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## Mrs. Margaret Sulley Leidlich & Mrs. Arletta Fenton Leverage

[0:00:00]

Interviewer: Arletta Fenton Leverage of Elsmere, Delaware and Margaret Sulley Leidlich of Elkton, Maryland are going to speak about their childhood and frontier life in Alberta, Canada. Why they came to Newark, Delaware and the reminiscences of the depression. How old are you Arletta Fenton Leverage?

Mrs. Leverage: You know I'm *[inaudible]* [0:00:31]

Interviewer: When were you -- when were you born?

Mrs. Leverage: 1909.

Interviewer: 1909?

Mrs. Leverage: 1909.

Interviewer: And when were you born?

Mrs. Leidlich: 1905.

Interviewer: 1905. And how was it that your family went to Canada in the first place, are you -- how are you both related?

Mrs. Leverage: Cousins.

Mrs. Leidlich: Cousins.

Mrs. Leverage: Well, my father went out there because they wanted a Timber Culture to estimate the guardian timber in the mountains, in the Rocky Mountains on the Alberta side, in Alberta -- the Province of Alberta. That's how he happened to get out there in the first place.

Mrs. Leidlich: And my father -- my father went out to Canada and he worked in a general store and he learned part of the English -- the Indian language, so that when they would come in and ordered sugar he'd know what to get.

Interviewer: What, what part of Canada did they move to?

Mrs. Leidlich: They traded the hides. They traded hides, see that was a, what do they call it, a poster something that...

Mrs. Leverage: The trading post. And they traded their hides for some provisions that they could use.

Interviewer: Exactly where in Canada did they go to live?

Mrs. Leverage: Well, this was in Nordic.

Mrs. Leidlich: It was -- well, when we first went out there, it was 8 miles on the other side it was the Scotchman River but the nearest town was *[inaudible]* **[0:02:04]** which was 72 miles away. And when they brought groceries they made out a six months grocery list and all the neighbors went at once because to get the wagons; they had big old wagons.

To get the wagons through the moss caves which are swamps, they have a use all the teams on one wagon to get it through and they all went together every six months and got their supplies.

Interviewer: How did both of your parents get land in Scotia?

Mrs. Leverage: It was Alberta. Alberta, Canada.

Interviewer: Alberta.

Mrs. Leverage: Home study.

Interviewer: Home study? Did they have to take a certain amount of land where there are certain conditions aside from this?

Mrs. Leverage: Yes, they took a home stead and I think it was a 150 acres but you could look that in the map because it was in 1911 when they went out there and my father took a home stead but he had this government job and a home stead too and build a home land, a long cabin.

Interviewer: And how about your father?

Mrs. Leidlich: Well, my father he worked in the trading post and the Indians would come in with their hides and he learned some of their language and they would trade those hides for the provisions they needed.

Interviewer: Did your father also had a farm along with this?

Mrs. Leverage: Home stead.

Interviewer: A home stead.

Mrs. Leidlich: A home stead, oh yeah. He had a home stead.

Interviewer: Were your grandparents also in Canada?

Mrs. Leverage: Yes, they followed.

Mrs. Leidlich: They followed.

Mrs. Leverage: They -- well, they went out -- grandpa went out with us, my father went first.

Interviewer: What was his name, could you give the name of your...

Mrs. Leverage: Chester. Chester, same middle name. Chester S. Fenton.

Interviewer: Fenton, it was Fenton?

Mrs. Leverage: Uh-huh. I don't know what the middle name was.

Mrs. Leidlich: Your *[inaudible]* [0:04:12].

Mrs. Leverage: Yeah, but grandpa was.

Mrs. Leidlich: Oh, grandpa was Chester, yeah.

Mrs. Leverage: Chester but I don't know...

Interviewer: What was your...

Mrs. Leverage: Chester S. Fenton.

Interviewer: What was your father's name?

Mrs. Leidlich: Well her father's name...

Mrs. Leverage: William Bonnie Sealer.

Interviewer: Okay, what was your father's name?

Mrs. Leidlich: Allen -- was it Chester Allens? Yeah. Chester Fenton, it was Allen C. so it had to be Chester.

Interviewer: Could you give us some idea of how your parents were educated?

Mrs. Leverage: Well my father went in the University of Michigan where, he was graduate in agriculture in the University of Michigan but he had grown up in the timber business. His father was one of those known lumber man in Michigan.

**[0:05:03]**

So he grew up in the lumber business and he knew as much about that as anyone at that time but he did go to college and he graduated in Agriculture.

Interviewer: And how about your father?

Mrs. Leidlich: Well my father went to business school and see that benefited him when he went out there to our home stead because he could figure things and he worked as a general, because the trading post, you could call that out there wouldn't [0:05:36] (Inaudible).

Interviewer: Why do you think that your parents went there, why did they leave Michigan and go? Was there an economic reason?

Mrs. Leverage: Well, my father -- no, his health.

Interviewer: His health.

Mrs. Leverage: That around the great lakes, it was too damp and he was -- he wasn't well and they -- he was threatened with TB so he went in the mountains that's why he went.

Interviewer: I see. Do you remember why you...

Mrs. Leidlich: Well, the family - the whole family was going out so my father went ahead and we went out and just followed.

Interviewer: I remember that you said that there were -- that your father's parents were not pleased with him going to Canada, could you...

Mrs. Leverage: No, they weren't too pleased; they weren't too pleased when he graduated in *[inaudible]* **[0:06:21]** that was the problem. His mother

thought he was going to be a minister and his father thought he was going to be a lawyer, and he said he was too honest to be either one, so he took up agriculture and they disinherited him, so he was made - he was on his own.

Interviewer: Could you tell us a little bit more about your father Margaret?

Mrs. Leverage: Well, as I said, he was a powerful man, when he was 18 he was traveling over the country into Florida with his father after timber and then he wanted to get married but wanted \$10,000 in the bank before he got married, so he went to Alaska in the gold rush and...

Interviewer: About what year would this be?

Mrs. Leverage: Well, I don't know, but I got letters upstairs, it could tell. And he --it was four years, and my mother wrote to him and told him that she was going to marry his rival if he didn't come home and she said she had no intention to but she got home that way; so he came home, it took him three months to get home and he bought in \$25 and they were married.

Interviewer: Where was she?

Mrs. Leverage: In Michigan.

Interviewer: In Michigan.

Mrs. Leverage: In Michigan. And then in four years time he had \$10,000 in the bank because he had graduated with -- in college with Agriculture and he went into scientific farming and they called him Potato King of Michigan, he was the first man in Michigan to ever have an eight hour day for farm labor.

His farmer -- his labor never worked more than eight hours a day and he had all the labor he needed because that was the reason but his health pay up around the great lakes he began to -- he began to have -- that's why we went to Canada.

Interviewer: Does he also track?

Mrs. Leverage: He tracked in Canada after he got all these estimating done he had his home up there , then he went into tracking and he tracked for about three or four years. He was always just a little ahead of the rest of the people and he would --he tracked lakes and martin, mostly lake San Martin and -- for three months in the winter time, he and a partner, Drew

Barron *[phonetic]* **[0:08:51]** and then they brought that fur down to St. Paul in Minneapolis and sold them down there to couriers and they cleared about \$5,000 a piece for a three months work, every two months, and then...

Interviewer: Did you also say grandmom that they would send the first time to Chicago sometimes?

Mrs. Leverage: That was the ones that your father took off.

Interviewer: I see.

Mrs. Leidlich: Was that it? And so I got it backwards now.

Interviewer: I see, so you were about what, four or five years younger than Margaret?

Mrs. Leidlich: No just three years younger.

Mrs. Leverage: Three and a half.

Interviewer: Three.

Mrs. Leidlich: Three and a half.

Mrs. Leverage: About three and a half years younger.

Interviewer: What kind of problems can you remember that you had --that your parents had in raising a family in this wilderness condition in Alberta?

Mrs. Leverage: Well, were always warm enough, we used Hudson Bay blankets to keep warm, we're always warm enough.

**[0:10:00]**

Mrs. Leidlich: I had one of those things up until about three years ago and I learned the one from my tenants...

Mrs. Leverage: You lost it.

Mrs. Leidlich: And I lost it.

Mrs. Leverage: We -- the one thing I remember we had to learn in the winter time, to never go to sleep if you felt sleepy outdoors, you must always keep going because the minute you felt sleepy, you will freeze to death.

Mrs. Leidlich: Yeah.

Mrs. Leverage: That was one thing we had to learn.

Mrs. Leidlich: They wouldn't even let you go to sleep in the cutters and the wagons are nothing.

Mrs. Leverage: You had to keep awake all the time in the winter time until you got into the home.

Interviewer: And you lived in log houses and log cabins?

Mrs. Leverage: Yes, in log cabins.

Mrs. Leidlich: They were warm though.

Mrs. Leverage: It was.

Mrs. Leidlich: I froze my feet, I remember that, going to school.

Interviewer: Could you talk a little bit about your education, what kind of education you both had?

Mrs. Leverage: Well, I didn't go to school for almost 10-years old, they didn't have any school out there until I was 10.

Interviewer: Did your parents teach you anything before you went to school? Did they teach you how to read or anything?

Mrs. Leverage: No, mama didn't. She was a teacher but she didn't teach us very much. I learned to count but I learned to count on a priest lead and we had a priest that used to come up there.

Interviewer: A priest?

Mrs. Leverage: A priest, and he used to go and take care of the catholic families in the neighborhood but he always stayed with my father, he always like to stay at our house and I used to sit on his knee and he taught me the way that mathematics works, not just to count mad and think but the way it would work, not so fun or...

Interviewer: Grandmom, can you talk a little bit about your father's education and also your own education.



Mrs. Leidlich: When my father graduated from business school. Yeah, my father graduated from business school in Michigan and that gave him the knowledge that when he went out to Canada he was able to work -- well, be the head over the store and go into Chicago and buy stocks.

Interviewer: I see. So a person just couldn't go to Canada and set up a trading post, he had to have some sort of knowledge?

Mrs. Leverage: Well, he had to have an education how to do it, yes.

Mrs. Leidlich: You had to have education.

Mrs. Leverage: Some of them did, I guess farther north at the new found territories but there had to be a man that know what he was doing, it either had to be born of that certain knowledge of trading or educated with, one of the other.

Interviewer: How close was the school that you went to? How close was it to where you...

Mrs. Leidlich: Mine was 4 miles.

Interviewer: Four miles.

Mrs. Leidlich: We walk.

Mrs. Leverage: We walk. You know, I don't remember going to school, I was pretty big.

Mrs. Leidlich: Yes, I don't -- you went to -- when you went to Nordic or Mountain House?

Mrs. Leverage: Mountain House, yes.

Mrs. Leidlich: She went to Rocky Mountain House.

Mrs. Leverage: And that was -- that was after I'd lived in Nordic, so I don't know, I don't know. I must have been eight or nine years old Margaret.

Interviewer: Okay. How was it that you moved from Nordic to Rocky Mountain House, why was it that your parents moved?

Unidentified voice: Wasn't that where you farmed on it?

Mrs. Leverage: We know we had a farm, owned a farm. I swear we had a farm.

Interviewer: What was in the farm, was it in Nordic?

Mrs. Leverage: No, it was not in Nordic. It was on the farm at the homestead rather, it was a homestead.

Mrs. Leidlich: I remember because *[inaudible]* **[0:13:20]** it was sophisticated everything you had up there, Nordic, you stopped, remember? And that's why you followed?

Mrs. Leverage: I guess it was.

Interviewer: What was that?

Mrs. Leidlich: Yes, the Nordic, the old man -- the man who had the mine, Nordic was a mining town.

Mrs. Leverage: Yes, it was a mining town.

Mrs. Leidlich: And he owned the mine and they discovered that he was a spy, a German spy.

Mrs. Leverage: A German spy.

Interviewer: This was during World War 1?

Mrs. Leverage: Yes.

Mrs. Leidlich: And they discovered -- confiscated everything he had and sold it and of course the town shut up quickly. The mine and everything, that was **[0:14:00]** (Inaudible).

Mrs. Leverage: My father when he would come home and he'd always bring large can of coal but this time somewhere they get some gasoline in it and when my father left on Monday morning, my mother had gotten up early to start the fire and my father had already left to go back to Rocky Mountain House where he was working.

And my mother started this fire and it just blew and I ran at what they had a little room where they kept the flour and the sugar, it was the storeroom and she had drapes to that and I thought --I run in there thinking that was a safe place to be, my mother had to come in there and get me and take me out and those drapes were on fire, I will never forget

that. I don't know how old I was but I will never forget that part of it. I was frightened to death.

**[0:14:59]**

Mrs. Leidlich: You were probably six years old, between five and six years old.

Interviewer: And then you moved to Rocky Mountain House?

Mrs. Leverage: I guess we did. Was it Rocky Mountain House or Nordic. I don't know which it was.

Interviewer: How was that your father worked. I think you mentioned that he was away for a week at a time.

Mrs. Leverage: Yes, because he went -- I don't know whether it Chicago or Calgary, anyway, he went and brought the provisions for the store and he traded these provisions when the Indians would bring you're their hides in and he would tell them how much provisions they could have for the hides.

Interviewer: I see, and so did you only see him on the weekends?

Mrs. Leverage: Not after we went to Rocky Mountain, I used to see him all the time then.

Interviewer: What kind of things did you do just for recreation as a family?

Mrs. Leidlich: Riding stick horse.

Mrs. Leverage: Yeah, riding stick horse, that's right.

Unidentified voice: A stick horse, what's that?

Mrs. Leidlich: It's a stick and you just put your legs over it, one on each side like you ride a horse.

Mrs. Leverage: Hold on and tie a string around and let y our...

Mrs. Leidlich: Yeah, yeah.

Interviewer: Did you ever have any sort of gatherings?

Mrs. Leverage: Oh, yes, picnics.

Mrs. Leidlich: Picnics, we had picnics.

Mrs. Leverage: They had a fair once a year down by the river and in fact we celebrated the 4th of July up there, there are so many people from the United States up there. It was 4<sup>th</sup> of July was always celebrated down there.

Mrs. Leidlich: And then after, I guess it was after you left there they had -- or maybe it was before, they had like a circus in Rocky Mountain House and they had a merry-go-round come into that little town.

Interviewer: Could you describe that Rocky Mountain House, was this one building or was this extended...

Mrs. Leverage: It was a town, it was a little town.

Mrs. Leidlich: Oh, no. It's a little town.

Interviewer: Could you describe the town, and the citizens that were in it?

Mrs. Leverage: One store, one hotel.

Mrs. Leidlich: One store, yeah, and one hotel with bed bugs.

Mrs. Leverage: And one lane street which -- one street which is the main street.

Mrs. Leidlich: One lane main street. It went down Hill State, we'd slide down all the time.

Mrs. Leverage: Oh, no, and it went to a valley where there's a real sleek place and a little tiny *[inaudible]* [0:17:22] and they had a wooden bridge across that I had to go cross that every day to go to school, but of course, I had to go to school, I don't know how old I was.

Interviewer: Could you describe the general store that you're father had.

Mrs. Leidlich: Well, it had everything and he used to trade the hides.

Interviewer: What sort of things did he have in the store?

Mrs. Leidlich: The important things, sugar and flour, they used to make their own yeast, didn't they Margaret? Materials and shoes.

Mrs. Leverage: The first 50 cent, the first 50 cents I ever spent was spending it on your father store and I bought crochet cotton and a crochet book to make grandma a wood bark for her birthday.

Mrs. Leidlich: Oh yeah, I remember that.

Interviewer: Do you remember the Indians very much?

Mrs. Leverage: Yes.

Interviewer: What tribe were they?

Mrs. Leidlich: Stonies.

Mrs. Leverage: Stonies. I told you that the other night

Interviewer: Stonies. Were there any Eskimos also or was that...

Mrs. Leidlich: No, these were Stonian and they lived upon the *[inaudible]* **[0:18:23]** Plains, what they call the *[inaudible]* **[0:18:22]** plains in the Rocky Mountains. And as long as the Susquehanna River runs downhill and the sun sets in the west, they are pre-indent, that's a treaty they made with their community in Dunwich and it still holds.

And they used to come down out of the hills, they stayed up there all summer and then they'd come down during the winter for about two or three months during the winter and trade their furs and traded their skins and things, these are the trade my father, we were in moccasins, we had little vest, things made of all beaded and all fancy, they trade for potatoes. Potatoes and cabbage, things he raised.

And there were five of those Indians that were college educated and they had long hair down their back and the Hudson Bay blanket around them and you'd never know. One was a lawyer but there were five of them.

Interviewer: Can you describe conditions in the towns or in other frontier homesteads, what the people lived like, did they have -- did they have harder conditions, can you say that your parents quite had it economically or...

Mrs. Leverage: I don't think so, we're all about the same. There wasn't any class distinction.

Mrs. Leidlich: No, there wasn't.

Interviewer: In, say, Rocky Mountain House, there weren't – there wasn't any poor section and there were the rich section?

Mrs. Leverage: Well, the doctor always had a nice home, you remember that Margaret?

Mrs. Leidlich: Yeah, and Mr. Mitchell, no, what was his name? It wasn't Mitchell. The post master.

**[0:20:02]**

Mrs. Leverage: Yes, that's right too.

Mrs. Leidlich: Yeah, very nice home. Well, most people had nice homes.

Mrs. Leverage: They didn't need, you know, things like they do now that it – back then it was different. People didn't judge you by your home or what you had.

Mrs. Leidlich: They didn't ask questions even. Well, they used to say some of our neighbors ran out the back door when the sheriff ran on the front door from Virginia. Nobody asked questions and everybody live peaceful.

Mrs. Leverage: Yes, they did. Many times they sit down at the table and my grandmother had invited her and my mother invited Indians and we sat around the table and mealed with us.

Interviewer: So were the Indians accepted?

Mrs. Leidlich: Oh, yes, very much.

Mrs. Leverage: Oh, yes, they were nice people. Even the Indians – I didn't know any, I mean, the Indians were my pals. I got to speak their language, they're going to speak mine but we had a wonderful time, we played, the little kids.

Mrs. Leidlich: Yeah, that was *[inaudible]* **[0:21:02]**.

Interviewer: Can you remember any discrimination that run against some of the Indians by, perhaps, some of the homesteaders?

Mrs. Leidlich: No.

Interviewer: No.

Mrs. Leverage: No, I can't either.

Mrs. Leidlich: My mother was – there was a little boy, he had pneumonia and my mother went over him and she put mustard plasters on him, they came to her to help him, and she put mustard plasters on him and she saved his life and then she did – she taught some of the other children and she had been a teacher, and she had been a Indian teacher in Michigan, she thought Indians in Michigan.

And they gave her a sweet grass necklace and it had claws in it and shells and beads and everything, and they told her that no matter where she went, if she needed help, show that necklace to an Indian. Well she kept it and she showed it to Indians in the seminars in Florida and they knew what it meant, she showed it to every Indian down here in Maryland, she showed it to some and they knew what it meant, wherever she showed that necklace, they knew what it meant.

They said you're a friend, wherever she showed the necklace. No, there was no discrimination on the Indians.

Interviewer: Were there any problems caused by isolation in the wilderness, did it affect you?

Mrs. Leverage: I didn't think so.

Mrs. Leidlich: No, no.

Interviewer: Or isolation from say, towns for a long period of time, did it...

Mrs. Leverage: No, we were contented. My mother went in there and she was eight years before she ever wanted to set foot in town. She was contented, there were so many things to do and see, everything. And well, I don't know, we just didn't have to run around, we had a good time all the time.

Interviewer: Do you remember any crime in the town?

Mrs. Leidlich: No.

Mrs. Leverage: Goodness, no.

Interviewer: No crime?

Mrs. Leidlich: No, that was another thing. Now we lived in along a road, the road that we lived went all the way up quite a ways and it would be at night when

my father was away tracking on track pond he would be away and we had a – we didn't have a porch or covered over, it was kind of a patio and you'd hear horses feet on that patio, and they'd knock on the door with a port, that's a porting stick, you know what it is.

And mama would go to the door and this native Indian, and he'd say, "Something to eat and stay all night," and we were only two miles from then from a little inn where they did keep people and she'd say, "I'm sorry but this isn't the place." Okay, they'd go on.

Or maybe it would be when they were going in the railroad up there, on – yeah, they were different nationalities and they would come and they'd knock on the door and he'd say, "I'm sorry but this isn't an inn," and they'd gone, but sometimes if my father is home, they'd ask the Indians in, they'd come in and mama gave them something to eat but there was never any fear, we never had any fear, even when a Siberian wolf cross the streets up there and came down, he left in the windows but we never were afraid of him, we weren't afraid of him and there hasn't any fear.

Unidentified voice: You stayed inside?

Mrs. Leidlich: Yeah, we were inside. We would see his eyes out.

Interviewer: The wolves wouldn't bite you?

Mrs. Leidlich: They probably would if you went out there, we had plenty to eat, he wasn't going in.

Unidentified voice: This was at night time and you're already in the house?

Mrs. Leidlich: Yeah, well, he wouldn't be around, he'd run away. The reason he came, we had a big dog. A big dog, it was a walker's trained fox hound and he was soaring and he came to our home.

**[0:24:57]**

And they go went hunting together, we just come for his company and you could hear him -- you could hear him, a terrible sound howling way off in the distance.

I remember the first time we heard, I went crawling under the bed, and mama said, "Come out of there," she said, "that's an animal of some kind."

Interviewer: Grandma, why is it that you left Canada?



Mrs. Leverage: Wait, you mean, in the personal life?

Interviewer: No, I mean...

Mrs. Leidlich: Your grandmother.

Mrs. Leverage: My grandmother left, yes. It was my grandmother who left, so I left with her.

Mrs. Leidlich: That was Grandma Stella.

Mrs. Leverage: Yes, it was and she was forgetting – she went to Florence Hospital in Michigan.

Mrs. Leidlich: Oh, yeah.

Interviewer: So you went to live with your grandmother?

Mrs. Leverage: I went to live with my aunt in Michigan for a while and then I went down to live with Margaret's mother which was another aunt.

Interviewer: Okay.

Mrs. Leverage: There was something else that I was going to tell you. Up in the mountains, when I saw this I went first to see it, up there if a man didn't treat his woman like he should they took him out and they hung him, if he cheated on her or anything like that I was not supposed to say this but I crept up through the woods and I saw one of those hangings. Do you remember that?

Mrs. Leidlich: No, I didn't.

Mrs. Leverage: It just come back to my memory.

Mrs. Leidlich: I didn't see that but I do know that they *[inaudible]* *[0:26:43]* too.

Mrs. Leverage: Oh, this was a hanging...

Mrs. Leidlich: It depended on how bad – how bad the misdemeanor what.

Mrs. Leverage: Yeah, if they cheated or anything like that.

Unidentified voice: Or if they hit him, or something like that?

Mrs. Leverage: Or if they'd beat them, you know, anything to hurt her or a woman.

Mrs. Leidlich: Or cheat on. Cheated. Going on another woman, they've got tarred and feathered like that.

Unidentified voice: The other men in the town did this?

Mrs. Leverage: And they did this for murderers too, they hung up the murderers when they...

Mrs. Leidlich: Yes, the murderers.

Interviewer: So they didn't – did they give these people any trial or a legal trial or was it more or less a passing...

Mrs. Leverage: No,

Mrs. Leidlich: No, it wasn't that, I don't know.

Mrs. Leverage: No, it's just a group.

Mrs. Leidlich: Yeah, it was just a group. Retired veteran, I remember that. Yeah, it was a group. And then they just viewed it, you know, what went on and...

Mrs. Leverage: But my father wasn't, you know, that, and that was after my afraid died, you know...

Interviewer: How was it that your father died?

Mrs. Leverage: Well, he was – well, after he got through with the tracking, he went into fox farm, he was the first man that ever had a fox farm around Calgary. At one time Calgary was known as the fox farming center of the world, and he was the first man that had that in vision, he started this fox farm but he had it about two or three years when he was injured and his back was broken into an accident.

Interviewer: How did this happened?

Mrs. Leidlich: Well, he had a wagon and they had loose boards, they haul gravel and they had what they call butt boards on it and they were boards they could pull out and let the gravel fall when they got to where they wind it, and they were –had butt boards on and they were going into town when a tree broke and that's part of the harness on the back of the horse.

Mrs. Leverage: That's part of the horse.

Mrs. Leidlich: And it hit the horse on the legs and it scared him and he – my father was on the front seat and a neighbor was in the front seat, there was three of them, and Drew Barren *[phonetic]* **[0:28:41]** was sitting on the back, he was helping my father.

And the horses, this neighbor got excited and he stood it and my father had pull on the range to make him go into some bushes and that would stop them, it would stop the wagon from slipping, they need to have the tong came out and that's what the wagon hit too.

And the neighbor got excited and he pulled on the range and threw them out into the open and of course then their stump boards started going to pieces, they started flying everywhere and my father jumped to the right of the wagon and one of those boards caught in the wheel and hitting right across the back, knocking underneath the wagon somehow and he fell right on the side of the wagon and he was paralyzed from waist down and he never got over it, he died in Michigan.

Interviewer: Was that why your family left after that?

Mrs. Leidlich: Uh-hmm, that's why we came back. We came back trying to get better doctors in Michigan and they helped him some but the – they couldn't help him in those days, they had him now – if a doctor – a good doctor had him for the first three days, they could have done something with him but it was six weeks before he got anyone, so.

**[0:29:56]**

Interviewer: Okay, Grandmom, can you remember of any cases of mental illnesses in any of the homesteaders or of people in the towns?

Mrs. Leverage: I remember my own my mother, there was no women only these Indians to talk to, and it was very hard, a very long time before she ever learned their language to talk to them and in that mean time while she began to lost her mind because there was nobody that could talk with her, my father...

Mrs. Leidlich: He'd be gone.

Mrs. Leverage: ...would be gone all week, he'd come home on Saturday night and he'd go back Monday morning – so all the time he had no mother, so she gradually lost her mind and finally they had to put her away.

Interviewer: Was there a state home in Canada or in Michigan?

Mrs. Leverage: No, it was in Calgary, they had some kind of mental home there, they had a large hospital up at Nordic, that's where we lived when this happened really and they had a large hospital there and they treated her up there for a while and they couldn't –she had a thing she would say, "I want to go home, I want to go home."  
She'd keep repeating this and she mentioned her home in Michigan, and there she was out in the wilderness, didn't know what – she couldn't talk with people, my grandmother was the only one that lived close and she never learned to talk to the Indians or any of them, my father was going all week, we would see him in the town and she just finally went insane and they had to put her away, didn't they Margaret?

Interviewer: So what happened after that?

Mrs. Leverage: Well, my grandmother took us...

Unidentified voice: Without your father, you had a housekeeper coming, right?

Mrs. Leverage: That's right too, yeah.

Mrs. Leidlich: For a while.

Mrs. Leverage: Yeah, for a while, that's right, we did. We had housekeeper coming for a while.

Interviewer: This was -- was this in Nordic?

Mrs. Leverage: No, this is was in Rocky Mountain House then.

Interviewer: Okay, Rocky Mountain House.

Mrs. Leverage: But the other place she was insane was on the farm, on the homestead rather, and in the Rocky Mountain House where we lived there for a time and she got worse and finally they had to put her away, and it was in Calgary they had a place where they put her.

Unidentified voice: But when you were young, you didn't know this, did you, how old were you?

Mrs. Leverage: I don't know but I knew there was something wrong with my mother. I just know, I wasn't old enough to realize what was the matter but I knew there was something wrong and I never heard of anything about her crazy, I mean, that was, you know, I wasn't old enough to know anything about a thing like this and there was partiality too showed between my sister and I, and of course, she was a baby, you couldn't help that but...

Mrs. Leidlich: Right after I left.

Mrs. Leverage: Yeah. And since then I didn't see them, it was only my grandmother and the Indian children that I played with and...

Unidentified voice: Maybe it was hard, you'd feel *[inaudible]* [0:33:17].

Mrs. Leverage: I'm sure it was.

Mrs. Leidlich: That's why I told her come and visit us.

Mrs. Leverage: Yeah, well, then see, my grandmother got worse and she wanted to go to Florence hospital in Detroit, so that's where they took her and she went in to Florida Hospital, my grandfather, myself and my sister left Canada and lived at Detroit and they put her in there and they gave a lot of experimenting and test and all these kind of stuff and they...

Unidentified voice: But what was her wrong with her at that time?

Mrs. Leidlich: Well, a malignant tumor.

Mrs. Leverage: Tumor, that's what it was.

Unidentified voice: Malignant?

Mrs. Leidlich: Malignant tumor.

Mrs. Leverage: Yeah. Because she just kept getting bigger and bigger right here in the stomach. So then after she died, we stayed on a while and we were...

Interviewer: Who was – who was – was this?

Mrs. Leverage: This was with my aunt.

Interviewer: I see.

Mrs. Leverage: What was her name?

Mrs. Leidlich: Claudel?

Mrs. Leverage: No, the other one.

Mrs. Leidlich: Cathy?

Mrs. Leverage: Cathy. Aunt Cathy.

Mrs. Leidlich: Pri.

Mrs. Leverage: Aunt Cathy Pri *[phonetic]* [0:34:31]. And then we stayed down there for the rest of summer and when – fall come on where they sent us on down to Louisiana we went by a train and they met us down there and my sister and I stayed there for the rest of our time until by the time we're married.

Interviewer: So how was it that both of you came to Newark, Delaware and why was it?

[0:35:00]

Mrs. Leidlich: Well, that – by that time my mother had remarried, she married. After my father, she went back to Canada and was teaching up there and she met my stepfather, his name was Mr. Dominic Martin *[phonetic]* [0:35:14].

Interviewer: Your mother was a school teacher?

Mrs. Leidlich: Uh-huh. And she met him up at Nordic where he was teaching and they were married and then they decided they were going to travel but they didn't have enough money to travel so they would teach and travel.

So they'd drive ahead and they'd get schools, they travel all summer and then they'd teach on that year and then if they liked the place they'd stay two or three years, if they didn't, they stay one year.

And we went first to Newark State, we stayed there a couple of years, then we went to Louisiana, and that guy picked -- stripped sugar cane and...

Mrs. Leverage: Make peanut butter.

Mrs. Leidlich: ...make peanut butter, everything else in Louisiana.

Mrs. Leverage: Getting us out at the field.

Mrs. Leidlich: We came from there, we came up to Delaware and that's how we travelled or we just stayed because my mother and father would ride ahead and they were both excellent teachers and good recommendations and all.

Interviewer: So grandmom you lived with your mother and your stepfather?

Mrs. Leidlich: Yes. And children and the cousin.

Interviewer: And so you both lived together afterwards?

Mrs. Leidlich: Yes, we all lived together.

Mrs. Leverage: We all lived together, yeah.

Interviewer: So what happened after they came to Newark, why did they stay in Newark?

Mrs. Leidlich: Well, they got – well, they stayed because we saw a guy I'm meant to be married.

Mrs. Leverage: Yes.

Mrs. Leidlich: But my father – my stepfather was the first principal of a junior high school in Newark and there had been many people over there still remembering because he had his music.

Interviewer: What was his name?

Mrs. Leidlich: W.E. Martin and I meet people now that played in the orchestra and they were into high school and they all remember him.

Mrs. Leverage: The music was free.

Mrs. Leidlich: He did everything free like that for children, and that...

Unidentified voice: He's dedicated wasn't he?

Mrs. Leidlich: Uh-huh. And he was a good teacher.

Interviewer: About what year would this be that you came in Newark?

Mrs. Leverage: I don't know, we lived in Newark in first, do you remember Margaret?

Mrs. Leidlich: No we lived in Newark first because I had to be married when you went to St. Martin.

Male: 1924?

Mrs. Leidlich: Uh-hmm.

Interviewer: 1924?

Mrs. Leidlich: Uh-hmm.

Male: I can see here on the letter.

Mrs. Leidlich: Yeah, that's right, 1925.

Mrs. Leverage: I graduated in 1924 in that class.

Mrs. Leidlich: Uh-hmm.

Interviewer: And so your father or rather your stepfather became the principal of the junior high school in Newark, do you remember what year it was?

Mrs. Leidlich: The first junior high. No, I don't remember, just the first junior high and it was...

Unidentified voice: Academy Street in Delaware?

Mrs. Leidlich: Yes, on -- well, the old high school was in the Academy at that town, so it wasn't there, we started all that. [0:38:21] (Inaudible) do you remember where that junior high was?

Mrs. Leverage: It was right on the main street.

Male: Academy street in Delaware Avenue.

Mrs. Leverage: What was that school around the Main street, that old school there?

Mrs. Leidlich: Oh that was the academy.



Male: That was their high school.

Mrs. Leidlich: Yes, that was a high school.

Male: Newark High school, he thought in various school *[inaudible]* **[0:38:35]**.

Mrs. Leidlich: Yes, that's right. They turned into a junior high. When I graduated from the new high school that they built I went six months on my senior year in old academy building and then six months -- and the other six months or rather not six months but a term in the new high school which now I think is a elementary school.

Mrs. Leverage: Yes, it is. They built a new high school toward the dam.

Mrs. Leidlich: Yeah.

Mrs. Leverage: And named it after a doctor *[inaudible]* **[0:39:10]** or something.

Mrs. Leidlich: Named *[inaudible]* **[0:39:11]**.

Interviewer: Your husband, what was his name? What's his name?

Mrs. Leidlich: He was a -- he was a *[inaudible]* **[0:39:19]** C.R. Leidlich. He got the new high school they have there now. I can tell you what the front door cost.

Interviewer: Can you tell us a little bit about maybe some things about Newark right before the depression and after the depression, someone or other things that you remember? In the meantime you had both gotten married, right?

Mrs. Leverage: Well, I went to college there, I walked across the campus, there wasn't any of the buildings there are now except right in that block, there was a library. I can't remember, it was a woman's college in there.

**[0:40:04]**

And you weren't supposed to get married when go to college, so I got married anyhow and then when I expected a baby I had told I was married and quit and it was -- I forgot the name of that dean, she was so mad at me because I was a good student. I forgot her name, she was mad at me. So that's why I had to stop and had to leave college.

Interviewer: Grandmom, can you tell us some, some of the problems in raising a family during the depression, the unemployment and the food problems.

Mrs. Leverage: Yes, I lived in Marshall, Delaware at that time, we had moved from Wilmington out to Marshall because we could -- we had this old time stove gift to us and with a cheap rent, it was probably in the place -- in the house.

And the house you could almost see through it, we just had those boards on that you'd get through that and get your night clothes on and get warm in front of fire, of that stove and you'd run upstairs as quick as you can while your mother had the *[inaudible]* [0:41:23].

Unidentified voice: Yeah.

Mrs. Leverage: And I would sit down around that stove, and just wrapping her with a blanket around her and a blanket around me, and you could feel that wind come in down in that boards, it was, I don't know whether it shook her or what happened to him. They didn't paint it for one thing, it was -- they hadn't paint it for years and years.

And that stove was gift to us by a bus driver that grandpa was a pay master in a weather place, that's where he lived. And this fellow worked in this weather place and they got to be real close friends and he used to come out and see us and he went around until he finally found the stove, a great big cook stove where the reservoir where you heat the water at the same time and the stove is gone and he bought it out there and help put it out in depression time this was.

We got -- finally we got food orders, but they call it then a relief and there was four of us and we get \$4.50 per week.

Interviewer: Was this relief from the government?

Female: Her dad...

Mrs. Leverage: Who did that relief order come from, the government or the state?

Male: State.

Mrs. Leverage: State.

Interviewer: State of Delaware?

Mrs. Leverage: Yup. \$4.50 for four people.

Interviewer: And what could you buy with that?

Mrs. Leverage: You couldn't buy enough. I remember we made a lot of popcorn and fill in the kids with popcorn.

Interviewer: What other kinds of food did you have to make because of the shortage of food?

Mrs. Leverage: Soups and stews. We never had much meat, I mean, we used canned meat like salmon -- and make salmon loaf and maybe once a week I'd get enough hamburger at the butcher because I had to spend money for that, I couldn't get that through the store because the store didn't have any meat, they had bacon, they didn't have a fresh meat.

So there was a *[inaudible]* **[0:43:47]** come through and they had fresh meat, he got off his wagon, at the back off his wagon. And I return to get -- when my order would -- and my relief order would come in, I'd always get a piece of meat in that great big pot of soup and I had an awfully big pot, I had a big pit of soup in it, and of course you ate a lot of beans.

Unidentified voice: Yes, you know, I can remember, really, I can remember like being maybe in the first grade and used to have -- take our lunches, and for some reason, well, not all families I guess were in the same situation as we are.

Mrs. Leverage: No, there aren't.

Unidentified voice: And I could remember other children making fun of me because my lunch -- and I had a baked bean sandwich and I could remember them laughing about it, like, you know, some of the other *[inaudible]* **[0:44:33]** or something which was in those days a nice -- something really good to eat.

Interviewer: Was this in the beginning of the depression or was this...

Mrs. Leverage: Yes, that's for 10 years. You know the church, the church even -- the church even felt sorry for us and they used to bring food to that place.

**[0:45:02]**

Interviewer: Could you speak a little bit louder?

Mrs. Leverage: I'd say the church, the Methodist Church in Marshall didn't know where we lived because we'd moved from the city out there because the rent was cheaper but the old house, it didn't have any shingles or something on the outside, it was just boards and the wind used to blow in right through the cracks in those boards where they have been together like that.

And Lou Anne had the *[inaudible]* **[0:45:30]** so I would sit down by that old stove with a blanket around me and a blanket around her and wrap her way into the night until she falls asleep.

Interviewer: I remember mom saying something about a kettle tea.

Mrs. Leverage: Well, yes, kettle tea.

Interviewer: Can you describe?

Mrs. Leverage: Well, I'll tell you what kettle tea was. Kettle tea was a can -- was canned milk and hot water with a teaspoon and sugar in it, you remember that Margaret?

Mrs. Leidlich: Yeah.

Mrs. Leverage: Those days, I will *[inaudible]* **[0:46:08]**.

Male: We didn't get tired after the first six months.

Interviewer: Okay, could you repeat that?

Male: You don't even get tired of that until the first six months.

Interviewer: So then you got tired of it?

Male: Finally.

Unidentified voice: Well, I used to think it was really good. I always had kettle tea before I get t bed at night.

Mrs. Leverage: Oh, yeah, I used -- sugar, you had to go in and pick it up.

Interviewer: This was relief?

Mrs. Leverage: Yes. And you had to go in and pick it up in Orange Street, of course I had to use bus fare to get in there and you'd get your flour and you'd get your

sugar, those were the two and once in a while they'd give you a bag of these native beans. Those were the three things.

Mrs. Leidlich: Now we weren't so bad off because we were out here in the country and we raised our own meat and took it off at a mill and had it brown and then we raised all of our own vegetables and I can them, we didn't freeze much at that time but we canned everything and we had our own wheat and we had our own pigs and what we didn't have, we traded the neighbors for.

So we weren't so bad off because we did live out here but the children just had one or two pairs of overalls a piece and we kept them clean and that was it.

Interviewer: Where did you lived at that time grandmom?

Mrs. Leverage: Marshallton.

Interviewer: Marshallton. Did you ever live in town, in Wilmington?

Mrs. Leverage: We moved from Wilmington to get cheaper rent and we lived in an apartment and the rent, you know, was a lot more than what it was out for a living, so.

Interviewer: Okay, could you tell us a little bit about unemployment problems, did grandpop ever -- was he ever unemployed during the depression?

Mrs. Leverage: He was -- during the depression he was unemployed for I don't know how long, I guess nearly two years.

Interviewer: And how was he able to make out during this two years?

Mrs. Leverage: Well, you just -- just what you got from the relief, they called it relief then.

Interviewer: So you were very glad to get that?

Mrs. Leverage: You bet we were. And we used to spend there time so that the children wouldn't be so bad off and we wouldn't be so bad off and we would go for long walks and I would fix sandwiches, in the spring of the year we would go to where there was a creek and they could go in swimming and we spared our lunch and eat dinner and we'd walk back again to Marshallton.

Unidentified voice: First they had something to do with that *[inaudible]* [0:48:48].

Unidentified voice: Breaking the monotony of it.

Mrs. Leverage: This old house.

Unidentified voice: Oh my, this was cold.

Interviewer: Can you tell us about some other friends of yours or acquaintances that had similar conditions?

Mrs. Leverage: Well there was other people that lived in Marshall and we lived there then that had the same experience that we did, I mean, they would get out of work and they had to go on relief and it was just -- it was how many they were in the family and it was four of us and we get \$4.50 and some of them they were more and they got more than we did, of course, it took more for a larger family but just to getting away from them, *[inaudible]* [0:49:36] of being in there, in that home I would walk into the city and look in the windows, and just dream about things that I'd like to have and walk back home again from Marshall back to Marshallton. And Grandpop has done the same thing -- or my husband, Herbert. Grandpop to you.

[0:50:10]

When we lived on this homestead, we got our provisions once a month and we had to go buy horse and wagon into the town which was eight miles away and we got our provisions in there and we got this one little bag of candy and it had to last one whole month.

Interviewer: So, in a way, your childhood in Canada, would you say that in some ways it was similar to some problems that you had in the depression?

Mrs. Leverage: Yes, it was. Yes, it was.

Interviewer: And that you had to wait for supplies and there were certain things that you weren't able to have?

Mrs. Leverage: We could get supplies but you didn't always have the supplies you'd like to have. For one thing you didn't have fresh fruit, you remember that Margaret? We had a lot of prunes, apricots, dried apricots, we even had dried apples, we made apple pies and apple sauce out of dried apples.

And in the summer time we would go and get the berries, we will make cranberry sauce from cranberries.

Mrs. Leidlich: It didn't have the same kind of cranberries they had here either.

Mrs. Leverage: No, they're different.

Mrs. Leidlich: They grew, they were called low bush and they grow only about five, six inches high off the ground and they were just covered with berries.

Interviewer: This was in Alberta?

Mrs. Leverage: This was in Alberta. We had blue berries, plenty of blue berries.

Mrs. Leidlich: Spice berries.

Mrs. Leverage: Yeah.

Mrs. Leidlich: Spice berries was another little berry that grew on the ground and tasted like a blue berry with all spices, not making it.

Mrs. Leverage: And...

Mrs. Leidlich: Saskatoons.

Mrs. Leverage: Saskatoon, that's what the name I was trying to think off, yeah. And then of course on the farm...

Mrs. Leidlich: Nice berries.

Mrs. Leverage: ...we always had rhubarb and we used to can the rhubarb.

Mrs. Leidlich: Rhubarb, those were big out there that we could take a leaf and put around our shoulders and make believe it was a cape. Everything were big out there.

Mrs. Leverage: Everything, the ground was so fertile.

Interviewer: So how would you conclude some of your thoughts about things that you remember during your life time and during the depression?

Mrs. Leverage: Well, I don't know , I know one thing, it drew families together. It was a -  
- the family stayed together more, worked together, played together and lived together.

Mrs. Leidlich: Lived together. If they didn't lived together they didn't eat.

Mrs. Leverage: I'd say lived together.

Mrs. Leidlich: That was about it, that's one thing. It was hard trying to do small and drift away at that time but it drew neighbors together and we...

Mrs. Leverage: Yes, it did.

Mrs. Leidlich: What we didn't have, we had neighbors next door here like down the road and what we didn't have...

Interviewer: This is in Elkton, Maryland?

Mrs. Leidlich: Yes, right here. And we would about three times a week we'd have our dinner together and she would have a meat.

Interviewer: Was this during the depression?

Mrs. Leidlich: Uh-hmm. And it was a muskrat, he get muskrat, and I never ate it then and I'd never eaten it yet but we have it. The kids ate it, it was good. They sell it on the market.

Mrs. Leverage: I'm sure they do.

Mrs. Leidlich: Or we'd have rabbit, we'd have something wild and of course, fish, always fish in order to get fish down here but we had the best **[inaudible] [0:53:49]** and they didn't have **[inaudible] [0:53:50]** and they had meat, they didn't have any **[0:53:53] [Inaudible]** so they always came up and make the **[inaudible] [0:53:56]**. And we did that for about four or five years with that particular family.

Mrs. Leverage: That's a while.

Mrs. Leidlich: That depression.

Interviewer: Well thank you both very much.

Mrs. Leidlich: You're welcome.

Mrs. Leverage: Well, I think I'd do it over again.

Unidentified voice: Yes, I do too.



Mrs. Leverage: I think so.

Mrs. Leidlich: I think I'd live that life...

**[0:54:24] End of Audio**