

March 2008

Interview with Ruth Elizabeth Wade Beard

by Isabelle Chewning

[Text enclosed in brackets [] is not on the audio, but is included here for clarification]

Isabelle Chewning: Today is March the 27th. My name is Isabelle Chewning and I'm in the home of Ruth Beard [3911 Brownsburg Turnpike] and she's going to talk to us a little bit about what she remembers about the Brownsburg area. Can you tell me your full name please?

Ruth Beard: Ruth Elizabeth Wade Beard.

Isabelle Chewning: And when were you born, Mrs. Beard?

Ruth Beard: March the 30th, 1927.

Isabelle Chewning: And you weren't born in the immediate Brownsburg area, but can you tell us where you were born?

Ruth Beard: Well, it was over close to McElwee Chapel, in that area.

Isabelle Chewning: And that's where your family was living when you were born?

Ruth Beard: Mm hm.

Isabelle Chewning: And you have brothers and sisters?

Ruth Beard: I have three sisters.

Isabelle Chewning: And what are their names? Who was the oldest?

Ruth Beard: Virginia Whitesell and Mary Frances Poole and Bernice Nye.

Isabelle Chewning: Is Mrs. Poole still living?

Ruth Beard: She lives in Waynesboro.

Isabelle Chewning: Great. Everybody's still around. I think Rachel Koeniger interviewed Mrs. Whitesell yesterday.

Ruth Beard: Oh, did she?

Isabelle Chewning: Yeah. And you were the youngest?

Ruth Beard: Uh huh.

Isabelle Chewning: How much difference in age was there between you and the others?

Ruth Beard: Well, there's two years difference between Virginia and Mary Frances and two years difference between Bernice and myself.

Isabelle Chewning: Did you get hand-me-down clothes all the time?

Ruth Beard: Probably. <laughter> My cousins, we had some cousins our age in North Carolina and things, and they'd send clothes, too.

Isabelle Chewning: Oh, that's good. So you were born at home, not in a hospital, right?

Ruth Beard: Mm hm.

Isabelle Chewning: And did your sisters help take care of you when you were growing up?

Ruth Beard: Oh, yes. Virginia, she would just be six. But I can remember when we lived on the farm, she used to carry me around.

Isabelle Chewning: Did she? And you said your family moved when you were...

Ruth Beard: I was a junior in high school. Daddy wanted to move to Rockbridge Baths, so he rented the Methodist manse at first. And then there was a Mr. Cayton who wanted him to move in and take care of him, so we did. And then he bought the house for...

Isabelle Chewning: The manse?

Ruth Beard: No, he bought the house right across the river from the manse.

Isabelle Chewning: Was the manse, at that point, the house right next to Bethesda [Presbyterian Church]?

Ruth Beard: No, no, it was up at the Methodist church.

Isabelle Chewning: Oh, okay. The Methodist church.

Ruth Beard: It was right across. Of course you know there's a school there now; it was right across from the school house at Rockbridge Baths.

Isabelle Chewning: What were your parents' names?

Ruth Beard: Roy Brown [Wade] but they called him Kite.

Isabelle Chewning: K-I-T-E?

Ruth Beard: Uh huh. That's what everybody knew him by, Kite. And Mary Bare.

Isabelle Chewning: She was a Bare before she got married?

Ruth Beard: Mm hm.

Isabelle Chewning: How did he get the nickname Kite?

Ruth Beard: He has said, but I can't remember. It was some, it seemed like it was some way some child couldn't say his name or something and they started calling him that, and everybody called him Kite.

Isabelle Chewing: And was Bud Wade his brother?

Ruth Beard: Mm hm.

Isabelle Chewing: So you and Janis Ayres, then, are first cousins?

Ruth Beard: And Ann [Beard], her mother was his sister.

Isabelle Chewing: And what was her name?

Ruth Beard: Bertha. Ott Wadeas his brother, so I'm cousins to [???] and all those now.

Isabelle Chewing: Mm hm. Oh, that was a pretty big family then.

Ruth Beard: Yeah. Mm hm.

Isabelle Chewing: And it was their home place where you were living when you were born, right? The farm your father grew up on?

Ruth Beard: Yeah. Well, it wasn't in the home, you know, where his parents lived. It was another house across the road. And then he bought-- it was the Mohler farm and I think I was-- they said I was two years old when we moved.

Isabelle Chewing: And where is that farm?

Ruth Beard: That's where Richard Whitesell...

Isabelle Chewing: Richard Whitesell owns now. Mm hm. And that's up in Backdraft?

Ruth Beard: Mm hm. At the end of Backdraft [Road].

Isabelle Chewing: How many generations of Wades had been here? Had your father's family been here a long, long time?

Ruth Beard: Oh, yeah, I'm sure. Well, I'd have to check on that.

Isabelle Chewing: How about your mother? Had the Bares been here a long time?

Ruth Beard: Well, she lived in Annex. Her mother lived in Annex.

Isabelle Chewing: I don't know where that is.

Ruth Beard: It's down on the other side of Staunton, down in there.

Isabelle Chewing: Oh, uh huh. And what brought her up to Rockbridge County?

Ruth Beard: I don't know how-- oh, I've heard her say how she met Daddy and all, but I can't remember.

Isabelle Chewing: Were your parents still living when you grew up? Did they live pretty long lives?

Ruth Beard: Oh, yeah. Daddy passed away in '74, and Mama died in '79. She died on her birthday.

Isabelle Chewing: And what did your dad do?

Ruth Beard: He was a farmer. Well, he drove the school bus for years.

Isabelle Chewing: I remember...

Ruth Beard: ...drove the school bus and then he carried the mail from Rockbridge Baths to Timber Ridge for years and then in the summer, we furnished the horses to Camp Okahawas. I helped him do that, too.

Isabelle Chewning: Oh, where was that camp?

Ruth Beard: Up at Rockbridge Baths. They've closed the road into it now. Where I was talking about the Methodist manse. You turn there at the [Mountain View] greenhouse and go up that road...

Isabelle Chewning: I think it's called-- is it called McCurdy Lane?

Ruth Beard: Yeah. And it was right-- way up at the end of that road.

Isabelle Chewning: Was the camp?

Ruth Beard: Uh huh. Camp Okahawas, the girls camp.

Isabelle Chewning: And who ran that?

Ruth Beard: Mrs. Chesterman was running it when Daddy furnished the horses. We furnished them for years. That's what I enjoyed every summer, I helped him. We'd take eight horses up there every day for the girls to ride. That's where I learned to ride. You know, I rode in horse shows for years.

Isabelle Chewning: Well, Richard Beard told me that he and you had ridden in pairs classes in horse shows.

Ruth Beard: Richard?

Isabelle Chewning: Mm hm.

Ruth Beard: I can't remember. I used to ride with Mr. Shiflett in here, too.

Isabelle Chewning: Oh, did you?

Ruth Beard: Who lived in the house, you know, where Bernice lives [2843 Brownsburg Turnpike].

Isabelle Chewning: In Brownsburg, right.

Ruth Beard: We used to ride in the pair class. But I used to help Daddy with the horses up there. I enjoyed that. I would sit there and watch them ride. That's where I learned how to ride, really. The counselor was teaching some of those kids who had never been on a horse and-- but that's where I learned to ride, how to hold your feet and hold the reins.

Isabelle Chewning: So your family had eight riding horses then?

Ruth Beard: Yeah, well, we had more than that -- oh, yeah. I used to keep the names of them down, but I don't know whatever happened to them. We'd take them up and take them down, tie them up at the ring and they'd ride them and we'd get them at lunchtime and take them and water them, feed them, then bring them back and they used to ride them up on Jump Mountain.

Isabelle Chewning: They rode the horses to the top?

Ruth Beard: And we would set up there, we'd wait. They wouldn't come in 'til after dark. You could hear them coming, singing the camp song and we'd say, "Oh, here they come!" But they'd ride the horses clear up to the top of Jump [Mountain].

Isabelle Chewning: Gosh, wow. Oh, my goodness. They'd go up the long way, I guess, kind of up the spine?

Ruth Beard: Well, it was a trail. Yeah, from where the camp was, they just went out a trail that way.

Isabelle Chewning: Mm hm.

Ruth Beard: They'd -- seems to me like one time they spent the night up there. I wouldn't want to!

Isabelle Chewning: So did you ride one of the horses and lead the other ones when you'd take them down every day to...

Ruth Beard: Mm hm. And some of them, we'd hook the reins under the saddle and they'd follow us.

Isabelle Chewning: Oh, they would? They must have been nice riding horses.

Ruth Beard: Yeah, they were. Yeah, we'd take eight and they would -- I know one time, this big white horse and we didn't have a name for it and we took him up there that day. And Mrs. Chesterman was the one who run the camp, and she was wanting the name of the horses. And Daddy said, "Well, this big white one is Mr. Roosevelt," and that's what they called that horse! <laughter> But I really enjoyed that, looked forward to helping him with the horses every summer. I helped until I was up 17 or 18 years old, I reckon, after I finished school and all, I helped him with the horses.

Isabelle Chewning: Did he raise the horses or did he buy them after they were already broken?

Ruth Beard: He would buy them and then -- Well, the one I rode in horse shows, Lightfoot, gee, I had her out here. She was about 35. She lived to be 35.

Isabelle Chewning: I think I remember that horse. I think...

Ruth Beard: She's the one I used to ride in the horse shows all the time.

Isabelle Chewning: I remember Lightfoot. I remember that name.

Ruth Beard: I had oodles of ribbons, and when we moved over here, I hadn't unpacked everything. And I set boxes down in the basement and that's the only time it's ever happened. It came a big rain and the water came off this hill and ran in the window well and the bottom of that box got wet. And when I went through it, all the colors of my ribbons had run together. I had a few back in the cedar chest but most of them were in that box.

Isabelle Chewning: Did you ride in the three-gaited classes?

Ruth Beard: Three-gaited, uh huh. Yeah. Used to have a horse show in Brownsburg.

Isabelle Chewning: Yeah. I think Mr. Beard told me it was at Brownsburg where you and he rode in the pair class one time.

Ruth Beard: Yeah. And when I rode, like I say, with Mr. Shiflett. And then Daddy would ride in the Knock Down and Out [class in the horse show].

Isabelle Chewning: Oh, so he was a jumper? Did you jump?

Ruth Beard: No, I didn't like to jump.

Isabelle Chewning: But your dad did?

Ruth Beard: Uh huh. You know Tex Tilson in Lexington, or maybe Buena Vista. And Daddy said, "Oh, I'd love to beat him in the Knock Down and Out." Of course you didn't have to have a horse, you know that -- you could have any -- just so they could jump. And Daddy had this big black horse and he jumped -- why, he beat him [Tex Tilson] in the Knock Down and Out!

Isabelle Chewning: He did?

Ruth Beard: He beat him. <laughter> He called the horse Sam.

Isabelle Chewning: Oh, that's great.

Ruth Beard: That was at Brownsburg.

Isabelle Chewning: Wow. What was -- can you spell the name of the camp? How do you say it again?

Ruth Beard: Okahawas.

Isabelle Chewning: Okahawas.

Ruth Beard: Okahawis. I'll have to look it up.

Isabelle Chewning: That's all right.

Ruth Beard: I've got some papers here on it but-- and I get things from Richmond, from some of the ones that were counselors up there. I get things from them now, but I didn't go to camp up there. When they have reunions and things, inviting me to come and all.

Isabelle Chewning: You sort of went if you were there learning how to ride.

Ruth Beard: Well, yeah, I sat there all the time and they saw me and I talked with them every day and everything. But they didn't have any lights. I said, anybody that would come up there and stay - they didn't have lights in the cabins, just lanterns hanging on the wall. I'd have been scared to death of snakes! And they'd have horse shows there at the end of camp. If it was dry and they wanted to have the horse show, they would line up. The swimming pool was down over the -- there was a path down the hill. And they would line up and take buckets of water and pass it up to water the ring so they could have the horse show so it wouldn't be dusty.

Isabelle Chewning: Did other people bring horses, too, or was it just your horses?

Ruth Beard: No. Just ours.

Isabelle Chewning: That must have been so much fun. I would have liked that, too.

Ruth Beard: Oh, it was. I had some pictures of some of the horses. I should have looked those up. I didn't think about that.

Isabelle Chewning: Did you get paid?

Ruth Beard: Daddy yeah, they-- well, I reckon he did. I'm sure he would, but I can't remember. But we had a certain tree to tie each horse up to. And I know we had this one horse, he got wise. Some of the kids was kind of scared, and they'd put their foot in the stirrup and he'd reach around like he was going to nip at them. And they'd take their foot and jump back. <laugh> And somebody'd have to hold the horse's head so they could get on. But Daddy wouldn't watch them. He said he was scared they were going to get hurt. Some of them had never been on a horse. And that counselor, sometimes, would stand in the middle of the ring and, you know, if somebody didn't know how to ride, they couldn't make the horse go. Well, she'd pick up little gravel, rocks and throw at the horse and I thought it was kind of dangerous.

Isabelle Chewning: Yeah.

Ruth Beard: But some of the children had never been on a horse.

Isabelle Chewning: Did they learn walk, trot and canter?

Ruth Beard: Mm hm.

Isabelle Chewing: Did they jump?

Ruth Beard: No. It was interesting. And I used to go down to the lodge when they had their plays and everything.

Isabelle Chewing: That's great.

Ruth Beard: But now it's closed up and the road's closed. Well, I guess it's been sold now.

Isabelle Chewing: Is that the camp that Helen Hartt had gone to?

Ruth Beard: Yeah.

Isabelle Chewing: And then Bennie Fauber --

Ruth Beard: Bennie took over [supplying the horses] after we did, after...

Isabelle Chewing: Oh, okay. So where did Bennie -- did Bennie live off of Swope Lane?

Ruth Beard: Yeah, he lived out here.

Isabelle Chewing: So he, I guess, took horses over there for the whole summer then? He probably didn't take them back and forth every day.

Ruth Beard: I don't know where he kept -- well, we rented land from Henry McCurdy and kept horses. Turned them out at night and go get them in the morning, take them to camp. But it was a lot of fun.

Isabelle Chewing: Did they -- did the horses...

Ruth Beard: Children don't know what they're missing now.

Isabelle Chewning: No, they don't. Did the horses work? Were they work horses, too?

Ruth Beard: No, no. They were all three gaited horses.

Isabelle Chewning: So he [Mr. Wade] must have made enough money to keep them all winter long during the summer.

Ruth Beard: Yeah. We would-- people-- well, Southern Sem [Seminary] in Buena Vista, you know, they had horse riding. They'd teach riding and they'd asked Daddy if they could use some of them during the winter.

Isabelle Chewning: Oh, so he rented them to Southern Sem, too?

Ruth Beard: Well, I guess he just let him keep them. Just for keeping them, he didn't get anything for it. But Tex Tilson, that's who it was, would take some of them down there. It would help him out because he'd teach riding at the college. At Southern Sem.

Isabelle Chewning: Right, right.

Ruth Beard: And then his brother used to take -- we had one we called Silver, a little white horse, and boy, he was fast. Bud [Wade] used to ask Daddy if he could keep him during the winter. He would ride him. He'd even ride him up steps. <laughter>

Isabelle Chewning: Wow, must have been a nice horse.

Ruth Beard: But he always wanted him every winter so Daddy let him have him.

Isabelle Chewning: So he kind of farmed them out during the winter to other people?

Ruth Beard: But he was fast, Silver was. They called him, High Ho Silver. <laughter> He didn't want any other horse to get in front of him.

Isabelle Chewning: You mentioned you went to Oak Hill School?

Ruth Beard: Mm hm.

Isabelle Chewning: And that was the school kind of close to McElwee Chapel?

Ruth Beard: McElwee Chapel. Mm hm. When I started, I would go for half a day. Miss Ward [Elizabeth] was the teacher.

Isabelle Chewning: Oh, Lib Ward was at Oakhill?

Ruth Beard: Uh huh.

Isabelle Chewning: Oh, she was.

Ruth Beard: And we lived on the farm and I would just stay, the first graders would have to stay a half a day so, at lunchtime, I'd go home.

Isabelle Chewning: And how did you get there?

Ruth Beard: Walked. She'd usually let one in the -- I guess it was four grades -- one of the older ones would walk home with me at lunchtime. I believe it was Bertie Mae Tuman [Potter], one time, walked-- she went all the way home with me.

Isabelle Chewning: How far was that?

Ruth Beard: Well, you know where it was, right before you...

Isabelle Chewning: Mm hm.

Ruth Beard: get to McElwee Chapel? We'd cut right across the road and go down through a field to the Riley House, it's where Al Strecker -- not Al, what's the Strecker?

Isabelle Chewning: Oh, one of those Strecker boys..

Ruth Beard: That has Blue Ridge [Animal Clinic].

Isabelle Chewning: That's Alan, I think.

Ruth Beard: He owns it now.

Isabelle Chewning: Isn't it Alan Strecker?

Ruth Beard: Allen, maybe. He owns it now [262 Wades Road]. So we'd cut down across the field there and then go up the road to the farm.

Isabelle Chewning: And was it a one-room school where all the grades were in one room?

Ruth Beard: Mm hm.

Isabelle Chewning: And so was Miss Ward the teacher for everything?

Ruth Beard: We just had four grades. I remember one time, there was just one student in one grade.

Isabelle Chewning: How many were in your grade?

Ruth Beard: Tommy Wade was the one -- about two or three. I can't remember now, but it wasn't very many...

Isabelle Chewning: So it was four grades but probably 20 kids or less?

Ruth Beard: Mm hm. But they had -- well, they had another room. I can't remember whether-- how far up the grades went. Elizabeth Williams taught there, too. She taught the third grade in Brownsburg for years. You don't remember her. But she taught there. But you had to carry the water from down-- had to go down over the hill and carry water and bring it up and put it in the cooler.

Isabelle Chewning: Was there a spring down over the hill?

Ruth Beard: Uh huh. It's where Roy Wade has now, but Mrs. Ella Firebaugh lived there. And we loved to go down there and carry it up because you got out of class! <laughter> You had to do that, you had to build a fire.

Isabelle Chewning: So you went to that school through the fourth grade?

Ruth Beard: Mm hm. I went-- think I was in the fifth that I came to Brownsburg.

Isabelle Chewning: Did they close the school or that's just when you started-- that's when, after the fourth grade, everybody went to Brownsburg?

Ruth Beard: I can't remember when the school was closed. Maybe it was. And when the school was moved, it's the one that's in here at Brownsburg now, that...

Isabelle Chewning: They bricked it up, right [behind the Agriculture and Domestic Sciences Building]?

Ruth Beard: Uh huh. Yeah.

Isabelle Chewning: But it was a frame building when it was [Oak Hill School]...

Ruth Beard: Mm hm.

Isabelle Chewning: Was it associated with McElwee Chapel, or just happened to be...

Ruth Beard: I don't think so.

Isabelle Chewning: ...in the same area?

Ruth Beard: I don't think so. Of course, I've heard a lot of things but, when I was younger, I just didn't think, oh, well. I just didn't pay much attention to what people would say.

Isabelle Chewning: Me, too.

Ruth Beard: And now I wish I'd a listened more. <laughter>

Isabelle Chewning: So you went to four grades at Oakhill and then you started in the fifth grade at Brownsburg. Did Miss Ward teach you the whole time you were at Oakhill?

Ruth Beard: Mm hm. Yeah.

Isabelle Chewing: Did you ride a bus to Brownsburg?

Ruth Beard: Yeah.

Isabelle Chewing: And was your dad the bus driver or was somebody else the...

Ruth Beard: Well, Daddy and Bud [Wade] drove the bus together for I don't know how many years. And then Daddy bought one. But, yeah, we'd get on the bus and ride. We were just so cold you'd think your toes were going to freeze. <laughter>

Isabelle Chewing: No heat on the bus.

Ruth Beard: Well, a lot of times, when it was real cold, you know where Janet Moneymaker lives [Bellevue at 952 Hays Creek Road]?

Isabelle Chewing: Mm hm.

Ruth Beard: Betty Belle [Moneymaker] was kin to Betty Jean [??] and them, Janis. And they used to sometimes let us off because we were just the first on and wait there until they went up the creek and picked up. Because it was-- we'd get off there and stay where it was warm until they'd come back down.

Isabelle Chewing: How far did they go to pick up people? They'd go up Dutch Hollow?

Ruth Beard: Yeah, they'd go clear up...

Isabelle Chewing: They'd go back around through Walker's Creek?

Ruth Beard: No, they'd come back by where Janet lives [952 Hays Creek Road].

Isabelle Chewing: Uh huh.

Ruth Beard: And then, of course, after Daddy moved to the [Rockbridge] Baths, he had a different route. He drove a bus until gosh, I don't know how many years.

Isabelle Chewing: So do you remember much about school at Brownsburg? Did you say Mrs. Grover East was your fifth grade teacher?

Ruth Beard: Well, that's-- the year I, first year out there, she was my teacher.

Isabelle Chewing: How many kids were in your class at that point? It was probably a much bigger group than it had been in Oakhill?

Ruth Beard: Oh, yeah. Because -- I remember-- yeah, Louise Wiseman...

Isabelle Chewing: Was she in your class?

Ruth Beard: Mm hm. Boyd Stuart and -- yeah, there was a whole lot more. And then as we got on up in the...

Isabelle Chewing: Was Mr. [Kenneth] Beard.[Ruth Beard's late husband, Kenny Beard]..

Ruth Beard: Yeah, he was a year behind me. Yeah. But then when we got on up into high school, I remember more. Miss Trimmer. <laughter>

Isabelle Chewing: Ms. Trimmer was the principal?

Ruth Beard: She did everything. She taught -- well, I didn't want Latin. When Phyllis and Louise -- Phyllis Blackwell was in my class. And we didn't want Latin but she wanted us to take it so she worked the schedule around so we had to take it, you know? <laughter> But I liked it after I took it. It was something you had to study every night. You couldn't put it off and I liked it. <laughter> But I didn't want to take it. But she taught Latin, she taught English. She had the Glee Club. commencement exercises, baccalaureate exercises. She did everything.

Isabelle Chewing: She did plays, too.

Ruth Beard: Yeah. Yeah. Senior play, uh huh.

Isabelle Chewing: Were you in any of the plays?

Ruth Beard: Yeah. I saw my book here one day. <laughter> I think it's there on the piano stool. I could get it out for you sometime. I won't take your time now.

Isabelle Chewing: I'd love to see. Yeah, that'd be great.

Ruth Beard: But it was different then. When the bell would ring, you got in line and you marched out. You didn't talk. When you were out for recess and then the bell would ring, you lined up outside, you marched into your room. And you didn't talk or you'd get a demerit. When got so many demerits, you were expelled! <laughter>

Isabelle Chewing: Uh oh.

Ruth Beard: And, in the mornings when school started, if the weather was pretty, you'd line up outside and they would, you know, raise the flag. And you would pledge allegiance to the flag and sing the Star Spangled Banner every morning.

Isabelle Chewing: Wow.

Ruth Beard: And then when school was out, the bell rang, you lined up and marched to the buses. You got on the bus as you got off. If you got off first, you got at the front of the bus because the buses were made different then. There was a seat down each side, you know, set like it is now. But in the middle, there was a long seat and, when you sat in that, your knees were out pointed towards the ones on the side and it was hard, you know, to get through. So you lined up as you got off the bus and you marched to the buses. And we had calisthenics I think it was. We'd line up-- the classes would get down in the road in front of the school and you'd take turns. And you'd stand at the top of the steps and you'd be the leader, do the jumping jacks and do all these exercises. And then Stanley Firebaugh would beat the drum, and you marched in step back to the room. And we had-- you joined certain -- you had army, the navy, the air force and she ordered little caps for whichever one you wanted to be in. And you wore a little cap, and you got out there and you marched.

Isabelle Chewing: Was it because -- was it during the war? Was it to be patriotic, is that why it was army and --

Ruth Beard: I don't know but we had -- you could join whichever one you wanted and he could do the drum. And you'd march out, we'd go out on the field and do exercises.

Isabelle Chewing: Was the bell that rang the bell that's in the middle of Brownsburg now? It's kind of a big bell sitting up on a brick column? It's right in front of Bud Wade's barber shop [at the historical marker in front of 2703 Brownsburg Turnpike]?

Ruth Beard: Did they-- they had-- does it say on there where it came from?

Isabelle Chewing: It said it came from the school.

Ruth Beard: Well, it probably was, yeah. Yeah, when I worked in there, they just, you know, had the bell like they do now so...

Isabelle Chewing: It was an electric bell, right?

Ruth Beard: Yeah. I'd kind of forgotten, you know, how the bell was then. But I just remember a bell ringing and you marched everyone. And you didn't talk, either! <laughter> And, when it rang, at lunchtime, well she'd get you in the gym and do the Virginia Reel with you and all, when you couldn't get outside.

Isabelle Chewing: So you'd come in at lunchtime and dance and just do things, phys ed things?

Ruth Beard: Yeah, if it was raining and you couldn't get outside to do anything, she would have you in gym to-- and I've forgotten how, but she was good at doing the Virginia Reel. I wouldn't know how to do it now. You know you marched down -- they'd line up and you marched -- take her and march down the middle of it and all that.

Isabelle Chewing: Mm hm.

Ruth Beard: Oh, yeah, she would-- and you'd do that, you know, just the two -- just a slow dance.

Isabelle Chewing: And this is when you were in high school?

Ruth Beard: Mm hm.

Isabelle Chewing: How many demerits, I wonder, did it take to...

Ruth Beard: I don't think you had to have but three. If you got three demerits...

Isabelle Chewing: Did people get expelled?

Ruth Beard: I can't remember too many. But you knew to be quiet.

Isabelle Chewing: Mm hm.

Ruth Beard: I liked her.

Isabelle Chewing: Did you take Home Ec?

Ruth Beard: Yeah. Miss Watson. What was her first name? Well, you've probably heard somebody say it. She married to Greer [??] Carson. Alice Watson, I believe it was. No. But she was my Home Ec teacher.

Isabelle Chewing: Did you like Home Ec?

Ruth Beard: Yeah. It was okay. I never did like to sew. <laughter> We used to have to can. In the summer, we were expected to help, you know, when your mother was canning.

Isabelle Chewing: Oh, so you learned that in Home Ec?

Ruth Beard: Uh huh.

Isabelle Chewing: Did you ever go to the cannery in Brownsburg? Did you ever use the cannery?

Ruth Beard: My mother did. I remember her going there.

Isabelle Chewing: Was there a cannery in Rockbridge Baths, too?

Ruth Beard: Mm-mm. No. Not that I remember. I'd kind of forgotten about the cannery.

Isabelle Chewning: Miss Trimmer must have...

Ruth Beard: She was. I mean, she was a remarkable person. She really was.

Isabelle Chewning: Well, to me, it's remarkable that she handled all the administrative things related to being a principal...

Ruth Beard: Yeah, she did everything.

Isabelle Chewning: ...but yet she taught and she coached, too, didn't she?

Ruth Beard: Yeah. Yeah. She was the basketball coach.

Isabelle Chewning: Did you play sports?

Ruth Beard: Yeah, I played basketball and volleyball. I never did like softball. I had to play it because she wanted you to play it. But I couldn't-- I could never-- I can't tell when to hit the ball when it's coming across the plate! <laughter> Do you like it?

Isabelle Chewning: Um hmm. Did she encourage people to go to college? Did some of the kids go to...

Ruth Beard: Oh, yes.

Isabelle Chewning: ...college?

Ruth Beard: Mary Frances was good in Latin...

Isabelle Chewning: Who?

Ruth Beard: My sister.

Isabelle Chewning: Your sister, uh huh.

Ruth Beard: She wanted her to go on further in that, but she didn't. She went to Dunsmore [Business School].

Isabelle Chewning: Well, it must have been a really good education, I think.

Ruth Beard: It was. I mean, and you look back on it now, you had respect for her. Well, I did then. I didn't, I knew to behave myself. We had some that wandered, but we never did have any real bad things, or do anything bad.

Isabelle Chewning: And she lived in Brownsburg with a group of teachers?

Ruth Beard: She did. She stayed up at-- toward the end of the last year, she was in there, she lived up at Mrs. Gibson's. I don't know how many years, there where the greenhouse is [16 McCurdy Lane].

Isabelle Chewning: Oh, you...

Ruth Beard: ...Mrs. Gibson.

Isabelle Chewning: ...you mean in Rockbridge Baths?

Ruth Beard: Mm hm.

Isabelle Chewning: And she drove to Brownsburg?

Ruth Beard: Well, she stayed out-- I can't remember who she lived with when she was here in Brownsburg. She wasn't up there very long. That was in -- when she was getting up in her later years of being principal that she stayed up there.

Isabelle Chewning: Was she still the principal when you graduated?

Ruth Beard: Yeah.

Isabelle Chewning: What year did you graduate?

Ruth Beard: '44.

Isabelle Chewning: So the war had started at that point?

Ruth Beard: Yeah. But she quit. That was her last year as principal, '44, because Kenneth [Beard] graduated in '45 and she wasn't principal then.

Isabelle Chewning: What do you remember about the war? Did you buy war bonds and do patriotic things or...?

Ruth Beard: I can't remember what -- I remember when I was working in there [at Brownsburg School] about every time a plane went over, they were, you know, go look and all that. That was in the '60s, though.

Isabelle Chewning: That was during the Cold War, I guess, when we all..

Ruth Beard: That's when everybody...

Isabelle Chewning: ...were afraid of fallout...

Ruth Beard: ...to build a place [fallout shelter], you know, they were wanting everybody to, that was in the '60s.

Isabelle Chewning: Do you remember any of the other teachers you had in school?

Ruth Beard: I should. <laughter>

Isabelle Chewning: You mentioned Mr. Lunsford

Ruth Beard: Yeah, he...

Isabelle Chewning: ...and Ms. [Alice] Watson was the Home Ec teacher.

Ruth Beard: Well, Miss Trimmer taught English and Latin.

Isabelle Chewing: Did you have to take math?

Ruth Beard: Yeah, Mrs. Patterson, Rosenell Patterson. Well, what else did I take?

Isabelle Chewing: How about Mrs. Patterson, was she a good teacher?

Ruth Beard: Yeah. She was a good math teacher. I can't remember it, but I remember them talking about her reading Uncle Remus stories to them before she started her class.

Isabelle Chewing: Mrs. Patterson did?

Ruth Beard: Yeah. But now I can't remember that.

Isabelle Chewing: What was your graduation ceremony like?

Ruth Beard: Oh, man, she really had a nice <laughter> -- And she was in charge of the Glee Club, maybe I said that to you. The Glee Club and the commencement. She would have the juniors do something different every year. They would line up and one year I know, you know, boy and girl, all went through the gym and they had a flag and would hold it and the seniors marched in, up on the stage, and you kept in step, too.

Isabelle Chewing: All that marching practice.

Ruth Beard: Yeah, she had a little rhythm and she -- and I believe when was in the seventh grade, I was kind of short. And she had me -- she had a V, the seniors to form a V at the end of the exercises on the stage. Because, of course, it wasn't too many graduated at the time, to form a V. And I was short, and she had me for the point of the V. <laughter> I remember that. She had beautiful commencements. Everything had to be just right.

Isabelle Chewing: Did she have speakers or did she do everything?

Ruth Beard: Oh, yes. Well, Mary Frances was -- my sister was -- now which is it? Valedictorian or salutatorian. Valedictorian, is that the head --

Isabelle Chewning: That's the first in the class.

Ruth Beard: Yeah. She had that. And you wrote up your speech -- I've heard Mary Frances say that not long ago -- and you practiced and you practiced. You got up there, you didn't have any notes. You had to say it.

Isabelle Chewning: Oh, my goodness.

Ruth Beard: And the singing she'd have. Of course, there's so many that graduate now, it would be hard to do all that.

Isabelle Chewning: How many were in your class when you graduated?

Ruth Beard: I believe it was about 13.

Isabelle Chewning: And do you remember moving into the brick building?

Ruth Beard: Oh, yeah, I remember. When was that built? '38?

Isabelle Chewning: I'm thinking somewhere between '36 and '38. I'm not sure.

Ruth Beard: '38. Yeah, '38 I think, yeah. Yeah, that's where I went, in high school.

Isabelle Chewning: So was the old academy there at all when you were there or just the stucco building?

Ruth Beard: Bernice talks about that old academy but I can't remember it that much. She's always saying she liked -- why they didn't keep that building instead.

Isabelle Chewning: A lot of people wish they'd kept that building. Was it a big commotion with all the construction going on for that new building? Do you remember any of that?

Ruth Beard: I can't hardly remember about '38, when I would be-- I was born in '27. That'd make me 11 years old, wouldn't it? Is that right? Yeah.

Isabelle Chewing: Maybe it was a couple years after you started school there.

Ruth Beard: I mean, I can sort of remember of them building it but, you know, I can't-- it's terrible, I can't remember anything now.

[audio off then on]

Isabelle Chewing: You were talking about the people in your class and you were telling me there were 13 or 14 in your class. What was the name of the person who was killed in the war?

Ruth Beard: Ralph Robertson.

Isabelle Chewing: And was he the only one out of your group that was...

Ruth Beard: Mm hm. Yeah.

Isabelle Chewing: How about the farming operation that your dad had? Was he a general farmer?

Ruth Beard: When we lived over, yeah.

Isabelle Chewing: Did he have cattle and sheep and...

Ruth Beard: No, we just had cattle. And the horses.

Isabelle Chewing: And the horses. Right. So it was beef cattle, mainly?

Ruth Beard: Mm hm.

Isabelle Chewing: Did you have...

Ruth Beard: Well, we had milk cows. We would just go out in the -- you'd just go out in the field then, sit down and the cows were tame and just milk.

Isabelle Chewning: Did you milk?

Ruth Beard: Yeah.

Isabelle Chewning: Did you have farm chores that you did?

Ruth Beard: Well, I used to milk some and we used to thin corn. Then you seeded corn, it came up and you had to pull up and just leave so many. And now they plant it thick as all get out, but oh, yeah, he used to plant corn and we'd get out in the field to thin it. And oh, you'd look up, you'd think you were never coming to the end of that field. He'd plant it then you'd get out and pull it up. <laughter> But it was fun.

Isabelle Chewning: How did he plant it?

Ruth Beard: The horse and, you know...

Isabelle Chewning: You must have had a lot...

Ruth Beard: with the corn planter pulled by the horse.

Isabelle Chewning: You must have had a lot of fun with three...

Ruth Beard: Oh, we did!

Isabelle Chewning: ...sisters.

Ruth Beard: We did. On the farm. We made our own fun.

Isabelle Chewning: Yeah, that must have-- having three sisters and being the youngest probably would have been...

Ruth Beard: And you separated milk then. I wish I had kept that separator. I don't know whether you've ever seen one.

Isabelle Chewning: I don't know that I've ever seen one but just about everybody I've talked to talks about the separator.

Ruth Beard: Yeah, you'd put that milk in a big bowl and it had two spouts. You'd stand there and turn it and pure cream would come out of one spout and foamy milk out of the other and we'd give that to the pigs. But you had to wash that old separator twice a day. And the pans, they had pans on a wire, when you washed them. And you had to keep those little round pans in order, or it wouldn't work. But I talk about that, or think about it when we were talking about it not long ago how that would separate and get pure cream out of one spout and just milk --

Isabelle Chewning: I'd love to have seen one to know how they worked.

Ruth Beard: I know. I don't know what happened. Back then, you didn't think about keeping anything. You just threw things away like those old iceboxes. We had an old icebox. I guess we threw it away after we got the refrigerator.

Isabelle Chewning: Did you keep the cream in the springhouse?

Ruth Beard: Yeah. Our springhouse was -- like this was the kitchen [demonstrates], and you walked right out the door into the springhouse. It was attached to the side of the house.

Isabelle Chewning: Oh, it was right at the back of the house?

Ruth Beard: Yeah, it was attached to it, another room, and you just walked right into it and it had a cement trough around two sides. And water ran through that all the time, ran in and ran out. It kept it cold in there. That's where our mother would set her crocks of cream and everything in there.

Isabelle Chewning: Did she cook on a wood stove?

Ruth Beard: Mm-hmm. Yeah, I remember cooking on a wood stove. And that's how you got your hot water. There was a tank on the end of the stove. When you had heat in that stove, it heated your water. And that would be nice to have one of those. I mean, not to use but--

Isabelle Chewning: You're doing two things at once then. When you're cooking, you're heating the water too.

Ruth Beard: Uh-huh.

Isabelle Chewing: Was it a good spring?

Ruth Beard: Oh yeah. We had a good spring.

Isabelle Chewing: Did you have a phone in your house?

Ruth Beard: Yeah. We had the one you crank. It rang in everybody's house. You had a certain number, a long, short and a long or three shorts.

Isabelle Chewing: Where was your telephone exchange? Did your calls all come into Brownsburg?

Ruth Beard: In Brownsburg.

Isabelle Chewing: How about electricity? When did you all get electricity?

Ruth Beard: Now I should know that. Because Bernice and I was just talking about that the other night.

Isabelle Chewing: Were you in school?

Ruth Beard: Oh yeah. I can remember though, when we were just carrying the lamps around.

Isabelle Chewing: It's a wonder everything didn't burn up with all those oil lamps.

Ruth Beard: Mm-hmm.

Isabelle Chewing: Because they're so easy to knock over.

Ruth Beard: And to have to carry them around all the time. We don't know how lucky we are. We're fortunate.

Isabelle Chewning: How about plumbing in the house? When did you get plumbing in the house?

Ruth Beard: Hmm, well, I can't exactly remember the year, but I can remember the outside.
<laughter> But I didn't think anything about it, because everybody was in the same way.

Isabelle Chewning: How about at school, though? You had indoor plumbing at school, right?

Ruth Beard: Not at Oakhill, we didn't.

Isabelle Chewning: But you did at Brownsburg.

Ruth Beard: Yeah.

Isabelle Chewning: And so your father mainly used workhorses to get things done around the farm?

Ruth Beard: Yeah. We had horses. We didn't have any tractors or anything.

Isabelle Chewning: How about butchering? Was that a big thing?

Ruth Beard: Oh, they just butchered right there on the farm. Just hang them up. It stayed cold then, cold enough you could—well they don't allow you to do it now, but you couldn't anyway, because the weather's so changeable.

Isabelle Chewning: Not as cold. Who helped your father do all that?

Ruth Beard: Just the neighbors. They'd help each other.

Isabelle Chewning: Did he have anybody who worked for him on the farm?

Ruth Beard: No. He just mostly did it himself.

Isabelle Chewning: He did it all by himself. And he had four girls.

Ruth Beard: Yeah. <laughter>

Isabelle Chewing: No boys to help him farm.

Ruth Beard: No. I laughed and said, I reckon he thought when I came along, "Another little old girl." <laughter> I teased him about that. But I was his boy, I reckon. I helped him.

Isabelle Chewing: Well, you helped him with the horses.

Ruth Beard: I liked outside. I never did do too much -- well, I never did do any cooking. I'd clean house, and Mama did the cooking. I'd clean for her. I never did cook till after I got married.

Isabelle Chewing: Did everyone get married and leave, and then for a while you were the only one left at home? How did that work?

Ruth Beard: Yeah.

Isabelle Chewing: Did Virginia get married first?

Ruth Beard: Uh-huh. And then Mary Frances and Bernice.

Isabelle Chewing: So when did you and Mr. Beard start to date?

Ruth Beard: Well, we dated some, then we quit. It was after, I guess, after we finished high school. We used to go for -- New Providence used to take -- go to Western State [Hospital in Staunton].

Isabelle Chewing: Go to visit?

Ruth Beard: And take programs down there. I remember I used to go with him.

Isabelle Chewing: Did your family go to McElwee [Chapel] or Bethesda [Presbyterian Church]?

Ruth Beard: We went to McElwee until we moved up Rockbridge Baths, and then we started going to Bethesda. McElwee, we went in the afternoon. But after we moved to the Baths, it was just closer and all, so we just started going to Bethesda.

Isabelle Chewning: So a lot of the things that you did with Mr. Beard were church activities?

Ruth Beard: Mm-hmm.

Isabelle Chewning: And then when did you get married?

Ruth Beard: In 1949.

Isabelle Chewning: And he was a farmer?

Ruth Beard: Who?

Isabelle Chewning: Mr. Beard.

Ruth Beard: Oh, Kenny? Yeah. Yeah, he stayed on the farm. He really worked hard on the farm.

Isabelle Chewning: Well, Mr. Trenton Beard [Kenny Beard's father] was considered a pretty progressive farmer, wasn't he?

Ruth Beard: Yeah.

Isabelle Chewning: He had a lot of the new equipment.

Ruth Beard: Mm-hmm, but I've heard Kenneth talk about, you know, when we were younger, out in the field with the horses.

Isabelle Chewning: Did he enjoy being a farmer.

Ruth Beard: Yeah.

Isabelle Chewning: When did he get started in the dairy business?

Ruth Beard: I think it was in the early '50s, because, let's see, he quit in '97. That'd make it about right, I reckon. Because he said he'd milked, I believe, 45 years, that was long enough. So he quit in '97.

Isabelle Chewning: How big was his herd at the biggest?

Ruth Beard: We were milking over 100.

Isabelle Chewning: Did you help a lot with that?

Ruth Beard: Yeah, I helped. Because he drove the bus for Daddy some. After Daddy got to the age he had to -- and Daddy didn't want to sell his bus, so he asked Kenneth if he would drive it. So he'd go over and help start with the milking. And then he'd have to leave, go to the bus, so I'd help Mr. Beard. And then I'd leave and go in to school. [Ruth Beard was the Secretary at Brownsburg School for many years] And then when I'd come home in the afternoons, I'd go over and help, after I got home from school, I'd help him. And then I fed calves. In the later years, I fed all the calves.

Isabelle Chewning: You had two full time jobs then. School and the dairy.

Ruth Beard: Yeah. When I was feeding all these calves, that's just been in the '90s, I reckon. One year, I was feeding 68 calves on the bucket. But Kenneth helped. We had calves every place. He'd help me carry it to them, and I'd dump it, feed them. He'd laugh and say it was my fault. Because he used to sell those bull calves. I'd say, "Oh, that one's so cute. Let's keep it," so he'd keep it. <laughter> We had calves in the granary. We had calves everywhere that summer, but I didn't mind. I enjoyed it. I liked to get out.

Isabelle Chewning: You said you had taken a business course at Lexington after you graduated from high school?

Ruth Beard: Mm-hmm.

Isabelle Chewning: What did you take there?

Ruth Beard: Shorthand, typing, bookkeeping.

Isabelle Chewning: Then you became a secretary at Brownsburg [School]?

Ruth Beard: Mm-hmm.

Isabelle Chewning: How did that happen?

Ruth Beard: Jo [Swisher Heath] was secretary then.

Isabelle Chewning: That's Jo Heath?

Ruth Beard: Yeah. She was expecting, so she was giving up the job, so then I got it.

Isabelle Chewning: And who was the principal then?

Ruth Beard: Mr. Knick.

Isabelle Chewning: How many years did you work there?

Ruth Beard: I started in '56 and quit in '68. I worked 12 years.

Isabelle Chewning: Who were some of the teachers there?

Ruth Beard: Oh, they changed around a lot. We had a lot of -- sometimes W & L [Washington and Lee University Law School] wives would come in. Virginia Lacks [??] -- she's Virginia McCrowell now -- she taught Home Economics. You've probably heard of Anne Nichols [??]. She taught Home Economics. And then we had teachers come from Buena Vista. We had all different.

Isabelle Chewning: Who were the different principals that you worked for?

Ruth Beard: Mr. [first name??] Knick, I guess. Mr. [Hal] Wallace, I believe, was after Mr. Knick. Mr. Snyder, Dan Snyder, and Mr. [William] Armentrout.

Isabelle Chewning: Gosh, the principals turned over. They didn't stay long then, did they?

Ruth Beard: Mm-mm. I think-- well, I don't have the-- let me see which one is here.

Isabelle Chewning: Mrs. Beard has old [Brownsburg School] yearbooks.

Ruth Beard: And this is Mr. Wallace. Yeah, see these are some of the pictures. This is the year I started.

Isabelle Chewning: It's 1957.

Ruth Beard: Because Linda [Mrs. Beard's daughter] was in first grade. I can't see the principal in that one. Oh, Mr. Knick. I was going to see what year Mr. Wallace -- that was '57.

Isabelle Chewning: Did you enjoy being at Brownsburg?

Ruth Beard: Yeah.

[break in the audio]

Ruth Beard: I can't remember her.

Isabelle Chewning: We're looking at a yearbook now.

Ruth Beard: I can't remember her.

Isabelle Chewning: Miss Milner. Mr. Morrison. I remember him. Driving a little MG and living at the Whipples.

Ruth Beard: Mm-hmm. That's his daughter, Mr. Wilhelm's daughter.

Isabelle Chewning: Oh, Virginia Lacks [??] is Mr. Wilhelm's daughter?

Ruth Beard: Mm-hmm.

Isabelle Chewning: Then Claudia [Whipple] taught typing. I remember her as being a librarian.

Ruth Beard: Yeah. She would help me, because I had to sell books at the beginning of the school year down in the library. She used to help me. She'd say, "Well, now you take charge of the money," but she'd take the list that the student wanted, and would get the books and bring it.

Isabelle Chewing: How did the books work then?

Ruth Beard: You bought them, and you kept them.

Isabelle Chewing: What happened if you couldn't afford the books? Did the school system pay for them?

Ruth Beard: I think so. They gave them to some children.

Isabelle Chewing: Because surely not everybody could have afforded the books.

Ruth Beard: But the library was downstairs towards the last few years I was there. But she was, and it was a help. She'd gather up the books for me and I'd get her to help me. And then I had to sell ice cream.

Isabelle Chewing: Oh, I remember that. At lunchtime.

Ruth Beard: Take up the lunch money and then sell ice cream.

Isabelle Chewing: Sell ice cream, yeah. I remember that distinctly.

Ruth Beard: I enjoyed it. Everybody was nice. Well, it was small, and you got to know everybody.

Isabelle Chewing: Did it seem a lot different when the high school left?

Ruth Beard: Yeah, it did seem.

Isabelle Chewing: A lot smaller then. Was it still pretty busy?

Ruth Beard: Oh yeah. We got adjusted to it. But now, the schools are so large. They can't have commencement and things like they used to, because there's too many children, students.

Isabelle Chewing: Did you do typing for the teachers? If they had a test or something they wanted typed, did you do that?

Ruth Beard: Oh yeah. Did I say I took typing?

Isabelle Chewing: Mm-hmm.

Ruth Beard: Yeah, I used to type for a lot. Mrs. [Fanny] Buchanan, she used to bring about all of her tests in there and want me to type them up, and then I'd run them off on the mimeograph machine. Of course then you had the old crank one. And the papers would all ball up in there. <laughter>

Isabelle Chewing: Were any of the other principals you worked for as strict as Miss Trimmer was?

Ruth Beard: Well, they were all nice. I mean, I didn't have any complaints with any of them. They were real nice. And I had to sell -- in the mornings. You got there, you had your little place right in the front of the office where you sold paper and pencils to the students. I'd sell that in the mornings before school took up. There was something else I was going to say when I thought of that. Now I can't think of what it was. Oh, and when we were in school, you had tests. The black board would go all along that wall and all along this wall. You know how they went in the room. That's how we had our tests. They'd fill that one up with questions, come over here and fill this one up with questions. When you got through with that one, they'd erase that one, fill it up again. You didn't have it printed off for you. They put it on the boards and when you'd finish up that one, they'd erase it and fill it up again.

Isabelle Chewing: Was the school day pretty much over at 3 o'clock?

Ruth Beard: Yeah, the same.

Isabelle Chewing: Did you have to stay late when you were working?

Ruth Beard: No, I didn't usually. I didn't leave right at 3:00, but it wasn't too--

Isabelle Chewning: When did you get all Mrs. Buchanan's typing done?

Ruth Beard: Oh, just in between, during the day. I'd go over to the lunchroom in the mornings, take the lunch count over there. I'd eat some of their good cake and stuff they were making. The principals were nice. They knew if they got a call and I wasn't in the office, they knew where to come and find me, at the lunchroom. <laughter>

Isabelle Chewning: I remember having really good food.

Ruth Beard: And they gave you a lot too. I don't see how they fixed it, the things that they fixed. They didn't have just little things. They really had good food.

Isabelle Chewning: It was good.

Ruth Beard: But some of the students would help to serve sometimes. Some of them that maybe-- some of them -- not free, but they paid so much on their lunch, but not as much as it cost. They would help in the lunchroom, but they enjoyed it. They'd serve for their lunch.

Isabelle Chewning: I know your dad had a bus. Did he have a car too?

Ruth Beard: Oh yeah. I remember, we were just young. You had cars with rumble seats. I remember that one.

Isabelle Chewning: Did you drive the car to church, take the car to church?

Ruth Beard: Yeah.

Isabelle Chewning: And there was room for your whole family in the car?

Ruth Beard: I can't remember when I was that young and all. We always went to the [McElwee] chapel, every Sunday afternoon. Well probably, when we were real, real young and we didn't have a car. I can't remember those years.

Isabelle Chewning: If your family needed groceries, did you go into Bustleburg to get them?

Ruth Beard: Yeah.

Isabelle Chewning: Did you ever come to Brownsburg for anything other than school?

Ruth Beard: No. Oh, we'd come out here, but we never did -- let's see, when did Virginia get married? I can't even remember, '38? Well, they were married 65 years. Wasn't it their 65th? You didn't buy anything mostly but sugar and flour then. You used to take eggs to the store, or a chicken. You'd take a chicken over there and Herman [Wade] would put the little scales, like I've got there on them and weigh them [Wade's Store in Bustleburg].

Isabelle Chewning: That's Herman Wade?

Ruth Beard: Yeah.

Isabelle Chewning: Was he related to your family too?

Ruth Beard: He would be my cousin, Uncle Ott's son.

Isabelle Chewning: There are so many Wades.

Ruth Beard: Yeah, I know it!

Isabelle Chewning: All different branches of the Wade family around here.

Ruth Beard: Yeah. Well I've got some I'm kin to I'm probably don't even know! <laughter>

Isabelle Chewning: Were you related to the Wades from Wades Mill?

Ruth Beard: No.

Isabelle Chewning: Were you related to the Wades that lived in Brownsburg? Miss Margaret Wade that worked in the bank?

Ruth Beard: Not that I know of.

Isabelle Chewing: Looking back on it now, were you conscious at all of how bad the economy was during the Depression? Did you always have enough to eat?

Ruth Beard: Oh yeah.

Isabelle Chewing: You always had everything you needed or wanted.

Ruth Beard: Yeah. I can't say of anything. My mother was a good cook. I have to say that.

Isabelle Chewing: Did she make a lot of your clothes?

Ruth Beard: Yeah, she sewed and did the cooking.

Isabelle Chewing: How about doctors and diseases and things like that? Did you have all the regular childhood diseases?

Ruth Beard: I remember we all had the mumps. Of course you got that jaw – ugh! I can't remember being sick that much. I remember the doctor's office used to be where Ag [Patterson] lives [2744 Brownsburg Turnpike].

Isabelle Chewing: So did you come to Brownsburg if you had to come to the doctor?

Ruth Beard: Yeah.

Isabelle Chewing: Do you remember ever having to come to the doctor, or were you pretty healthy all the time?

Ruth Beard: I can't remember. I remember Bernice coming out here. She was always stepping on nails and stuff. He'd clean her foot out. I can remember Doctor Bailey, Doctor Taylor.

Isabelle Chewing: Do you remember Doctor [Joseph] Williams?

Ruth Beard: Oh, yeah, Doctor Williams, that's who I'm thinking about instead of Doctor Bailey, I reckon. I've heard Mama and them talk about him. But Doctor Taylor lived over here in the Wade house at one time [Castle Carberry at 34 Beard Road].

Isabelle Chewning: Right here?

Ruth Beard: Mm-hmm, over here.

Isabelle Chewning: I didn't realize that. But he had his office in Brownsburg?

Ruth Beard: Uh-huh. Yeah, Doctor Williams and -- yeah, it'd be nice if we had a doctor in Brownsburg now.

Isabelle Chewning: Did people worry a lot about things like polio and scarlet fever?

Ruth Beard: I can't remember. They might have. We never did. I can't remember being ill. I had pneumonia one time, but I can't remember ever being sick.

Isabelle Chewning: Did you see a dentist?

Ruth Beard: Oh yeah.

Isabelle Chewning: Who did you see for the dentist?

Ruth Beard: Well, Doctor Wilson, over here at Raphine.

Isabelle Chewning: That's pretty far.

Ruth Beard: He has an office up over the post office. That's who, when I was older. That's when I was-- I was still at home, but I was older. He pulled teeth -- ugh. He was rough too! <laughter>I imagine all of them were at that time.

Isabelle Chewning: Not so much Novocain as they give you now?

Ruth Beard: Yeah. Now they give it when they fill your teeth, don't they? They wouldn't do that then. They said, no, they didn't want to. A danger of hitting the nerve and you wouldn't know it and could kill the nerve. So they wouldn't deaden them when they filled them. But they hit on that old nerve. Hit it, and you'd go on, ooh! It was terrible!

Isabelle Chewing: I don't even like to think about it. How about the animals? Did your dad doctor on the animals himself, or did somebody--?

Ruth Beard: Now I can't even remember the animals getting sick. Back when I was a child, I can't remember ever having a vet. Maybe he did. We used to make apple butter. The neighbors would come in at night and help peel apples. We'd all get out and play while they peeled apples and serve refreshments.

Isabelle Chewing: Was that just for your family making apple butter, or was it--?

Ruth Beard: Yeah, just for the family. And then when they would make, you'd go in and help them.

Isabelle Chewing: Every year, or was that every couple of years?

Ruth Beard: No, I don't think we did it every year, because you'd make a big kettle full.

Isabelle Chewing: And then your mother would can it?

Ruth Beard: Yeah, put it in big containers.

Isabelle Chewing: How did you preserve the meat?

Ruth Beard: Well, I've heard say like a beef, you could keep it hanging all winter, and just go out and cut off what you want.

Isabelle Chewing: So it sort of dried?

Ruth Beard: Mm-hmm, but it wouldn't spoil because it stayed so cold. And you cured your own hams.

Isabelle Chewing: Your dad did that?

Ruth Beard: Uh-huh. Yeah, we cured our own hams. They were good too.

Isabelle Chewning: I'm jumping around. I'm sorry.

Ruth Beard: That's all right.

[End of Tape A, Side 1]

Ruth Beard: -- I should have written them down.

Isabelle Chewning: Well, if you think of other things, you could write them down and I'll come back.

Ruth Beard: But you say I get to read it before you--

Isabelle Chewning: Mm-hmm. You were telling me about fire drills and civil defense drills. Remember anything about those?

Ruth Beard: Oh yeah, I remember.

Isabelle Chewning: In the '60s.

Ruth Beard: Let's see. What did we say? I can't think what we said.

Isabelle Chewning: Just that--

Ruth Beard: Yeah, when you had the fire drills, you had to line up and march out and stand on the playground. The defense drills, what did we do on those? I can't remember.

Isabelle Chewning: I don't really remember at all.

Ruth Beard: I'll have to ask somebody about that. I can remember at the time, since you mention it, about all the drills. And every time you'd hear a plane go over, you were scared and everything.

Isabelle Chewning: Did your mother have any home remedies?

Ruth Beard: Oh yeah. I remember, she used to grease you with Vick's salve, when you got a cold, and heat a flannel real warm. Well, there's nothing to it, but oh, I'd hate it when she'd put that heated flannel on my chest. It was all greasy! And keeping it on you all night, but it helped! I've heard some people talk of mustard plasters. But I don't think she ever made any. Maybe she did for Daddy, but I can't remember a mustard plaster.

Isabelle Chewing: Was she a good baker too?

Ruth Beard: Oh yes. She did all of her cooking and canning. Bring in sackfuls of corn and sit there and shuck corn, and she'd can it.

Isabelle Chewing: You had a big garden?

Ruth Beard: Yeah, a big garden.

Isabelle Chewing: What did you grow in the garden?

Ruth Beard: Oh, everything. We had this creek -- little stream went down through the garden, and a ram. Bernice was talking about it the other day. We used to get it to throw water, when we were in the garden, on each other. <laughter> Stand on that ram and Daddy-- we knew we weren't supposed to do it. You'd stand on the ram and water just squirts out. <laughter> We used to try and throw the -- this is terrible! You don't have to put this on it [the tape]. When we were shucking corn, we knew Bernice was scared to death of those old worms, and we used to try to get them and put them down her neck. <laughter>

Isabelle Chewing: Well that was mean!

Ruth Beard: That was mean, wasn't it. She talks about it now. <laughter> Of course we never could catch her!

Isabelle Chewing: I don't know that I really know what a ram is. I've heard people talk about them, but it's another one of those things, I wish there was--

Ruth Beard: Well, we've got two of them over here at the barn, a big one and a little one, that used to be down here in the meadow. One of them's big and other one's little. Metal things come out from them, and that's how it pumped your water to your house.

Isabelle Chewning: So it was sort of a pump thing?

Ruth Beard: Uh-huh. But if you stood on those metal things, of course the water just kept spurt, spurt, spurting way up high.

Isabelle Chewning: So where did you live when you married Mr. Beard?

Ruth Beard: Up at Rockbridge Baths, across from where the old motel used to be. There at that building is that had a swimming pool in it. It's right down, before you get up to where the store is. Where Phil Mohler lives. The house right before you get to their house, we lived in that one.

Isabelle Chewning: And did Mr. Beard drive out here every day to milk? Was he working on the farm then?

Ruth Beard: Oh, I thought you meant when I was -- that was before I was married.

Isabelle Chewning: Oh, okay. How about when you married Mr. Beard?

Ruth Beard: No, we lived out here. We lived with his mother for a little while, and then we moved over in that white house [get address]. That's where we lived. I thought you meant before I was married.

Isabelle Chewning: And then you moved to this house.

Ruth Beard: In 1960. From the white house over here.

Isabelle Chewning: Were there people working on the farm here, or was it mainly just Mr. Trenton Beard and Kenneth?

Ruth Beard: Just the two of them. Well, Donnie [Beard] would come up on his days off and help. It was just the two.

Isabelle Chewning: Did you know any of the black people in the area when you were growing up? There were a lot of black people in Brownsburg, but I'm not sure there were that many out in Bustleburg, or Rockbridge Baths.

Ruth Beard: I can remember at Bethesda. They lived up on Gospel Hill. And she would come to church, but she'd sit on the back row. And then they were -- there used to be a sexton in Bethesda, I think, at one time. But there weren't too many up at Rockbridge Baths. But then they started going to school, when I was working in Brownsburg [School]. But it wasn't any problem when they did. They all got along. But I think really, some of them, at the time, would just as soon have been in their own school. But then, after they came in, they got adjusted and all. They got along real good. Weren't any problems.

Isabelle Chewning: How about Christmas? Did you all have a big Christmas, Thanksgiving celebration at your house?

Ruth Beard: When we were younger, oh yeah. We've often said, Daddy would be up bright and early, running down the stairs. "What did you get? What did you get?" like he'd never seen it before. <laughter> I don't see how he was always so excited. He'd come flying. "What did you get? What did you get?" And one Christmas, we were all in the living room, and somebody came up on the front porch, scraping their feet. You know how kids are. We hollered, "Come in!" And here Santa Claus walked in. <laughter> But I used to be scared to death. When I got up more of age, I used to be scared to death of Santa Claus. And Daddy had a suit. He couldn't put that thing on and go out and look around and look in the window. It scared me to death.

Isabelle Chewning: That's funny.

Ruth Beard: Oh yeah, we had big ones. But you didn't get [gifts] like you get now. But we enjoyed it more. We'd each of us would set a box. And we had a special place under the tree. Santa would leave in each place, and in the box would be oranges, candy, Roman candles, sparklers and things like that in your box. And if you'd ask for something and you didn't get it, there'd all be a little note saying, "Sorry I couldn't find that, but I hope you like what you got."

Isabelle Chewning: That's cute.

Ruth Beard: I tell the kids now, about how we'd set a box. And you had good candy back then. You always got a lot of candy and oranges and fireworks.

Isabelle Chewning: What did your mother cook for Christmas?

Ruth Beard: I'm sure she'd cook a ham. She always had a delicious meal, all the trimmings and everything.

Isabelle Chewning: Anything else you can think of?

Ruth Beard: I was thinking of something I was going to tell you, but it's slipped my mind. I can't think of what it was now. Something at school.

Isabelle Chewning: If you think of things later, just make a note of them, and I'll come back and you can tell me a few more stories if you think anything.

Ruth Beard: You're not going to keep this are you, on tape all the time are you? Nobody listens to it, do they?

Isabelle Chewning: I think if people wanted to know what you said, they'd go read it. I really do appreciate it. You remembered a lot. I especially liked hearing about the horses. That was great.

Ruth Beard: I remember one time we were leading the horses. I was leading three or something, and one pulled back. Well instead of me letting loose, I just kept holding on, and he pulled me off the horse. The normal thing to have done was let loose of the reins! <laughter> And we used to have people that was -- there was a Susan Buchanan, a girl, and she used to love -- so she'd come up and go up to the camp with us a lot of times. She liked to ride horses, so she'd go up with us. And we'd pack -- Mom would pack our lunch and we'd eat up in the mountain at lunchtime.

Isabelle Chewning: Mr. Trenton Beard was a good horseman too, wasn't he?

Ruth Beard: Yeah. He had a horse named Banner. I was saying, Lightfoot, she was 35. She got so she would lie down and she couldn't get up. Kenneth would have to get the backhoe or something, put a rope around her and get her up. So we finally had her put to sleep, up on the hill. I didn't go up there. Kenneth went. And he said it was hard. I mean, I'm sure it was. But it was Dr. Williamson was the veterinarian.

Isabelle Chewning: I remember that name.

Ruth Beard: Oh yeah, I rode her all the time in horse shows. She was a good horse. I remember Wally Poole saying, when Daddy passed away, "I never thought Lightfoot would outlive your Daddy." I mean, when Daddy bought her, she was just a young colt. And she lived -- usually they don't live that age, but she was 35 years.

Isabelle Chewning: What did she look like?

Ruth Beard: She was sort of a sorrel -- had light feet. She had a colt. We named it Golden Boy. We just rode him a few times. I still call him the colt. I can't think of -- when did he die? I know one time he was standing up here at the fence. And I went out, and he had gotten a wire around his leg, and it had buried-- it had gone back in and we have to have the vet come and put him to sleep and cut that out. I've got a picture of him, getting up when he came to.

Isabelle Chewning: Did Linda ride?

Ruth Beard: She never did ride any horse shows, but she rode just here on the farm. We used to bring ponies out here from Daddy, but the little old ponies were mean. They were more dangerous than a horse, for a child, I think. Daddy had all kinds of horses, so we used to bring ponies out here and keep them, but you usually didn't have to take them back, when Linda was younger.

Isabelle Chewning: I sure appreciate your help. One more thing. Do you remember when they dedicated the new school? Was there a big ceremony? Did you go to that?

Ruth Beard: Gee, I can't remember that. Has anyone's ever told you --

Isabelle Chewning: I've seen an article in the paper about it, but I've never -- don't think anyone has told me about being here.

Ruth Beard: I should remember. I should remember more about the schools and when I was going to school, I mean.

Isabelle Chewning: I think you remembered a lot. That was great.

Ruth Beard: I remember I had appendicitis when I was in the seventh grade.

Isabelle Chewning: Did you go to the hospital in Lexington?

Ruth Beard: Dr. Leech [??]. They were taking exams at the end of school. Mr. Oliver was the home bound teacher. I remember him saying not to worry. I made good enough grades. I didn't have to take exams, so I got out of taking them! That was a bad way to get out them!

Isabelle Chewning: So then you went from seventh grade into high school?

Ruth Beard: Yeah. We didn't have eighth grade. It was just 11 years, but really, altogether, you just went, because we didn't have kindergarten or eighth grade.

Isabelle Chewing: I've enjoyed talking to you. Thank you so much.

Ruth Beard: I've enjoyed talking to you.

[End of Tape 1, Side B]

Ruth Elizabeth Wade Beard Index

A

Apple butter · 42
Armentrout, William
 Brownsburg School Principal · 34
Ayres, Janis · 4

B

Bailey, Dr. · 40
Banner
 Riding Horse · 47
Beard, Ann · 4
Beard, Donald · 45
Beard, Kenneth · 31
 Bus Driver · 33
 Dairy Farmer · 33
 Graduation · 23
Beard, Richard · 6
Beard, Ruth · 1
 Appendicitis · 48
 Business School · 33
 Graduation · 23
 Horse shows · 6
 Marriage · 32, 45
Beard, Trenton · 45, 47
 Farmer · 32
Bethesda Presbyterian Church · 32
Blackwell, Phyllis · 17
Brownsburg
 Cannery · 20
 Doctor's Office · 40
 Horse Show · 8
 School · 17
Brownsburg School · 34
 Commencement Ceremonies · 24
 Fire Drills · 43
 Sports · 21
Buchanan, Fanny
 Brownsburg School Teacher · 37
Buchanan, Susan · 47

C

Camp Okahawas · 5, 7, 9
Chesterman, Mrs.
 Camp Okahawas Director · 6
Christmas · 46
Cold War
 Fallout Shelters · 23

D

Depression Era · 40

E

East, Mrs. Grover · 17
Electricity · 29

F

Farming · 26
Fauber, Bennie · 11
Firebaugh, Ella · 14
Firebaugh, Stanley · 18

H

Hartt, Helen · 11
Heath, Jo Swisher · 34
High Ho Silver
 Riding Horse · 12
Horse Show
 Knock Down and Out · 8

K

Knick, Mr.
 Brownsburg Principal · 34

L

Lacks, Virginia
 Brownsburg School Teacher · 35
Lightfoot
 Riding Horse · 8, 47
Lunsford, Mr.
 Teacher · 23

M

McCrowell, Virginia · 34
McCurdy, Henry · 11
McElwee Chapel · 32
Moneymaker, Bettie Belle · 16

Morrison, Mr.
Brownsburg School Teacher · 35
Mr. Roosevelt
Riding Horse · 8

N

Nichols, Anne
Home Economics Teacher · 34
Nye, Bernice Wade · 2, 25, 31, 40, 44

O

Oak Hill School · 12, 15
Oliver, Mr.
Homebound Teacher · 48

P

Patterson, Rosenell
Math Teacher · 24
Poole, Mary Frances Wade · 2, 21, 31
Valedictorian · 24
Poole, Wallace · 47
Potter, Bertie Mae Tuman · 13

R

Robertson, Ralph
Killed in WWII · 26
Rockbridge Baths
African Americans · 46
Rockbridge Baths School House · 3

S

Shiflett, Mr.
Horse shows · 6
Snyder, Dan
Brownsburg School Principal · 34
Southern Seminary
Horses · 12
Springhouse · 28
Strecker, Alan · 13
Stuart, Boyd · 17

Stuart, Louise Wiseman · 17

T

Taylor, Dr. · 40
Telephone Service · 29
Tilson, Tex · 9, 12
Trimmer, Ocie · 17, 21

W

Wade, Bertha · 4
Wade, Bud · 4, 12
School Bus Driver · 16
Wade, Herman · 39
Wade, Margaret · 39
Wade, Mary Bare · 3
Death · 5
Home remedies · 44
Wade, Ott · 4, 39
Wade, Roy · 14
Wade, Roy Brown "Kite" · 3, 10, 12, 16, 26, 30
Death · 5
Farmer · 5
School bus driver · 5, 33
Wade, Tommy · 14
Wades Mill · 39
Wallace, Hal
Brownsburg School Principal · 34
Ward, Elizabeth
Oak Hill teacher · 13
Watson, Alice
Home Economics Teacher · 20, 23
Whipple, Claudia
Brownsburg School Librarian · 35
Whitesell, Richard · 4
Whitesell, Virginia Wade · 2, 31
Wilhelm, Mr.
Brownsburg School Teacher · 35
Williams, Dr. Joseph · 40
Williams, Elizabeth
Oak Hill School · 14
Williamson, Dr.
Veterinarian · 47
Wilson, Dr.
Dentist · 41
Woods, Linda Beard · 35, 48