

ORAL HISTORY T-0404
INTERVIEW WITH ELMER BROEKER
INTERVIEWED BY ED COFFEY
DEPRESSION ERA PROJECT
JULY 23, 1974

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COFFEY: Today is July 23, Tuesday. This is Ed Coffey and as a part of the oral history program at the University of Missouri-St. Louis I have with me today Elmer Broeker. We will be talking about the Great Depression. Do you want to start now, Elmer by giving us a brief background history of your life.

BROEKER: You mean about the depression?

COFFEY: You know what your family life was like prior to the depression and you know maybe during the depression. Something like that.

BROEKER: _____ I was four years old when I moved away from the farm, I don't remember much about that. I just remember It was the year of the great ____ because the years that I remember I was nine years old. Should I just start out with the depression then.

COFFEY: Right, that would be fine.

BROEKER: I talk

COFFEY: If you want to, it's up to you.

BROEKER: Well lets see if I can begin right now. Do I say hello or something like this...

COFFEY: No, no just go ahead.

BROEKER: Just go ahead and speak just like I am talking.

COFFEY: Yeah, right.

BROEKER: I will start out with the year twenty-nine is that close enough.

COFFEY: Sure, that's fine.

BROEKER: They don't want no family history on me do they?

COFFEY: If you want to say what your family life, you know, if it was prosperous and everything prior to the depression. or if you felt the depression waves coming on, you know, prior to 1929. Did things get really tight like inflation is now, you know. Or was everything

really prosperous and everything like it was maybe after the depression, you know, when everybody was in a post-war boom or everything was really happy. Or if you just want to start with the depression in twenty-nine that's fine.

BROEKER: I'll just start with that then. That's about the best I can do, I think.

COFFEY: OK, fine.

BROEKER: Because I mostly remember from nine years old on. I'll just go ahead with the depression. I'll start out with twenty-nine. And I just talk through this thing. And then if you want to ask a question, you ask a question is that right.

COFFEY: Yeah, well when ever you get done, you know.

BROEKER: Well it was in 1929 when the big depression hit and it was very hard times for all those who had to work for a living. Is that OK? And of course there was rich in them days, but not like today. The rich of course they did all right. But the ones who had to work for a living, they had a pretty rough time. Now I remember a time in 1931. I was about eleven years old. I went up to a old store in Creve Cour. It was just like a little country store. It was open on Sunday morning. And I bought an eight pound pork shoulder for a dollar and a half. Sure couldn't buy that today for that. Beer, why you could get beer, that is after Roosevelt got in in thirty-three, he brought the beer back so you could get beer, ten cents a bottle and I remember an old tavern up here on Mosley and Olive you could get a twenty-six ounce schooner for ten cents. _____ I worked in a big apple orchard in 1937 10 hours a day six days a week. Sometimes even Sundays. Two dollars a day, twenty cents an hour, ten hours a day. Anyway you could buy automobiles back in the thirties. You could buy a new Chevrolet or a Ford for around eight hundred., eight hundred and fifty. Of course there was, like I say, some rich in those days, but not near the rich like today. Of course they could hang on to their dollar because they could get the working man for little or nothing in those days. In those days if you made... If anybody made, I'd say four or five dollars a day, you was making, pretty well, top money. The depression really hit all over the country. Those who didn't have it or had to go out and work for it are the ones that really felt the sting of it. Of course we had a big garden. We rented a, I'm going to put this in 'This ought to help you a little'. We rented an old house down on Craig Road where Dierbergs store is now. That was all woods and fields back then. We rented that house for fifteen dollars a month. I'm also and I'm also going to put this spring in there. We had good clear spring water. And we went down to the creek. We had a good clear spring down in the creek bank. It was as good a water as you would ever want to drink. We helped ourselves a lot by spading ground over. We had a lot of ground. We had about a two and one half acre garden. We spaded that over every Spring and we raised potatoes, pumpkins, strawberries, butter beans. We had a stand down on the road. Saturdays and Sundays we sold butter beans as the people came by. They stopped and bought butter beans. Of course the rich pretty well stopped and bought the beans. There was too many poor who could not afford to. That garden pretty well put us over along with whatever jobs we could get in those days. While we raised enough potatoes and pumpkins and stuff was stocked in the cellar. We had food down there, canned tomatoes and we had food pretty near all Winter. We didn't have to buy too much at the store. My father back in thirty-two and three, when times were tough, he couldn't find much work. He got a job with a farmer down on Craig road. He would work for a dollar a day and of course they

gave him his dinner and his supper. One winter this farmer, he bought a couple of hogs to butcher and so he took the pay for two weeks off of my fathers salary because you could buy hogs cheap in them days and he asked him if he wanted to do it and he agreed to it so he bought two extra hogs along in with his and butchered them and we had a couple of hogs that Winter which went a long way. Those were the day and I am telling you, they were really rough and if you were working out there for a living in them days and had to depend on a job for a living. If you quit your job there was thirty or forty men waiting to step into your job. Now I have to think a little more.

COFFEY: Do you think St. Louis felt the depression, a sudden depression that hit the country all at once or?

BROEKER: When she struck, she struck all at once, That's when the stock market went down. She just struck all at once as far as I remember.

COFFEY: Did it hit all at once or did it seep in from the coast to the Midwest.

BROEKER: Well it pretty well hit the country all at once. As far as I can. One year it just hit like that and went all over the whole country. Everybody, all those who had to depend on jobs. They're the ones that really saw it. Shall I say that?

COFFEY: Yeah if you like.

BROEKER: When this depression hit it really hit all at once and all over the country. And those who really had to work for a living, why they were the ones, they felt it right away. Are there questions?

COFFEY: Do you have any certain opinions or ideas about what caused... you know possible causes of the depression? Or do you think it was something that was building up for a long time and was destined to happen.

BROEKER: Well they blamed it on Hoover. whether that is true or not I don't know. They blamed it on Hoover. It came in 1929_____. They spent a lot of money in World War I and everything. I think that could have added to it, but Hoover was blamed for it and when Roosevelt was running his first time for President and even his second term he really was laying it on Hoover for the depression. So I don't know.

COFFEY: Was it like in Hoover's policies or was it just because...Do you think it was really right that Hoover got blamed for it or was it bad policies.

BROEKER: I think he might have done a few things that wasn't too good. I don't just recall too much what they were. I know was... Shall I mention that in there about when Hoover run for his second term, would they be interested in that? He promised a chicken in every pot and a car in every garage.

COFFEY: Sure.

BROEKER: Would they care to hear that?

COFFEY: Yeah sure that would be fine.

BROEKER: Well if you think that will interest them

COFFEY: Sure anything's fine.

BROEKER: And now when Hoover run again for his second term he promised a chicken in every pot and a car in every garage, but that didn't turn out any good either. While, as far as I understand, I don't know how true it is, but Hoover was actually blamed for the Depression. Whether it was his fault, I couldn't really say, because I was pretty young in them days and I don't remember too much about his policies. They claimed some of his policies wasn't too good. Might have not been his fault, I don't know. It could have been leading up from after World War I. All the money they spent during that war and everything. I don't know. But anyway when it hit it really hit and hit hard. I wouldn't say whether Hoover was the ___ or not, but I know he was sure blamed for it.

COFFEY: Do you know much about how the services were then.

BROEKER: The services?

COFFEY: Yeah the army and the navy and stuff like that.

BROEKER: Well I was a pretty young kid then, but... You mean as far as pay and that?

COFFEY: Well as far as pay...

BROEKER: Oh no very cheap.

COFFEY: Did they have as many men in service then or did they encourage people to go into service because of that, you know

BROEKER: Yeah, but lets see, I don't think there was too many in the service after World War I was over. There was depression then I think, I might be wrong, I think a lot of people went in when they couldn't get jobs. I think they did, quite a few did go into the service when they couldn't get nothing else, you know. Because there wasn't much work. Oh and the apple packers. The guys from World War I, the soldiers were selling apples on the streets of Washington trying to make a nickel or a dime. The depression was so bad that a lot of them were even trying to sell apples on the streets of Washington for a nickel or a dime just to try to get something to eat. That's how bad it was. There was something about the depression that was about McArthur, I think McArthur was the chief, not chief of State, but Chief of Staff, yeah. And I don't know if he even paid some out of his own pocket. It seems to me, to keep from , oh you know pulling a march on Washington.

COFFEY: Oh really?

BROEKER: Yeah, the depression was so bad back in them days. I'm pretty sure General McArthur was Chief of Staff at that, somewhere during the thirties. It seems to me I heard stories that he even went so far as to help some of the soldiers from World War I. I think they wanted to draw some kind of a pension or something, I forget what it was, anyway they

wanted to draw some money or something, but anyway McArthur talked them out of it or offered to pay them some or something to keep them from marching on Washington or starting a, what do you call it , a revolt or

COFFEY: A riot.

BROEKER: A riot or whatever you want to call it. Anyway, but that's how tough it really was.

COFFEY: Did you say a lot of people went in the service so they could get a job, because they couldn't get one on the outside.

BROEKER: Oh yeah I think so. But still I know some did, but I'm not sure if they took too many in when the depression hit. But I think a lot of them did actually go in when they couldn't find work no where. But they got poor pay. because you had back in forty four as a private you didn't get much money. I remember back in forty four I think we got around eighty dollars a month. In the army if you was just a private.

COFFEY: So during the depression days was that considered a lot of money? Eighty dollars a month?

BROEKER: Oh yeah, I should say so, that was big money, eighty dollars a month. I imagine it was tax free.

COFFEY: Oh sure you have a lot of people going in.

BROEKER: You talking about going into the services. Back in the depression days a lot of them when they couldn't find work nowhere they went into the service, but the pay was very poor then, because if I remember right, about 44 a private only got around 80 dollars a month then but back in the depression days that would have been considered good money. My older sister, she worked for really rich people named Green, she got fifty dollars a month. Back in them days that was considered very good money in those years. Were the sanitary conditions and stuff, you know, even though money was tight. There wasn't a lot of money going around, Hard time had hit.

COFFEY: Were things, you know out here in Creve Coeur and the surrounding areas were they still pretty sanitary or did they go down. Well you know, I mean were sanitary conditions below normal?

BROEKER: You want to know all about that?

COFFEY: Like sewers and stuff?

BROEKER: Just anything.

unintelligible.

BROEKER: Sanitary conditions wasn't too good in those days around...anywhere around here where I lived. There wasn't hardly no sewers and there was a lot of outhouses in those

days. In fact the old school that I went to, Old Weber school. It's tore down by now. In fact we had outhouses there up to about, it was about thirty-one when they first put the inside toilets in there.

COFFEY: Well, let's see were here. Lets see, did you know any... Did you ever hear anything or know anybody that live around or visited Hooverville, or had you ever heard of that?

BROEKER: I heard of Hooverville, but doggoneit I can't really tell you anything about Hooverville. I don't exactly recall that... just what it was about. I know I heard of it. You want to hold this just a...

COFFEY: Sure.

COFFEY: Do you know anything about Hooverville?

BROEKER: This is all that I can remember. She remembered this much about Hooverville. In those tough depression days old homes were thin ____ and people who didn't have no place to live they put up shacks for them around the different parts of the country. And they called those shacks Hooverville. They probably named that after Hoover on account of the depression, I imagine. So that's all I know about Hooverville. I guess that that is all I know that could be to that scene. Because they blamed him for the depression so they just put these shacks up and called it Hooverville. So if you want I'll put that in there.

COFFEY: Sure.

BROEKER: Yeah and back then those bad depression days, now talking about Hooverville, they as far as I understand put up shacks for old men and people that didn't have no places to live and that. Put them all over the country wherever the old men lived and where they didn't have no place to live and that they put up shacks for them, and that they called Hooverville. So that's about all I remember about that, but I'm sure that I can't remember any more to it. I'm sure now that that was what it was actually about. They just called it Hooverville. Maybe they did that on account of Hoover because, putting the blame on him because of the depression. Then these poor old men lived in them shacks that had no other place to live. So that's what I remember, Hooverville and as far as I know that's about all that would be to that. I don't recall anything else to it. They just put up these old shacks. There was a heck of a many old homeless man that couldn't live. He didn't have no place to live so that is what they did they just built up these old shacks anyplace in the country. They might be out in the wilderness and places. And these poor old men who were down and out, too old to work, no place to live. They just put those shacks up and called it Hooverville. There was an old man. This was still back in the depression days if I remember right. It seems to me it was thirty-six somewhere in there in the fall of the year. No, it could have been February. He had gray hair, he was really old and his hair came down to here. He looked like he hadn't shaved for a year. _____ that poor old man I don't know how old he was, but I know he was up in his eighties. I remember he might have had a cane, but _____ house on Craig road. What you call a depression house because it was two dollars a month. This poor old man come through there you know and he was _____ I think he slept in hay barns at night. I'm pretty sure that is where he slept, in farmers hay barns. But he was so poor he didn't have more than just the clothes on his back. He would come to our place and mother give him, she had, what the

heck was it, probably two bananas and some cookies or something. She fixed him up a little package of stuff. And then he went to the Deirbergs house. Now the Deirbergs they were rich, they were running the store in those days. The Deirbergs were well off. So he worked for Fred Deirbergs wife, Fred Deirberg would be at the store. Anyway he ah, I think she gave him a couple of things, anyway she fixed him a little package. Do you think that would sound interesting in your recording ?

COFFEY: Yeah

BROEKER: About that old man.

COFFEY: Sure that would be great.

BROEKER: That would come close to it, I think showing them how the times were. Well it was in about 1936, in February. There was an old man. He was pretty much up in the age. And he hadn't shaved or had a haircut for a year the way it looked. Anyways hair was all way down over his chin and all. And he was so poor that the place we were renting for fifteen a month in those type days, he came by our house one afternoon and he was really poor, but anyway my mother felt sorry for him and of course we had to scrape ourselves, but she fixed him up a little package and then he went to another house across the street from us and as far as I understood that lady fixed him up with a little package. And as far as I understood, I think, the poor old man was living in farmers hay barns at night, sleeping in there because he had no other place to go and all he could do was go around from house to house and beg for a living.

COFFEY: Do you remember, were the any wealthy people up around this area that, you know, by being hit by the depression were just you know more or less forced to do odd jobs. Or did the wealth, you know, people who had the money around here did they, were they more or less better off in the depression or were there some of them who had to go and scrape to.

BROEKER: Well. There was some that invested there money and went broke. That kind of stuff went on, yeah that kind of stuff went on. Yeah they had to wind up, in those days, going out and working for a living.. There wasn't too many rich in those days, but. _____ the rich they managed to hang onto their money but there was some they tried to go too far and I don't know if they invested it and lost it and this and that. Some lost it like the banks. A lot of them lost their money in the banks. The banks, as I understood, the banks claimed they went bankrupt or something. There was a lot of them lost money that way, but anyway there was some that had money and they lost it to different kinds of investment of different things, whatever they did with it. Anyway some of them had to even go out and try to find a job and work for a living.

COFFEY: Do you remember anything about child labor, you know, like kids...?

BROEKER: Child labor, you mean kids trying to get jobs?

COFFEY: Well like kids working in factories and stuff like that

BROEKER: In them days practically all your kids lived just on their parents.

COFFEY: Oh really.

BROEKER: Except in cases like _____ now for farmers, my older sister who's ninety years old now she picked strawberries and raspberries. But outside of that . Well they caddied at golf courses, a lot of them. A lot of caddying going on in those days you know. As far as I... see I think they had a law in those days. It seemed to me you had to be was it sixteen or somewhere before you could work.

COFFEY: So as far as you can remember child labor was just out during the depression except for a few odd jobs like picking strawberries or caddying, or something like that.

BROEKER: Well now the law... I don't know if they had... I guess they had a law. Because I know if I remember right, I'm darn sure it was sixteen or somewhere around there.

COFFEY: When men and women were working did they earn equal salaries, like for jobs?

BROEKER: I didn't see too much of women working in those days except oh now maybe here and there..... ones that had a good education, now like that were working in the offices. Certain offices or something like that but you didn't see or hear near the women, around here anyway. As far as I know they were mostly housewives around here.

COFFEY: Like during the depression years, did education more or less fall out of people's lives or where they still trying to send their kids thorough maybe grade school?

BROEKER: A lot of them couldn't afford it. a lot of them around here couldn't put them through high school. A lot of them dropped out in grade school. You know didn't even go through the eighth grade. It was tough days in them days. The rich and them that could afford it , you know, their children got a good education. The ones that had to get out and slave for a living didn't get much education. I had to get out of grade school. I was probably in the eighth grade. I had to get out of their to help my parents. Otherwise I would have been _____ if I could have got a chance to go though high school and college. _____ in them days. You would get out and work for it or beg for it or starve to death.

COFFEY: Well like I know you like sports a lot like baseball and stuff. Was there a lot of that going on then or was that more or less wiped out too.

BROEKER: No it was strong and continued. Baseball was a great game. _____ Well naturally the big leagues they could _____ years. _____ We had a baseball team. We played in September and October and April and May til school was out. The school board stood our uniforms and our bats and the balls. The only thing we had to stand was our gloves. And we played different teams _____ Six or seven different school teams from different areas. _____ school teams at that time. _____

COFFEY: You know the salaries the major league players get today, was it as outstanding for them as they are today, you know like you hear a lot of them like today making maybe 110,000 a year to play in so many games or whatever like back in those times did they make the same kind of big salaries as they do now or was it cut down because of depression. Did they make like fifty dollars a month playing baseball or something like that?

BROEKER: You want me to give an estimate on what Dizzy Dean made.

COFFEY: Oh sure that would be fine.

BROEKER: This will give you an estimate of what the big league ball players made back in the thirties. Dizzy Dean would be in his prime today he might be making two or three hundred thousand which is what he made back in thirty-four when he won thirty games and lost only seven and won two games in the World Series. Back in those days you know even the big league ball players, oh if they could be making the salaries they are making today. In 1934 Dizzy Dean won 30 games for the Cardinals and lost only seven. He won two in the World Series and his salary was six thousand something for that year. I don't recall just how much over. It seems to me it was six thousand five or six hundred or somewhere in there.

COFFEY: So they all made salaries similar to that?

BROEKER: Yeah.

COFFEY: Wow.

BROEKER: Otherwise they didn't get the salaries they are getting today. They are paying Gibson one hundred and sixty thousand a year and he has five damn victories. Thirty eight years old and paying him that kind of money five wins. Dizzy Dean could be pitching today in his prime like he was in thirty-four he might be getting at least \$300,000.

COFFEY: That's right that would be a ____ Was there a lot of kids or men or boys who maybe like in the school years that they had, you know, went through and maybe they were interested in sports and stuff. Did they try to try out for the big league teams of stuff. For the salary or did they just worry about making it from day to day? You know were there a lot of people, guy that who maybe had talent in sports and kind of a baseball, football, whatever, who tried to get into the big leagues?

BROEKER: Oh yeah. Back in those days there was a lot of them. If they thought they could make the grade they went ahead in and went into training and all that. But there was a lot of them that would like to, but they couldn't make it. Fred Hackman up there, he tried to make it. He was a darned good left handed pitcher. He couldn't get into the... There was a lot of them, they were so damn poor they just had to get out with a pick or a shovel or something. They didn't get a chance to get in there. They just had to get out there and lucky if they could make a dollar or a couple dollars a day so they could. So they could get a little ____ or a sausage or something to eat.

COFFEY: Right, yeah.

BROEKER: Too bad you couldn't experience those years. I guess you could be glad you wasn't there.

COFFEY: Was there like much construction? Many construction companies doing any kind of?

BROEKER: No, heck you didn't hardly hear of nothing. You never say a high lift or a anything back in them days. You mowed your grass with an old reel type push mower that was a hand....you pulled it. It had no motor on it. Should I put that in there?

COFFEY: Yeah sure if you want to.

BROEKER: Well back in those depression days why you wouldn't hear of no big construction companies or no big machinery like high lifts and bulldozers and all that stuff. In fact when you mowed your grass, you mowed it with what you call an old reel type push mower with a handle. Long wooden handle on it and you pushed it. It had no motor on it at all. Just a reel turned as you pushed the mower with the handle. That's the kind of days those were. Yeah, you didn't a...you didn't have no kind of machinery where you sat down and easy today when you can do every thing the easy way. Those were the hard days. Yeah we spreaded our garden all by hand with shovels in those days. When we made about a two and one half acre garden. Washing machines, those who could afford them had them and those who didn't they washed in tubs and boilers and rubbed and scrubbed their clothes on what you called the old...I can't think of the name of that old thing now. It's an old, anyway. When they rubbed them on this thing. Yeah I guess it was what you called a old wash board, that's what they called it. That's the way they rubbed their clothes out. Those who couldn't afford no washing machine and all that. And you didn't hear of no drier in them days it was just the washing machine.

COFFEY: So there weren't really that many luxuries or anything for the average type guy.

BROEKER: Just the wealthy had the luxuries and even he didn't have the luxuries that we have today. Back in twenty-nine and so we had. My uncle gave us the old time radio. Where you plugged it in and listened to it in your evenings. Not your regular radio. They had these things and that's how you got the sound ._____wasn't anything like we got today.

COFFEY: Were radios and things like that considered luxuries at that time?

BROEKER: Oh yeah radios, there was only a few of us who had them things. No television at all. Then they had the old time record player, where you wound with your hand. We had one of them over there. An old time record player. Still to tell you the truth the way this world is today, I still kind of like the 1930s. You could go to a show for fifteen or twenty cents. And you could see some damn good old time movies in them days. Oh they had good old movies in them days. A lot of these damn movies they got showing today.

COFFEY: Yeah, I imagine.

BROEKER: You had Clark Gable and Jean Harlow back in them days. They had the good movies or heck you could go to a carnival in the thirties . We could go to a good carnival on a Saturday night and really enjoy yourself for three or four hours if you wanted to pay it. You could enjoy yourself for anywhere from fifty cents to a dollar. Them were good old days. They didn't try to crowd you out of here or there. Or start a damn riot like they did in the sixties, you know. The colored were kept in their place, pretty bad. They weren't allowed at the zoo. You could go to the Forest Park Zoo in the thirties and the late fortie's and you would see no coloreds in there because they wasn't allowed. They wasn't allowed on the

Admiral. They wasn't allowed in the ball park You was all to yourself. You didn't hear no colored guys trying to marry white women. Or white men marry colored women. It started with Warren, the Supreme Court Justice. _____. He put that law down from what I heard. Let colored marry whites and whites marry coloreds. And they talked a bunch about that...
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BROEKER: They had a damn rough time. I think some of them might have even starved to death in those bad days.

COFFEY: Were there any kind of, like did people feel sorry for them or did they feel like a lot of them do, like a lot of people do today that well you know they are lower than us and they are getting what they deserve.

BROEKER: Back in them days there wasn't much use yet for the nigger, if you want to put it that way. Mostly Jews. Oh yeah they had the real... they could get.....This place where my older sister was, they had a colored guy he would chauffer and he took care of the yard. See my sister got a day off a week, I think it was on Thursday. Wednesday he would chauffer her out to where we lived and would come back at a certain time she had to be back there at night. We caught a rat down there you know. This one Wednesday night when he'd come out to pick her up. My older brother was standing there and he had it a trap. It was a white rat. First white rat we ever had down here. We had rat traps out in the sheds. See we raised chickens down there at our house. We had about fifty chickens. We had our own eggs. We got a 100 pound sack of feed at the store for pretty darn cheap. That would last the chickens for quite a while. Then sometimes we would kill a couple of chickens and eat them because we would always have some you know. Anyway we caught a white rat down there and like I say this nigger chauffer picked my sister up to take her back to the Green....my brother held that rat. Clayton Thomas was his name. He was a nice colored guy though. Was pretty well educated too. And we said have you ever seen a white rat before. I shore declare I never saw a white rat in my life. I don't know if Roosevelt brought us luck that morning or not but we got a damn cold winter and early cold falls back in them the late thirties and early forties. Thirty-six I remember back in That was Roosevelt's biggest land slide. One of the biggest presidential land slides in history I think. He carried every state but two I believe. He got elected that year. The day after election day. We had rabbit traps set down where the big woods and fields was. They was good eating if you knew how to cook it. We had about twenty-two rabbit traps set out two____. That morning I ran the traps and I came in with five nice big rabbits. And an old truck came down, went up Craig road right along our house, because we was right out near the road. And a big duck must have got out of the cage or anyway it got out of the truck. There must have been two but we never saw the other one. The other one got in the woods I guess. And when that duck got out. so a couple of ____chased it out under the pair trees. We had pair trees down there too, that helped a lot. we had a lot of them in the cellar for the Winter. ____A couple of weeks later just before they had to kill the duck and had a good Sunday dinner. A few weeks later found the mate to it. I found it out in the woods. Caught her then we killed her with the chickens. Had a duck and a chicken. There wasn't nothing in hard times like that like having a couple chickens for Sunday dinner or Thanksgiving. Take them out to the chopping block. Take them out there and ____their wings and held them tied to their feet that they couldn't fly. Stretch their head over the old block and just took the axe and chopped the head off. Let the old chicken jump

a little. A little colored boy, you know, this was about 1929 or 1930 somewhere around there. A little colored boy came up to old Creve Coeur golf course of course I wasn't caddying up there then I was just a kid myself. But my brothers had caddied up there. _____ he felt sorry for him so he had never had a regular caddy when he played golf all white guys and a lot of them had to beg on their knees. Anyway this colored boy came in caddied that _____ He wasn't there fifteen minutes and the story went out and they had an outhouse there too. They took the poor old boy and shoved his head down into the toilet. They said boy that sucker ran out of there about _____. old country town. They claimed they gave him a warning if one ever came up there "you better be out of there before dark or he wouldn't get out at all." We had one that years ago now, when they got that school house out there supposed to have raped this white teacher. They caught him, the way I got the story they caught him and tied him up inside the school house and set the school house on fire. One that went and raped this big shots daughter. Shot in the arm _____ or what, but anyway he's high up there. So when they took. I don't know if they if got him away from the law. I think they did, I ain't sure, but anyway however it turned out they tied him behind the car and drug him _____ and threw gas on him and lit a match. They his eyes were like saucers. That was really cruel. They could have done it a little easier than that . Of course on the other hand it might have stopped a lot of them other coloreds from, you know, going too far, I don't know. They claimed that they done that to a few here when they was doin all this terrible stuff. A lot of them might have thought twice before they pulled that, I don't know. Can't let them off free _____ now they think they can do what they want and they won't get killed for it. If you got any more questions.? Or anything I could add I'd have to think a little bit.

COFFEY: Overall you think, just general for a conclusion do you feel that you enjoyed or you, I'll say, maybe preferred to maybe live in that time again rather than today because of various reasons that you have or hold or opinions. You think, over all it was better.

BROEKER: Well I think I liked it preferred it better than I do today. The way things are going today. _____.

COFFEY: Thank you for letting me do this with you.

BROEKER: You are very welcome. Do you think you got enough there?

COFFEY: I can't really think of much more to, maybe, say, you know. We covered pretty much of it.

BROEKER: I can't really think of much more to, maybe, say, you know. We covered pretty much of it. If you think it will help. I believe I really enjoyed those depression years in the thirties better than I do today. Come to think of it though I believe I actually enjoyed those days back in the thirties a lot better than what we got now in a way. Because it was rough as far as getting a job, but when you did get a job, a dollar went pretty long in them days. You could go to a show for 15 or 20 cents, you could go to a carnival for fifty cents or a dollar have a good time and it just seemed so much better to be back in them days. I believe I liked them better because the way it looks today, well inflation might be here next, and if that ever comes that's going to be a lot worse than the depression.