

Ruth Mitchell: My Daddy Was a Farmer

RM: And my daddy was a farmer and drove a school bus, and he owned his own bus. And that was our only transportation at that time, to ride in that. And we were all members of the Associate Reformed Presbyterian Church in Lincoln County, in Elkton, Tennessee, at Yukon, TN. At this time, with six children, we had very little income coming in, it took quite a bit to feed six children and to manage a home, and, but at that time we were rich in love, whether there was money there or not. And we raised a large garden. My mother canned dozens and dozens of cans of vegetables and fruits and things. And we had our own wheat, a thrasher came through and would cut and thrash wheat. And we'd exchange our wheat for flour. We raised corn, and they'd take the corn to the mill and have it for corn meal and we raised our own cane for molasses and our meat was hogs, and they'd kill hogs in the winter time and it was cured and taken care of. And we also had hens, our eggs, we used our own, we had our own eggs there on the farm. And we had cows, I can't remember that we sold milk but we did have cows for our own, milk for our own use, and the butter, that way.

Ruth Mitchell: Milking in the Lot

RM: We lived here with Mr. and Mrs. Mitchell for a while, and we milked cows by hand out in the lot, just run a cow down and milk if you can, and of course the cow would run over me or something and I would cry, and Gene would say, "Well just go to the house if you can't beat this." But no, not me, I never give up, I'd always milk the cows you know and stay with him. And all through this, we worked together on the farm.

Ruth Mitchell: Peddler's Truck

RM: There would be a peddler come by, a truck that brought most anything you wanted, sugar, and flour and meal, or, and Mrs. Mitchell would swap her eggs for coffee or whatever on the peddling truck that she needed. That, I suppose, would maybe come once a two weeks, not very often the peddler would come by here.

Ruth Mitchell: Running Water, Electricity and Wash Day

RM: We washed on a rub board. We had a big black pot outside that we heated our water in, and washed outside. I suppose in the summer, I guess in the winter we did otherwise. But, and Mrs. Mitchell made soap. It was so pretty and white when she made soap. And right then, at the time the war was going on, and women, most women went to factories or took work outside the home because their husbands were in service or in the war fighting, fighting. And at that time, too, our food was rationed. We had coupons that we could get so much sugar or so much coffee or so much gas, very little gas could you have during that time. And we had no car, it was a truck here on the farm, a pick up truck of some kind, but Gene and I rode mostly by horse back to visit my mother and daddy. But then later, his half brother, gave us a T-Model Ford that we rode in, and oh, we were really first class with that coming on. Right along this time, we moved down into the little house. And down there we cooked on a, no electricity yet, cooked on a wood stove and for heat in the living room and bed room combined, we used coal, a heater, a big tall heater, and coal was our heating. And of course no plumbing, we had an out house. And we used water from a well, but then came, we had a spring here, up from the house, and they built a 10,000 gallon tank and this, they brought this water piped it into this tank,

and it furnished this house, the barn, and our little house with water, running water, which was a great improvement. That was a gravity flow. And then, along came electricity, which we weren't able, I guess, financially able to really buy all the equipment that we needed. But before we got electricity, I had an ice box, and we'd go to Elkton maybe once a week and get chunks of ice and keep in this ice box to keep things cool. But when the electricity came, up until this time we still milked by hand, but we got a milking machine, and what a great improvement it was that we did that. But after we got electricity, I got a wringer washing machine, which we had no hot water heater . . . We had a little round doughnut like thing that we'd drop down in, we'd fill our washing machine with cold water of course and we'd put this little electric doughnut like thing down in it and it would heat the water in the washing machine, and then we had the wringer and then we had a tub of cold water to run our clothes through the wringer into the rinse water. But we had to hang our clothes on the clothes line and in the winter, lots of times, they would freeze in your hands before you could get them hung up on the line.

Ruth Mitchell: Horseback Rides

RM: We had friends, maybe a mile or two up the road, that we would go at night and play cards or eat supper with or, we visited with each other, and we'd go horseback. And I can remember so well in the winter time how cold it was, how cold we got coming home, but we'd have such a good night. And then too, we would ride to my mother and daddy's which was maybe some 15 miles away, but we'd go up one day and spend the night, and come back the next day. And then another event, I remember us riding over to Elkton School, and this would be all before my children were born, from '41 to '45, and we went to, we rode to school, to some function they were having there at school, and I remember so well where we hitched our mules. It was in behind, Mrs. Beasley lived there then, Brother and Mrs. Suddarth live there now, but that was where, that was the hitching post that we hitched at. And we had, we did get out and do things, horseback. . . And we enjoyed it and we were together.