Oral History of Mary Heath Ochiltree Sweet

In 1992 – 1994 we recorded three cassette tapes about my mother, Mary Heath's, life. Herewith are transcripts of those tapes. The first is in interview format, where I was asking Mother questions. In the others she was talking on her own from prepared notes. There is some duplication, especially once when she spoke from her notes twice, almost word for word. Nevertheless, I have transcribed as spoken to the best of my ability. The cassette tapes have also been converted into digital .mp3 files.

This story covers her birth and early years in Avoca, Iowa, teaching country school and moving to California. It resumes with her return from China in 1934, living in San Antonio and in Tahlequah, OK, and moving to Washington, DC, area. Sadly, we never talked about her time in China or how she came to make that momentous trip. We should have done several more of these recordings.

To start off, here is an abbreviated family tree; most of these people are mentioned in the recordings.

Mother's grandparents:

Jacob Yoakum Randall (5-Mar-1928 to 5-Oct-1870) m. Leah Stickley (30-Jun-1827 to 11-Jun-1906)

- Benjamin Stickley Randall (15-Jan-1854 to 19-Feb-1919) m. Dora Bartholomew (1859 to)
  - Uncle Ben and Aunt Dora - lived somewhere nearby, perhaps Council Bluffs.
- Mary Ellen Armeda Randall (20-Sep-1855 to) m. George M. Griffith (1850 to)
  - Aunt Mary - sand hills in Nebraska
- Sarah Margaret Alice Randall (20-Oct-1857 to 1927)` m. William Frank Griffith (1852 - 1937)
  - Aunt Alice & Uncle Frank - lived nearby (south of Avoca, near Oakland)
- Martha Virginia Jemima Randall (1860 to 1933) never married
  - Aunt Marty - lived with her sister Anna and children for most of her life.
- Anna Melissa Aseneth Randall (7-Jan-1863 to 27-Mar-1945) m. Robert Samuel Ochiltree
  - Mother and Dad (my grandmother and grandfather)
    - Son: Clinton Howard Ochiltree (18-Nov-1897 to 30-Aug-1900)
    - Daughter: Margaret Leah Ochiltree (17-Feb-1902 to 05-Jan-1989)
    - Daughter: Mary Heath Ochiltree (14-Dec-1905 to 15-Jul-2003)
- John William Edward Randall (1866 to)
  - Uncle Will
- Emma Leota Randall (20-Apr-1869 to 1968) m. Albert Biggs
  - Aunt Em - missionary in China, lived in Arizona

Sunday 8 March 1992, Mary Heath Sweet tape #0 — digitized as 170220_001.mp3 and _002
(We had two tapes, labeled #1 and #2, then I found this earlier tape so I'm calling it #0 in lieu of re-labeling the two newer tapes.)

John R. Sweet interviewing Mary Heath Sweet with Charolette Sweet joining late in the conversation.

John - It is 8 March 1992 and I'm talking to my mother, Mary Heath Sweet, and I know you were born in Avoca, Iowa, a long time ago, in 1905, so let's just start from there and talk for a few minutes and see where this thing leads.

Mary Heath - It was probably a snowy day on the day I was born, December 14th, 1905. In those days snow lasted almost all winter in that part of Iowa. We lived in a small house in Avoca where my family had moved when they gave up farming near Oakland, Iowa.

J - Oakland is where? North?

MH - Oakland is south of Avoca about 14 miles. Mother had always been on the farm. They rented a farm for several years. My father couldn't stand working in the hot sun so they bought a small house in Avoca. My father did carpentry work and he also worked at the local four mill, for the Consignys. That's where Margaret was born, in Avoca, in 1902. Avoca was the second town in that area. Previous to that there had been a little settlement started about 3 or 4 miles south of Avoca, called Newtown and that's where my mother was born and where she lived and where my family lived.. and when the railroad went thru that area of Iowa, the Rock Island Railroad, it went a little bit to the north there and so the whole town was moved to Avoca.

J - It just bypassed Newtown?

MH - It just bypassed Newtown, so they needed the railroad, so there wasn't much to move from Newtown . I don't . . .

J - There's nothing left at Newtown?

MH - There's nothing left at Newtown now. The little rural school where my mother went has recently been moved to the park in Avoca and it's being maintained as a pioneer school. But it was the same building that my mother attended. I don't think there was any store or anything [at Newtown] because my mother told about the group of men would get ready to drive over to Council Bluffs and everyone got their long list of what they needed. If you needed some needles you better buy them then, because there wasn't anywhere in Avoca [Newtown] to buy things. Avoca during my childhood was a town of about 1200 souls. It was on the main line of the Rock Island, which we bragged about all the time because we thought we were better than Harlan [12 miles north] and Oakland [12 miles south], which were on branch lines.

J - And you were about 25 miles out from Council Bluffs?

MH - No, farther than that, about 40 miles. About 40 miles [actually about 32 miles] out from Council Bluffs. The trains that went to Oakland and Harlan were little branch lines, the kind like your ride in now when you go to a place where they are showing off how people used to live, with plush seats and dust coming in, cow-catchers [on the locomotives]. Often when we rode on them the conductor would have to get out and scare the cows away because they would come up and they . . . But it was great fun when we went on those trains. And when we went into Council Bluffs, which I don't remember of ever going on the train as a child except when I went into Omaha for an operation. There had been a train wreck in Avoca and there were a lot of little, round metal pieces, thin metal pieces about the size of a dime, and all of us kids picked them up and we played with them, played they were money. I put one in my mouth and got it caught in my throat. So, the doctor in Avoca said he couldn't get it out and we would have to go into Omaha. My father and my aunt took me in, we went into the hospital in Omaha to have the piece of tin taken out.

J - How old were you then?

MH - I don't remember it. I don't suppose I was more than 2 or 3. It was a Catholic hospital and one of the nuns came out and asked my father if I had been baptized and he said, "No." Did he mind if they baptized me? They didn't like to give any anesthetic or do anything to a child that had not been baptized. Dad said, "Oh, that is fine." So I was baptized as a Catholic. I don't remember anything about it so I must have been very small.

J - And knowing your father, he must have been in a state thru all of this.

MH - Oh he was in a state, I guess. And I guess Mother wouldn't have gone at all because anything that was in a city she didn't like to even attend to. But anyway, I recovered very well. When my parents had moved to Avoca, soon after that the government opened rural mail routes and Dad took a job as a rural mail carrier, some time about 1903 or 1904 and he continued being a rural mail carrier until his retirement. It gave a stable living, not a great salary but a stable living.

J - When did he retire?

MH - He retired in 1924. And after that he did a lot of odd jobs. He worked in . . . They were having a strike in Omaha, a very, very serious strike of some kind. He had been a private detective at one time and so he went in and got a job as a detective among the strikers. He went in on Monday, stayed a week, and came home on the weekend. And then he worked around; he was a carpenter and he did a lot of extra jobs and so forth. With his small pension we got along fairly well. Next door to us in Avoca was the South-Side School. There was a high school combined with a grade school on the north side but it was at the far edge of town and the fathers-that-be of the town thought that it was too far for the little children to walk there so they built this small frame building with 4 grades; until you got thru fourth grade you went to this little school and it was right across the alley from us. It had no connection with any water or anything. We had an outdoor privy. I don't know where we got water. There may have been a well, I don't remember.

J - There must have been a pump or something or else maybe they went next door to the neighbors to get water, it's possible.

MH - Thinking back on it, I think maybe water was pumped in, that we had water but not toilets. Because, it seems to me as I remember, there was a kind of a sink in the hall where the janitor got water. That's a little vague to me. We had the four grades and the playground was divided, a boys' playground and a girls' playground, and the boys had three times as much playground as the girls, which, of course, was typical of those days.

J - They played harder.

MH - Right, right. Then when I got thru 4TH grade we walked up to the high school which was about a mile from our home and I continued there thru high school. Is that enough for now?

J - Tell a bit about, oh I don't know, roads and utilities and things like that. I guess you had mostly dirt streets on the south side. Was there a paved road thru the middle of town?

MH - No, when I was small there were no paved streets anywhere. We did have electric lights over on the south side; we lived on the south side close to the edge of town. Two blocks away was the town

limit and farms right there. At that time they had a fire engine drawn by horses and because we were far from the main fire house, they built a small firehouse just a block from our place and they had a hand-drawn fire hose that you pulled and we did have water hydrants in the street. When Margaret was born, Dad was working at the flour mill and he was up to the owner's house up in the far edge, the northern edge, of Avoca and the telephone rang and the woman said, "Bob, see who that is, see what's happened." And they said there was a fire – no, the fire whistle had blown. She said, "See where the fire is." And so he said, "Where is the fire?" And the operator said it was at Robert Ochiltree's house on the south side. Well, Dad dropped the receiver and ran out the door. I don't know whether he told Mrs. Consigny where the fire was or not but he ran all the way because Margaret were in bed, she had just been born. The fire was not extreme, it burned grandmother's room but they saved the house. They carried the baby and Mother across the street. And so, that was . . . Oh, not too long, when I was still a little girl, we still used that firehouse with a hand-pulled fire wagon and we had a firebug in Avoca. All the men of the town got where they watched at night, they set up groups to watch where the fire would be. Fires usually were in a barn or in an empty house, not where anyone lived. I remember about a block west of our house, there was an empty house that had just been re-rented and the fire [whistle] blew and this house was going up in flames. We finally found it was Mr. Leslie was the firebug and how he got caught was, he lived next door to his aunt, Mrs. [name unclear], and she heard something out on the porch at might and she got up and there was her nephew lighting a fire on her back porch to burn her house down.

J - While she was in it?

MH - While she was in it!

J - Is that the first one where he had started a fire in an occupied house?

MH - That's as far as I remember, that's the first one where anyone was living in it. She said she opened the door and said, "What are you trying to do, burn my house down?" So I guess he hadn't got started very far so he was able to put it out but then he got caught and he was the one who had burned houses but it was a frightening time in Avoca. Everyone was watchful.

J - I can imagine. You mentioned when you first were speaking about the fire that it burned Grandmother's room. Who-all was living there? Of course, your mother and father and your sister Margaret and Grandmother, that's your mother's mother, and Aunt Marty.

MH - Mother and Father and Margaret and Grandmother and my aunt. Grandmother Randall and Aunt Marty. We lived in this little house, it was a two-over-two with a kitchen behind. Grandmother had the one bedroom and Marty had . . .

J - How old was Grandmother then?

MH - Grandmother . . . I don't know exactly. She died in her middle seventies. I was born in December 1905 and she died in June 1906. She had TB and . . .

J - So you never really knew your grandmother, obviously, you were alive while she was there but you didn't know her.

MH - She never even held me because she was sick and they didn't want to . . . Dr. Spaulding knew she had TB but in those days, what did you do? You just had TB. Dr. Spaulding was a pretty up and

coming doctor and he told them exactly what they had to do, that all of her sheets and everything she wore had to be washed and boiled separately, all her dishes had to be done separately so that it wouldn't spread. Our aunt and mother took care of her. She died in June 1906, so I never knew her.

J - Of course you knew Marty. Marty lived there . . .

MH - Marty lived with us on and on most of the time. She went when other members of the family needed her to work, she went and helped them when babies were born. When I was small . . .

J - Is Marty your mother's older sister? Next to mother but older . . . I have all of this written down but I just wanted to say it.

MH - She was next to mother but older. And when our missionary aunt, Aunt Em, and Uncle Albert moved to Arizona . . .

J - Aunt Em is the one that went to China?

MH - Yes, she was a missionary. And she was having a baby and so she had Marty come out to take care of her. She always had everyone taking care of her. But Marty went out to Arizona to take care of her when that baby was born and I think she went when the next one was born also. And she always went to Aunt Alice's farm every summer to help with the heavy work in the summer. She lived most of the time at our house. She did all of our sewing and she and mother shared the housework. Mother did . . .

J - That's what I was wondering, is how did they divide up the work?

MH - Mother did everything in the garden. Marty didn't garden at all, oh she might have planted some flowers now and then but Mother did all of the gardening. They shared in the cooking. And so, it worked out pretty well. Marty sometimes worked for other people, if they had a baby or if someone was sick and for awhile she worked in the Patrick Home, which was a hotel up on Main Street. I think she worked in the kitchen, I think she cooked., and worked there for awhile. She would have made a wonderful nurse. She was so gentle and loved taking care of people. And also she was very . . . loved to fix up the house. She always made the nice things. She always had vases of flowers, she did the delicate things round the house.

J - I started off asking you about roads and utilities and that led into all of that. Was there electricity in the town when you were born? Of course you don't know when you were born . . .

MH - I don't know when I was born. I'm sure there was electricity on the street as far back as when I was really little. We didn't have elec in our house until after we rebuilt the house when I was about 9 years old and then we put electricity in.

J - And that's when you raised the roof and made the extra bedroom?

MH - Raised the roof and made the extra bedroom upstairs and made some more room and put in electricity.

J - That would be about 1914 then, roughly, that you put in electricity.

MH - Roughly that time, yes. So it made the home . . . we still had no running water but the well was right out beside the house, had lovely cold, cold water but it did have to be pumped. And when we rebuilt the house we put on a bathroom but we had no running water. We would bring water in and then we did have a stationary tub, metal, just a tin tub I think, some kind of metal, and Dad had made so the water could run out but we had to carry it and put it in but it was a big improvement over washing in the corner by the stove. So that was a big improvement. One thing I remember so well, when we were little,
Margaret didn't like the evening, never liked twilight, she always wanted the lamps lighted. And so Mother would say, "Well, you two go outside and when you see ten lights, come in and I'll light the lamps." So we would go out and anxiously look for ten. I don't know if it was ten but a certain number and then we would come in and Mother would light the lamps. The lamp with a bracket on the wall and it had the reflector behind it so it would be a little bit stronger. And we had little lamps in our bedroom, little tiny bedroom lamps that we would light but we often just went to bed in the dark.

J - What about a telephone? When was telephone in town and when did you get one inn your house?

MH - Well, I guess the telephone was in town before I was born. I mean, well of course when the fire was going on . . . I don't know how long it had been there. But we got a telephone, I don't remember but Margaret remembered. She said she remembered when they came and put it in, she said it was so wonderful.

J - So if she remembered, she was 3 years older than you are.

MH - Almost four years older.

J - Almost four, that's right. But she probably wouldn't have remembered it unless it was . . .

MH - Well it was such a big . . .

J - After you were born or just before.

MH - She wouldn't remember until she was about 5 or 6 years old.

J - Five or six I wouldn't think, and you were probably already born. So they probably put in the telephone around 1910 [1907 or 08 more likely], just as a guess.

MH - Yeah, that's a guess. I know it . . . of course it was the kind, the wooden kind that was on the wall and you turned the crank to ring in to the operator.

J - What was your code? Do you remember? You must have had a ring code.

MH - No, no not when it was a private line. You see . . .

J - You had a private line?

MH - Well yes, because there were no party lines except in the country phones. There weren't any party lines as far as I know in town. The country lines you had, oh, 8, 10 people sometimes and you had two longs and a short or two shorts and a long.

J - No, that's what I was expecting.

But no, I don't think anyone, I don't think there were any party lines in the little town. Oh, the telegram at that time were the way you reported to anyone deaths and illness. You knew if you got a telegram someone surely had died or was next to death. I remember when a neighbor had died and someone called to ask about them. My, what the flurry, but you did not use long distance for anything except tragedy.

J - You didn't use long distance for just chatting even when I was little, you wouldn't even think of it unless it was an emergency.

MH - Oh, goodness no.

J - Even in the '40s and into the '50s.

MH - Oh yes, yes, after all it's been since you've grown up that people have used the telephone for just chatting.

J - Of course the rates have come down so much in recent years. But I remember when I went to college I don't think I phoned home hardly ever.

MH - Except one time when you were sick and when you lost your wallet. But no, you didn't call home just to chat about anything.

J - In the dormitory we had one local University phone and one pay phone that you could call outside on each floor and there must have been, oh gee, 20 to 25 rooms on a floor, most of them with two people, so then 40 to 50 kids in the dorm with one telephone. Not too many calls going out.

MH - Oh, I was going to say about the streets in Avoca. There were no paved streets when I was little and at the time, I don't remember the year but when I was real little we had four saloons and we had a lot of drunken people [Grandmother's clock strikes 4] but Iowa went dry and so the saloons had to be closed and that was when I was still quite a small child. We had no paved streets until, there again, I would say when I was maybe 10, about that age maybe [1916] they decided they would pave four blocks, I think, uptown in the main street and, I know, everyone went to watch, it was a brick pavement and the man was absolutely fantastic he could lay bricks so fast. That was the show all that summer to go watch the street being paved. We had, well, I guess maybe it was more than just the main street, it was several streets right around the main part of town. I think it continued up around the high school and so forth. But that was the first paved streets we had.

J - It probably didn't get paved on the south side for some considerable years.

MH - No, I don't know when it was paved but it never was paved when I lived there on the south side, except maybe the main street extended down to the fairgrounds, it might have been paved, I don't really know for sure but our street was never paved.

J - Now you lived there and graduated from high school and then started teaching in the country school and I guess we'll get into that another time but the . . . Let's see, so that would have been, when you graduated from high school it must have been 1920 what?

MH - 1924, and in that year, that summer, Mother and Dad moved to Council Bluffs and I stayed in the country and taught at Buzzards Glory . . .

J - at Buzzards Glory and lived with the Derbys. OK. And then . . . So that's when they moved to Council Bluffs and sold the house in Avoca. And up to that time they hadn't paved any streets and had not put in any indoor plumbing or anything, or did plumbing ever get put in?

MH - Yes, and some people had it. Usually, now right across the street from us the Zollers lived and they were German farmers and they were good farmers and made a lot of money, a lot for those days, and they bought an old house and restored it and made a beautiful house and they had plumbing in that house.

J - Was there town water or was it plumbing with . . . ?

MH - Yes, it was town water. Town water had been over there for a long time because at the time of the fire they put it out with the town water.

J - So they had a fire hydrant out somewhere?

MH - Right on the corner, right on the corner from us.

J - You could sign up for it if you wanted it or you could keep using your well I guess.

MH - Yeah, and I was trying to think when the sewer, the sewer of course had to be there when the people had, unless they had, I don't think they had a cess pool, no.

J - I would think once they got town water they probably would have a town sewer too, I would think.

MH - I think they put in a sewer. And the new houses, but not many new houses were built on the south side, it was the poorer part of town.

J - That's on the wrong side of the tracks.

MH - Wrong side of the tracks.

J - The tracks did, in fact, go right thru the middle and divided the south side from the north side. Hi.

Char came in - Admiring comments accepted, only. [In regard to what I don't know.]

J - OK, let's see, we've been talking a good bit about Avoca and so on. I'm not sure where to go with this next but . . . Oh, why don't we talk about the country school for a little while. Talk for another 15 minutes or something and you can talk, the school there that was northeast of

Avoca, if I remember correctly, was colloquially called Buzzards Glory and you lived with a family, the Derbys.

MH - Scott and Marie Derby and four and a half children. And the reason they called it Buzzards Glory, when they were building the school the buzzards just came and roosted on the roof all the time. I think it was actually Knox County #6 or something, it didn't have any real name.

J - It wasn't Pottawattamie County?

MH - It was Pottawattamie County, Knox Township.

J - Oh, Knox Township, OK.

MH - I had never even, although I had lived all my life in Iowa, been in a real rural school, one-room rural school, and I certainly came ill prepared to teach the youth of America, I was just 18 years old and very inexperienced.

J - Some of your students were probably 19.

MH - I had led a very, very sheltered life and no real education.

J - You must have started teaching right out of high school.

MH - Right out of high school. We had had, if you were planning on teaching you had to take two courses in the last, senior year in high school, one on methods and I don't remember what the other was. But that was our preparation and, fortunately, we had a wonderful teacher, Ethel Mae Taylor, whom you probably remember came to visit us. And she was the one, when I told you she was coming for you to behave, you said, "You mean she isn't dead?" Because you thought that anyone who had taught me in school would certainly be dead. But you went out to the rural school with no preparation other than given a . . . I had all 8 grades, one or two in each grade, I had about 27, 28 children.

J - You had 8 grades? The high-school age kids went in to Avoca to the high school?

MH - Eight grades. The ninth grade went in to Avoca.

J - And the high school was for the whole county?

MH - Well, no, not for the whole county. It would be for that area. I don't know how much it included, but no, no, it was just for . . .

J - It was Avoca and the surrounding . . .

MH - And there was no bus transportation. If your children went in to high school it was up to you to get them there. The little school I went in to, well it had the seats and a desk for the teacher and a stove in the middle of the room. The well was, no well on the school grounds, the children had to carry water from the nearest farm. I don't know if it was quite clean by the time they got it there. They had a kind of a container you put it in, it had little a push button on the bottom, you could get water, you didn't dip it with a dipper. Although the next country school I taught in, they had a dipper, sitting in the bucket of water.

J - Everybody drank out of the same dipper?

MH - No, they didn't drink out of the dipper, they weren't supposed to.

J - I'll bet some of them did.

MH - Well, I'm sure that most of them did. And that also, you had to go down the road a piece to get water. There were no books in the school at all. The books were bought by the parents. And, of course, the family that had the number of children, they would have had the books at home and, of course, the children would've, they had no other books, so the children would have, by the time the little children came along they would have known all the stories and everything in them. So it wasn't anything fresh that you had to offer the children. There were no books at all in that school. Not even, I think there was . . .

J - You didn't have slates to write on? You must have at least had paper.

MH - No, we had paper. And the . . . we had double seats, two sat at a desk. The teacher sat a little elevated up on a little, at the front of the room. There were two privies in the back yard, boys and girls. Shall I tell about the boys' privy? I'd better not tell it.

J - Oh I was going to say, the boys' privy was always a problem.

MH - Do you want me to tell about them?

J - You should tell about them. It was part of the story.

MH - I didn't know the teacher had charge of the privy. I thought you went to the privy but you didn't have charge of it. Some boy was complaining about the privy to other kids, so I decided I had better go up and look after school. Well, the boys had not used the hole in the privy at any time. Oh, it was the most awful mess you ever saw. So, I called the Director of that school and I said I didn't. was I supposed to take care of that? And he said, "Oh, I wouldn't have you clean that up. I'll come down and clean it up and then you talk to the boys about it." So I did talk to them.

J - Rather firmly I imagine.

MH - And I checked every day after that and if there was any misbehavior in the privy I kept the boys in and gave them a piece of my mind. Punished them. But what, I had no idea the teacher was supposed to check on that.

J - The teacher is janitor and fire stoker and everything.

MH - Yes, yes. In fact, the second school I went to, the Director . . .

J - This was Limekiln Hollow, down near, closer to Council Bluffs?

MH - Limekiln Hollow, uh huh. Limekiln Hollow, was real ly, the proper name was Orchard Heights. But there was a lime kiln so they called it Limekiln Hollow. I went to apply for the school, the director lived in a log cabin with his family and several children and a long beard, which men didn't wear at that time very much, younger men, and he only asked me two questions. He asked if I had a certificate to

teach and he wanted to know if I could teach geography and if I could light a fire. Those were the two things and I said yes to both.

J - He was the Director of the school?

MH - Each country school had a local director, one of the farmers.

J - Was there an overall school board that directed a group of schools or how did that work?

MH - The county supervisor. The county supervisor had charge of all the rural schools, and Pottawattamie County was quite a big county. The county supervisor was supposed to make a visit in each country school at least once a year. So you lived kind of in dread of the county supervisor coming. She never came to Buzzards Glory and she came once when I was teaching in Limekiln Hollow. Oh, on the Buzzards Glory school they had a storm cave out in the back yard. I lived in awful fear that we would have a tornado and I would have to take all of the kids down into the storm cave and then the school would blow over on top of it and we would be trapped and we would all suffocate. So it was just a hole with a cover on it, it did have an air hole coming up but I never had to do that but I was scared about it.

J - You were pleased at that.

MH - The Derbys lived a quarter of a mile from the school and I had three of the Derby children, were in my room. One time I got to school and I had a terrible headache, an awful headache and, of course, in those days I didn't carry aspirin or anything, so I asked Ned, one of the Derby children, if he would walk home and I'd send a note for his mother to send me some aspirin and I had an awful time swallowing aspirin so I wrote a little note and said I had a terrible headache and would she send me some aspirin and some jelly to put it in so I could swallow it. So I sent little Ned home and I think later how we never could have sent a child home later without letting everyone know because you would be sure somethhing would happen to him.

J - Well, you would have to have the principal phone the parents and have someone accompany him probably.

MH - Right, right. Later when I was teaching, in the last years I was teaching we couldn't even take the children on a walk a few blocks around the school without the parents permission.

J - You're speaking now, when you were teaching in Arlington and this was in . . .

MH - Yes, in the 1950s and 60s.

J - Yes, times have changed. But you could take the, if you didn't feel like teaching that day, you could take the kids blackberry picking or something if it was the right time of year or whatever.

MH - At Buzzards Glory there wasn't much to go do but at Limekiln Hollow it was bluffs and hills and in the spring when the wildflowers bloomed we just took our lunches and went roaming up in the hills and the parents didn't know where we were. It kind of scares me to think about it now.

J - If someone had come by the school and no one was there they wouldn't even know where to look.

MH - No, no one. I had a child break his collarbone at Limekiln Hollow and he was in great pain and I sent a child running to the Director's wife. She came over and we knew right away that the bone was broken so she said, "Well, I'll call the clinic in Council Bluffs and you get him in the car and I'll stay with the children and send them home later." Well, I think now how scared I should have been, taking that child with a broken collarbone and driving all the way into Council Bluffs to take him to the clinic.

J - Well, what were your alternatives? Call in a medivac helicopter, I mean?

MH - Right, right. I remember how embarrassed I was. The child came from a very poor family and evidently they had never paid their bills because, when I brought him in and gave the name and everything and she said, "Well, you haven't paid your bill for . . ." And I said, "I'm not the parent, I'm the teacher in the school." And so they allowed as how they could fix his collarbone since he was suffering.

J - Well that's good. What, did you, you lived at Limekiln Hollow too, part of the time, in the winter.

MH - When it was bad weather, in the winter, I lived there.

J - But you traveled back and forth . . .

MH - I drove back and forth until it got, you had to go over this hill and in the winter that filled up with snow and so I had to stay at the Pascal's [microwave alarm going off in the background], and that was the house that was built into the side of the hill. And it was just one big room with two partial partitions, not to the top, and sometimes the cow would walk on the roof and scare you half to death at times. They were nice people though.

J - This wasn't the Director or anything? Who was the Director?

MH - No, I'm trying to think of his name, it escapes me right now.

J - You were living with your parents in Council Bluffs when teaching at Limekiln Hollow except for in bad weather. And what about Margaret, she . . . ?

MH - Yes. Well, Margaret had gone to Council Bluffs to go to business college and then she got a job down there and that's the reason Mother and Dad moved to Council Bluffs, 'cause they couldn't stand their children not being at home. And when . . .

J - Couldn't stand the children being at home or Margaret couldn't stand . . .

MH - They couldn't stand not having their children at home and Margaret didn't like being away, living in a room and . . .but after they moved down there, then Mother just got after me that I couldn't teach way out there at Avoca because, if I got a school near Council Bluffs then I could be at home. So . . .

J - And then did Margaret live at home also?

MH - Margaret lived at home, yes.

J - What was Margaret doing? Was that . . .

MH - She was a stenographer.

J - Was that when she worked at . . . I remember when we were in Council Bluffs [1980] there was this big brick office building and . . .

MH - She worked for one of the old-time lawyers, Mr. Stewart [or Stuart?]. She worked for him. He was really a demon but she worked for him there. Margaret was responsiblefor a lot of our moving about because she had begged Mother and Dad to move to Council Bluffs and then she went to California and begged them to move out there, which, of course, was a mistake.

J - Well, that was what I was trying to get at when she had moved to Council Bluffs I was wondering whether it was more Margaret wanting her parents to move down of her parents wanting Margaret to be at home?

MH - Well, well, yes, yes, Margaret was very convincing. Margaret had . . . Mother couldn't send her down to Council Bluffs to go to business college alone, so our aunt went down and they got a room in a house, Aunt Marty, where they had a little kitchen, a little, what do you call it, electric plate, in the bedroom and Margaret lived with Marty there and then after she got a job, Marty still stayed, Mother didn't want Marty to come home and leave Margaret alone in that wicked city. So Margaret . . . they got a little bit more roomy place where they had a little, well it still was a funny place, just an upstairs of a house, and so Margaret began to get very antsy about living with Marty because she wanted to be on her own. And she always said, the reason she didn't want to keep on living with just Marty, she was having to help, you see, Mother said, well, she was working she had to help pay Marty for the food and things, so it was expensive. So that's when Marty [Margaret?] begged the family to move down there because she thought it would be better than her . . . So, then, of course, she had to develop some way of getting away from home without her family. And so she developed illness, she had bad colds all the time, which I guess she had, and she went to the doctor. I really don't think this was true but she said the doctor said, maybe the doctor did say, that she should get to another climate, the climate was causing these bad colds. And, of course, she went out to visit San Francisco. No one would ever go to San Francisco to not have colds.

J - I thought San Francisco was sort of damp all the time.

MH - But Margaret loved San Francisco and so she told . . .

Char - Yes, damp and it's never warm, one of my favorite things about San Francisco.

MH - She told Mother and Dad that the doctor said she should move away and so she was going to move out to San Francisco. They didn't question it and so she went out there and got a job. And, of course, as soon as Margaret was away from the family she wanted the family, then when she had the family, she didn't want them. So, she was living around in rooming houses and having an awfully good time but she liked things about home too, you see, so first she wanted me to come out there, and, oh Mother didn't go along with that at all. And, of course, I, being docile, I didn't fight it. So finally she said it would just be so fine for the whole family to move out there. It was a big mistake, they shouldn't have gone at all. They should never have left Avoca.

J - They probably would have been better off in Avoca that anywhere else.

MH - Better off in Avoca.

J - And if they had moved to Council Bluffs they would have been better off to have stayed there than to go to San Francisco, or, they lived in Los Gatos, isn't that right?

MH - Right, right, and of course I . . . yeah, later. Well, that's how Margaret got rid of being in the family again. I sound like Margaret was, I tell these bad things about her . . .

C - She was manipulative, would you say?

MH - She was manipulative. I must say that I had two people devoted to me in my life. One was my husband and one was Margaret. I never had such devotion and Margaret and I had wonderful times together . . .

END of side A, begin side B.

. . . wonderful times together but she was manipulative. After we had lived there awhile, of course, the beginning of the Depression, Dad had always had little jobs to do, that he could, part time work. Well, he got one little job in San Francisco but the Depression came and no jobs for anyone so Margaret was supporting the whole family. I couldn't find for a long time and there was Marty and Mother and Dad living on Margaret's and Dad's little pension. And so Margaret finally decided the folks should move to Los Gatos.

C - What was going to happen in Los Gatos?

MH - Well, Los Gatos is a beautiful little town and Aunt Em and Uncle Albert had lived down there and they had been down, it was a beautiful place to live and it was cheaper, of course, than San Francisco. And so Margaret told the family that they should move down there, it was a nice place to live and they could get a little house down there and she said, "I'm going to get married as soon as I find the right man and so I won't be living at home and you could live more cheaply down there. So that's what they did. And they found the cutest little house. It had a rose arbor and California was beautiful there. So they moved down there, they got a little house for $15 a month and it was a cute little house. But Margaret was manipulative, there's no doubt about it.

C - How long did they stay in Los Gatos?

MH - They stayed there until I came home from China [1934] and there . . . Do you want to hear how she manipulated that too?

J - Oh yeah!

MH - Well, I moved to . . . we came home and Lewis went into private practice in San Antonio and it was pretty poor private practice, it was mid-Depression, but we expected to live there always, he was going to build up his practice there. [Margaret married Allan Scott Rogerson on 01-Nov-1932.] So Allan had never gotten out of the merchant marine and she didn't like him to be away from home and of course he had no background for getting a job during the Depression and he had a brother that lived in Salt Lake City who ran an automobile dealership.

J - Allan's brother?

MH - Allan's brother and he had made a good deal of money and so Allan went to visit him and he said to come here and you can get a job, why don't you and Margaret move here and Margaret can get a job. So Margaret wrote to me right away that they were going to move to Salt Lake City and what were we going to do about [our] parents because Los Gatos . . . Of course, Margaret wasn't going to take them. Also, she said we were stable, we were settled and she didn't know that they would be settled in Salt Lake City. So we decided the best thing was to move them to San Antonio, which was another mistake. So I went back to San Francisco and Los Gatos and in the meantime Lewis looked for a little apartment so they could live independently. And that was just another tragic move. Los Gatos was such a pleasant, pretty place and the only apartment Lewis could find was in half a house and it wasn't attractive at all and we couldn't move all of their things so . . .

J - And it was too hot.

MH - And it was hot and . . .

C - What were your parents saying and thinking all this time when they were being whisked from one [inaudible] to another by somebody else?

MH - Margaret manipulated . . . it was sad but Margaret manipulated the whole family. She manipulated the whole family from babyhood. Since Howard, the first child, died when he was two-and-a-half, when Margaret was born they were sure something would happen to her, you know, and so there was in the household at that time Marty and Grandmother and Mother and Dad and they all ran around after this precious little baby that was so sweet, and she was, the pictures were delightful.

J - But fragile.

MH - Yes, and Dad would, Mother said Dad would go around with his hands under her head, he was afraid her head would fall off. And he had a, Dad was very nervous and he had this nervous, he would wake up in the night with a nervous cough and, of course, the baby was in the same rom with Mother and Dad and Mother said to Dad, "Don't cough, you'll wake the baby." So poor Dad had to jump up and go in the kitchen when he had a cough at night. Margaret ruled the roost, she ruled the roost and when we were living in Council Bluffs, I remember, we'd be sitting in the living room and she'd say, "Oh, I need a drink of water." Three grown people would jump up to get it for her, Mother and Dad and Marty. I could have said I wanted a drink of water; no one would have moved. But, of course, I wouldn't have said I wanted a drink of water, I would have got up and got it. Ha, ha. Margaret was manipulative, there's no doubt about it.

J - Well, so when you, so what happened to Salt Lake City? I don't remember about . . .

MH - They never even went!

J - I didn't think ever went.

MH - They never went. The job wasn't there. I don't know whether they intended to go.

J - So you and Lewis were in San Antonio and expecting to stay, you wound up going to Oklahoma from there?

MH - Right, right. Well, mid-Depression was no time to start a practice anywhere and, of course, at that time pediatricians were quite new beings, in fact very few people knew what a pediatrician was. And there was one pediatrician in San Antonio, who had a pretty good business, you don't call it a business do you?

J - Practice.

MH - Practice. And he was very nice to Lewis and gave Lewis some help but most of the patients Lewis got were relief patients who were paid, the government paid fifty cents for an office call and a dollar if you made a home visit, and we weren't getting anywhere very fast and most people just went to their general doctor, they didn't go to a pediatrician. And so Lewis owed all this money for his medical education and things were, and I went to teaching at this, I couldn't get a job in the public schools because I didn't have the Texas, what I needed for Texas, and there were too many teachers and I got a job in this little private school at $40 a month but that wasn't very much. And so Lewis had written to his, the head of the Childrens Hospital in Boston, whom he had been very, Dr. Blackfan. And Dr. Balckfan said, well they are looking for people in the Childrens Bureau to go into various places for well-baby clinics. So Lewis wrote to the Childrens Bureau so he got this position in Oklahoma. [Scruffy meowing] It was funded by the Childrens Bureau and the Oklahoma State Health Department. So that was a salary, which you got your money.

J - You didn't have to count on any patients paying you.

MH - That's right, so we moved to Oklahoma.

J - And that was Tahlequah? And you've got some pictures.

MH - Tahlequah. Yeah.

J - So we've been leading into all these pictures, so let's look at the pictures for a while . . .

MH - Why don't you turn that off.

J - That's why I want to talk about the pictures. You want to see some Oklahoma pictures? No? You [Char] I meant.

C - Yes, yes.

MH - I wondered if you were interested. I think these are rather interesting. These are . . .

J - I have to take my glasses off to look at pictures and Char has to put hers on.
[Sadly, the photos discussed here are missing,not found after intensive search 19-Feb-2017. I did find some pix of Point of the Pines at Tahlequah but not the people or houses described.]

MH - I think these are kind of interesting. This first bunch is just the roads and the scenery and something, there's just a few. And that's a spring that has been covered over. Why don't you hand it on to . . .

J - I wanted to mark some of these. This looks like a box here. These were taken under what, these were some of the places where . . .

MH - Over a spring. Well this was in the area where we lived. Lewis had charge of five counties of well-baby clinics, out from Tahlequah and they would set up the time when they would come and there was a nurse that went with him. And there's just . . .

C - Was the can for people who were going by to get a drink?

MH - To get a drink, yeah. Um-hum.

J - And this is a corral, appears to be.

MH - I guess so and I noticed they had fences like you have here. [split-rail fences] And that's just a road, that's the way the roads looked, that and that. And there's a fence like you have, similar, somewhat.

J - Um-hum. Now here's a well. I'm going to want to label these . . .

MH - And that's some sheep I think, it's not a very good picture.

J - I can't really make out what . . .

MH - I can't but there are , it's just a field but I just put it in. Now here's a series of houses, typical houses where, on the farm, and you can just go thru them.

J - Do you know who . . . these were all just in the vicinity of . . .

MH - No, they were just people of Tahlequah, where the people lived and these were the patients that came to Lewis.

J - Now, when did you move to Tahlequah?

MH - 1936.

J - 1936. That's right in the midst of the dust bowl. And how long were you there?

MH - No, well, the bad dust bowl was evidently the year before or the year after because we didn't, we weren't there when they had the Okies that moved. But it was a bad summer.

J - OK. Although the worst of the dust bowl was further west in Oklahoma wasn't it? Tahlequah being right on the eastern edge, it wasn't quite as bad.

MH - Yeah, yeah. Well, Tahlequah was . . . in the counties that Lewis had were the northeast counties and they were kind of in the edge of the Ozarks and it looked very much like the country around here, not quite as high but very pretty country, but so poor, oh, so poor. The inhabitants were largely Indians, mixed breed.

C - What year?

MH - 1936 and 7.

J - So you moved there in 36?

MH - 1936 in the spring and moved at the end of December 37.

J - OK, so you were there thru two summers. OK. So all of these pictures then were taken in 36 and 37.

MH - Yes, but I thought . . .

J - This doesn't even look like a house. Is this a house?

MH - It is, it is a house, they were all houses.

J - Let me just write "house" on the back of this, just as a reminder, because that looks like a shed. I mean it's not even beaten down around it. You'd think it would be all worn down. I can see that this one . . .

C - It could be that most of the traffic goes this way.

J - Yeah, it could be, yeah. Now this one looks more like a house. And this one is a log building that has been, apparently, added on to, so I know it looks like a barn.

MH - Well, it's possible, I'm not positive.

J - Of course this one I don't, I betcha that's no house, that looks like a barn.

MH - Well, it's possible.

J - But here's a house. A little teeny-tiny log house. And of course that's a rather nice looking house except for its environment could be, the landscaping isn't tops. Now that looks like a tar-paper shack, it was the . . .

MH - Well, people lived in that sort of thing, they just lived in whatever they found. And that looks like there isn't any, it's just shelter.

J - That, this may not even be the actual home but this like the "summer kitchen."

MH - Well, it might have been the kitchen because they have a chair and a . . .

J - Here's a little block stove and a table and so on and you may have been standing at the house, whatever there was of the house, and this would be . . .

C - That may have been the house.

MH - But that, right.

J - That's possible that was the house, the tar-paper shack.

C - The construction is similar.

MH, J - Yes, yes.

J - And here's, this is another, oh, you were handing these back to me were you, or have you still got them? This is another one of . . .

C - I've still got them.

J - This is another copy of the one that . . . Now this is a particularly ramshackle looking place.

MH - I have some other nicer ones that I can give you, the nicer ones. Heh, heh.

J - That's a fine homestead there.

MH - But Lewis took pictures whenever he went on the well-baby clinics he would take pictures of all the houses that he saw around, you know.

J - I particularly like the roof on this one. Now here's a nice house, I like that one.

C - Held down with rocks . .

J - And sticks and whatever else. OK, so I need to mark some of these . . . get the general idea . . .

MH - These are the people he saw at the clinics. You see how many children they had. And, uh . . .

J - Is this presumably one family?

MH - It's a well-baby clinic, well, there are probably two mothers aren't there? Or are there three? Three mothers maybe.

C - There seem to be five mothers in this one.

MH - Well, there may be, this was a clinic.

C - These are ladies sitting down.

J - These are ladies and [inaudible] children.

MH - And of course it was a well-baby clinic so all of the little children would have come. And that's a typical family, you see, typical people, I guess that's two mothers, but it's just typical people. That I think is a charming little boy. Poor little kid. [Scruffy meowing]

J - Hi Scruff.

MH - But this is the size of families that you saw. She still had a long way to go.

J - She looks possibly Indian or . . .

MH - Most of them were part . . . that's a family of children. You see how close together their children were. Meow, well, you want up? Come on. I'll get over a little. I think that is an interesting woman. Meow, meow, OK.

J - She's working in her garden . . .

C - Oh God, they've got twins.

MH - Oh, heh, heh, last week [inaudible].

J - OK . . . gangs and gangs of kids. That's closest thing I've seen to well organized-looking people.

MH - Yeah, they look pretty don't they.

C - Oh, I thought this group was, this group . . .

J - Oh, look at this one.

C - This one, she's wearing high-heeled shoes and nylons.

MH - Yeah, she was pretty good shape, wasn't she.

J - There's quite a lot of children . . .

C - These three don't have any shoes but the ones that walk do.

J - There's the Radio Flyer [wagon].

MH - But those were just typical people. And [long pause] and this is Minnie Icescraper, she's the one that got the, after the talk on polluted water, she went to the well and brought . . . "Doc, would you like a drink?" He had just given a talk on not drinking out of the spring, brought a rusty can with water. And look, she had five children and she had a little coaster wagon she brought them in and her dress is just fastened with a safety pin here because she had to nurse the littlest one all the time, so she's just open up and nurse him. Minnie Icescraper, her name was.

J - And you got that one marked?

MH - Yeah, I wrote on that, cause Margaret was with us when she came, she just about died when she saw her. This one of the little towns where we went, I think it's Jay, Oklahoma, the main street and this was the local physician. And we went out there one evening, he called, Lewis was called for consultation lots of times, he called us to come, he had a baby he wanted Lewis to see. And he was sterilizing a needle and he had it in a saucer with some alcohol and moved it around with fingers to sterilize it.

C - Well, the alcohol is taking care of the germs, isn't it?

MH - Right, right.

J - We hope so.

MH - Oh, and this was a nice little community building that had been and that's where they held the well–baby clinics. Here's just some more of them.

J - Oh, we saw this group before, may have been a slightly different pose. Is this marked, this community building? Oh, you wrote "Rural Health Center," OK.

MH - It was out in those woods where the well-baby clinics were held that Pretty-Boy Floyd lived, the bandit, you know, and in this one area half of their babies were named Floyd after him. He was like Robin Hood.

C - Heh, heh, heh, popular fellow!

MH - This was the nurse that went with us. [Sounds of thick paper crinkling. These pix were not in an album, I think stored in a large kraft-paper envelope. Sadly, they have gone missing since this recording was made 25 years ago. There must be 100 of them and MH had them divided into groups of people, houses, etc., probably in small envelopes within the large one. Some of these are really important to the story of their time in Oklahoma.]

J - Standing in the middle of the street back here.

MH - Yeah. I know they had at Jay, they had a black doctor and that other doctor and [inaudible] saw him stirring the needle in the alcohol, I said, "Well, I'll take the black doctor sight unseen."

J - Well, you never know, he might not have sterilized anything at all.

MH - He may not . . . that's right.

J - What else you got?

MH - Well, there's just more of the same, I mean not exactly the same but they're not . . . These were better houses, these were quite good houses. I thought I wanted to show the bad ones.

J - This looks like all quality construction here. A little chinking in the logs needed. This, it just doesn't look like a lived-in house, you know.

MH - Well, there's a possibility it isn't.

J - There's no chinking in the logs and it looks like there's no doors on the openings.

MH - Well, they oftentimes didn't have doors. And, uh . . .

J - Of course it's not a . . .

MH - This is a picture, a closeup, of that woman you saw in the . . .

J - Oh, uh-huh. This is, let's see, there's two here of the same house cause I recognize the chimney that's in . . . yeah, there we go.

MH - The chimney.

J - There's nothing, nothing untoward looking about that place, in fact it's got a car parked next to it.

C - The doctor's car, perhaps?

J - That's possible I suppose.

MH - Let's see.

J - You can just barely see . . .

C - Behind the tree.

J - You can just barely see the bumper there, you can just see the bumper of a car sticking out there. Well, I want to make sure these get . . . I don't want to write on each one because there's nothing to write in general but I want to make sure that we have these in an envelope that is marked Oklahoma.

MH - Well, these, yeah these are just, you know, other people, which I didn't think you wanted to look at all of those, they were just other people.

J - Let me just flip thru them, just flip thru them real quick. This might have been the doctor's car because I have seen that car in a couple of pictures. Or, wait, [mumble] well, I can't tell. There's a couple of different, there's a couple of cars here that look pretty similar. I presume the doctor had a car.

MH - Yes, he did have one.

J - He had to have gotten to these places one way or another.

MH - How could he get there.

J - There's two cars in the background here. They know how to make babies but they don't know a whole lot else.

MH - Yeah, they sure did make a lot of them.

J - Where's this brick building? That showed up in the background in a couple of other things, that's a rather substantial looking thing. There was a family, there was a bunch of kids standing next to that same brick building.

MH - I don't know. Well, they sometimes had the well-baby clinics in a . . . Oh, I don't think they had any brick-building schools but maybe in the little town.

J - I guess if it was in Jay or . . .

MH - Yeah, they probably, might have had a few brick buildings.

J - Uh-huh, nice looking gentleman.

MH - Nice looking old man, isn't he. Yes, he looks nice.

J - There's a chain and a hook hanging off this porch roof. Put a ham hock up there or something?

MH - Right, right. [long pause]

J - There's a fine . . . again, that looks to me line a barn rather than a house but you can't really tell.

MH - Well, it might be. I would be a little amazed why Lewis would take a picture of a barn.

J - Junction . . . how to put a split-rail fence together. And that's the same on we had earlier. Well those are good.

C - Well, I was just looking for where my folks lived when I was born.

MH - Oh, you were in Nebraska?

J - Haigler?

C - Um-hmm. I think that's the house. It did have doors and windows. Sort of.

MH - Yeah. Was it frame?

C - I have no idea. Yeah, it had to be. It was a little wood house.

J - It looks like a frame house.

C - I understand that when the wind was blowing the dust went right thru it. [inaudible]

MH - Right, right. Well, of course that was mid-Depression.

C - They moved up there in 1930. Thirty.

MH - The Depression had just hit right then.

C - When the bottom fell out of everything they went up there, they traded their house for this farm in Nebraska and they came back in '36. I was a year old. When things sort of started to . . .

J - They did the opposite than what was spoke about in Woody Guthrie's famous song. Don't trade your cow for a car, you better stay right where you are.

C - They didn't have any, they traded for this farm so they could, you know, raise food. This is my dad. And a cow who had the name, I can't remember, they called [her] Curly or something like that.

MH - And who's that?

C - That's my mother.

MH - Oh, [inaudible]

C - This is Dad and my grandfather and Uncle Chet.

MH - Oh, your father was a nice looking man too.

C - Yes. There's one [inaudible] cocky bastard. Look at this. Look at that. I ask you. He must have been about 18. That was either just before they were married or . . .

MH - And that is your mother?

C - I mean, it would have been after they were married.

MH - That is your mother?

C - Yeah. I don't know exactly when it was taken,

MH - Who's that?

C - I don't know those three people.

MH - Who's this?

C - This is my grandmother's album and some people I don't know. This was her sister, Della, and this is my grandmother [Grady].

MH - Oh, my, she's young looking.

C - [inaudible] We were all young once.

MH - Right, right.

C - This is my father's family, this gang, let's see, this would have been . . . this is June, she was the littlest at the time and this is Thelma and this is . . .

MH - You know, she looks like that. Thelma looks like that.

C - Yeah, to a certain extent, yeah. This is Doris and Ted and Glenn and Thelma and June, now that was the first five grandchildren. But Opal and Rollin were married, this is my Aunt Opal and this is my Aunt Myrtle and her husband, Raymond, and this is Aunt Maxine and she

wasn't married yet and there's Uncle Chet and he wasn't married yet and this is Grandma and this is Dad and my grandfather and my mother.

MH - Now, this your father's . . .

C - My father's family, his mother and father and then his older sister and him and his next sister and then Chet and then Maxine.

MH - Which grandmother lived in Texas?

C - None of them.

J - Oklahoma.

MH - Oklahoma I mean.

C - This grandmother, this is my mother's mother.

MH - Uh-huh. Now is she the one that married several times?

C - Yes, heh, heh. Yes, she made kind of a career of it.

MH - Heh, heh, thought that was, thought maybe it was one of the most interesting things she could do.

[Phone rings, recording ends abruptly, end of side B – tape counter 490 – end of Tape #0]
[Side A has been converted to 170220_001.mp3 – 47:23
Side B has been converted to 170220_002.mp3 – 27:29]

Char's transcript of tape #1, side A Transcript has been edited and the tape has been digitized. There is quite a bit of duplication but this transcript is as spoken with minor edits to improve clarity and a few details, not spoken, were added.

December 5, 1993

We moved to Washington, DC, in December 1937 and there we found an apartment in Alexandria, VA. It was an old building that had been a hospital during the Civil War and had been made into a number of business ventures, a sparkplug factory at one time, and eventually made into an apartment building. It was partly furnished and we had stored our furniture in Tahlequah since we didn't know where we were going to stay finally. So we moved in there and found Alexandria to be a lovely place to live. Lewis was given a sort of make-work job at the Children's Bureau, rather boring, but he got on the bus in Alexandria and went directly into Washington, riding along the lovely Potomac River. He got home on time and we often took rides out into the country and down along the Potomac and to Mount Vernon. So it was a pleasant thing, but Lewis was not very happy with his work as it was just makeshift.

At that time Lewis discovered that there was a position opening in the city hospital – Gallinger Hospital. Gallinger Hospital had never had any doctors at the head of their departments. The private physicians had just taken charge and since they often didn't go out to the hospital at all, it was run largely by interns and residents. So the District decided to hire five doctors to be heads of the departments and give a lift to Gallinger. Lewis discussed the job with Dr. Dunham and Dr. Elliott and they thought it would a good thing for him to try, so he accepted the position and he was given $3000 per year, which was quite an increase for us. So we began planning then to stay in Washington, DC, for some time.

At that time I was pregnant and looking forward to having our first baby. We thought that we should have a baby soon as the years were passing by. So we looked desperately for a house to live in. It was hard because we had to have a downstairs bedroom and bath due to Mother's inability to climb stairs. Eventually we found a house in Arlington, where we moved in July 1938. John was born September 27, 1938 in Columbia Hospital in Washington. Columbia Hospital was an old hospital, a women's hospital, it had been there for many, many years and was showing the signs of neglect in the Depression. Women stayed in the hospital for ten days or two weeks when they had a baby so I was there for at least that long.

When we came home, Dad had gotten so concerned about the new baby coming home, he wanted it to be worm enough so he stoked up the fire and I think it was about 92 or 93° in the house. It was terribly hot and, of course, the baby began to cry right away when it became so hot. But we were home and safe and we were a happy family.

I believe the four paragraphs above were recorded over a previous session, since we are suddenly back in Oklahoma and, seemingly, in mid-sentence. I've added a couple of sentences [. . .] to set the scene.

[While in Oklahoma, Lewis was running well-baby clinics for the Children's Bureau. He traveled over a five-county area to talk to young mothers about caring for their babies.]
I joined him many times on the trips and found it a very interesting, interesting place to live. The counties were very poor . Most of the people were part Indian and they had practically nothing – they lived on little farms and had practically no money at all and were on relief. They had little education and didn't know even the rudiments of good health. On one trip I took with him, he had given a talk about the necessity of drinking pure water. A lot of the rivers and springs were polluted at that time and he spoke at great length about this. The funny thing was that one of the women who had listened went up to the spring and came back with a rusty can full of spring water and said, "Doctor, do you want a drink?" So his lecture hadn't taken much root. Another woman said – I heard her say – she was sitting on the porch – "I don't know what this young doctor knows about children. I had twelve children and I raised five of them!"

We had never seen such poverty. The people lived in shacks, not even houses at all some times. They had never been anyplace. They were unschooled with little ambition and knew nothing of the outside world.

I traveled one time with Lewis into the section where Pretty Boy Floyd had lived. He was the criminal who claimed to be sort of a Robin Hood; he stole from the banks and gave to the poor, supposedly. This one place we visited practically all the babies were named Floyd. I talked to a little boy who said someday he hoped for a car so he could go the ten or fifteen miles to Tahlequah. He said his brother had been to Tahlequah. The schooling was still in little one-room country schools. The teachers were not very well trained. So the people really had not much chance to get ahead.

One time we went to see if we could buy some stove wood and someone told us that one of the families there might sell us some if they hadn't been to town recently and had a supply of flour, salt and lard. When we arrived at their little shack the man of the house and his father and his son were sitting out in the sun beside the house and they had rolled up newspapers and were just whittling it and when Lewis approached them they became friendly and he asked them if we could buy some wood. The man said, "Well, wood's pretty scarce around here." Of course, he was sitting in the midst of a forest.

[Discussion follows about living on the Point of the Pines near Tahlequah, OK. This web site gives coordinates slightly west of several piney points overlooking the Illinois River: http://oklahoma.hometownlocator.com/maps/feature-map,ftc,1,fid,1096794,n,point%20of%20the%20pines.cfm Any of these could be the Point of Pines where Mom and Dad lived in 1936. The northernmost of those points is actually labeled "Point of the Pines" on the USGS Tahlequah topo map. It is about 250 feet above the river level and is 2.5 miles due east of downtown Tahlequah, probably about two miles east of the edge of town in 1936. Northeastern State University is the college referred to below. Some classes there are taught in Cherokee. Tahlequah's population ~16k now, between 2500 and 3000 in 1936.]

Before we moved to Tahlequah, Lewis had gone ahead to find a place for us to live. He discovered there was not a single rental house in all of Tahlequah. He inquired around and found nearby, several miles out in the country, a sort of summer camp with some log cabins. Fishermen often, people who liked to fish, came out there to spend a few weeks. So he rented two of the log cabins, since my parents were with me, and we moved in there and lived for a couple of months. Then we found that one of the college professors had been transferred to another college and he had a small house that he would rent out on the Point of Pines. Point of Pines was a beautiful spot overlooking the Arkansas [Illinois] River. The house was out on this point of land – you drove out this narrow road at the top of the mountain and the house was there on this narrow land and you walked to the point and looked over the Arkansas River and the valley below and it was very beautiful. The house was very small and shoddily built but it was a pretty place to live and we lived there for a number of months. Finally a place came up – we heard of a house in town that was going to be for rent and we were glad to get into a house. It was owned by some Indians and they wanted to rent it. It had been lived in by a woman who had college boys live with her and it was in very bad shape and we had to do the painting and fixing up. But it had six rooms and was a modern house. So we moved into the town of Tahlequah. We liked living in Tahlequah. We enjoyed the professors at the college and really had a very interesting life. But in 1936 the Health Department of Oklahoma decided that they

could not afford to put any money into the Well Baby Clinics. Children's Bureau wouldn't pay for the entire thing if Oklahoma did not want it badly enough to share. So Dr. Dunham and Dr. Elliott, who were Lewis' bosses said they would place Lewis someplace else. So then began the waiting game. We would hear one day that there was going to be a place in Montana. I would quickly read up about Montana. Next letter, we would be going to Alabama and I would read up on that. We waited for quite a while, feeling very uncertain, and Dr. Dunham said that we should come to Washington until they found a place. They assured him that they would find a place for him; he would be in Washington, DC, temporarily. So that's how we arrived in Washington, DC.

November 18, 1993

Returning to Oklahoma for a little while. I forgot to say that before we moved into the Point of Pines we lived temporarily in a house in Tahlequah with an older woman, Miss Grace McGregor. Miss Grace had divided her house into two parts so she could rent half. She didn't make it into a real apartment, we just had two bedrooms and a kitchen at the back and shared the bath with Miss Grace. The house was quite old fashioned in its ways and had pictures of cross-stitch "In God We Trust" and "Home Sweet Home," and bouquets of cattails around the place. We lived there for several months before we moved on to the Point of Pines. Miss Grace worked in a little dry goods store there in Tahlequah, which sold fabrics and sewing machines and so forth.

The economy at that time was very bad. We were still in the depths of the Depression and in fact, at one time while we were there, it became more depressed than usual. We were thankful for our regular salary and after living with next to nothing in San Antonio we were able to make some payments on the debt and able to buy some of things we needed to buy. We were short of everything because Lewis had gone to China after his medical education and three years of residency without much money and so he was short on clothes and I had no clothes except the ones that were leftover from my teaching days and three years in China. Lewis had had a couple of suits made in China by a Chinese tailor, but they were not very well fitted and he needed some clothes badly. We also had no furniture except the Chinese things which were lovely but were not the necessary things. So we needed to buy bedroom furniture and we needed to have a table and chairs, which we bought, a card table and some little kitchen chairs. We had two living room chairs which we had bought in San Antonio when we first came home. We bought lounge chairs and we paid $9.00 apiece for them, but they were still useful.

Continuing with Oklahoma – I marvel at how much we did with the money we had in Oklahoma. I think Lewis' salary was about $2500 a year and we bought bedroom furniture for Mother and Dad's room and for our room and of course Lewis had to have a new car because the old one he had in San Antonio was not good enough to travel over the roads in Oklahoma. We paid, of course, $20 or $25 a month for rent so everything was, fortunately, cheap.

We arrived in Washington in December 1937 and found a place to live in an apartment in Alexandria, Virginia. It was an old building that had been used as a hospital during the Civil War and later had been used for many things, at one time a spark plug factory, but it had been made into apartments. It was a very attractive building and we rented a one-bedroom apartment

there. Mother and Dad had the bedroom and Lewis and I had a sofa in the living room, since we were to be only temporarily in this area – we thought. Early in the next year, 1938, a position became available at the city hospital, Gallinger Memorial Hospital, as head of the Pediatrics Department, and Dr. Dunham and Dr. Elliott thought this would be a good job for Lewis to take, so he accepted the position and this would mean staying awhile in Washington, so we looked for a house. We looked high and low because we needed one we could afford and we needed to be near the hospital if possible. Mother could not climb stairs so we had to have a downstairs bedroom and bath. We looked everywhere. Every week we would go out to look and couldn't find anything near the hospital. Eventually we found a house in Arlington at 1915 North Highland St. where we moved in July 1938. I had become pregnant, as we were looking forward to having children. I had had a miscarriage in San Antonio and we felt that we were at the age where if we were going to have children we should have them. So we moved in July into the house on Highland St. and John was born in September 1938, while we lived there.

Although Washington had grown a great deal during the First World War, it still was a rather overgrown Southern town. The schools were still segregated, of course, and the buses were Jim Crow. We liked Washington and enjoyed getting acquainted with the many things there to see. We found the rent exorbitant in this house compared to Tahlequah – we paid $90 per month – but Lewis had an income now of $3000 and we felt rather secure that this job would be a permanent one. So we were happy in our new situation and began to·enjoy life with our new baby.

November 19, 1993

John was born on September 27, 1938, at Columbia Hospital for Women in Washington, DC. Columbia was one of the older hospitals there and later, after I retired, I worked there as a volunteer for twenty years. He was a healthy, fine baby, weighing almost 8 pounds. I had never seen a newborn baby before so I thought he looked very little and tiny to me. I stayed in the hospital for about a week or ten days, which mothers did at that time. When we came home, Dad and Mother were so eager to have us get home, and Dad had gone down and fixed up the fire – he didn't want the baby to be cold and he had a roaring fire going – I think it was about 90-95° in the house and so the baby cried from being too hot right away. But life at home changed – the routine had to be different with a new baby and with grandmother and grandfather and mother we all made a lot out of him – he was a lovely baby.

At that time Susanna Ritter came to help me a couple of days a week. She was such a lovely person. She was a Negro girl that had grown up in South Carolina and her parents had died just a year ago and she had brought her five younger brothers and sisters to come up here and live with an older sister and an aunt. They took care of this group of children. They were lovely, lovely people – so hard working, so clean, so honest and Susanna and I became good friends and have been ever since.

I knew nothing about taking care of babies and of course I worried a great deal, sure I would do something wrong. Lewis said one time when he came home, if the baby had been crying Mother and I were worried and if he hadn't been crying we wondered why he wasn't. Days were full of joy and happiness at that time with our new baby.

Washington had grown a great deal during the First World War but it sank back into a very slow Southern city during the Depression and that's what it seemed like. It really was not a bustling city-like place. Of course, that was a time of complete segregation; segregation not only in the schools but in the stores, in the theater. In fact the one theater that had "living" theater in Washington, National Theater, closed for, I think, two years because the Theater Guild refused to send their members down for plays because of the segregation in the theater. And there was no place downtown where a black person could go in and get a meal except over on 7th Street which had very shoddy kind of shops. They could go into a drug store and buy something and bring it out and eat in the street. It was a terrible situation. They didn't buy things in the nice stores very often either. One of the clerks in a store told me that they were told if a black person came in they would have to wait on them but they should put it off as long as they could – wait on everyone else and not do anything special for them. So that was what segregation was like in Washington at that time. But we did enjoy Washington. There were so many things to do, so many things to see and we enjoyed thoroughly living there.

Long gap to the end of Side A, tape counter 455 to 756. Side A = 170208_001.mp3 24:15. Begin Side B.

December 3, 1993

When Lewis and I returned from China in 1934 we determined to start a practice in San Antonio, Texas, where Horace was already practicing medicine. We rented a small apartment at the back of a home there and Lewis began to inquire around about practicing. Pediatrics was not a very well known branch of medicine at that time – most people just took their children to their regular doctor. There was one pediatrician, Dr. Lee, in San Antonio, and he was making a pretty good living and he was willing to give Lewis a little help in getting started. We rented a small office in the medical building and collected some furniture from Mrs. Waugh, who had some stored in her attic, and the practice started. It was in the midst of the Depression and everyone was very poor. Franklin Roosevelt had started a relief program and poor people, who were without jobs, they could go to a doctor and the government would pay the doctor 50¢ for an office call, and $1.00 for a house call. This is where we started and things were pretty tough.

Long, long gap, almost to the end of Side B, tape counter 043 to 686.

Continuing December 3, 1993

When we were going to move to Tahlequah, Lewis went on ahead to find a place for us to live. When he got there he found that there was not any rental property at all in Tahlequah so he had to look around to see where we would find a spot. He located some log cabins on a camping place out in the country. There were just two plain log cabins so, since my parents were with me he rented both of them until we could find something better. So we lived there for several months looking all the time for something better. Soon we discovered a place in Tahlequah. Miss Grace McGregor had divided up her house and rented part of it. She was an elderly women who lived there all her life and she working in a department-like store in Tahlequah where they sold materials and sewing goods and things. She had done nothing to really make it an apartment but she just divided and made the two bedrooms available and the kitchen and we shared the bathroom with her. It was an old-fashioned house and we had bouquets of cattails

around. The pictures on the wall were cross-stitch "Rock of Ages" and "In God We Trust." It was very, very hot that summer, It was one of the summers of the drought in the Middle West and we had no rain from June until September and everything dried up, even big trees died sometimes.

Later that summer, a little house in the country, out at the Point of Pines, became available. One of the professors at the college had been given a leave of absence and he rented this little house. It was a tiny little house and the Point of Pines was really a beautiful spot. You went onto this point of land. It was a narrow road and on either side were beautiful, beautiful trees and at the end you overlooked the Arkansas [Illinois] River. So we moved out there into the country and at this time we had to buy a little bit of furniture since we had no beds or table and chairs so we bought our bedroom furniture for our room and for Mother and Dad's and we got a card table and four little kitchen chairs for eating and so our life began there. It was a pleasant place to live, a beautiful spot, and it was only a few miles from Tahlequah. Dad would often ride into town with Lewis and spend the day getting acquainted with the old gentlemen on the sidewalk.

In the spring a house became available in Tahlequah. It was a modern six-room house, not very pretty, it was made of cement blocks but it was well built and convenient and rented for $25 a month. It was in bad shape and we had to do the painting and cleaning but we got it cleaned up and it was such a convenient, attractive house, comfortable house to live in.

I believe Lewis' income was about $2000 a year and it'd amazing to think what we did with the money. We had bought the bedroom furniture and now we were able to buy a sofa and two chairs. We went to Muskogee, which was the nearest town of any size, where we cought these and we were so happy in fixing up our home.

In 1936, Oklahoma State Health Department decided that they could not share in the salary for Lewis and the Children's Bureau was not willing to pay the whole salary if Oklahoma did not want the service badly enough to pay half of it. So the job closed. Children's Bureau assured Lewis that they would have a job for him but they didn't know how soon. So we began to get letters. A letter that there was an opening probably in Montana, so I quickly read up about Montana and wondered about living there. Dad had been in Montana as a young man and he thought that would be great. The next letter was from Alabama and we read up on Alabama, and thus it went on for several months and then Dr. Elliott and Dr. Dunham, Lewis' bosses in the Children's Bureau, said that they wanted him to come to Washington temporarily and he would have some work there to do until a post was found for him. So in December 1937 we closed things in Tahlequah and . . .

End of side B in mid-sentence tape counter 753. End of Tape #1.
Combine two parts of side B. 170208_002.mp3 7:26.

Tape #2, recorded in January 1994.

Continuing with life in San Antonio: My parents lived in Los Gatos, California, and Margaret and Allan lived in San Francisco at this time. Allan had been unable to get work of any length

after he left the merchant marine. He was untrained and unskilled. While he had a brilliant mind he had little education and there were no jobs during the Depression. Allan's brother lived in Salt Lake City and worked for a company and had a very stable job and he told Allan and Margaret if they would move to Salt Lake City, he could place Allan in a job there in his company. But Margaret and Allan had been looking after Mother and Dad, going to Los Gatos occasionally to see if they were all right and so this was a problem. Margaret suggested that we move Mother and Dad to San Antonio, as we all felt that Lewis would be permanently placed there and Margaret and Allan, it was uncertain what would happen at Salt Lake City. So I went out to Los Gatos and prepared to move Mother and Dad. We got rid of most of their belongings, which was very sad. I cry when I think how difficult it was for Mother. Her home was her refuge and they had built their home in Avoca over the years with thrift, hard, hard work, love and joy and each time she moved she gave up more of it. Her life was her home and her children. It seems now it would have been better for them to let Margaret and me go and make our lives wherever we wished and for them to stay in Avoca and welcome our visits but that's in hindsight. Lewis found an apartment for Mother and Dad not far from us.

In the spring I became pregnant but experienced difficulty immediately and had to have a D&C to terminate the pregnancy. In the fall of 1935 I found a position as a teacher in a small country day school, private school. I earned $40 a month but it enabled us to a small house that was much more comfortable. Mother did not fair very well physically and the doctor suggested they move in with us, which they did.

The practice was not flourishing and the Depression showed no signs of abating. Lewis wrote to friends at Harvard and Boston Childrens Hospital for advice and Dr. Blackfan suggested that he get in touch with the Childrens Bureau in DC, which often had interesting positions. Lewis did that and found they were setting up a program for well-baby clinics in northeastern Oklahoma in conjunction with the Oklahoma Health Department and Lewis was accepted for that post.

January 2, 1994
A few words about some possessions that you might like to know about:

The little black [cast] iron pot came along with the family when they moved from Virginia to Iowa in 1859. It was called "Pappy's little pot." Mother's grandfather [Abel Randall] was somewhat of a tyrant and ruled the roost over everyone. He did not like the big pot of food prepared for the family along the way and he had to have his own private meals, which were made in the little pot. [This is now on the hearth next to the living room stove.]

Some of the old dishes that I have were given to Mother by Grandma Bush. When Mother was old enough to earn some money she went to work for a little family hotel in Oakland run by the Bird [Byrd?] family. Mrs. Bird's mother was Mrs. Bush. The dishes include the blue and black plates on the wall and the blue, damaged teapot and in the cupboard, the blue cup and saucer and a bowl and saucer with red sailing ships. [These are all in a box in the warehouse. They have all been photographed and identified as to origin – English, mid-1800s.]

Looking at the other objects in the living room, the Chinese water pipe was one of my early purchases when I arrived in Peking. [We had three of these at one time but Mother gave one as a present. I don't know which of the two we have left is the one Mom is referring to here but it was not the one that is gone. Both of these are pictured at right; they now reside on the dresser in the spare room, upstairs.]

The first thing I bought in Peking, I went to a fair and purchased the wood and brass box on my dresser in the bedroom. It was called a "missy box" by the foreigners who lived there. I bargained for it, which I didn't know how to do very well, and was pleased that I was able to get a good price. [Now on the counter in Char's bathroom.]

Along the shelf, next there are some glasses, the thumb-print goblets, are some of Mothers, in Mother's family, as was the covered cracker jar. Also, in the cupboard was a pair of goblets with a floral design that were in her family, as well as pressed-glass dessert dishes and a pressed-glass bread plate. [I believe these are probably the thumb-print goblets referred to and this is the only covered glass jar I can find. There are eight floral goblets in the cabin but Mother referred to "a pair" so these may be different. These may be the dessert dishes, most likely the set of five on short pedestals, and this is the only pressed-glass plate.]

The [ivory] figure of Quan Yin [Kuan yin, Kwan yin, Guan yin – the female Buddha of compassion and mercy] was purchased in Peking with money which Tassie sent for a wedding present. [It is on the bottom shelf of my trophy case, hall between living rm and music room.]

The little hob-nailed glasses, blue and yellow, were given to Margaret and me when we were children by an elderly English woman who lived in our neighborhood. [I know these well but do not know where they are now.]

The pewter, three-legged, covered bowl and the tea caddy beside it were given to me by Eleanor Shaw, one of my students. Her parents were missionaries in the American Board Mission. [These are in a cupboard in the cabin. I do not know exactly what a "tea caddy" is; this may not be the right item.]

The two little cloisonne vases with dragons were also given to me by a student. [Now on the mantel in the living room.]

The grayish-green bowl, Celadon bowl, was given to me by the president of the Chinese National YWCA for a wedding gift. Celadon is a glaze used on stone and porcelain ware and it's highly prized in the art work of China. [This is on the bookshelf in the spare room.]

The black vase, inlaid vase, is Chinese but was not one of my purchases. It was brought to Mother from China by her sister, Emma Randall Biggs, who was a missionary in China. [Also on the bookshelf in the spare room.]

On the wall, the stone rubbing was made Margaret and Allan's niece, who lived in England. [Not found yet; there are two or more boxes of Mom and Margaret's wall art in the warehouse. This is an earlier photo]

The little oriental picture of a village in Laos was given to me by a Laotian woman, with whom I worked in the refugee center [1980s], and this was some of her work. [I don't know what this looks like. It may be among the art in the warehouse.]

Continuing on January 2, 1994 —
This may be repetition because I have some notes; I don't know whether I recorded them or not. When we came home from China, my parents lived in Los Gatos and Margaret and Allan lived in San Francisco, where they could go and oversee Mother and Dad's welfare. Allan had never been able to get any kind of job after he left the merchant marine. He had no experience in shore jobs and no education, although he had a brilliant mind. He had no public education and no experience, so he was without work most of the time. He had a brother in Salt Lake City, who told Allan, if they would move to Salt Lake City he could get him a job in the company where he worked. So, what about Mother and Dad? Margaret suggested that it would be better for them to come and live in San Antonio because we were probably permanently settled there, which was probably true or we thought so at the time. So I went to Los Gatos and helped sell Mother and Dad's belongings and got ready to move them to San Antonio. I cry when I think how difficult this was for Mother. Her home was her joy and her refuge. Her home in Avoca had been built and improved over the years with thrift and hard, hard work and love and joy. Her life was her home and her children. It seems now that it would have been better for them to let Margaret and

me go and make our lives wherever we wished and for them to stay in Avoca and welcome our visits but that's in hindsight. Lewis found a small, furnished apartment for Mother and Dad, not too far from us.

In the spring I became pregnant but experienced difficulty immediately and had to have a D&C to terminate the pregnancy. In the fall of 1935 I found a position as teacher in a small, private, country day school. I earned $40 a month but it enabled us to move to small house that was more comfortable.

Mother did not fare well physically and the doctor said they should move in with us and they did. The practice was not flourishing and the Depression showed no signs of abating. Lewis wrote to his friends in Harvard and Boston Childrens Hospital for advice. Dr. Blackfan suggested that he get in touch with the Childrens Bureau in Washington, DC. They often had positions that were promising for a young doctor. They were setting up a program for well-baby clinics in northeast Oklahoma in conjunction with the Oklahoma Health Department and Lewis was offered this position and he accepted that post.

[The above 3 paragraphs are, indeed repeats, almost word-for-word, but this next one is new.]

Mother and Dad married in 1894 and went to live on a small farm near Oakland, Iowa. Grandmother and Aunt [Marty] lived with them. Mother said Grandmother one day walked across the fields to a nearby farm and came home with the golden-oak clock, which sits in my bedroom, ticking the time over the years. My father wound it every Sunday morning. [Now in our spare room, upstairs.]

End of tape #2, counter 288. Digitized as 170218_001.mp3 13:46