

Georgiana Davis

Interviewed by: Lael Carlstrom Ferlita 8/13/99

Transcribed by: Jennie Hakes 11/21/00

Cassette tape label: *Georgiana Davis 8-13-99*

Side A

Lael: Today is August 13 - Friday the 13th - 1999, and I am Lael Carlstrom Ferlita for the Aitkin County Historical Society with our filming crew, and we're here to introduce Georgiana Davis in her apartment at Black Rock Terrace. Georgiana has been an almost lifetime citizen of Aitkin County, and so she's going to share with us today all of the information that she can remember.

Her parents

Lael: So, Georgiana, if you could tell us first about your birth here, and where it was, your parents – start with that information? Your birth date, you maybe could start with that?

Georgiana: I was born November the 29th, 1901 in the Feider (?) house at that time, the site of the Security Bank. My parents had come to Aitkin from Duluth where they were married June 23, 1897. There was two apartments in the Feider house and they had the upstairs one. In those days the outside stairway was used, and a well at the bottom of the stairs and then of course the outhouse was out in back and there was no furnace in the house for that matter. The buildings at the back of the house were: one had coal and the other had wood and the other was the outhouse. He went to work for the Hartman's Livery and was some years, not too many years, later he started his own livery on the, I think it's the site of the theater (Rialto Theatre) about now.

L: What were your parents' names?

G: My mother's name was Ida Wilhelmina Smith and my father's name was George D. Davis. They met in Marshfield, Wisconsin, years before and my dad had been married before, because there was 15 years difference in their age. He was born in York, Union County, Ohio and he married and had four children, then they were divorced, and I suppose he was going around the country looking at places and that's how he happened to end up in Marshfield, Wisconsin. Mom, 'cause she was, her father had died, and she was living with her mother and father - she had remarried – and she was living with their family. She was born in Brigham (?), Wisconsin and they had moved to Marshfield and she was learning to sew and be a milliner, and left then and moved up to Duluth. Everybody was interested in the Bay area, of course... (*unintelligible*)... He asked her to come up there and get married. It was June 23, 1897. It was after that, then, they came to Aitkin as I already mentioned.

Horse-drawn hearses

L: What brought them to Aitkin?

G: Well, I suppose... I really don't know, except it was sort of the biggest town along between here and Brainerd, you know (*unintelligible*). Probably he had felt that he was going to farm some place. He started out in the livery business. They had the only livery in the town then when Hartman went out of business, and Dad owned the hearse and all that goes with it. I can tell all the ancient things about the area. There's a picture I got, one of the largest funerals that they had. They had the horses and the hearse and I had to drive with the Catholic priest out to the cemetery because you hire someone who was quite special. In Aitkin, (*unintelligible*) who was buried that day, everybody that had a horse and buggy was driving their own horses or were all dead so we had to - we didn't have anyone to drive. Oh, I was just a kid, I remember, and scared to death! (*Unintelligible*)...out to the cemetery, too, some graves was underwater, even, and of course that was scary business to me.. (*unintelligible*)

Siblings and school days

L: Did any of your father's first children come to Aitkin, or did they...

G: No, they never did.

L: And then how many brothers and sisters did you have?

G: There were seven of us kids.

L: And you were, then, oldest?

G: I was oldest. Do you want the names of the others?

L: That might be interesting.

G: There was Rebecca, and (*unintelligible*). I remember George, and Irene, and Gordon, and Ben... all of them are still living except George. He died in '86. He worked with the Burlington Railroad in Chicago. He was working for a roofing company in Duluth in the first place, and then they had a job in Chicago, and so he went with them. (*Unintelligible*) There was an old railroad station there, and there was a notice on the board to apply for a push man (?) and so he didn't like the roofing deal anyway, so (*unintelligible*)... and I am sure he misspelled it when he wrote it. Evidently he got the letter because he wrote such a nice letter to George and he could present (*unintelligible*) the railroad, and he did get the job. He liked working nights because it was always cooler and less traffic and (*unintelligible*) going to work, and worked downtown. It took him three-quarters of an hour every day to go to work and also back home again. I thought how awful that was to have to spend three hours in traffic.

L: Who else of your brothers and sisters were born in the Feiter house, then?

G: Well, Rebecca was born in the Feiter house. She was born in 1903, and before we moved to the farm (*unintelligible*). Part of it was the Erickson Store now. Most of the land was on the other side of Rice River. That's where they built a big square house, two-story. There was a horse barn, and a cow barn, and a chicken house and a woodshed. And when it was time for me to go to school, in 1907 it was, we moved into town. And Mom was pregnant with Irene, and so (*unintelligible*) with a neighbor and she took me home. In those days, I guess all the time in school, they really - everyone from the north side of town was to go in the back door, so I had never seen the schoolhouse before; well,

I had probably seen it, but I had never been in it. (*unintelligible*) door, I remember, and all the cordwood was piled inside, long piles of cordwood, out in the back of the schoolhouse, because that was the only sort of fuel we had. Jessie took me across this room, and out into the hall, and up two flights of stairs and plopped me down in the first grade. No one questioned it, so I just stayed there. I don't know if I was supposed to be there or not.

L: Who was Jessie?

G: Perkins

L: Jessie Perkins was your neighbor?

G: She was just a neighbor. She must have been a little ways away, because the house that we had erected was...

L: Where was that?

G: (*unintelligible*) there weren't any older kids there anymore

L: It was what?

G: There weren't any other Perkins (*unintelligible*)..

L: Where was the house located that you moved to, your new house?

G: Well, it was on 5th Street and you know where the Jule (?) house is?

L: Yes...

G: Well, the street that goes north from there, it's the last one on the corner.

L: OK.

Missing out on the baseball game

G: I remember one day my dad would go to a football, a baseball game - and we used to have a pretty good baseball team - and Mom had gotten me ready and I suppose in order to get me out of the house for a few minutes, she said "Why don't you go over and show Mrs. Peterson your new dress?" So I thought that was a good idea, so over I went, and rapped on the door, and when Mrs. Peterson opened the door I had backed into the rainwater (barrel?). Oh, she had to pull me out and had me laid out (*unintelligible*), and I went home soaking wet, And then I remember this house had a smallest rooms I ever saw, and I remember there, in order to get to the game on time, why, Dad took the other kids and went and put me to bed. And I remember my bed stuck out over the window a little bit, and Mom (*moved the bed there?*), I guess, and so I could look out and see my clothes on the clothesline, and I not being able to go to the game, I think mostly because mostly I was in bed between the sheets but no lights on in the house. A few years ago when I was still working at the Post Office, the Assistant Postmaster had to go around and check the carriers, and I was walking around with Liljenquist, and I was telling him about this thing, about the rainwater, and that I had to stay home from the baseball game, and me looking at my clothes pinned out on the outside line, I said "Do you suppose we could have a walk around the house and see if the clothesline is still there?" And sure enough, it was. It was on the corner (*unintelligible*). I got a real kick out of it because of Elmer (*Liljenquist*).

The dress she wore as a 3-year old

L: Speaking of dresses, you have a very interesting dress to show us. Do you suppose you could take out your dress that you have here from when you were three, and the picture of you on it, so we could see that?

G: Oh, sure.

L: You could just hold it up. And the picture I could help you with. And that was when you were three years old. And what, was there a special occasion?

G: I don't know. Not that I know of.

L: So this is, you were born in 1901 – this is 1904. This says “two years old”, no, “three”. As we are talking about these things and so far back, do you remember – oh, I am sure you do, some of your playmates? Were there neighbors close by, like probably on the farm, were there neighbors that you played with? Or like in town? Were there neighbors that you played with? Or mostly brothers and sisters?

G: We moved back to town so I could go to school, and there were only the three of us at that time. Irene was born in that house.

L: ... in the house in the northeast part of Aitkin. OK. Were the rest of the children then born in that house?

G: No. (*unintelligible*)

L: Thank you for showing that to us.

Houses she lived in

G: Afterwards we moved from the house on 5th Street to a house on 4th Street. It was the house next to I guess (*unintelligible*). But that isn't the house (*unintelligible*) because that burned down during the time I was, I retired. Gordon was born there, and farther down the street, probably you remember the Shank House. That's where, was there a pool hall or some kind of a bowling alley, I guess, on the corner?

L: I remember the name, the Shank House and I think I remember the house that you said burned.

G: At the time we lived there it was the Shank House. There was a laundry on the corner. (*unintelligible*) Price had it, and his daughter Ada Price is the one who married Howard Cluff that was in the Royal Clothing Store. I suppose that's why they bought the Shank property for the bowling alley to get more area. It was a big house with five bedrooms and both Patricia and Ben were born there, so they all were born right in the two-block area.

L: You told me before then that the farmhouse burned.

G: Oh, yeah. When we lived in the house, I told you about going to look at with Elmer, Irene was born there October 3, 1907, and in those days mothers always stayed in bed when a youngster was born, about 10 days or so, and Mom was in there at the time, and forest fires started up in the area north of Rice River, and the wind just blew the flames across there, and burned it all up, burned the property down and much that we had intended to bring to town when we either got a bigger house or needed it. Also I know

there was some talk about it would be easier to haul on a sled because it was (*unintelligible*). We bought the farm, or Dad did, from the Courtise's (?) and Mrs. Courtise was the midwife at our house at the time. Of course, like I said, I started school, and wouldn't you know, in those days, every kid and even the teachers, had lice. And I remember having, laying, my head on my knees, cracking the nits. Everybody had them. (*unintelligible*) It was in the Minneapolis paper that they had a session where somebody (*unintelligible*) lice, and everybody gets it then.

School

L: When you started school about how many students were with you? In your – was that a one-room?

G: Well, it was a real school.

L: ...into the public school?

G: Oh, yeah. That was built in 1901. It was built about the time I was born. I never had been in it because... although we did live in town and I was born in (*unintelligible*). We lived on the farm. In those days, there was just a horse and buggy, so that wasn't much fun to go to town. Anyway, (*unintelligible*) the 21 Saloon (?) they used to have, and it was no fun for us, although we nearly... I saw the schoolhouse, you know, I never was in it really until the first day of school when I went through the janitor's door.

L: And so how many started with you? In your class?

G: Oh, I think it was, I suppose it was quite a few kids.

L: Do you remember your teacher? Any of your teachers? That's all right. So you graduated from Aitkin High School, then.

G: Yes. In 1920.

L: 1920.

First experience at the Post Office

G: I have to tell you about our first day of school. Of course, I had never seen any of these kids, and teachers, and had never been in the building so it was all new, and I was just taking in everything. So the first day of school you never stay only a few hours, and all the kids were guided out the front door. And they went down 2nd Street towards the Post Office, and of course, I just followed along, never had been there before. And when we got to the Post Office of course (*unintelligible*) or anything, and so I went in the Post Office like all the other kids, lined up, queued up, along the wall. And if you remember the old office has that little bit of a square window? Every kid, I started watching very closely, not one of the youngsters had a single word, she put her face in the window, facing the window, and whoever was inside – which I couldn't really see where I was standing – anyway, they got some mail, some kids did, of course. And the next one would get some, too. There we were up in the Post Office (*unintelligible*) and so the Postmaster asked me, I remember, whose mail you are? "Well, I mail to my Aunt Mary and my Aunt Amanda!" (Laughs) I thought she looked kind of funny, that I didn't understand mail. And Lois Olson in the back part of the office, I could see from this little

window there was someone who was, just, something (*unintelligible*) because she was laughing, I know.

L: That's funny.

G: I found out years later her father was (*unintelligible*). Anyway, she worked at the office. Anyway, after she kind of leveled off a little bit, she finally told me that (*unintelligible*). So, on my way home, I had to go past the livery stable my dad had, of course I had to stop and say hello to him. And he said, "Did you ask for the mail? Did you stop for the mail?" And I said "Yup, I stopped for it. She said there wasn't anything." So "you better go back again and tell her that you want George Davis' mail, Box 1495." He said Lou Harry (?) should be there, of course I got back then, but still nothing from Aunt Mary or Aunt Amanda. But anyway, they did figure out who I was.

Later when I started working in the Post Office, and had to wait on that same little window there, and all the kids would stick their little faces in there. Naturally, I would know who they were, so I often would just hand out mail to them. There wasn't one single one that asked for it, the special mail. Of course I never told them at the Office anytime I worked there because I realized how really fun it was.

In those days, the postcards were only one cent. You could buy them at the Post Office for one cent, the card and the whole bit. And in those days also Mom or Dad or our brothers or sisters or anyone, I think, didn't do much writing, you know. They didn't write, and so most cards had "we're fine, hope you are the same". (Laughs) There was some special, maybe somebody was sick, or something like that. Everything was on a postcard, and Mom had given them to us kids to play with. It was very careful how we played with them. I remember shoeboxes that we had, we had to get quite a few of them, and we could read, I think, that was the first words we learned to read was "we're fine, hope you are the same". (Laughs)

L: The Post Office, excuse me, was where the Riley Auto building is now.

G: Yeah. And half of that, too. When they started to put Tom Sawyer's Bakery - the Post Office was on the west side and the other side was Tom Sawyer's Bakery.

L: Tom Sawyer's Bakery.

G: And he went out of business, and then they took out the partition between them, and ended up having the whole building.

L: Was Tom Sawyer's really the owner, or was that name just...

G: No, that was his real name.

Aitkin businesses and the Cluff's cabin

L: How about some of the other business places in Aitkin? Can you, you know, as you walked down the street, can... You mentioned the livery stable where your dad was.

G: Next to the livery stable south there used to be a real estate office there that John MacDonald used to work in?

L: And who had the banks?

G: The First National Bank, I think that was on that corner, all the time I worked in the office. The theatre, the first theatre, and Royal Clothing House, too, were on north on the west side of Main Street. And the theatre and the Clothing House, both, moved across on the other side. I think the Royal Clothing House bought, at one time, was a Republican (*unintelligible*). I know when they tore out the flooring, there was real nice hardwood floor and the Cluffs were building their cottage out of it. And I remember the day all the flooring, I think the glass windows that were in the thing, in the building, (*unintelligible*) the doors. They used that in their cabin. I remember that it was about the time they were starting the new hospital south of town they had a luncheon (*unintelligible*). And afterwards then I had gone with the Cluffs out to their cabin, and the boys were going to lay the flooring in their cabin. And of course, all the pieces of wood, they was very narrow, good hardwood, and they had to take a knife this long and take out any gravel or sand that had accumulated through the years. It was thoroughly dry so it scraped out real easy. I know the boys got into an argument. Jimmy had a earlier, he had started putting it on, the flooring, the length of the dining room, in that area...

L: Jimmy Cluff?

G: Yeah, Jimmy Cluff. And when we came, had brought Ada out there, "Oh!" she said, "that was the wrong way to do it. You were supposed to put it across the narrow way." And they had a little argument about that. So Jerry said "Georgie, how do you think it ought to be?" And I said "Oh, heaven honey, why do you want to get me into this?" (Laughs) And I said "Well, I don't know, I would put it on the long way." And Jerry said, "Why?" And I said, "Well, if you put it on the long way, one board will go across the door opening, otherwise you put it on the short way you have all these little ends like that." And he said "Good enough for me! Keep right on, Jimmy." (Laughs)

L: Oh, that's interesting! (Laughs)

G: Yeah, I thought it was. I was scared to death that I could see that there was a little problem, and I didn't want to get into it, but it turned out that it was a good way to do it.

Working

L: Were you involved in a lot of activities during your school years.

G: Not a great lot, because my mother was taking in sewing and stuff, and so needed some help doing it. Seems like I was always getting excused to go home and help with the washing. What broke me was that I couldn't take the notes to get excused from school with me when I went in the morning, and I had to go back at noon. Walking home first, and then walking back with the excuse, and back home to help with the washing. Which made a pretty hard day out of it.

L: And after you graduated, you stayed in Aitkin, then.

G: I started working for the Post Office, you see, in 1920, and I didn't graduate until I started in February and then graduated in June. So I worked 4 hours in the morning, before I went to school, and then 2 hours after, and all day Saturdays, and in those days the delivery train brought the mail, so mail was delivered on Sunday. So that was always my job, after I kind of learned where all the boxes and stuff were (*unintelligible*). So at night there was a train that came in, and someone had to sort that mail. I sold tickets at

the theatre. Oh, boy, I was supposed to be there at 7:30 and you should have seen me going down there along that corner to get the mail not a second later. It wasn't a great loss, but quite a few people that got papers they wanted (*unintelligible*). As soon as I heard (*unintelligible*) down the corner I would go, over to the theatre. I sold tickets there until the theatre was moved to the other side of the street where it is now. And I sold there for a while, too.

(End of side A)

Side B

(Tape starts in middle of conversation)

A job at the Post Office

G: (*unintelligible*) I said, "Oh, sure, I would, but" I said, "I have to go home and ask my mother." And so I ran all the way home, and my mother was fitting a dress for Miss Alzheimer (?) – she worked for the (*someone's name – unintelligible*). And in those days, of course, you didn't put and buy patterns, you made patterns, and Mom had a kind of a funny looking chart with all kinds of little holes and stuff you'd make your (*unintelligible*) and stuff. And from that you could get a pattern. And on real, cheap material, we would cut a pattern from it, and then (*unintelligible*)... seeing if the garment was going to fit and then you'd just decide on how you want it. And I know that Mom never wanted us to go in and bother her while she was fitting a dress, and so I remember sitting on a chair, and waiting and waiting and waiting. And I thought, "My land, what in the world is she doing anyway?" So finally I thought, well, she'd think that was all right, so I ran all the way back to the Post Office and told 'em that my mother thought it was all right. And I told 'em when I got home, that (*unintelligible*) and she didn't think it was all right! (Laughs)

L: Wages. How much – what was your wage?

G: Oh, my! I started in February 1927, and the wage was 35 cents an hour.

L: Wow!

G: But that year, they raised wages 25 cents, and so I got a whole 60 cents! And the first day of work was a Saturday. I worked 9 hours, and I thought I would die! Because I was very active, and on my feet, and running and oh, everything. That's what, it's a whole lot different when you just shift your weight from one foot to the other. Honestly, I really did think I was not gonna pull through!

L: (Laughs)

G: But I did.

L: And you remained there your whole working career.

G: Yeah. I was there for 47 years and 20 that I was the Assistant Postmaster.

L: You left Aitkin, then, for awhile, after you retired.

G: Yeah, my sisters were in Boulder, Colorado, and they liked it so well. And I thought it would be nice to be where they were...The two Gedding (?) girls and I used to go out

on a lot of trips while I was working. She – Mr. Gedding had a car, of course, for the road delivery that he was on, Route 2 carrier. And I had gotten a car, so one time we'd take my car, or Gedding's, and (*unintelligible*) would drive us, and Marian was the one that was supposed to write down all the events and report how much it cost us to go here and there, for buying gas and stuff. And oh, I have some of those letters, and you'd just be dumbfounded how cheap we traveled! All over! And (*unintelligible – a woman's first name*) Heatherington was, she was born in Aitkin, but they had moved to Duluth so the kids could go to school.

L: What was the name – Heddington?

G: Heatherington.

L: Heatherington.

G: Heatherington.

L: And the Gedding girls names were Miriam...

G: Miriam and Lindl (?).

L: Lindl?

G: Uh ha. And I remember...

L: Where did they work?

G: Well, Lindl worked at the courthouse with Claude (?) Cline when he was the county auditor. And Miriam worked up there, too.

L: Did she work at the school? Miriam Gedding?

Seeing the King and Queen of England

G: Maybe it was the school. We were in Winnipeg when the king and queen of England came, and oh! That was beautiful! To be there for that occasion, for the Winnipeg, I think we had been there before, and for the king and queen, why, everything was dressed up. And oh! A lot of all kinds of red banners and stuff, and all the Mounties with their beautiful horses and their outfits and everything. And we stayed at the same hotel, because...the Marlborough... when we drove in to get the reservations, of course we rode to the same place we had been. They had bleachers along some of the streets. We had bleachers. And when the king and queen had rode in a carriage. I often wondered if they brought that from England with them. I think it's the same one that you see in the (*unintelligible*) of London, you know. Somebody rides in this open carriage. And they had four black horses that were so polished up, and the queen – she's still living now. She's the Queen Mother, you know? And she had liked it very... she (*unintelligible*)... she looked different, she was very fair. And she had this beautiful umbrella she was holding over this open carriage. And this umbrella... And I remember we were, four of us girls were sitting in the bleachers, and Lindl said "Oh! I think I'm going to cry!" And I said, "Well, if you do, you can't see anything!"

L: Do you remember what year that would have been?

G: No, I don't. (*Note from Jennie: I know it was 1939, because we have a teacup and saucer from my husband's Canadian side of the family, that says "To commemorate the*

visit of their majesties King George VI and Queen Elizabeth to Canada and the United States of America 1939)

Jack Christianson (?): The Duke, he married Wallie Simpson, and his brother then became king.

L: That's right. OK.

G: Oh, I was going to tell you that Swenke (?) house, Allie Hanson – that was before she married Warren Hartman – had something real good. That they were reading tea leaves like they told about, you know. And I know when she was reading Lindl's and mine, well, she told the both of us that she could see in there that we were going to be at a parade and everything, with very notable people and stuff like that, and I've often thought, don't you think that's something - that she actually really said what we actually did afterwards?

(Note from Jennie again: Another coincidence! Allie Hanson was my grandmother Martha Hanson's sister – Martha married Frank Erickson, and my mother Dorothy Erickson Hakes was one of their 3 children – and we have Martha's fortune telling cup and saucer. It was quite a fad at one time, reading tea leaves. We also have the instruction book that came with it, dated 1931.)

G: I thought that was interesting. She was just a – I don't know how she started doing these, but she turned out to be absolutely right.

L: And you continued to travel...

G: Oh, yeah.

L: ...throughout your lifetime.

G: Yeah, we went to lots of places then. The four of us. We took a trip into Canada one time, and we went up through the Straits and over, so we saw the (*unintelligible*), and then went on to Quebec, and they had graduated from high school or college some kids, they were trying to earn a little money. And so we could hire them, if they would drive the car, and as long as there were just the four of us, there was room for one more, and so we hired one of these graduates that sort of saw us on to St. (*unintelligible*) very beautiful country in (*unintelligible*). I always thought it was too bad that the United States didn't continue that 49th meridian that crossed the other part of the States, but we took lake ferry to northern boundary. And so we saw all kinds of things. Beautiful country, beautiful area. And when we stayed in the Chateau Fontenac, and a movie star happened to be there. (break in tape) And he wrote about that afterwards, that he had been to the doctor and gotten a prescription, but it hadn't helped at all. But the footman at the Chateau Fontenac told him what to take, and he says that the doctor had it all wrong, the cold was in his other nostril.

L: Where was that, in what city?

G: In Quebec.

L: When did you return to Aitkin, then? Now, to live here?

G: Oh, the 24th of August in 1994.

L: 1994.

(break in tape)

L: I am wondering if you have other things that you would like to show us. You have some things out on your desk, and I wondered if you wanted to...

Getting into trouble dressing up

G: One thing I would like to tell you about, though. We lived on a farm, like I said. We kids really went to town. But there was a... my dad for some reason, had to go over to see Mr. Armstead.

L: Who was Mr. Armstead?

G: Well, I don't know what he did, but I remember there was a (*unintelligible*) Armstead, I know, and Clark... I remember Clark, the first day in school, he had a time talking, you know. He couldn't say "Clark." And he kind of said it "Clock" and the teacher thought it was so funny that she said, "And what did you say your name was?" "A Clocka (*unintelligible*) – I told you what my name was!" (Laughs)

L: (Laughs) Anyway, your father had to go to see Mr. Armstead...

G: And so I rode along. And Mrs. Armstead gave me a cookie, and said I should come back again. Now this old, you have to go down the main road, but the people from town used to cut across the, our bridge, to work, because the property, like I said, was the airport side on this side of the river and the most of the land was on the other side of the Rice River. And so dad had built a kind of an approach to this side, and it was just kind of a little bridge, I suppose. And so there was a lot of people that, when the Rice River was high, they could come and go over our bridge and cut across our property and miss all this (*unintelligible*).

Anyway, Mrs. Armstead had given me a cookie and said I should come back and visit her, which I said I would sure do. My mother, when she was, before she was buried, had like I said before, that she was working in town so she could learn to sew and be a milliner. And when Mom came, (*unintelligible*) she brought a good sized box of velvet hats and ostrich plumes, and veils, and good hat pins and all kinds of stuff. And she used to let us kids play with that. And because the ostrich feather are quite hard to destroy, you know.

Anyway, Mrs. Armstead had asked me to come and visit her. So I really wasn't really trying to hide anything. Everybody was busy because we had a hired girl and a hired man on the farm. She'd asked me to come, so I gotta go unless she was really dressed up a little, and so with a, well, we had to stuff paper in these, some of these hats that were there in that big box that Mom had, and so we had to have paper in that, so it didn't come down over our faces. And with, I don't know, I was decorating the hat from my sister. We got done, for myself, and we just loaded on the feathers, and boy! We hat-pinned and everything we could think of. And evidently, everyone was busy, and I wasn't trying to sneak out or anything, but I was just so busy with my decorating, you know, and getting ready to go to see Mrs. Armstead, that I didn't tell anyone what we were doing, until all the sudden we were missed.

And they looked all over and they called, you know, and no one answered or anything. And they was sure that we had drowned. But oh, my mother had threatened that she was going to give me a spanking of my life for not telling her what we were doing! Anyway, the hired man got on top of the chicken house, I guess it was, and he was looking all over, and he thought he could see something fluffy moving along this road. And so he ran down the road and found us.

And my mother had promised, of course, that she was going to give me a spanking, and I never had one before, but when they saw the hired man come up with the two of us all decorated...and ostrich never saw so many feathers! I remember all three of them: the hired girl and the hired man and Mom, sat on the pump can and laughed until they nearly...well, I didn't get spanked at all!

L: That's a wonderful story! (Laughs)

G: I can remember, because Rebecca is, she just let me decorate her just as much – we were just loaded with all kinds of fancy stuff, you know. It's too bad we didn't get over to Mrs. Armstead's, so she'd see how... (Laughs)

L: You should have had a picture taken.

G: Yeah, in those days no camera deal, you know. That was probably in a house. We were still on the farm 1906 or something, you know. And we was just little kids. But anyway...

Retiring to California

L: Now, I have to ask – your folks are buried here in Aitkin, in Lakeview?

G: Yeah, in the cemetery.

L: And how about brothers and sisters? No, you only have one...

G: Yeah, just my mom and dad are buried there, and just yesterday Jerry Thompson was here, so that I made arrangements for my brother George, because I know that his remains are buried in Chicago, (*unintelligible*). And May had died, and she was cremated, so they may be out there in the cemetery also. The other kids, we had five lots in the first place, and I guess they needed the lots, so they wrote to me, and wondered if I would want to sell the other three. So I asked the other kids in our family, and they said they didn't want to be buried there, so I sold them back to the cemetery. And we just have the two.

L: So there are no brothers and sisters living around here, in this area?

G: Uh, ha. My brother, Ben, is over in Coffee (?), but my sister Patricia, next one to him, is in Phoenix, and Rebecca and Irene are in the (*unintelligible*)...are in (*unintelligible*), California.

L: You lived near him for awhile?

G: Yes, out in Nissa (?). And they did live in Alkaholie (?) at first, but at, the doctor thought it was better for his emphysema if he could get nearer to the ocean, because probably the air was clearer, so...I had already moved to Nissa because Zeze (?) Heatherington, the one that went on all these trips, because she and (*unintelligible*) and

Zeze had a kind of an Aitkin party of all the Aitkin girls that were out there in Minnesota. And Irv, they had (*unintelligible*) at her house, and after George died, I suppose she'd finally be real busy or something. So Zeze had said, gee, it would be nice if you lived here, because we had been on so many trips and so many nice times together, and I said, well, just, do you want to look around at coaches? Well, there wasn't one single coach empty at the time. There were 137 in this... and then, by the time I through (?) home, then the telephone rang, and Zeze said, I just found out that a coach in the very next lot is for sale, shall I go over and look at it? I said, oh, sure. And she went over and came back, and said she pounded on the walls, and looked everything all over very carefully, and she thought it was a good coach. And it was in a different lot than hers was, but it was same second on the corner. So I said, well, yeah, why don't you go over and tell her that I'm interested. So they never, all they did, was put out the sign and they sold it right away. (Laughs)

It was fun, because Zeze had lived there long enough that she knew the California area real well, and he had died, so she sold the little farm that they had. And so we went to all kind of places. The first thing we did was join the zoo. And George liked to go down to the zoo, and he belonged to it, and got in on a lot of their suppers and big dinners and things that they had. And so that was real fun for us to do that.

L: Well, Georgiana, I think we're going to end this today, but I think...

G: My voice...

L: ...Yes, I think your voice is giving out.

G: I hope that there...it's showing up (on the tape).

L: I am sure it's going to be wonderful. And after we review it, you might want to see this, and we would be happy to show it to you, the filming, and to listen to yourself, and we might be wanting to get back to you, then, at a later date, if that's OK with you.

G: Yeah.

L: But we thank you very much for this time today...

Saving Father Green from drowning

G: I would like to tell you about the one time on the river, Rice River was very high. And they, a lot of the people that lived up north of us, they didn't try to stay on the main road, they would always come across this approach my dad had, and cross the same road where I told you my sister and I were walking to go to Armstead's. The river was very high, and we didn't know why it was, but Father Green was using this road to go up and visit some of the Schall's (?) and Cartie's (?) and Bellecourt's (?) and the Armstead's, of course, I think some of those, some of those same people live there. Anyway, perhaps the approach to the bridge had washed out, I just don't remember exactly, except that the wheels of the buggy must have dropped into this hole, and threw Father Green into the water. And it was in the spring, of course, cold as could be. And they was an open buggy, so everyone wore heavy coats and stuff, and I remember that I, Mom from our house, she could see what was happening, so she and the hired girl rushed out to save Father Green. And I, of course, wanted to go, and she grabbed me and put me in the pigpen, because it had a fence around them, and I suppose she figured she'll never figure

out how to get out of there...By the time I did, they had already taken off on the raft to save Father Green. Which they did. And I can remember him standing there with this heavy coat, remember in those days a lot of people wore heavy capes, kind of doubled, so then, (*unintelligible*) to keep warm. And he was just dripping and shivering, and somehow, they (*break in the tape*) I remember seeing him just hang on the spokes of the wheels and one would pull him up a little bit, and there he'd go again, and got ducked into the cold water. But they did save him, and somehow got the horse and buggy turned around, so that he could drive back to town. I'm not sure, it probably could have been a horse and buggy from our stables, too, from my dad. Quite a few people in those days used to have horses in their home, you now, but I don't think the priest had horses.

L: So that was before 1907.

G: Yes.

L: When you left the farm.

G: Yeah. Because we moved to town in 1907, so it had to be before that. There must have been something in the paper, I would think, about this, and also about the terrible fire, but I asked one of the girls at the Age, because I knew just about what year when the fire came in and burned our property down, and I don't know that (*unintelligible*) or not, but you think there would be...

L: Jack Christianson and did look for that, and we could not find any articles about it. Papers were very worldly back then. The first page was dedicated to Aitkin news, and then a page further on in the paper, but much of the paper contained nation news and international news and state news. It must have been the all-encompassing.

G: ...burned down at the same time, so it must have been through the wind, and the fire had started on the other side of the river, and the wind was that had, that it blew flames over to (*unintelligible*). We had one of those old-fashioned, well, it wasn't old-fashioned then, table-type baby grand pianos, you know. They were great big things, that of course and many other things burned also. If you had that now, well that would be priceless.

L: Very priceless. Absolutely.

G: Also, I often have thought how I, I remember sitting at this, Essie's (or Effie's?) piano, playing, you know, and crossing my hands and all kinds of things, and so where in the world did I ever see that, because we never went anyplace? You know. And they didn't have TV in those days, so where did I get the idea? I was old enough to be very creative, imaginative. (*Laughs*)

L: (*Laughs*) OK. Well, thank you very much and we'll be getting back to you, I think, OK?

G: OK.

(end of side B)