

Ethel Fritts

Mrs. Fritts (7/18/22-11/10/19) was interviewed at her Pittsfield Township home on March 11, 2004 by Rachel Sandler for the Pittsfield Township Historical Society Oral History Project.

Ethel West Fritts was born at home in Howell, MI on July 18,1922. Her family moved to the city of Ann Arbor when she was a baby. These were hard times for the family during the depression, when her father lost his job and worked for the WPA. She married Harold Fritts in 1946 and after his military service, they moved up north to farm. They returned to the Ann Arbor area where they raised 4 children, including their oldest daughter Marcia Fritts Ticknor, one of the founders of the Pittsfield Township Historical Society.

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Fritts Interview Transcript

Side 1:

I: Okay. This is Rachel Sandler interviewing Ethel Fritts on March 11th, at 2:05 p.m. at the interviewee's home for the Pittsfield Township Historical Society Oral History Project. Just put it...Is that okay if I put it right there? So...

R: Okay.

I: Okay. I guess that we can just start at the beginning. When and where were you born?

R: Oh, Michigan.

I: Okay.

R: July 18, 1922.

I: Were you born at home? Or in a hospital?

R: I think I was probably born at home.

I: Born at home. Do you have any siblings?

R: I have five brothers.

I: Five brothers? Any...no sisters?

R: No.

I: No.

R: Then we moved to Ann Arbor when I was a baby.

I: Oh, when you were a baby still?

R: Yeah.

I: To the City of Ann Arbor?

R: Yes.

I: What did your parents do professionally?

R: Oh, my dad worked in a factory at one time.

I: In Ann Arbor?

R: In Ann Arbor.

I: Um-hum.

R: And, oh, he...I know when we were younger he was out of work for...for quite a while.

I: Was that during the Depression, or...?

R: Yes. He was on WPA.

I: Was that hard for everyone?

R: Yeah. We didn't have a lot.

I: Um-hum. Did you kids do anything to help out? Or your mother?

R: No. Because we were too young.

I: Too young. Were you in school then?

R: Yes. Lots of schools.

I: Lots of schools?

R: We moved a lot.

I: All within Ann Arbor?

R: We lived in Dexter one summer.

I: Why did you guys move so much?

R: I don't know whether he couldn't pay the rent or what, but we...we just moved a lot.

I: Moved a lot. But all in this general area?

R: Yes.

I: Yeah. So what do you...what do you remember about school? What was it like when you were younger?

R: I went to...one winter I went with my aunt in Livingston County, and she'd take me to school on a sled and I'd carry her skates and she'd skate during the lunch time.

I: Uh-huh.

R: And I'd go downhill on the sled.

I: Oh, wow. That sounds like fun.

R: And I didn't know some of my lesson, and they sent me in the corner.

I: Oh, no. That's not very nice.

R: That wasn't much fun. I wasn't very old.

I: Yeah. You were young, huh?

R: Yeah.

I: They were pretty strict with the kids?

R: I'd gone to school in Ann Arbor and when I'd went to country school, why, you were kind of dumb.

I: Oh, really. That's not...that's too bad. So which...which schools did you like better? You like the country school better or...?

R: I don't...I don't really remember.

I: Yeah. You just went to a lot of different...

R: Yeah.

I: ...schools. Where did you go to high school?

R: Ann Arbor Pioneer.

I: Pioneer. Was it...how big was it then? Do you know?

R: Pretty big.

I: Pretty big. Anything else you remember about your school days? Anything that is different from how you think school was...?

R: Not really. I belonged to some girls clubs.

I: Um-hum.

R: And we went camping out to the Clear Lake.

I: Was that fun?

R: Yes.

I: Yeah. Was it...was it like the Girl Scouts kind of?

R: Kind of.

I: Yeah.

R: We just did camping things and had songs and choir.

I: Sounds like fun. So what did you do after high school? You graduated from high school?

R: Graduated from high school in '41.

I: Um-hum.

R: And I babysat for a while and then I got a job at the A&P store, as a cashier.

I: Where was that store?

R: Oh Huron.

I: Huron. Uh-huh.

R: Yeah.

I: So how was that, working there?

R: Good.

I: Good. Did you live by yourself or...?

R: No, I lived at home with my parents.

I: Uh-huh. So they were living in Ann Arbor at this time?

R: Yeah, they lived on...Well, when I started working there, I lived on...on Berkley. But then later we moved on Rosewood.

I: And so you lived with them at the time?

R: Yeah. Till I got married.

I: When did you get married?

R: Forty-six.

I: Forty-six. Where did you meet your husband?

R: At the Roll—Ann Arbor Roller Rink.

I: Oh, really? What...how long you...?

R: I knew, I knew his cousins from church, and his cousin was at the Roller Rink and I went over to talk to her and she introduced me to him. I had gone out there with my brother on a Friday night after work, after working till nine o'clock at night.

I: Um-hum.

R: He wanted to take us home, and I says, "No, because I don't know you."

I: Yeah.

R: So we walked home from the Roller Rink.

I: Uh-huh.

R: ___ Berkley.

I: How far was that?

R: Long ways.

I: Long ways. Did you walk a lot back them?

R: Yeah.

I: For school and...

R: Walked or rode my bike.

I: Everywhere. Did, did a lot of people do that? Or did most people have cars or...?

R: That too.

I: Yeah.

R: We didn't have a lot of buses.

I: Um-hum. So what happened...So how long did you know your husband before you got married?

R: Probably about two years, because he went into the service.

I: He got drafted or...?

R: Yeah. He got drafted.

I: What branch? Was he in the Army?

R: VFW.

I: Oh, yeah? So were you married...so you got married after he came back then?

R: Yeah, got married after he come back in March.

I: Um-hum. Of...

R: Then mo—then moved up north and in Melita, so he could farm.

I: That's in northern Michigan?

R: Yeah. He was draft standish[?].

I: Oh, okay. I know the area a little bit.

R: That's where Marcia was born up there in the hospital.

I: Was that your first child?

R: Yeah.

I: Okay. You have four, right?

R: Yes.

I: Um-hum. How...how...is this the Marcia, then Bruce, then Sharon and then Barry?

R: Yes.

I: How close are they in age?

R: Marcia and Bruce are almost four years apart. Bruce and Sharon are three years apart, and Sharon and Barry are two years apart.

I: So they were spread out.

R: Then the doctor says quit.

I: Oh, yeah?

R: There's no more because of my arthritis.

I: Oh, yeah. Well, at least you have four healthy babies then.

R: Right.

I: So...so you said your husband was a farmer, right?

R: For a while. Then he...he was trying to make a living with his parents and then he moved to Ann Arbor and left us up there...

I: Um-hum.

R: ...for a while, and then we come down to...we lived with my folks for a while and then we moved over on First Street. And he worked, he got a job there in the...American Broach.

I: What kind of company is that?

R: They made parts for something.

I: Oh. Uh-huh.

R: Machine shop.

I: Oh, I see.

R: Then he was out of work for a while and, um, got a job at the Arboretum.

I: Hm.

R: He worked there about, I think about fourteen years.

I: Um-hum.

R: That's where he retired from. It was the Arboretum.

I: What did he do there?

R: Ground work.

I: Oh. So he enjoyed working outdoors.

R: Trimming bushes, trees.

I: Um-hum.

R: Snow removal [clears throat].

I: So what did...what did you do during this time? Did you stay at home or...?

R: I stayed at home, took care of kids.

I: Yeah.

R: I didn't work. I didn't work out of the home.

I: Um-hum. Well, I'm sure four kids kept you pretty busy.

R: They sure did.

I: Yeah. So did you live in Ann Arbor that whole time, while your husband was working?

R: No. We lived here.

I: Oh, you lived here?

R: Um-hum.

I: So you moved...you lived in First Street and then you moved out here.

R: We moved...we lived on First Street and then we moved out on Earhart Road.

I: Um-hum.

R: Where my...where Bruce was born. And then we moved here in June of '52.

I: Um-hum. And you've lived here every since then.

R: Yes.

I: So fine, it's nice out here. Nice place.

R: Sure is.

I: Yeah. You enjoy it still?

R: Yes.

I: Yeah. Good. Um, so when...what year was it when your husband retired?

R: I don't remember.

I: Do you know what...a decade? Maybe it was in the '80s or '70s?

R: Oh, when Christopher and Carl were babies...

I: Are those your grandsons?

R: He'd...yeah, those are Marcia's, two of Marcia's.

I: Um-hum.

R: When they were babies, and they're nineteen.

I: Okay. So...when... '80s then.

R: Then we went to Disney World.

I: Oh, after he retired?

R: Yeah.

I: For a celebration?

R: Well, they were going on vacation. They took us along.

I: Oh, how was it?

R: ___ home.

I: Was it fun?

R: Yes.

I: Had you ever been there before?

R: No.

I: No.

R: First and last time.

I: Yeah. I bet it was nice to be there with your whole family.

R: Yeah, it was fun. Marcia had been there before, so she knew some of the good rides.

I: Um-hum. The fun stuff to do.

R: Yeah.

I: Yeah. Because it can pretty crowded there, so if you know the good stuff you can wait for that. So what else have you done? Have you volunteered in any places or been active...? I know you've said on your form that you belong to the church. Were you pretty active with your church?

R: Yeah. One time I belonged to the Business Women's Society. I was secretary at one time. I was a Sunday school teacher for the little people.

I: Um-hum.

R: I didn't do an awful lot in church.

I: Yeah. But you were with a business organization?

R: Yes.

I: What exact—what kind of organization was it?

R: Attend meetings.

I: Um-hum. For women in business?

R: I think so.

I: Yeah.

R: Well, I kind of...because I don't remember.

I: Yeah. But you worked that. What else did you like to do?

R: Spend time with the kids in the summertime outdoors.

I: Huh. Did you...?

R: In our flower gar—flower garden.

I: At your home?

R: Right here.

I: Yes.

M: That's right.

I: As if there's a lot of room from...for them to play and...Were there any other things that you did when you were either younger or...? Currently, are you involved in anything in the area?

R: No.

I: No. What...have you noticed a lot of changes in this area?

R: Lots more houses.

I: Lots more houses. All around? Or even just right in your own neighborhood?

R: Just both.

I: Yes. So a lot more people around.

R: Yes.

I: Is there more traffic or...?

R: Lots of traffic because they...they try to miss State Street and they come down here.

I: Oh, they come down your street.

R: Because there's a factory over here on Ells—on Morgan Road.

I: Um-hum.

R: And at night, why, they come by...come by here and then the factory over on State and Textile. So there's traffic both directions. So they...about 4:30 to 6.

I: So they use this as a shortcut?

R: Pretty...pretty steady traffic.

I: Yeah. And it used to be pretty quiet out there?

R: Pretty quiet most of the time.

I: Yeah. What do you...?

R: But the train switches out there couple times a day.

I: Oh, really? And it didn't used to do that?

R: Yeah. It used to do that. Used to do that quite often, or just about every afternoon at the same time. And then...then they cut the traffic. It used to go clear to Ypsi.

I: Um-hum.

R: And then they cut the railroad ties just up here, the other side of Stone School Road. But it comes from Milan now and switches for the main track that's way out in back

I: Oh, I see.

R: It goes into Ann Arbor.

I: Right. The Ann Arbor and Detroit and...

R: Yes.

I: Yes. Well, what...how was it different back then than how it is now? I know you said there are more houses. So...

R: Quieter.

I: Quieter.

R: Yes.

I: Any other differences? The types of people or...?

R: Well, I know I can...the coach watches the kids and if they'd...if they didn't let me know where they were, why, I found out later and I told them...they ran off, clear up to the corner. I had two little ones at home.

I: Um-hum.

R: Two oldest ones went up to the corner and I didn't know it. The nex—I told them if they run off again without me knowing it, they'd go to bed without their supper.

I: Uh-huh. Did they ever run off again?

R: No, and they didn't get their supper either.

I: Yeah. So they learned their lesson then.

R: They learned their lesson.

I: Yeah.

R: Because I was kind of stuck in the house and I couldn't go looking for them.

I: Um-hum. Yeah, because you had your two others, the young ones.

R: Yeah.

I: So what did...what do you like to do?

R: I used to do a lot of sewing, knitting and crocheting, but I haven't done that in a long time.

I: Yeah.

R: Mostly watch television and read.

I: Um-hum.

R: I've done a lot of jigsaw puzzles, but I haven't done those lately.

I: Um-hum. So you always liked to do those things -- to read and to...?

R: Yes.

I: So...yeah.

R: They had made puzzles. You'd get pictures out of magazines and put them on wood and cut them out.

I: Oh, really.

R: Because there was five of us. Well, there's...actually, there was six of us when...My youngest brother was born when I was a senior in high school. So before that, there was

five of us. And they didn't have a lot of money, and they had...think of different things for us to do. We used to go on lot of picnics and go swimming in the summer.

I: Where did you ____ do that?

R: What?

I: Where did...where did you go and have your picnics and go swimming?

R: Out of the Huron River.

I: Oh, yeah?

R: There's a big rock in the...in the river.

I: Is that in the Arb or...?

R: No, that's...the Arb is north of Ann Arbor.

I: Um-hum.

R: No, it's out towards Dexter.

I: Right. That's where you would go.

R: No, when we lived in Ann Arbor, we...we went out there for swimming.

I: Um-hum.

R: My mother would pack a lunch and supper and then dad would come home from work and we'd go for a picnic and go swimming.

I: That sounds like fun. Did you enjoy that?

R: Yes. Then when we lived in Ann Arbor, I don't remember what street we lived on, on Friday nights we'd go to Burns Park and go roller...or ice skating.

I: Oh, yeah. At Burns Park they set up that ice rink.

R: Yes.

I: Um-hum. I live right near Burns Park and they still set that rink up sometimes. I like to roller skate too.

R: I didn't roller skate much.

I: Yeah. Just that one time?

R: Just the one time.

I: So I know you said that it was hard for your family because of the Depression and money was tight. Was, was that a common thing for a lot of people in this town?

R: I think so.

I: Yeah. Seems like a lot of people had trouble getting jobs.

R: Oh, and Christmas when...I don't think my dad was working too much, and he would...he made our Christmas gifts. He made a cupboard for me, and got dishes for it. and he made a barn for my oldest brother, airplane hangar for the next one. And I don't know after that, I don't remember.

I: So he would make presents for you even though he couldn't...

R: Yeah.

I: ...buy them. Well, that's nice. What else did you like to do?

R: That's about it.

I: Yeah. That's a lot of stuff. Kept you...

R: Yes.

I: ...busy, I'm sure. So what...were there...are there any other things that you remember about your schooling? I remember you said that it was different between Ann Arbor and the country schools.

R: I learned to read in the country school, and then to come back to Ann Arbor and I'd read the funnies to friends. Because they hadn't learned to read.

I: Oh, really. So the country schools were...?

R: They were more advanced.

I: Were there...were the country schools just one room?

R: Yes.

I: Uh-huh. And there was one teacher who taught all the grades?

R: Right.

I: And what was going on in Ann Arbor at that point? Were the grades separated with different teachers?

R: I think so.

I: So you found the country schools to be much better academically.

R: Yeah. I only went there one winter.

I: Um-hum. Were they more strict than the other schools? Or was that pretty much the same?

R: They were kind of strict.

I: Yeah. In both...at the country schools and in Ann Arbor?

R: I don't remember in the Ann Arbor schools, I don't...

I: Yeah. They were _____. So you were...how...were your brothers...were you the oldest of all brothers? Or did you fall in the middle?

R: I was the oldest.

I: The oldest?

R: Yes.

I: So you and then five boys?

R: Yes. They thought I should do the dishes all the time.

I: Oh, yeah [laughs].

R: We took turns.

I: Yeah. That's fair. Right, I guess you were the oldest, so you should make them do some of the...Um, let's see. Are there any other things that you can think about for Pittsfield Township in particular that you remember? When you think about Pittsfield Township, what kind of...? Are there any...

R: _____

I: ...memories that come up?

R: I remember one time on...on Morgan Road for election, I wheeled a buggy, baby buggy to go up and to vote.

I: Um-hum.

R: Must a had Marcia and Bruce, because when we lived here, why, Bruce was a baby. I probably had Bruce in the buggy and Marcia walked.

I: So that you could go vote?

R: So I could vote.

I: Um-hum. How far was that?

R: Probably a couple miles.

I: Yeah. So you walked a lot even after you were married?

R: Yes.

I: Yeah. Where did you...Are there grocery stores around here, or markets or anything?

R: No.

I: Oh. That'd be fine.

R: We thought the closest is Meijers.

I: Um-hum.

R: Or Busch's in Saline.

I: Oh, yeah. So what did you do back then? Back before those stores? Did you drive into town?

R: I never drove.

I: You never drove? So you never got your driver's license.

R: I got a driver's license. I droved [sic.] a little bit when we lived up north, but...

I: Um-hum.

R: Then my husband was working and he needed the car and he was afraid I was going to go in the ditch, so I never renewed my license.

I: Um-hum. So...so you mostly stayed at home and...

R: Right.

I: ...did things out of the home. When you did need to go somewhere, did you either ride with him or...or someone else? Or did you usually walk or bike there?

R: Usually went with him or once in a while with somebody else.

I: Um-hum.

R: Did a lot of baby-sitting when my kids got older. To baby-sit for the Payeur kids.

I: Do they live around here?

R: Two houses up.

I: Um-hum.

R: Russell and Cage. I think you're interviewing Russell.

I: Oh, what's...what's the last name?

R: Payeur.

I: Oh, am I? I have them in my ____.

R: And I baby-sit for their kids during the day.

I: Um-hum. You still doing that now? Or you did that?

R: I did that.

I: Yeah.

R: I don't baby-sit now.

I: Uh-huh. So do you...do you see your children a lot now? Do they live in town?

R: One lives in Ann Arbor. Marcia lives here on Textile about a mile away, and one lives in...the other side of Saline. And my...Sharon lives almost in Manchester.

I: So they're all pretty close.

R: Yeah.

I: Do you get to see them a lot?

R: Yes.

I: That's nice. Are there any other things you can think of that you think are important regarding Pittsfield Township History? Were there any big movements, or anything that really excited people in the area, or really angered people? Maybe somebody...

R: Well, we watched when house in Textile was moved. We watched that move over onto next street over, next road over.

I: Um-hum.

R: Watched them move that house.

I: Oh, they moved the whole house.

R: Moved the whole house.

I: When was that?

R: Couple years ago.

I: That must have been quite a sight.

R: Yes. We had a lot of people come around.

I: Yeah. Was it an old historical house?

R: Yes.

I: Yeah.

R: I can't think of the people's names now. They're not...none of them were very polite. It was the first house that had elec—all electricity...

I: Oh, really?

R: ...in the area.

I: Oh, interesting. Do you know when it was built? Or how...?

R: No.

I: But it was the first house to have electricity. That's neat. So it had...so the electricity, is it still working? Is it all the old fixtures in the house, still?

R: I was in it before they moved it. Then I think that the...I think the fixtures were taken out. Her refrigerator and stove. I'm not sure.

I: Um-hum. That's...that's good to see a house that was the first one to have the electricity in it, and it's standing.

R: I remember the...when we first moved here, why, the lady that was still living, and her son was living with her.

I: Um-hum.

R: And she'd drive an old car and go to the parties, the Tupperware parties and the baby showers and the wedding showers and...

I: Um-hum.

R: And I walked to them.

I: Yeah. So there were a lot of parties?

R: Yes.

I: Were...as everyone in this area pretty close? You all knew each other?

R: Pretty close.

I: Were friends?

R: Yes.

I: Is there anything special that you did with your friends? Or that you and your husband did with your friends?

R: No.

I: Did you ever get together for dinner or...go play games?

R: Did...people lived up here for temporarily, she had a luncheon one time for the neighbors, when her little boy was about year old.

I: That's nice. Are you friends with your neighbors at all?

R: Not really.

I: Not really? Did you used to be, or...?

R: Little bit. Some of them kind of went by the wayside.

I: Um-hum. Just as time went by...

R: Yes.

I: ...you didn't see them as much. Is there anything that happened in the nation that you saw that affected people in this area? Such as, you know, World War II or other wars or...anything of that nature? Or the Recession?

R: You know, the Vietnam War, one of the neighbor boys left and my son-in-law left, Marcia's son, Marcia's husband, before they were married went in the service. No, they

were married. And he went into service and when he went to Texas, she followed along with him.

I: She went with him to Texas?

R: Yes.

I: Did he have to go overseas?

R: No. She was...they were hoping...the neighbor boy that lived across from me, across the road from us, went...went to...Germany? I think he went to Germany, and Marcia and Tim stayed in the United States. They were hoping to go out of the country.

I: Oh, really? Were...you mentioned the Vietnam War. Were a lot of people around here in support of the War or against the War? Were there a lot of debates?

R: No.

I: Arguments? No.

R: We had a lot of meetings, couple, two, three years ago, when they wanted to build over here across the road and that great big square, and they wanted to put a lot of houses in there.

I: Oh, so a subdivision?

R: Yes. We had a lot of meetings fighting it.

I: Hm. So you were against that then?

R: Yes.

I: Were a lot of people in this neighborhood against that?

R: Yes.

I: So what happened? Was it blocked?

R: It was blocked eventually.

I: Took a lot of work, but ____.

R: It's going to be left as a nature series, nature conserve.

I: Well, that's good. Those are some of the beauty. So that got a lot of people up...in uproar? ____

R: Yes.

I: Yeah. Were there any other times that you remember people being that passionate about something like that?

R: No.

I: No? So people just pretty much went about their lives?

R: Right.

I: _____. So, is there anything else you think is worthwhile to...

R: Not that I can think of.

I: Not that you can think of. Okay. Um, I don't really have any more questions for you.

R: Well, I know one time in the spring, him and his brother put a board across the ditch to catch frogs, and it flooded our yard out here. So my husband got the motor boat out in the yard.

I: Uh-huh.

R: Put one of the boys in it and they had his picture that they put in the Ann Arbor News.

I: Oh, really? Oh, that's neat.

R: We kept wondering why the water kept coming up in the yard and finally found out that they put a board across to cover it.

I: Uh-huh. How much...how deep was the water in the yard?

R: Deep enough so that they could run the motor boat.

I: Oh, it's pretty deep then.

R: Yes.

I: Was that kind of a fun experience?

R: I think so.

I: Yeah?

R: Marcia married him later.

I: Yeah. So you forgave him then for flooding your yard?

R: They used to go square dancing. He'd drive...he was the driver of the neighborhood.

I: Oh, yeah. Because he had a car or...?

R: He had a car and he drove the...

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R: ...and she'd be the last one that he'd leave off.

I: Oh, yeah? The last one he'd drop off?

R: Earlier they...the two boys, Dennis and Tim, would get clunks of mud and throw at Sharon.

I: Oh! It's...Sharon is...So Tim married Marcia, right?

R: Yes.

I: So they would harass her sister?

R: Yes.

I: So they all grew up together?

R: Yes.

I: Did they live on this street or pretty close by?

R: They lived...Payeur Road. Tim lived on Payeur Road.

I: Um-hum.

R: Then after they come back from Service they lived in Saline...or I mean Ypsi in a trailer park. Then they moved out here.

I: So where did your children go to school?

R: Sutherland. They went to Sutherland until Marcia was in...went through the third grade. Then they consolidated with Saline.

I: Hm.

R: And...and she took the bus to Saline.

I: So all of your children then went to the same...

R: Yes.

I: ...graduated from the same schools.

R: They all went to Saline.

I: Um-hum. Were you involved in the...in their schooling at all? Did you...?

R: No.

I: No. Did they play sports or anything like that?

R: The two boys played football and the one of them played...was in wrestling.

I: Did you go watch their games?

R: Yes.

I: Was that fun?

R: Plus the football games. Sharon was in the school band.

I: Oh.

R: Marching band.

I: So did they perform at the football game?

R: Yes.

I: So you got to see a lot of your kids, went to...

R: Went to a lot of football games to watch the band.

I: Uh-huh. What was that like? Were people excited to watch the games, see every game?

R: Yes, they're pretty good fans.

I: Um-hum. So it was a very social event.

R: Yes. And I think the boys were in Little League at one time. My husband kind of was a leader for a Little League...

I: Oh, a coach?

R: ...one summer. A coach or...he'd always come home, hurry up with something to eat, go to the games.

I: Yeah. Took a lot of time?

R: Yes.

I: Some do. What did you and your husband like to do ____? Did you travel at all, or...?

R: No, he went...he went with Boy Scouts on Boy Scout trips.

I: Um-hum. With your sons?

R: And then later...later years, he kind of let up on that and we went to...took two of...the second and the two youngest ones, we went...oh, we went to Grand Beret one time and...I don't remember where else we went.

I: Um-hum.

R: Went on vacation. Most of the time when the kids were younger, we'd go up to his...his home where his dad was farming and there was Fourth of July week and they'd be farming.

I: Was that in northern Michigan?

R: The lower part.

I: The lower part?

R: Of Castandish.

I: Oh, uh-huh. So you...it sounds like your family really enjoyed spending time outdoors.

R: Yes.

I: A lot of picnics and camping and...Ever keep a garden or...?

R: I had a big garden.

I: Vegetables or flowers?

R: Everything.

I: Everything.

R: Lots of vegetables -- tomatoes, green beans, peppers, cucumbers.

I: Would you sell any of that, or just keep it for your family?

R: Just keep it, and I'd plant pumpkins and corn till finally the...finally quit planting corn, because the raccoons would eat it, when I was about ready to pick.

I: Oh.

R: So we couldn't plan any corn. Now Marcia and Tim plant the garden.

I: Um-hum.

R: Um-hum.

I: so you did that for a long time then?

R: I did that for a long time till I think couldn't work in the garden anymore.

I: Um-hum.

R: Doctor said no more hoeing.

I: Oh, yeah. But your children keep it up for you.

R: Yes.

I: So you still get your fresh vegetables.

R: Some.

I: Yeah.

R: Hasn't done too good the last three years. It...Last year it was too wet...

I: Yeah, last year was a very, very...some...

R: ...for a long time and they got it in really late.

I: Um-hum.

R: They don't work in the flowers anymore. Grandson clips the dead flowers in the fall.

I: Um-hum. How many grandchildren to you have?

R: Eighteen.

I: Wow. That's a lot.

R: Three great grandchildren.

I: Uh-huh. Well, that's great! Do you get to see them a lot?

R: Quite a bit.

I: Yeah.

R: Saw all of them the other day. Sharon's husband passed away a week ago.

I: Oh, I'm sorry about that.

R: Yeah. And they had a big memorial Sunday...

I: Um-hum.

R: ...at the church. And all the grandchildren were there.

I: Well, that's nice that everyone was able to get together, you know.

R: He had cancer for four months.

I: Yeah.

R: They were going to heal it, but it didn't cooperate.

I: Yeah. ____ together.

R: Marcia and Sharon both went to Eastern...

I: Uh-huh.

R: ...for teaching. Sharon kept going and going and going and she'd got masters and bachelors and I don't know what all. She's a teacher in Manchester half day. She'd like to teach full day, but so far they've only been able to have half day for her.

I: Oh, really? Is Marcia teaching too?

R: Marcia substitutes once in a while in Saline.

I: Um-hum. What about your son's, what do they do?

R: One of them works for Gene Butman, Ford. They're carrying cars and the other one's driving a mail truck between Dexter, Saline and, I'm not sure what all. Fix up the mail from the post offices and takes it to Detroit.

I: Oh, uh-huh.

R: Before that, he worked on diesel trucks, repaired them till they kind of quit bringing them in.

I: Um-hum.

R: Then he was out of work for a while, and then he got the truck. Sometimes he pares the mail...re—repairs the mail trucks and sometimes he drives the truck.

I: Um-hum. So all your kids are pretty involved in this area...

R: Yes.

I: ...that grew up here. Did your husband grow up in this area too?

R: No. He grew...he was born in Melita.

I: Hm. How far away is that?

R: It's about the standish.

I: Oh.

R: Well, go...

I: Well, that's where you went to live...

R: Yes.

I: ..._____ you were.

R: They built a house. They cut trees and built a house for us. Yeah.

I: When you were first married?

R: Yes.

I: So was he about your same age, or...?

R: He was a little bit...three months younger.

I: Three months younger.

R: He would have had a birthday couple years...couple days ago.

I: Um-hum.

R: He died a week...a week from our 54th wedding anniversary.

I: Oh, wow. So you were together for a very long time. That's wonderful.

R: Yes.

I: How long ago was that?

R: Four years.

I: So many years together.

R: But he was sick a lot.

I: Yeah. Spent time with your children _____.

R: Some.

I: Yeah. Friends nowadays?

R: No.

I: No. ____?

R: I like it by myself.

I: Yeah. No pets?

R: No pets. I don't want any.

I: Yeah. That can be a handful. I have a huge dog at home and he's a beast.

R: If the dog wanted out and I didn't feel like letting it out, why it would be kind of rough, and I just...I don't want any dogs. I don't like cats.

I: Um-hum.

R: My mother always had a cat, and it seemed like they was always dying and the girls...Sharon had a couple of cats, and I just don't want a cat.

I: Yeah. Well, you shouldn't have one then. Do you watch the birds a lot? I notice...

R: Yes.

I: ...a lot of birdfeeders.

R: Yeah.

I: Do you get a lot of different kinds?

R: You get chickadees, goldfinch, purple finch, nuthatch, tufted titmouse. I think that's all the small ones. And then cardinals come. There's a blue jay, once in a while a blue jay will come.

I: Um-hum. That's quite a variety. That must be...

R: Yes, it is a lot of birds.

I: Yeah.

R: You can watch them.

I: Do you see a lot of any other kinds of animals out here? I know you said there are raccoons.

R: Squirrels.

I: Yeah, squirrels.

R: Raccoons. We come home from Sharon's the other night. The porch light was on, the lights were on in the house, the curtain was open -- big old fat raccoon on the porch.

I: Oh, no [laughs]. Did you have to scare him away?

R: Yeah, I scared him. He's scared away when they come up on the porch.

I: Uh-huh.

R: Run out back.

I: Yeah. So he just hangs out around here some _____.

R: He gets in the garbage when I put the garbage out. Or when the garbage is put out, I don't put it out. I don't...I don't go out to get my mail or paper. My son-in-law picks it up after work.

I: Um-hum.

R: Or the grandchildren pick it up.

I: So somebody comes by every day.

R: Yeah.

I: Is there anything else you'd like to...?

R: Not that I can think of.

I: Well, thank you very much for sharing your story. It was very interesting. You've definitely...it's neat to meet someone who's lived her for so long. And you've seen a lot of changes and experienced a lot here. Do you like it in this area?

R: Yes.

I: Yeah.

R: I wouldn't like to live in town.

I: Um-hum. Yeah. It's very different.

R: I just come down the lilac bush.

I: Oh, really?

R: They're probably going to grow over on the porch.

I: Yeah. I saw some over there on the tree too.

R: They get up on the porch roof, come down and they were climbing down on my birdfeeder, leaving birdseed out of the birdfeeder.

I: Oh, yeah.

R: I removed the birdfeeder.

I: So they can't get to them now then.

R: Not that I know of.

I: Yeah. I'm sure they try though.

R: Yeah, they try.

I: Okay. Well, should I stop the tape?

R: Okay.

I: Okay? You don't have anything else to...?

R: Not that I can think of.

I: Okay. Well, you've told me a lot, so that's great.

The End