a mule, but I think now I have heard somebody say that they have tractors that will, you know, make that thing go- the pole go around to squeeze the juice out of it- it's two big rollers.

Kimzey: Um-hum.

Young: Well, when you get that juice out, I don't know too much about the cooking, I have seen it when I was a child, but we used to go to one of my old uncle's and he would make syrup and that was a bog day for us to go to the 'lasses mill as we called it. And, um, he would put it in there and it had different stages that it had to be cooked. And then when it got to a certain stage [in [?]] all that foamy skim on it, he could tell that it was done, and he skimmed all of that off, and then he had a hole in the side where he let the molasses out of that tin tray or whatever it was cooked in.

Kimzey: Um-hum.

Young: And, uh, we thought it was fun eating those, um, we called them “skimmings” but it was nothing but old foamy bottom molasses, and we thought that was fun to eat that. Take our fingers and stick it in and when it got cool enough to eat it, but uh, and we’d, uh, [unintelligible] cooks some kind of [unintelligible] and we’d drink the cane juice. It was good.

11. Making gingerbread (00:44)

Young: But if we wanted gingerbread, we wanted Daddy to cook it. Mama couldn’t cook gingerbread, Daddy had to cook gingerbread. And we had a great big old black biscuit pan, it was about three inches deep and I’ll- about 14 inches square maybe or something or other. We had a big old wood stove, and he’d cook that- it’ll take all that for about eight children or nine children- that’d be about 10 in the family.

Kimzey: Um-hum.

Young: It’d would take that to give all of us just one block of gingerbread apiece, but we thought that was a treat.

Kimzey: Did you- you said- with butter?

Young: Yea, we’d butter it, and ooooh it’s delicious.

