

Interview with Fern Myers McBride

October 31, 2005

Conducted at the Kinsley Library, 208 E. 8th St., Kinsley, KS 67547

Interviewer: Joan Weaver

(Fern began by reading a history she had prepared.)

My name is Fern Myers McBride. I was born November 29, 1915. In 30 days I will be 90 years old, which I am real proud. I was born on a farm near Kinsley (*1588 P Rd. Lewis*). I am the only child of Pearl and Otto Myers

My folks used to run a drugstore in Fellsburg, Kansas. It had drugs, ice cream and a fountain, and various items. My dad got the nickname of "Doc" because people would come in if they had a cold or some of them even pneumonia. They would want my dad to mix up something they could rub on their chest or maybe a weak cough medicine. My grandmother lived with us, Jennie Myers, and she took care of me because my mother had to work in the drugstore. They had a real, real good business because people didn't go to various towns to do their shopping. They did it there in the small town of Fellsburg.

My dad heard about the Florida boom that was back in 1924. It was an advertisement that if you go to Florida and live and get a job, you can get rich. So, he thought it would be a good idea to get away from Fellsburg. So he loaded up the Model T car, touring car with the side curtains, and of course, there were 5 of us in that car. He made a brace on the back for the big trunk, and he loaded all our clothes and things. On the side he made a box called a lunch box. It had a lid that lifted up. We had everything to cook the meals. We had a large folded tent. And I don't remember whether it had a floor in it or not, but I don't think it did. My grandmother had a bird. So she had the bird in a cage on her lap and carried it all the way to Florida that way. I had a little fox terrier. We had our pets, and we were crowded in the old Ford touring car. It would drive about 40-45 miles per hour, maybe less. It did not have a speedometer. They didn't have them then. My dad did like to see things on the way to Florida. So we went by Lawrence. I suppose it took us about a full day to get to Lawrence. We went to the Haskell Indian School. That was quite a site. There were a lot of Indian boys and girls. I'm not sure about the girls, but anyway boys, Indian boys, at the Indian school. Then we went to St. Louis to the World's Fair that was in 1924. We saw that famous fan dancer. She was well known at the time, and she was beautiful, of course. She danced with her huge fans. I don't remember her name, but she was well known. *(Fern later recalled she was Sally Rand.)* We got to see her, and we got to see all the things about the fair. So then my dad had decided that we should make a kind of trip out of this. He had relatives in Pennsylvania, so we were going to go, after going to St. Louis, we'd go to Washington D.C. We stopped to see the things there. We visited the famous museum in Washington D.C. That was fantastic. We saw other places while we were there. I failed to say that I was only nine years old, but I remember so many things and many places. We went on the Pennsylvania where the mountains were so huge, and we were so loaded. We had to remove the trunk and have it sent on to Florida because it was too heavy to go over the mountains. We sent it to Florida and then removed some other things. We came down the east coast of the United States. Before that, we stopped at Michigan to visit a friend and we got to see celery growing which was quite unusual. We saw a number of fruits, vineyards and vegetables and things. We came on down to Georgia. Now that was pretty scary for a nine year old to see the hanging moss on the trees. I understood later that it was growing on the trees. I don't know how I thought it got there, but anyway, I didn't like it. Before that we went to the Carolinas where they had tobacco growing. They would have the tobacco tied up in their big barns to dry. That was a big

industry at that time. Then we went on down to St. Petersburg, Florida after a long journey. We could not make very many miles a day, maybe 300 or 250. We saw quite a sight in Georgia. We say the chain gang, which were prisoners in gray and white stripe suits. Boy, you couldn't miss them. They had their ankles chained one to the other, in front and in back of them, so they couldn't get away. They were working on the roads, and they were working very, very hard. They returned at the end of the day to the prison.

A sight that has stayed with me all my life were the Negroes. They were called Negroes then. They had the huts and the slaves were living in these huts. They never had been painted, never. They looked like they were just about ready to fall down. But you always saw a porch full of Negroes. They spent much of their time there when they were not working. It happened to be a Sunday when we went through so we did see a lot them. They never had a care in the world. They were happy, just getting by on what they could. They had no running water, bathtub and so forth, not much heat because you didn't need too much there. They spent the summer picking cotton with bags over their shoulders and lots and lots of walking on the plantation. They were called slaves. The commanders lived in beautiful, huge homes with maids and butlers dressed in their flashy uniforms and had lovely limousines. They didn't treat the slaves very well, but that was a part of history and that was the way it was. I had a friend, a very dear friend, that was my age, and she had a nanny. That was a woman that took care of her which was black. She loved her. She loved nanny and nanny loved her. While we were down there we were able to go through the Negro church. That was quite an experience. They really sang with all the vim they had in their body. They had a lot of rhythm, movement, and a lot of shouting "hallelujahs".

In Florida, 1924, we rented a house, finally buying, and dad got a job driving a city bus. The City Director doubted dad's age of 30 or 31 because he was fairly gray. So he had quite a time getting a job because he had to prove everything. Dad was sure that he told everything just right, but they doubted him. Getting a job driving a city bus was quite a thing then because jobs were hard to get, and they had to do a lot of proving their age. After proving his age, dad started dying his hair so the people would believe him. And of course, he dyed it black-black. He did this until he was 72 years old. So most of his life I remember him having black hair.

Then in 1925 or 1926, my mother had a serious illness. I was 11 years old then. I washed on the board all the clothes that we had including heavy overalls. My dad had to wear those. We had two tubs of hot water and Proctor Gamble, PG soap. I washed the clothes through the first water and my mother did the second water. She was able to stand and do that even though she had been in the hospital for so long. We set a big tub in the yard and filled it with water to warm in the sun to use for our baths. Of course we had to have our baths in a tin tub.

For entertainment when I was a child, I loved to ride the bicycle. My folks didn't have the money to buy a bicycle. We had neighbors that had a boy's bicycle. It was hard for me to reach because I was short. But I had many, many falls, and I still have scars after almost 90 years that show that the handlebars didn't have any rubber on the ends. So it would just cut out places on my hands and arms. I had skates that I absolutely wore out. I skated and loved it. We lived in a place that did have sidewalks. The skates were so worn they just had the rims around the skates. But I still skated with them.

I'm going back to talk about the Negroes. The Negroes had to go back to the back of the bus. If it was full they had to stand. They had to step aside and let a white person have the seat. They had to get off the sidewalk if a white person was walking by. They were treated terrible in the South. We accepted it because we didn't know anything different. But when I look back now, it was a terrible way to treat the blacks. They could not eat in any of the restaurant s with the whites. There were so many

things that they couldn't do. Oprah on TV has tried to teach the white American people how the black people were abused. And I mean they were abused.

We spent 5 years in Florida and returned to Fellsburg after the Florida boom was over. We ended up eventually moving to the Sylvester Shera farm, 2 ½ miles west of Fellsburg. My parents, Otto and Pearl Myers were farming here. We moved there in 1951. After moving from Florida, I attended Fellsburg School, graduating in 1934 and attended Hays College and had a teaching certificate. I taught two years in a very small country school at Charlotte. I had never gone to a country school. So I learned a whole lot. I stayed with a couple who had a north bedroom, no heat, but I used a hot sad iron wrapped in paper and cloth which I placed at the foot of my bed. I paid very little rent. I don't remember, maybe \$5-\$10 a month. My first salary for teaching school was \$60 per month. The next year I was hired again and I got \$65. I had to walk half a mile towards the north wind to get to school on Monday morning. I had corn cobs, paper and matches to start a fire in the large stove. That was on a Monday morning when everything was so cold; there wasn't any heat. Then I added coal to be able to hold the fire. Soon as it got warm enough, I had to warm some water on top of the stove to prime the pump because the pump didn't work unless you primed it. Out in the cold, the ice, the snow, and everything, I didn't like that very well. Now to go out into zero weather to prime a pump or get water, that was quite a job.

I had eight grades in that one-room school. I was very unhappy about having eight grades, especially since we had to finish school in eight months. It wasn't fair to me to have all these grades, and then have a month less than the people who were in town which had nine months school. Then I had another thing I didn't feel was right. They had the county tests, and those were difficult. A student had to pass them or stay in the eighth grade which was a reflection on the teacher at that time. But mine passed.

We were going through the Dirty Thirties in 1931 to about 1934, 5 or 6. We did not have any rain or any moisture enough to raise any crops. We had the dirt blowing. It was a might pathetic time for the farmers, the whole family. We would roll up towels and things to put in front of the doors to keep the cold out, the dirt out mainly, also the windows. When people would milk cows, the dirt that would come in from north up around Hays and Waukenee, that dirt would roll in one big cloud. It would be so dense you couldn't see to be able to get to the barn or back to the house. But we had one friend that milked cows. He would get out to the barn, but he said he had such a time trying to find the house after that because he was carrying milk. So they would put a lamp in the window so that it would give him a little bit of a key to where to go. The dirt and wind blew so badly out west, I don't know exactly where that was, but it was past Sublette I know, rather west of there. The dirt had blown so much it would cover up their machinery from one season to the next. There was much sickness, must dust pneumonia. At that time nearly everybody had a cook stove. So if you had an old fashioned cook stove, of course you had warm water in the reservoir. The humidity from just a tea kettle on top of the stove, boiling, gave the people a little bit of moisture in the air which helped some in as far as cutting down on some of the diseases and things, especially pneumonia. That was around Johnson, Kansas where the Dirty Thirties really had such a time.

The farmers started strip farming to try to keep the ground from blowing. They could set up the way they wanted, would be maybe 20-30 acres or whatever. They had 20 acres of wheat and maybe 20 acres of maize or summer fallow. That way if the ground did blow it kept from getting over onto the next strip and starting it to blow. This worked out real well. We had all kinds of presidents through the years that had different ideas about what to do. They, of course, naturally wanted badly to have their name go down in history about what wonderful things they did. But F.D.R., Franklin Delano Roosevelt, was one that I think helped out the farmers more than anyone. He talked about the strip farming and the

reserve farming. He had what they called the C.C.C. There was a name for that, and I think it was Civilian Conservation Camp. They would let boys, 18 years of age (they had to be 18) work to be making dams or maybe recreation places. But it kept them busy, plus they had to do so much marching. That was good for them. Marching was discipline. All of them needed it, I am sure. They probably hadn't had it before. The boys didn't have any money at all, so that was a way to make a little bit of money. They enjoyed that.

Then I didn't tell about the old time toilets. But it was a two-holer. It was usually made of terrible old lumber, but it was a place you could get in. There was a catalog hanging by the side to use as toilet tissue. During that time, when Roosevelt was president, they had what they called the WPA toilets. This was a nice little house toilet that had a cement round container that would have a lid you could lift. It was just a one-holer. This WPA was really quite a nice thing because it was more sanitary, warmer when you went into it, and you could shut the door. It wasn't just a lean-to like we had so many times.

In our home we had gasoline stoves, gasoline irons and gasoline light and lanterns that had the mantles. This was quite an improvement over just the lamp. I'll tell later on about the fire we had and the gasoline lantern.) The only one that I ever heard of that had any problem with the gasoline, was a woman by the name of Rella Fatzer. She lived south of Fellsburg. A gasoline iron exploded with her. She escaped that but that was about it. *(Italicized is not on recording.) She died as a result of the gasoline iron.*

Nearly everyone had a telephone. We had party lines which 4 or 5 people would be on one. You could listen to others talking on the line. Nothing was private. Our call was 2 longs and one short. Snow storms would sometimes blow down the pole or break a line. We would be without a phone for a few days. There were no televisions and just a few radios until we had electricity.

We were married April 30, 1937. I married Earl McBride of Kinsley, Kansas. He lived actually about nine miles west of us. But I didn't know him. The only people who knew each other were in the town of Fellsburg, Centerview, Trousdale. Kinsley was far away at that time. He was farming. I didn't try to teach the third year. That was when we got married. A teacher rarely taught after she was married and definitely she did not play cards. She did not dance or other stipulations that she should not do. They were followed, I will tell you. This was the happiest day of my life, the day we were married. We were married at my home with a very small attendance. We moved to an old farm home. We had very little money. Things were cheap. And if a person had any money, you tried to hang on to it to use for all the necessities that you needed.

My kitchen in this terrible old house...the house didn't look so bad on the inside, but it was terrible on the outside. It looked like it was ready to fall down. It looked like it never had any paint. In the kitchen, I had a pretty quaint little kitchen, I thought. It had wainscoting on all the walls and the ceiling. Of course, this was after the dust storms were over. The dust would fall down into the cracks of that wood. So, on the side it was terrible. I got pasteboard boxes from the store that had bread in. They sold it in the stores. I think it was Holsum Bread. They had these great big pasteboard boxes. I opened them up and nailed them to the walls because I couldn't paper over wood. I did this and it looked pretty good. Then I got some real cheap wallpaper that was red and white. My kitchen was in red and white, and it made it look pretty nice. I had some curtains that matched, and I had dishes. I used my money from teaching and bought some little red and white cattail dishes. At that time, you could get orange crates which were divided in the middle. They were made of wood so they were pretty sturdy. So I took two and stood them up on end, one placed down at the bottom, right in the middle, which made it shorter and two which made it taller. That way I had several shelves, cabinet space. I made red and

white curtains to hang over the front of the wooden boxes. That was kind of my kitchen cabinets. We had 10 shelves that way. It looked pretty good.

Earl worked at Safeway Store in Kinsley, and that was on the corner near the railroad, which is called Ryan's Secondhand Store now. He worked from 8 o'clock in the morning until, like he said, the last drunk at night. He would work until 11:30 or 12 o'clock. He was paid \$3. I worked at Mammals, which was a grocery store just a block east of there. I went to work at noon, and I worked until 8. I was paid \$2. So that way we had \$5, but they did take out social security, and so it wasn't quite five. We bought our gasoline, our coal, our groceries, and all expenses. We use nothing for enjoyment. We just didn't have the money to spend for that. But Earl did milk, and we had cows where he had quite a bit of milk. We saved the milk to use for ourselves. I had a few chickens that I bought or was probably given to me. We had our eggs and milk and our butter. He would raise pigs, and we would have a pig to butcher. We were thrilled to death to be able to have our job because at that time people just did not get jobs very easily. In fact, well, if you just didn't work all hours of the day and night trying to get ahead, then you weren't even considered. I happened to know the people who had the Mammals store, so I was able to get a job as cashier there.

At the time we lived in this terrible old house, we had a near tragedy. That was about six months after we were married. We had a gasoline light that had mantles. Maybe you are not familiar with it. This mantle had a little hole in it that would flare out a flame that would be, oh say, maybe an inch or inch-and-a-half out into space. We had a closet that you could walk through. You could walk through one bedroom, through the closet, and out to the other bedroom. So, of course, we had our clothes hanging in there. Earl and I both, at that time, had quite a few clothes, better outfitted than we have been since then. I was going through the closet with this light when it hit a starched apron that was hanging there. It started a fire. It scared me to death, and I knew we had to do something quickly. Water was out of the question because you had to go pump water and bring it in by the bucket. So Earl was milking the cows, and I ran out and hollered at him. He knew by my holler that there surely was something wrong. He came running. We had some heavy rugs on the floor that my grandmother had taken like jeans or overalls, cut them in strips. She had a loom and wove these rugs. So they were heavy, very heavy. He pulled down the rod so it all came in one pile in the closet. Then he took these rugs and put over the clothes and smothered out the fire, which was a wonderful, wonderful thing because we would have lost everything we owned.

We had wool comforts that were made from old wool clothes, coats, anything. We would use those comforts in the winter time because we had no electricity, no way to keep our bodies warm and our house warm. We would take some of those and hang up to a door that was open, maybe there was no door like between the living room and a dining room to keep the cold out.

Earl's sister worked at the courthouse. She was lucky to get a job there. So when we had this fire, it of course burned up everything of our good clothes. We had nothing to wear if we needed to dress up. So she gave me \$10 to buy me a Sunday-best dress.

As I have said before, we did not have wonderful facilities like people have now, but we did have buckets that we could hang our butter and milk down in the well where it was cooler. When you wanted to use some of this you had to pull your rope out of the well and get your milk, cream, and things. A lot of people had a tank type, where the windmill would be running the water. It would run the water through a type of vat and that would help to keep things cool. Earl raised hogs, milked cows, and we had a garden. I was able to sell the garden things, after they were all cleaned, to the store which helped out. Naturally, he butchered a hog. We ate the pork. I raised chicken, and we had chickens to eat. Now this was down through the years. Then we took an old iron kettle that had the bale on it, and

we would render our lard from a pig. After the lard is done and put away, then we would make soap from the cracklings. Homemade soap then was used by everybody. It was good old soap. It did good, as far as cutting the dirt. I would cut the soap out after it was cooled for a number of days with an iron cutter. I'd have a half of bushel or bushel of soap. *I put it containers to be used to wash clothes. I canned.* We had glass jars; you put them in the boiler to be able to can things. I am sure you know what that is. I saved the chicken and turkey eggs and placed them under a setting hen. Sometimes the setting hen would get pretty cranky and peck at me, but we got along pretty good. We had some chicken coops just made out of scrap lumber to protect the chickens and keep the rain and things off from them. One night we had quite a storm. Of course we had the cook stove going, just like we always did. Anyway, we had this rain and the wind and everything; it blew those coops off. It blew them clear away a distance. So I had those baby turkeys and baby chickens. They were wet. It looked like they were drowned. I went out and picked them up. Earl helped me. We brought them in, laid a towel in the oven. We rubbed the turkeys and the chickens and brought most of them to life. We had quite an experience that way.

In 1941, we moved to the Kuykendall place. This was between Centerview and Fellsburg. It was a bit of luck for us. We were disappointed it was in an estate, so we didn't get REA when it came through the country. But we had a place where we could have a bath because it had a bathtub and a stool and a lavatory. We didn't have any warm water. But we felt like we were really uptown when we moved to that place. Hardly anyone had this luxury of a bathtub, stool, and things at that time. But later on the REA came through, and they made improvements. Earl refereed ball games, high school games, grade school, all kinds. We had quit our jobs by that time and milked many more cows, sold cream, and had a chicken house full of chickens and a huge garden. So we were getting along better. We were farming more land. The main thing it started raining, and we were raising good crops and had some money. I canned three bushels of peaches and apricots. I canned everything that I could get in a jar. We had well-stocked shelves.

After eight years of marriage, we started our family. We have a boy, Terril Dee McBride, born February 10, 1945. And two years later our daughter, Bonita Rae McBride was born February 7, 1947. That was the most wonderful thing that ever happened to Earl and Fern. They attended Centerview School. School consolidated with Lewis so they did graduate from Lewis. In 1957, the Kuykendall place sold. We knew that place would be sold because it was in an estate. We tried to buy that place because it was a nice place and good farm ground. But our bid was not large enough, so it sold to another party. At that time we didn't know what was going to happen to us because people just weren't eager to rent ground to you, to anybody. They were hanging on to it and beginning to get a little bit of money ahead. So what were we going to do? My folks lived on the Shera farm which they had bought. They had remodeled it and fixed the house up like they wanted it, and they were not thinking of moving. But when our farm and house sold, it was difficult to rent a farm. My folks decided to move to Kinsley and let us move there and farm. Otherwise, we were going to try to take over the John Deere agency. They didn't want us to do that because they did want us to eventually be able to take the farm. This made the third generation on that farm. It is about 2 ½ miles southwest of Fellsburg. Our children graduated from college. Our son is a business administrator for a radiology corporation in Chickasaw, Oklahoma. He has two boys. Our daughter is a registered nurse and has a State Medicare job in Raleigh, North Carolina. She doesn't have any children.

Farming was good to us. We both had good health. Our son and wife had the two boys and the boys live in San Diego, California. They are not married yet and do not have any children. They are 31 and 27. But they are having a good time, and they do have wonderful jobs. They have their college educations.

In 1980 we retired. We had a sale. We sold all our machinery but kept all our land. We bought a fifth wheel and a pickup. We traveled over most of the United States and Canada. Finally, we sold our fifth wheel and bought a park model in Mesa, Arizona. We have gone there for 26 winters. We go in November and come back in April. We enjoyed the winters and made a lot of wonderful friends. It is nice and warm, and you don't have to scoop snow like we do in Kansas.

God had been good to us, and we feel blessed. Earl had his 90th birthday and mine will be next month. We have been married 68 happy years, but not all of them without our faults. We have done very, very well, and we are happy.

Interviewer: What brought your grandparents to Kansas?

Fern: My grandmother, Jennie Myers, came to Kansas to a place called Colony in the (*eastern*) part of Kansas. They came in a covered wagon. They had a baby with them while they were traveling. They got along pretty well. It was kind of funny. She would say they made something more or less like a pancake for their evening meal. I don't have any idea what they had with it. But I do remember her telling that they would go to a corner of the field, and that way, I suppose because of the horses and things would be easily gotten if they got loose. I never did figure out why they always went to the corners of fields or pastures. I don't remember asking why, but she probably told me.

They proved a homestead up north of Lewis. Of course they had just heard about it. They didn't know what it was like until they got there.

Interviewer: Do you know what year this was? And the baby, maybe that would date it. Was that your father?

Fern: No, no. He was the youngest. I can't tell you.

Then my mother's dad came to Kansas from Indiana. My dad's folks came from Illinois. Grandpa Shera came out, and I think he knew about a place out here and decided to come. He had a new little bride. Later they had seven children. My mother's mother died quite young. She left my mother who was the youngest one at 11 months old. Of course, she never knew about her mother really. The mother of all seven had children about every 2 years. My mother said probably having children was what killed her because she did die fairly young. In that group of seven children there was a boy that was 21 years old. He was helping his dad on an old wooden windmill. Something happened and he fell. I suppose he hit his head. He had never had seizures before but he had seizures after that. So one time when his dad had gone out to milk and the boy had not come out, he wondered where in the world he was and why he hadn't gotten around. So he went up to the house, upstairs, and he had passed away. They figured that he probably died in a seizure. There was another baby that had died. So that left five girls. So those five girls were left without a mother, the oldest one was 12 years old. My mother would say that all of them would be down under the great big tree, quite a little ways from the house, in the shade. They would be playing house with all their dishes. They would hear Grandpa coming with his horses and the wagon and they would hurry. And they would say, "Oh there is Dad, we've got to hurry." Each one of them had a job. One would be washing the breakfast dishes; one would be going and getting the cobs and wood to be able to get the fire going in a hurry; another would set the table where it looked like they were getting the meal ready. So he would come in. The girls at 12 years old were baking lots of bread. He would say, "Well girls, what do you have for dinner?" They would say, "Dad, we have got to fix it; it isn't ready to eat yet." "Well just give me a slice of bread and some butter, and I'll go back into the field." That was the way he survived. He had to hire people to take care of my mother and the girl next to her which was 2 years old. They were not treated very well. They had

to sleep in the living room on the floor where it was not heated, and it was cold and the snow came in on them. They were not treated very well, but they did survive. They were a good, big strong family. They all lived to be in their eighties. Grandpa never remarried. Grandpa Shera's ancestors were Scotch-Irish, I guess is what you call it. I think they talked a little bit more about Ireland.

Going back to my dad's parents who proved up, homesteaded, the farm near Lewis, actually they could not have found ground much poorer than that. So they didn't do very well. He had lock jaw *from a pulled tooth* and died after they moved up there. It was after my dad was born. So then that left my grandmother with nothing. So she lived with my folks. But she could do everything with her hands. She did all kinds of quilting. I mean poor people! Maybe she would work days and days and get a dollar. It was hard times. But she finally got an old assistance. I had read about it and had determined that she was going to be able to get that. It was only \$30 a month, but that was lots of money for her. So my dad did not want her to do it. He said, "That is just welfare and I don't want you to do it!" I didn't pay any attention to him. I went ahead and took her up there. She was so happy. You would have thought she had a thousand dollars a month. She still continued to use the spinning wheel to spin different threads. I will tell you one thing that she has, it's wonderful. Her sister grew hemp. That hemp is kind of a gray color. I didn't see the hemp when it was growing in the fields. But she had skeins of yarn of this hemp. It was real coarse. It was a lot like burlap. She wanted to use that so she could leave it for us, the folks and me. She said, "If I just had a spinning wheel." I didn't think she knew how to use one. But I found one that was over at Trousdale, Nora Roenbaugh's. I asked if she could use it for that. My grandmother had quilted quilts, many of them for Nora Roenbaugh and got hardly anything for them. But the people didn't pay big prices then. She spun that hemp into thread. Jenny has this kind of gray color, lace tablecloth, which is lovely and quite an heirloom. You can even use a colored silk sheet and put this over the bed, and it can be used as a bedspread. I was in high school when she did this, around 1934 when I graduated. I have many bedspreads. I have many, many quilts that she has made. Everything was done by hand. You never bought any material to make a quilt, like they do now. You would use scraps of material from clothes that people gave to her. We also had floor that came in sacks, white sacks. We would rip those apart. Some of them had designs on them, and we'd make dresses and aprons and things out of that. Of course, everyone wore an apron then.

Interviewer: I am interested in why you went to college. It would not have been real usual back then.

Fern: Well yes, it was in 1934. However, they didn't go four years to college. You could go one year and get a three year certificate. (*Later clarified by Fern as a certificate to teach for three years.*) Then you would have to go back. That is what I did.

Interviewer: I have another story I want you to tell because you were born in the house I live in (1588 P Road, Lewis, Kansas).

Fern: My mother's sister's husband lived there. She was Mae Zimmert, Mrs. Jim Zimmert. Yes, that was the house. They didn't have a hospital so the doctors would come out there. I suppose there was a doctor. I don't know about that. She was to be with her sister. That is the place I was born.

Interviewer: Tell me the story about Terril.

Fern: When Terril was about 6 months old, we had joined a bridge club. We lived on the Kuykendall place and that was a little bit of entertainment we could have, and we enjoyed it. I didn't have Bonita yet. My folks were gone, but they usually were the babysitters. So my grandmother was probably about 80 years old, maybe 75, said she would take care of him. So we took him over to her place. She had a feather bed. He wanted him to go to bed and she tried to get him to sleep. She laid him on the feather

bed, and he got so hot he about cooked. All he did was bawl or cry. So she called up. She was a very plain spoken person, very plain. And people all knew it and enjoyed her. She says, "Fern, you're just going to have to come get this kid. I can't get him to go to sleep. He just cries all the time." So when I went over there, there he was with the feather bed all up around him. He was hotter than a pistol. So I got him up and kind of cuddled him a bit, and finally he went to sleep. That is the story about the feather bed. She did love that feather bed. She slept on it every night. When we had to get rid of some of her things, what will we do with that feather bed? I don't remember what we did with it. I suppose we gave it to somebody. We never did use it.

Interviewer: Tell me about the blizzard.

Fern: In 1971, our children were gone. My mother had an operation, and she needed someone to take care of her. She had had her operation for quite some time. So I told my dad and mother to come to my place and stay there, and I would take care of them. They were living in Kinsley at that time. We had a blizzard in April. It was kind of unusual. It was a terrible blizzard. The snow had drifted. Nobody could get to you. You couldn't go anyplace unless you took a tractor. That night my dad had a stroke, a very bad stroke. We needed to get him to the doctor. They had a hospital in Kinsley, 20 miles, but there was no way to get to the hospital. I didn't know what to do. So we called the county to see if they would come out as far as they could towards us from Kinsley, and then we would get our township road control to see if they could come get us out by our house. Well, they couldn't. Every time they went anywhere they would get stuck. They went out in the fields, and they got stuck. So people came, all the neighbors, trying to help out. They would dig a path to put him on a stretcher and take him out. But you could hardly do anything because the snow would blow in the path so fast. It was just drifted so deep; it was hard to shovel. So finally, after about 12 or 13 hours, the neighbors had been able to get to our house on the farm. The ambulance station wagon got part way out, and the tractors and pulled him (the ambulance). That way then they could get dad in that part of the station wagon. But they had a terrible time getting to the hospital. Then after they got him to the hospital, it was dig more paths to be able to get him into the hospital. It was just a narrow path to get in there. Dr. Schnobelen took care of him, and he did a great job taking care of him. But he had the stroke too long, and there wasn't much that could be done. He lived about 2 ½ months and then passed away. We had many blizzard stories to tell, but I believe that is the worst one because it pertained to sickness too.