

Interview with Mildred Frazier
Friends of the Library Oral History Project
Marshall, IL

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Interview Link: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=T965uFd8bK8&feature=youtu.be>

[Lelah Pancake] Okay, we're going to start our interview, and I'm going to be interviewing uh, Millie Frazier, and this is Lelah Pancake, and we've known each other for about forty years, and had a wonderful relationship. So, I'm excited and enthusiastic about interviewing Millie, so, we're going to start off with a few questions here. Okay Millie, when and where were you born?

[Mildred Frazier] Two blocks south of here, May twenty-third, nineteen fifteen.

[Pancake] May twenty-third, nineteen fifteen. And...

[Frazier] [inaudible]

[Pancake] Oh my Millie, you look so nice and young, [laughs] you really do. And just two blocks south of me on, on Sixth Street.

[Frazier] In the front bedroom.

[Pancake] Mm, how interesting. Which side of the street?

[Frazier] Oh, on this, on the west side.

[Pancake] On the west side.

[Frazier] Next door to the [inaudible] family.

[Pancake] Oh yeah.

[Frazier] In fact, Doctor George and I, our mothers put us in the same, we always had the same, he's the first boy I ever went buggy riding with, baby buggy riding, that is. Because he was just a little over a year older.

[Pancake] Well, the mothers used to drive buggies.

[Frazier] Well, this is a pushing baby buggy.

[Pancake] My mother had a, had a buggy with a very nice horse, that was her very own, that she took her children to town in.

[Frazier] My mother's good friend [inaudible], she had a buggy she used to drive to Terre Haute.

[Pancake] Okay. Now, if you can speak up just a little bit, I have. Um, who were your parents and siblings?

[Frazier] My father was C. C. Carroll, and my mother was Ruby M. Carroll. They came here when my brother was, I think, two years old, they came from northwestern Pennsylvania. Dad came to work for the Ohio Oil Company.

[Pancake] Oh, a lot of people did come to work...

[Frazier] Oh, yes.

[Pancake] Did you have brothers and sisters?

[Frazier] Just one brother, eight years older.

[Pancake] And what was his name?

[Frazier] Frederick.

[Pancake] Frederick.

[Frazier] Mm-hm.

[Pancake] Mildred and Frederick, that's interesting. Okay, when and where were you married?

[Frazier] In March, the latter part of March, nineteen forty-one in the First Methodist Church in Marshall.

[Pancake] You were married to?

[Frazier] Oh, Garber Frazier.

[Pancake] Mm-hm.

[Frazier] He was born in Edgar County.

[Pancake] But he, at that time, did he, at that time live south of town, too? His mother?

[Frazier] No, they lived, they lived in town on Spruce Street, next door Christian church parsonage.

[Pancake] Mm. So, that makes you living in this community about how many years?

[Frazier] Nearly all my life. I have been [inaudible] Clark County, really, I have.

[Pancake] [laughs]

[Frazier] But I sound terribly provincial about it.

[Pancake] But that's alright, that's...

[Frazier] I have been in [inaudible] almost all my life.

[Pancake] and that makes it interesting to interview somebody that's always lived...

[Frazier] [inaudible] school years and teaching years, [inaudible] and World War Two years.

[Pancake] I love the recognition they gave you not too long ago in the newspaper.

[Frazier] I was so surprised, then I was embarrassed, and since then I've been thrilled to death.

[Pancake] Sure. It w-, it was a nice writeup, I thought.

[Frazier] Wasn't it?

[Pancake] [clear-throat] Uh, I bet you had a lot of nice neighbors then, didn't you? As you said, Doctor Mitchell was one of them.

[Frazier] Yes.

[Pancake] Family was...

[Frazier] Although, he left that, that house when I was three, and moved to the four hundred block of North Seventh Street.

[Pancake] Mm-hm.

[Frazier] But uh, I had kids to play with. We were next door to another doctor then, Doctor [inaudible] and his family.

[Pancake] And they lived at uh...

[Frazier] They lived next door, west of, we lived on the corner, and the neighbor, Ash Street was the side street, and Doctor Mitchell lived [inaudible] of Ash Street.

[Pancake] Millie, who built or bought the house where um, John Tarble lives now?

[Frazier] That house was there when I was, when we moved there. That was uh, who was it that built that house? People by the name of Ziegler lived there when we moved there, but is it, they weren't the builders.

[Pancake] When we moved here, there was um, a doctor that was living there, and a...

[Frazier] Oh, Doctor Mitchell. An uncle of, or brother of the one next, that we lived next door to.

[Pancake] A brother to George, or...

[Frazier] No...

[Pancake] a cousin?

[Frazier] [inaudible]

[Pancake] Oh, I see.

[Frazier] George is an only child.

[Pancake] Mm-hm. So, he was, it was a brother to George's dad...

[Frazier] Yes...

[Pancake] that lived in that house.

[Frazier] We had three Doctor Mitchells in town. The two MDs, and then uh...

[Pancake] Hm.

[Frazier] [inaudible], mm-hm.

[Pancake] Well, you lived in a nice neighborhood, didn't you?

[Frazier] We had good neighbors.

[Pancake] And did you go to school here in Marshall?

[Frazier] Yes, all the way.

[Pancake] All the way. Graduated...

[Frazier] Did not have a kindergarten then, but grade one on up through senior in high school.

[Pancake] Graduated from Marshall High School.

[Frazier] Yes.

[Pancake] What memories of your education would you like to share? Is there anything special about your education that you would like to share?

[Frazier] I think I loved it all, I loved my teachers, they were all just wonderful. Miss Gilbert, [inaudible] Miss Gilbert was my first grade teacher. And I don't know about a favorite, that would be hard to find.

[Pancake] Well, I don't want you to be afraid to say anything, just like, how do you feel that the teachers or the schools have changed today as to what they were then?

[Frazier] Of course I'm not as close to the schools now, so it's, I really can't give you an answer there. I don't know, maybe I just accept things too much, but I've been satisfied all the way through.

[Pancake] That's a good answer.

[Frazier] [inaudible] and teaching and I'd bristle up when I, anybody says anything against the schools.

[Pancake] Right-o. Okay, what can you give me that uh, sticks out in your mind as you were growing up? Do you have a favorite time period, or a favorite friend?

[Frazier] Mar-, well, I had several awful good friends. Margaret Clark is [inaudible]'s younger sister, was my closest friend. In fact, we cut our arms and mixed the blood so we would be true sisters. [laughs]

[Pancake] Well that's, that's interesting too.

[Frazier] And I keep in close touch with her and, she's, she's has died now, but with her daughters.

[Pancake] Okay.

[Frazier] [clear-throat]

[Pancake] Now, I think I could almost answer this for you, but I'm going to ask you. Um, what was dating like for you, and course, you already told me you were married in forty-one, didn't you?

[Frazier] Yes. Well, my date had to leave, I think it was my tenth or eighth, and he was always embarrassed because would stop uptown and we called it the [inaudible] the hangout. [inaudible] C., C. C. sent you home, didn't he? [laughs] No, I couldn't have, I couldn't have a date until eleven o'clock, but I think everybody else did.

[Pancake] That was, that was the uh, time limit, then?

[Frazier] Mm-hm.

[Pancake] And that was kind of same, in our family, too. But, I'm not sure that was all bad, either.

[Frazier] No, I don't think it was. So, you thought it was pretty fancy then, huh? When you got away form home, or I went away to school, I think eleven o'clock or maybe even twelve o'clock was maybe normal time for dates to end, then.

[Pancake] And I think that was good, because there were some stipulations on when people weren't ready to go out on their own, you know...

[Frazier] Sure.

[Pancake] I think maybe that's a little bit bad for now, but there's no, no time limits or anything.

[Frazier] [inaudible] some good things. [inaudible]

[Pancake] Right, we gain good things every day, but we have to watch out or we lose some very good things...

[Frazier] Yes.

[Pancake] too. Uh, [clear-throat], [inaudible] too much. And of course, you can give us your favorite past time, and your leisure activities, but.

[Frazier] My literature teacher asked me that while I was a sophomore in college, and I guess I told her reading or sewing, and she was shocked because I was not more active with that. I often think of that. I, I've become more active since then, but yes, those, those were both sitting things.

[Pancake] Mm-hm.

[Frazier] And music.

[Pancake] And you told me you taught music, uh, did you play an instrument?

[Frazier] [inaudible] the piano.

[Pancake] Do you still play it some?

[Frazier] Very little, my right arm is not very workable [?].

[Pancake] What was cooking and preparing meals like then?

[Frazier] Well, mother and I always cooked together when I was at home, and it was surely a lot easier than it is now. Just to have somebody else to be working with you.

[Pancake] Did you know something that your family enjoyed on a regular basis, some foods?

[Frazier] I think we enjoyed everything.

[Pancake] I bet you could tell me, though, of something, when you came home from school, something that if you could smell it cooking, that you really liked to smell cooking when you got home from school.

[Frazier] I loved spaghetti, and of course pumpkin pie was my favorite word, dessert, as was strawberry shortcake in the summertime. We loved custards and soft things like that in our family, we all did, and uh, we used [inaudible]. Passed down the [inaudible] fairly often. I remember when we were there at noontime, dad would always ask after he ordered his meal, he would say do you have any custard left, pudding, any pudding left from yesterday? Because uh, they would sometimes have it left over.

[Pancake] Uh-huh. Well, um, the eighth question is what job career did you have?

[Frazier] Librarian, mostly. Taught school some, but I was, you know, librarian, I remember telling, we had periodically meetings of all the school librarians, and I remember telling them, whether you think it or not, you act like you think this is the most wonderful job in the world, and be sure that, that you show that. To me, that was very important.

[Pancake] Well, you had quite an impression from the children, because when I, I think I can put this in, I'm not supposed to talk, do a lot, but when I told my son Ron, who is now forty-seven years old, and

Mildred has a son his age, when I told him who was coming in, he said oh, it will be so nice to see her. He said, I haven't seen her in so long.

[Frazier] Bless his heart.

[Pancake] And I thought that was just great for him to, because...

[Frazier] Makes me very happy.

[Pancake] um, I remember you and I went to a play together where our boys were in it, some grade they were in, I remember Ron had a part in that little play, and your son had a part, we went together. I don't know if you remember that or not.

[Frazier] I don't offhand.

[Pancake] It was a, out at the high school cafeteria, so we decided at school we would both see our...

[Frazier] Kids.

[Pancake] our kids in this little play, and it seems as if, uh, it was Dolores Maurer, Missus [inaudible], or somebody about the fifth grade, that's about the grade...

[Frazier] Oh...

[Pancake] they were in, I remember [inaudible]. What historical events stand out in your mind? Now, this can be local, national, or worldwide.

[Frazier] That's a hard one to answer offhand.

[Pancake] There's been so many things in the last few...

[Frazier] Yes, with television we are so close to [inaudible]...

[Pancake] Close to everything.

[Frazier] Of course, I suppose one of the things that most impressive but most tragic was when uh, when Kennedy was shot. I remember right where I was when I first heard it.

[Pancake] Millie, I remember right where I was, too.

[Frazier] I'd gone up to the North School to take some books, and somebody up there had heard it. Just couldn't believe it.

[Pancake] It was just, same here, I thought it was very impressive to the children and school too.

[Frazier] Mm-hm.

[Pancake] [clear-throat] There have been so many conveniences that have come about since you and I have come up through life, and I don't know of which one I could truly say, but the conveniences enjoyed most by your family would be telephone, phonograph, toilet, railroad, and so forth. Can you think of one convenience probably that has brought more enjoyment to the family?

[Frazier] I would say radio. Course I'm kind of [inaudible]...

[Pancake] That, that's okay. That, that...

[Frazier] but for things overall, Kleenex and nylons.

[Pancake] All those are wonderful.

[Frazier] I remember, I remember before we had, well, and then uh, Dreft, do you remember draft uh, dishwashing and [inaudible]...

[Pancake] Yes.

[Frazier] I thought that was wonderful. [inaudible]...

[Pancake] Made your hands feel so good.

[Frazier] Yeah, I was in college, and the, they put little sample boxes of Dreft in every room. I remember that so well, and uh, I don't think I could make it without Kleenex.

[Pancake] There's going to be just a few questions I'm going to put in here, because you've lived here so long and everything. Um, the enjoyment that you had when there were more stores downtown, uh, was quite different than today, wasn't it?

[Frazier] Yes, it was pretty nice.

[Pancake] I remember uh, shopping when I would finish up my shopping on Christmas Eve, and Wayne and I would do it together, and they would wrap every gift. You'd go uptown, the music was playing...

[Frazier] Yes.

[Pancake] and they would wrap our gifts for us, just felt so lighthearted, and there were so many places to shop.

[Frazier] Oh, yes.

[Pancake] And now we have nothing to shop from downtown.

[Frazier] Specialty stores.

[Pancake] Yes.

[Frazier] Remember the [inaudible] sisters on the west side of the square? You went there to have your hem stitching done.

[Pancake] Where did you enjoy going to eat most in downtown, in the downtown area?

[Frazier] Well, when I was a child, probably Mel's Café, and then [inaudible] Restaurant. And then in the early days, in my early days, Lycans had an inn on, out north of town on uh, [inaudible].

[Pancake] Lycans, now that's an...

[Frazier] [inaudible]

[Pancake] L-Y-C-A-N.

[Frazier] Yes. Missus Lycan was a uh, was a Blundell, I'm pretty sure, yeah. And they were all [inaudible].

[Pancake] As you were growing...

[Frazier] The uh, the inn north of town was the Plymouth Rock Inn, Inn, and that was, you know, seemed pretty special to have something like that.

[Pancake] As you were growing up, did they have a teenage hangout place uptown?

[Frazier] Well, we called it the Greeks because it was the Helicoss brothers that had it, and it for, what's that now, next to Jerry Wallace's drugstore, [inaudible] next door...

[Pancake] It was around the corner?

[Frazier] No, it was uh...

[Pancake] The next one down there, didn't, doesn't seem to be anything in that building.

[Frazier] No, that's where it was. Well, it wasn't called the Candy Kitchen.

[Pancake] Oh, later Candy, I know, that's where, it was there when we came here.

[Frazier] Oh, was it?

[Pancake] Mm-hm.

[Frazier] Yeah.

[Pancake] So that...

[Frazier] That was...

[Pancake] [inaudible]

[Frazier] that was the place where everybody went.

[Pancake] And then of course, you could always get sodas and things at the drugstores, and they had the soda...

[Frazier] Oh...

[Pancake] fountains...

[Frazier] gee, yes.

[Pancake] at that time.

[Frazier] And stools where you could sit down, those little ice cream table chairs.

[Pancake] Well, I know that I've certainly lived, enjoyed living in Marshall in the times I've lived here, and if you say you've lived here most your life, I'm sure you've enjoyed living...

[Frazier] Yes.

[Pancake] here too.

[Frazier] Course we had the movie theatre too.

[Pancake] And see, I didn't ever s-, get to see that, gone when we moved to...

[Frazier] Burned before [inaudible].

[Pancake] Not long, I don't think. I think Ronny [?] Ellington said, I don't know what year it burned, but we came here in sixty, so I'm not sure when it burned, but.

[Frazier] That bu-, burned before Garv and I were married.

[Pancake] It did?

[Frazier] I'm sure it was, uh.

[Pancake] Well, Ronny [?] Ellington can always tell me what it looked like, I said I wish they'd start another one.

[Frazier] Me too, yes.

[Pancake] I'd like to go to the movie theatre. If you uh, went to Terre Haute uh, did you usually drive, or did you take uh, public transportation?

[Frazier] In the early days, when I was little we went on the train, and uh, [inaudible] bus uh, picked us up. I suppose by the [inaudible], pick us up in the morning, and take us out to the station north of town,

and uh, we arrived in Terre Haute in the large Union Station, and they had a [inaudible] and I remember seeing the [inaudible] were at least a yard so [inaudible].

[Pancake] Where was Union Station located in Terre Haute?

[Frazier] Oh gosh, north...

[Pancake] On Wabash?

[Frazier] No, no, North Eighth, probably.

[Pancake] Okay.

[Frazier] But I would judge at least six blocks north of Wabash.

[Pancake] Okay.

[Frazier] I don't know what...

[Pancake] Then you would spend the day, and then catch the train back.

[Frazier] And come home on the Bob, they always called that night train the Bob.

[Pancake] The night train was the Bob.

[Frazier] I suppose it was Bob Dale, I don't know. And uh, Mister Rector, with his bus. It was [inaudible] from the back, with, they had plush seats, they would be there to pick people up and de-, deliver them to their homes.

[Pancake] Now this was Mister Rector.

[Frazier] R-E-C-T-O-R, yes. And we had a, where the post office is, that was Rector's bus barn. I believe that was a [inaudible], and that's where the buses were kept.

[Pancake] That's very interesting, Millie, because I...

[Frazier] [inaudible] but, by bus, and uh, I think it was just a local bus, Greyhound went through here, but this was a locally, Wabash Valley Bus probably. I think came up from Robinson, it would stop at several place between here and there.

[Pancake] They, they had a bus stop when we moved here, I never did ride the bus anyplace, but used to stop at the Archer House, I know.

[Frazier] That's true, yes. Now d-, that probably was the, the Greyhound.

[Pancake] Mm-hm.

[Frazier] But this was a local one that we went to Terre Haute on. And a lot of people um, used the bus, people that worked in Terre Haute went back and forth on the bus. Then later on, much later, we drove [inaudible].

[Pancake] And of course your husband was uh, was into the restaurant business for quite some years, wasn't he?

[Frazier] Yes, not when we were married.

[Pancake] Not when you were married, but...

[Frazier] No, [inaudible].

[Pancake] Mm-hm.

[Frazier] So, so going back in [inaudible], or Magnolia. Yeah, Magnolia was the uh, was the [inaudible].

[Pancake] And the name of his uh, café was the um...

[Frazier] Colonial Kitchen.

[Pancake] Colonial Kitchen. I loved eating there, too. I thought it was...

[Frazier] Yeah, [inaudible].

[Pancake] I always thought that they kept uh, very neat, and was, and I was disappointed in later years when it, you know, wasn't kept up that well, after he went out.

[Frazier] Thank you.

[Pancake] Uh, it seemed the place to go when I came here, if we wanted to...

[Frazier] I'll tell him, he'll be pleased.

[Pancake] Plus, many teachers' meetings were held there, and we were, I thought it was very nice...

[Frazier] That's true, they were.

[Pancake] when we would go. Well Millie, I want to thank you for the information you have given us, and there's going to be many people, your students, and people that know you that are going to be interested in this, and be checking it out, to listen to it. But it will be placed in the public library for those who would like to listen to it, and your name will be on this tape, and I want to thank you very much for coming and letting me interview you.

[Frazier] It's been a pleasure to visit with you, Lelah.

[Pancake] And time flies, doesn't it?

[Frazier] It does.

[Pancake] But it doesn't seem like we...

[Frazier] It's fun to, to be reminded of...

[Pancake] It is.

[Frazier] things in the past.

[Pancake] There was one other thing I wanted to ask, do you still go to the Methodist, are you still a member of the...

[Frazier] No.

[Pancake] you don't go there?

[Frazier] No, [inaudible] Unitarian.

[Pancake] Uni-, Unitarian?

[Frazier] Uh-huh, I go to church in Terre Haute.

[Pancake] In Terre Haute? That's interesting too, I didn't know that. But I want to thank you again, it's been my pleasure to interview you.

[Frazier] Thank you Lelah.