

Ann Newton: Growing Up on the Farm

AN: And my mom, she raised her own chickens, and my children think it's real funny because I tell them, I can remember mother saying she was going to kill a big fat hen, and she would get out and she would kill it, chop its head off, she'd dip it down in boiling water and we'd watch her dress it, and we, that was a, we couldn't wait until it would get done. And she raised her own eggs and we had a spring, the farm we lived on, and she would churn and make butter and she would put the milk, we didn't have a refrigerator, and she'd put the milk and the butter in the spring to keep it cold, and I can remember going to get it for her. And we lived a good piece off the road, so we did have an ice box, and every so often a man would come by and my dad would buy big chunks of ice and we'd put it in the ice box, and that day we would have iced tea. It wouldn't last the whole week, but we would have it for a day or so. And I remember going out in the yard playing, and my mom, she would order chickens and they would come through the mail. And she would, raise her little baby chickens and we would go out to play barefoot in the summer and the little baby chicks would come up and peck at your feet and we thought they were so cute. They'd grow up and the roosters in there she would fry and she'd save her pullets to grow up to be hens so she'd have the eggs.

Ann Newton: Starting School at Conway School

AN: And I started school when I was six, at Conway School. And we had to walk, it was close to three miles, and we'd walk in the morning and we'd walk back in the afternoon. And, but there was more kids that lived close and we all would walk together. And I went there for two years. And after that, in my third year of school, I started riding the bus and coming in to Elkton School, and I went there until I graduated. And I graduated in 1955 with a class of 15. And we were all real close because we had all our classes together, and we still are close even today, we get together fairly often.

NT: What was the school like in Conway?

AN: Well, we had a wonderful teacher, Miss May Sisk, and of course she taught all grades. And when it was your time for class, you had class, but you could hear the others, so you learned, even from the older ones, because you were, you could hear them. And we had an old wood stove that the boys would go out and get wood and keep the wood going, and we had, of course there weren't any water fountains. We had like a water jug like that had a little spigot and we'd drink our water from that. And we had to carry our lunches, no lunch rooms, and Mother would pack my lunch and I'd carry it that far with me every morning, and we'd all have lunch.

NT: What sorts of things would she pack you for lunch?

AN: Well, maybe something we had left from breakfast, maybe biscuits with a piece of meat in there or even, I've had biscuits with a fried egg, and sometimes maybe we'd have crackers with peanut butter or some cheese. But very seldom did we have sandwiches, because Mother cooked, she made biscuits and she made cornbread, and so we'd usually carry the biscuits. But they were good because you were hungry by that time of the day. And we didn't have cokes or anything—we'd just drink water with our meal. There was no refrigerator to carry milk or anything, to keep it cold. And we'd go outside and we'd all play outside together at recess. And.

NT: Do you remember about how many students were at Conway School?

AN: It was a big room and it was pretty well full, so I'd say there was probably 35 or 40 in that room, you know, several in each class. And I can remember there was a set of twin girls that were maybe a year or so older than I was, and they were identical, and the teacher would ask them to wear different colors, 'cause she couldn't tell them apart. They had certain seats, but they would switch seats and she never knew it. We thought that was real comical, you know, but it was fun. But I can remember having to walk and sometime it would be raining, maybe start raining during the day, and we'd have to walk home. You'd get wet going that far, but you had to keep going.

Ann Newton: Snow Storm

AN: We don't have snows like we did years ago. And one day it started snowing so hard and they let school out, and it was, I guess, to me, I thought it was a blizzard. We couldn't see. There was trucks, a car run right up under a school bus, it was just horrible. We got home but we had to walk. The bus let us out, and we had to walk probably half a mile even then. And there was a girl that was in high school that lived a little bit further than I did, and I said, oh what would we do, we couldn't see to get home. And she said, I don't know, she was just worried to death. And we got off the bus, her dad and my dad was standing there with lanterns, they had come to meet the school bus because they knew we would have trouble, and we were so proud to see our daddies that day. And they got us home OK.

Ann Newton: Picking Cotton

AN: The cotton picking was up to my brother and my mother and myself. And one year, we picked 14 bales of cotton, just the three of us, and it, we picked a lot, we picked, even my little brother wasn't but eleven back the year we had all that much cotton, and he would pick over 200 lbs, And my mother and me would, and it didn't take us. In two days, we could pick a bale of cotton. . . We did get out a few weeks for cotton picking, at that time. We'd start to school and then go until cotton got ready to pick in the fall and then it let out for a while. Now that was one thing, my dad, his mother died when he was, like, four, and his dad remarried and the children kind of got sent different places. And my dad, as soon as he was old enough to work at all as a child, he lived with different people and worked, and didn't get to go, he got to go to the fourth grade and that's all he got to go. But my daddy could out count me any day, and me going to school, but he never learned to read or to write. And that was one thing, I don't care how much cotton we had, I don't care what was going on, my brother and me never missed a day of school. He made sure that we went to school every day.

Ann Newton: Burning of the High School

AN: The Methodist Church was here when I was growing up. The Baptist Church was here but not the same building, and then of course the Church of Christ has been added in the last few years, in the way of churches. And of course our school burned. I was at church that morning, someone come in there for Sunday School, before we started, said the school was burning. And we all, we just ran up there, and I watched that and I think every brick that fell, I cried more. And it was heartbreaking to see our, to lose our school like we did, we loved our schools, and, but, it built back but we never had the high school

there any more, just had to leave to go further. So that's one change, we don't have the high school any more.

Ann Newton: High School Sports

AN: We had basketball teams, they'd play basketball at night and things. And base ball and football, they even had a little football team. So just sports activities mostly. I never, I didn't play sports much but I enjoyed them.

NT: UmHm. Would the whole community support those events?

AN: Oh, yes. Yes. Our, we had a real close community. And that's with our school and that's one thing that hurt when, we lost, seems like you know, people didn't get together as much, because we'd all get together, the families, at the ball games. That they, a lot of them, they didn't go on up like the high school, like we did when we had our little school. I noticed that. So that was a sad thing for all of us.

Ann Newton: Community Churches

AN: Elkton, I thought, was a real close knit community. And our churches are here. The Methodist Church, and I go Elkton Baptist Church, you know we do things together. We have our Thanksgiving joint service and we have Easter joint service. And when we have revivals, they come and we go when they have things. And my children always went to our Bible School, and at that time Elkton had a bigger, more children, but they didn't have as many as we did, and they loved for us to come to Bible School because it gave them more. And my children always went to both of them. So that was nice. They enjoyed going.

Ann Newton: No Electricity and No Indoor Plumbing

I remember all through a lot of my grade school years we didn't have electricity. We did our homework by coal oil lamp. Mother and Daddy had what they called an Aladdin lamp, and that was of course, on oil too, but it was brighter, you could see better. And I remember an ice box. I remember having a wood stove, where Mother cooked on a wood stove. And it had a reservoir, they called, on it, where she'd keep water in there to be hot. You'd dip it out, so you'd have hot water. Had an out house—didn't have a, I remember not having indoor plumbing. As a child I didn't.

Ann Newton: Peddler

AN: Most, a lot of people had cars, but we didn't until I was, we got one when I was in high school.

NT: UmHm.

AN: But Dad would get a ride with somebody, a neighbor, to go pick up things we needed. But also, there was what they called a peddler. There would be a truck come around, and you would buy groceries and things off of there. He'd come around once a week and Mother would do a lot of shopping from that. Because she didn't need a lot.

Ann Newton: Friday Night Suppers

AN: I can remember my dad coming home on a Friday night with his paycheck. Didn't have a car, and it was probably a half mile to the store, and he'd set out walking, and while he was gone Mother would make hot biscuits. And Daddy would buy baloney that

they would cut off of a big old long stick, and he'd have it sliced, and he'd bring that home and Mother would fry that baloney and fry some eggs and we'd have biscuits. That was our Friday night supper and that was a big treat for us, because we didn't have it through the week, you know.

Ann Newton: Dad Always in a Hurry

AN: My dad was always in a hurry. He worked, he really was a hard worker. And, he, even when he was retired and didn't have to rush, he still rushed at everything he did. And he would take Mother to town and he's want to get up there, she always said that he got there before the stores opened, because they didn't stay open all the time, at that time. And one day, I was, after I'd married, she called me and she said, "Are you going to get groceries today?" And I said, "Yes, do you want to go?" And she said, "Yeah," said, "I went with your dad this morning, and he got my buggy and run through the store so fast, I couldn't catch him and put something in it." So she went back with me. But he was always just used to being in a hurry and that's the way he lived.

Ann Newton: Lye Soap and Hominy

AN: And my mother always waited until my grandmother come and they would get the old black pot out and build a fire under it and they'd make lye soap. I remember them making it, they'd cut it in squares and put it up and let it dry. They'd use that to wash clothes. I've seen, I've seen my mother heat an old black pot and shave off some of that lye soap and put it in there and she'd wash her clothes. And also they'd make hominy. And I don't know how to make hominy, but I remember they would take lye and get ashes out of the fireplace and somehow use them. And they would put that dry corn in there, and they would get the husks off and make hominy. And I thought that hominy was so good when they'd make it. And Mother, that was something they did every time my grandmother came. They'd always make the lye soap and the hominy.

Ann Newton: Wash Day

AN: I remember she'd heat the water in an old wash pot, a black pot, and she put it over in the tub, and she had a washboard, and she'd scrub them with lye soap and that washboard, and then she'd put them over in another tub and clear water and she'd rinse them and ring them out by hand and hang them on the clothesline and let them dry. And she'd starch them, too, and they'd be so stiff they'd almost stand up by theirself. And then she'd sprinkle them with water and roll them up, and she'd take them out and she'd iron them with an iron that she'd heat on the wood stove. And she had two, and when that started getting cold, she'd swap them out. And she ironed with that old iron, old iron.