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Interview Mrs. Jane Lee

LOCAL HISTORY

- Q. My name is Robert Williams and I am visiting in the home of Mrs. Jane Lee at 185 N. Oakdale, Decatur, Illinois, on January 31, 1990, in this second series of oral history interviews. Mrs. Jane Lee, you told me earlier that you were born in Decatur - would you share with us something about your birth, your early background, your education, your experiences over the years?
- A. Yes sir, I was born at home because back in those days you did not go to the hospital to be born, you stayed at home. Dr. Jones, a well known physician in those days, was the gentleman who officiated at my birth. He had a horse and carriage and I will tell you that the temperature for fifteen days was below zero and the poor horse was tied to a telephone pole out in front of the house for the entire 25 hours it took for me to get here. And, consequently, it was almost a frozen horse. The house that I was born in is the one my father built and it is still standing today. My aunt, who was a baby nurse, took care of me and my mother and because of the entire length of time of my being so long in getting here they just rolled me up in a blanket and tossed me on a bed in the other bedroom, trying to save my mother's life, and, consequently, my father walked in to the other bedroom to see if I was all right, pulled the blanket back and let out a yell for them to come, I was still alive. So, thanks to him I am here. I started to school at Lincoln School - which was new - it was built on the side of the old Marietta School in 1917. There was no kindergarten in those days so I started in the first grade. Miss Mary Boyd was my teacher. She, the first day of school, said, "what are all your names," and since my name was Edith Jane Rule, she said, "Now look, you have to be called either you Edith or Jane, make up your mind." So I went home at noon and told my mother and she said it's up to you whatever you select will be the name you'll go by for the rest of your life. So, when I went back to school the teacher said, "all right which is it going to be?" I said I guess just plain Jane and for two weeks the children kidded me to death about being just plain Jane. In 1921 I started at Roosevelt School which was also brand new. It was built in 1921, I mean. Mr. E. J. Muffley was the principal, Betty Jo Eickenberry had music and glee clubs, which I belonged to, and Freda Douthit, I definitely remember, was the English teacher. There was a play called the Little Prince put on - I was not in that but later on there was the Red Mill and the HMS Pinafore and I had small parts in that. From Roosevelt Junior High I went to Decatur High School which was just Decatur High School and graduated from there in 1930. R. C. Sayer was principal at the time. Miss Helen Gorham and Ethel Parkinson taught English. Miss Louise Fyke had the dramatic club and Elmer Nickel was the typing teacher and I will mention him for a very good reason. The senior play when I graduated was called Quality Street by J. M. Barry in which the movie was made with Katherine Hepburn and Franchot Tone. Now by all rights I should not have graduated because my typing grade was very very low but because I had been chosen to have the

lead in the Quality Street play, Mr. Nickel conceded to let me get by on an "E" so I would not be flunked out of school. That was my main reason for mentioning him. I belonged to the poetry club then and am still writing poetry today. I have just put together poems that I started writing in junior high school and have compiled in a loose-leaf type affair to which other poems can be added because I'm still writing quite a bit. After I graduated from high school I started work, trying desperately from June until December to find a job because in 1930 jobs were just not easy as you know the depression was hanging over us and was awfully hard to find a job. I started at the newspaper and worked there until married in 1939. I was on the switchboard basically until the last few years in which I served in the classified ad department. There was some interesting moments on the switchboard - the saddest moment was the Moweaqua mine disaster because at 3 o'clock in the morning I was called out of bed to come down to open up the switchboard because there they were going slightly crazy with calls and they needed me there to operate the board so that the editors could call in any area that they wanted to through the switchboard which was quite a unique arrangement and not supposed to be done but I had learned to do it and I was the only one who could handle it. So it happened on Christmas Eve, this mine disaster, and, of course, Christmas Day I spent the entire day at the Herald and Review and came home quite tired. I remember election night I worked down there which was quite exciting. One election I remember particularly because I was having foot trouble and had to wear bedroom slippers and sit with my feet up on a chair in order to answer telephones. The radio just wasn't all that much in those earlier days and consequently the telephones were absolutely necessary for the people to get returns on everything. The ball games were another issue that were quite interesting because I worked on the switchboard at that time and Howard Millard would climb out the window of the sports department and would patrol up and down a little platform out there and change the scores and the people would be standing down the street below him watching the scores because they did not have radios to get the scores and what he was not getting to them out of the window and down on the platform I was giving out on the switchboard. So on baseball days we had quite a bit of excitement. I was fortunate enough because of working at the Herald and Review to get to attend the concerts for Jeanette MacDonald in Peoria and Springfield and to meet her and see her and I even took a picture of her myself because one of the cameramen at the newspaper loaned me his fast camera and I corresponded with her all down the years on a person to person basis. I did not belong to a fan club and, consequently, the letters that I still have from her and the pictures she sent me are very very precious. I remember when they dedicated Lake Decatur because they dedicated it on July 4, 1923 and the grade school all took part in it. I was supposed to be a gray shadow, very interesting. My mother had to make my dress out of gray cheesecloth. Fortunately we got almost through with the entire program before it rained because when it rained gray cheesecloth wasn't the thing to be caught in, that's for sure. I remember in World War I on Armistice Day they had the parade downtown, of

course, and since my father worked at Linn and Scruggs for 50 years, he had us come down, mother and I, and sit on the window ledge at the corner of Main and Water Streets and he bought me a cow bell so that I could ring it and make noise out of the window there. I still have the cow bell. I remember the old court house which was built of stone and was 3 stories high. I remember it definitely because it was on the corner of Water and Wood Streets. I remember the old Interurban station and the Transfer House, which was quite important. I remember the old Central Railroad Depot and I remember going to Mt. Zion on the Illinois Central which was quite a trip. I remember going to Springfield on the Interurban and having to change to a milk delivery truck in order to get from Springfield to Petersburg, Illinois, where my father's people lived. It was an all day deal getting there, believe me. And Mt. Zion was almost as bad which sound ridiculous in this day but that's the way it was. I have served in the Red Cross in records and recognition, as chairman, and worked with the Red Cross for 10 - 15 years. I was the one who established the Macon County Newsletter for the Red Cross and I entitled it on the horizontal bar of the red cross. I had the word Red on the left side, Cross was the word on the right side and on the perpendicular line Hot was the word at the top and News at the bottom so it looked like it said Red Hot Cross News. It was lots of fun doing this. I served under Gene Keltner the vice chairman. In 86-87, I gave the Red Cross the city lot on the east side for Al Dobson's Green Thumb project. They were quite happy to have it. I worked with St. Mary's Auxilliary and am a life member now. I started out working on puppet making and in the beauty shop as a receptionist and pick-up. I have served as vice president and president of the Westminster Presbyterian Women. I have been in DAR and still am. I have served as Stephen Decatur Chapter Regent and eight years on the state level as American Heritage chairman, press chairman, state chaplain, and the division third director. DAR is an organization which if you are eligible and have had an ancestor who had served in the Revolutionary War in some capacity - he doesn't have to have fought in the war - he could have given patriotic service of any kind, but that entitles you to become a member of DAR - Daughters of the American Revolution. I was starting on my 21st year on the Governor Oglesby's mansion board serving as historian, tour director, and writing for the newsletter. I have been working as a volunteer at the mansion since the first day that we had our first look of the property at the beginning of the year 1969. My husband and I served together on the board until he died in 1985. At the current time as tour director I am thoroughly enjoying meeting people coming by bus to tour the house, coming by car and serving with the girls in that manner at the house. It is a very beautiful home and anyone who hasn't seen it should because it truly has been a work of art since we took it over in 1969. It has not been easy thing to do because we had been given a \$50,000 grant and - not a grant I should say - but a bill was passed and Governor Ogilvie signed the bill that we should have the money and unfortunately Dan Walker pushed Governor Ogilvie out of office and refused to acknowledge that we had the \$50,000 and said it was not a needed budget and we lost the money to acquire the house and to

get started on the restoration of it. So it hasn't been an easy thing to do. The house was finally acquired in 1976 through the Macon County Conservation District. And, we are the ones who do the work and they are the ones who own the property. I have a hobby that I have already mentioned in listing the poetry club and that is that I do have a book that I have put out and have given a copy to all my family and friends too. So far everyone seems to have enjoyed them and I believe they mean what they say. And I go on writing for the pleasure it gives me.

- Q. You certainly have given us a good bit to start with this week. You went to school in Decatur at a time when you lived in the neighborhood where the schools were located.
- A. That's right.
- Q. Did you ever have any difficulty in getting to and from the old high school which was a little farther from where you lived?
- A. No, I walked every day - walked there and walked back. The only difficulty I had in that area it was not because of the school but that I worked at the Herald and Review. Unfortunately, I was walking to work one day, going up Marietta Street, and got within a block of Lincoln School and realized that somebody was behind me and every time I turned around he was there - probably half a block behind - so I crossed over thinking I could throw him off but he wouldn't - he would cross over too. I could tell by his actions that he didn't mean any good and finally I broke into a run and went into Lincoln School and went to the principal's office. She wasn't there, so I hunted up one of the teachers and told her and because of the children on the playground being harmed in some way, there obviously was something wrong with him, so the Herald and Review sent a mail truck to pick me up and the teacher got the janitor to go out and stay on the playground with the children. That's the only problem - well possibly one other time. There was a freight train on the railroad track where a bunch of the neighborhood children walked to school together and that freight train had everything blocked for blocks and we were going to be late for school and you weren't just foolish enough to crawl between the cars - that would be stupid - but we had a problem convincing Mr. Sayer that we were not all playing hooky in some way, shape or form and he finally called the railroad to verify that we legitimately had been late.
- Q. Sounds like a typical school administrator. Very skeptical about student excuses.
- A. Oh yes, there was quite a handful of us I have to admit and he had all reasons to believe because we all came from the surrounding neighborhood out there - that was when we lived on N. Monroe Street in the 1000 block. And we lived next door to Alex Van Praag, Sr. who was a health commissioner at the time and quite a character. He was the one who played Santa Claus in Decatur for many many

years. And, he was quite a fellow - he was the one who had a tulip bed in his back yard and it was a gorgeous place to see as far as that was concerned - but mercy he was a slave driver and with his family and (we were next door neighbors) tried to entice me to weed the beds for him for 5 cents - that type of thing. My mother would say you should do it - it' not going to hurt you - you're young, etc. Well, that got to be old hat after a while. The money was fun to spend at the corner grocery store but I didn't think it was all that much fun because he was very particular and if you left even the hint of a root of a weed you were in trouble. I didn't enjoy that at all.

Q. You mentioned the depression and experiencing it of course - you have any lasting impressions of the way the depression effected you, your family the community?

A. Well, my mother had always been very careful about things and, consequently, when my boss at the Herald and Review, Ida Zoch, asked my mother one day how did you possibly survive the depression, I know that your husband's salary at Linn and Scruggs was not that much and I know what your daughter makes here, how did you possibly make it through. My mother said simply because we did not buy anything that we couldn't pay cash for. And that was the secret of our surviving, I think, because we took in the grocery sales, and we managed to have delicious chuck roast dinners on Sunday and my mother would get a big enough piece so that it would last - we could have hash and all manner of things off of it through the week and we had things worked out very well and of course my dad and I purposely would turn our paychecks over to mother and then she was the one who handled the rest of it. Also, in order to get me through high school we had a live-in board and bed young man who worked up at the Piggly Wiggly that stood up on the corner of Marietta and Edward Streets. He lived with us and by virtue of his living there mother was able to add to our income so that I could get through high school. Consequently, when I graduated from high school, Mr. Holt who was in charge then of Linn and Scruggs wanted to get a scholarship for me to go to Millikin and my dad came home quite excited about it and Mr. Holt said he could get it for me, etc. I did a little thinking and then I said no because a scholarship would not be enough money to go the entire way - I would have to work too - and after all you and mother have done so much to put me through high school that I think the time has come for me to get out and work now so that I can bring in another income. I have never regretted it because I have found out that I learned a lot in the good old common sense, horse sense, in the world that there are many things I know that college people have never learned. I don't mean to put myself above college graduates in that it is just I feel like in a sense I am on the same level with them because I have had so much happiness and chances to travel. I have been to Ireland twice, I have been to a bit of Sweden, I have been in London, I have been in Hawaii and Alaska, I have been in all of the 50 states. I have been to Nassau and all this after my husband and I were married in 1959. Up to that point I had taken a three nation tour - in 1950 when I was

working - and got to go up into the northern states and so on around so I do feel like - and I am the kind of the person who absorbs and listens and you can learn so much if you really want and you really have to want - it's not the question of sailing through a country and not seeing things because that's not the way to handle.

Q. You have been a keen and good observer in your life and you articulate your experiences quite clearly and I appreciate it - let me ask you another question - you mentioned the Figgly Wiggly - a young man who lived in your home worked at the Figgly Wiggly that was a grocery store - one of the chain stores in Decatur - what was the nature of the grocery store situation in Decatur when you were growing up - quite different from what it is today I'm sure.

A. Quite a bit different. There was that store and also Mr. Hinton ran a grocery store on the northeast corner of King and Monroe Streets - and he was quite an old timer and he was very fond of my father because my grandfather Rule and Mr. Hinton had known each other a way back when they traveled on the road for groceries and consequently he was tickled to death when we moved into the neighborhood and when we would come in there to buy our groceries from him - across the street from him there was a drug store and in that store at 4th of July they sold firecrackers as well as drugs and the fountain, etc. I remember buying the little ladyfinger packages of firecracker and because I wanted them to last a long time I would patiently sit and unwind every string of fireworks until I had each tiny little ladyfinger separate and maybe if the wicks came out of them I would break them in the center and put the punk in them and make it fizz out - so I guess my mother's teaching of salvaging everything - it lasted a long time. But the grocery stores were really something - later on there was a A&P on the corner across the street from the drug store and that was there for quite a while too. I was thinking that we used to watch the ads at the A&P and believe it or not they would have ten cans of canned goods for a dollar. Unbelievable, 10 cents a can. So we would invariably go down and load up on your canned vegetables and fruits - they were quite heavy - we had a block to walk with them but we managed to get back home again - we lived on Monroe but that was unbelievable for prices because they just didn't run that way in those days.

Q. You said your family paid cash for things - did they ever run a bill at the grocery store -

A. No.

Q. Always paid cash - even in small market.

A. No, always paid cash - even in small market. No, no way. Dad was paid every week and when I started working, I was paid every week so there was no reason on earth that we didn't have enough to take care of what we had - and we only shopped once a week and consequently it just worked out very beautifully. I can remember

when Lindbergh flew the Atlantic and my grandmother was quite excited because my grandfather came over from Sweden when he was 21 to evade the military but his name was Fremont and in Sweden it was Lindbergh and my grandmother was so excited because she was sure that Charles Lindbergh could have been related to us - I had a terrible time convincing her that I was sure there was no connection whatsoever. She was so excited that when the news finally came that he had made it successfully there was no holding her down she was so positive. My grandfather was the first conscientious objector I ever knew - but he didn't want to kill anybody. So he came to America and became quite a well known shoe cobbler in Decatur. And his main deal was that he made shoes for crippled people - built up shoes and soft leather shoes so that their feet wouldn't hurt so bad. He worked at Folrath's for quite a while so he was quite an accomplished shoemaker.

Q. Before we run out of tape on this side, how did you spell your last - your maiden name - Ruhl --

A. No Rule - just plain golden rule.

Q. Now you have some other comments - about some other things you recall.

A. Yes, I was going to comment about the old Shellabarger mansion that was fastened to the Decatur High School at the corner of Franklin and Eldorado Streets - before they put in the Kintner gym on the southeast corner - and I remember distinctly of having a journalism class in that corner room with Ethel Parkinson who was teacher at that time and we had the kind of chairs that would turn around and she would have us look out - we had to take a test - she would have us look out for a certain small short time and try to visualize all things we were seeing and we had to turn around and write down - itemize - how many different things we could remember we had seen and that was the way we got our grade for the day in journalism - it was very interesting - it was certainly another trial of observing and remembering and I think it probably had something to do with the way I had that much background when I went to work for the newspaper because I had learned that you had to sit and observe and listen - and certainly on the switchboard I had a lot of that to do. My top boss was H. C. Schaub and he was quite a wonderful newsman and whenever I was training new people to work on the switchboard with me - it was my job to take them around to every department and introduce them to the different ones and let them get a little idea of the different areas thereabout and I always ended up in his office because it was right close to the switchboard in the next room. He would invariably say when I'd bring the different ones in - boy or girl - he'd be very gracious and gentlemanly to them and he would say, "I just have one thing to say to you, you learn what you need to learn and you've got the best teacher in Decatur. If you can do it as well as Ms. Rule does you're in." I wanted to reminisce a little about the fires in Decatur. There was a bad fire at one time in the Gebhart block

which was in the 1100 block of North Water. I don't remember quite clearly how many stores were involved there but it was a good part of an entire block on the east side and I remember that the flames were terrific and my mother was so concerned - I was so little - she didn't want me to get frightened - I was walking and all that - but she took me to the back of the house as far from the windows that would show where the fire was that she could get and made me stay back there until the firemen had gotten pretty much control of the fire and there was very little flame coming up before she would let me come back to the front of the house. So you can understand that it was quite a bad one or she wouldn't have been that much upset about it. She wasn't a person who got upset easily so I know that was true. Then there were Linn and Scruggs' fires - my father worked there - in 1895 and 1914 - I don't remember that he would have been there in 1895 but he definitely was there in 1914 and of course that was two years after I was born and that's when Linn and Scruggs was at the southeast corner of Main and Water Streets - where the Millikin-Magna Bank is now - and also in one of those fires - it was when the Orlando and the area down at that end - the entire deal was mostly burned down - I remember my father telling that Mr. Scruggs asked him when they were beginning to get the fire at Linns under control and hopefully out but it was still pretty hot down there - he asked him if he would go down in the basement with a fireman and locate the safe that had fallen through the floor from the office because they were anxious to get it out and they had a deal whereby they could lift it out once they could locate it so my dad went down with the fireman - he was a little bit uneasy about going because he wasn't sure what they would get into and of course the basement had quite a bit of water in it but he did manage to locate the safe so the fireman could attach the lifting cable to get it out of there but it was important because it held the papers and everything and they were most anxious to know how fireproof it was - otherwise they would have lost all their records.

Q. Do you recall the condition the safe was?

A. It held beautifully - remarkably so considering the intent of the fire - it was unbelievable that it could do that but it really did. I was quite a good friend of Helen Gorham who taught English at high school and we rode horseback together out through Fairview Park - she was a wonderful person and a very dear friend who is still living - she is 92 now, is Valette Barnes, Mrs. William Barnes II - and she had a very great influence in my life because at the time that I was in high school, my aunt who was a baby nurse was taking care of both Bill Barnes III who passed away this last year and his sister Gloria. My aunt took care of both of them and Mrs. Barnes, knowing I was going to be going through high school with all the proms and things going on, would give me her formals which she may have only worn once but she would give me her formals and the matching gold or silver slippers that went with them and beaded bags and actually I attended my graduation dance in one of her formals which was a white georgette beaded and it was in silver beads and it was the most beautiful thing I had ever seen. My

high school picture was taken in a green velvet dress formal which she gave me also - she gave me her riding habit because she found out I was riding with Helen Gorham and she did so many many things and I still see her every Tuesday when I get my hair fixed at the beauty shop - we sit down and reminisce about things. She played a very important part in my life - my grandmother did too. She lived with us and she was so much fun - she was the one who had in the back of her mind that I was going to work at a newspaper office - she knew long before I ever got the job or anything was said about the newspaper but she belonged to the Women's Relief Corp which was a women's organization of the Grand Army of the Republic and she was secretary and she would have to make her report of the meetings and I can see her very importantly sitting down to telephone in our little den on Monroe Street and dialing the number of the Herald and Review and calling in her report on the Women's Relief Corp and announcing in very strong language that she was Mrs. Ellen Fremont and she was calling to report the Women's Relief Corp meetings and just thrilled to death when she got through - the next day she would look at the paper to see if that article got in and heaven help them if it hadn't because she was on their trail right away. When I was dating in high school and this is not from a bragging standpoint, but at one time I had three or four young men who were calling and they would invariably call without calling in advance so my neck was in the noose quite a few times. At times my mother would be entertaining one in the kitchen, my father one in the living room, and my grandmother one out on the front porch while I was trying to get my clothes changed and decide which one I was going out with and it got to be real funny because the fellows didn't particularly mind visiting grandmother because she was very sharp. She was up on everything that went on. She was interested in current events, she could talk up a storm on any subject you would bring up - which was unusual because she was pushing 75 - and she really was a fun person to be around. I was happy she lived with us, she had five daughters, and the other four sons-in-laws didn't want her around but my dad was such a darling and he enjoyed her and consequently she would go to visit the others and before the week was up she would call to say could she come home. And we knew the other sons-in-laws had decided she was getting on their nerves so home to us she would come. She is the one who helped raise me. She was quick to say if my mother's friends came to call

invariably I would be called in the room for them to give me the once over - that's why the big hair bows on the top of the head - everything had to be just right. And I would come in the room and the women would start, Oh! Mrs. Rule she's a darling, Oh she's this, she's this, she's this - I would go out of the room to where grandmother was - when the examination was over - my grandmother would get hold of me over in the corner and she would say I'm going to tell you something - beauty is as beauty does and beauty is only skin deep - don't you ever forget it. She could whittle me down very quickly. If I did anything wrong - which I did, I wasn't an angel - she would just look at me and shake her head and say, "Why Jane?" That's all it took - I sunk to the floor. I was really done in.

- Q. I'm sure she would be very proud of you today if she could see you. I noticed behind you on the wall is a needlepoint of the transfer house in Decatur.
- A. That's right.
- Q. You mentioned the transfer house as something you did recall - I'm sure you remember when the transfer house was used quite actively by people who were riding the streetcars - you mention riding the Interurban from Springfield - do you recall riding the streetcars in Decatur?
- A. Oh definitely, because there was an Edward Street car that came out on Edward Street from town from the transfer house and went way out to the Macon County Hospital as they called it then and at Marietta Street it was joined by what we called the Toonerville Trolley but it was this little streetcar which ran just from Edward Street out to Fairview Park. That was quite a deal and I remember definitely one Halloween we were up in our attic on Monroe decorating for Halloween because we had a floored attic and we were going to have a Halloween party and we were going to have a fortune teller and all that good stuff and we were up there working and we heard this horrible crash and ran to the front window and looked down and a Ford touring car had hit the streetcar and knocked it off the track and up into the yard catty-corner from us across on Marietta. The car had turned over and the - not the streetcar but the automobile - had turned over and while we stood there and looked a bunch of people had gathered around and they had righted the automobile, the Ford, and the person got in it and drove off. But the streetcar took a little while because they had to get some help to get it back on the track again but those streetcars definitely were a part of our lives when we lived there on Monroe Street - until they were dismantled and took up the track but it was fun to ride on. I know when I was out in San Francisco I got on the cable cars and rode because I was missing - that was back in 1950 - I was missing the streetcars at home and I also remember the ice wagon that used to bring the ice to you. You would put your sign out for how many pounds you wanted and if you were lucky and if you happened to be sitting out by the curb when the wagon came along, the man would chip you off some little pieces of ice and toss it to you and you could sit there and suck on a piece of ice while he took the ice to the back of your house and put it in your refrigerator - icebox I should say. They didn't call them refrigerators in those days.
- Q. Could you describe that ice sign?
- A. Yes, I have one downstairs. It was a square about little over 12 inches and it would have 25 lbs, 50 lbs, 100 lbs. and I believe 150 - that would depend on how large your icebox was - how much it would hold and then you had to have - because it would naturally melt - even though you had galvanized lined interior of the section that the ice went into - it would melt but it would come down the little pipe underneath your icebox and you had a little door that

lifted up in front and you had to slide a pan in there and believe you if you didn't keep an eye on that pan at the right time you'd have water running all over wherever you had the icebox sitting because it had to be emptied.

Q. How was that sign used then?

A. If you had a pillar on your front porch you had a nail - it had a hole on all four sides - and you would hang it up on that and the top number would be the amount he would bring so that was his way of reading exactly the number of pounds of ice you wanted. And maybe you had some left over from the last time so you didn't want a full 50 pounds - maybe you needed just 25 pounds to carry on but it was wonderful to get that nice cold ice - he'd toss it to you and you would sit there ---

Q. Quite a treat. Did your family keep their house locked - was it a pretty common pattern to leave the house unlocked when you leave during the day or night or was it the pattern to keep the house locked?

A. Well, in the first place when I was going to school my mother was always home when I got home and of course she was always there in the morning because she did not work. She worked until she was married - then she quit. No, at night, yes, we would of course and if we went out at night, all of us, we would lock the house but during the daytime there was no need to do it then.

Q. Did the meter reader come in?

A. Oh yes, the meter reader came in and I'll never forget one night we went grocery shopping with the neighbors across the street because they had a car and I don't know what the occasion was for needing to leave the neighborhood to go grocery shopping but we did and when we came home we took the groceries in the back way into the kitchen and put the things in the icebox the things that needed to be refrigerated and mother had gotten some oil mops and the kind of floor - cedar floor stuff - that we used and she put it in the back stairway that went up from the kitchen to the second floor and she had bought a - this was on a weekend so she bought a perfectly gorgeous lean chuck roast that would have been put in the icebox and she had gotten some other things I don't remember now but she had put them away and went across the street to the neighbors to visit them a little bit - came back and went to bed - and that woman next door who was off mentally had gotten in somehow and when we woke up the next morning and went down to the kitchen she had been in and had taken the roast, she had taken a lot of the canned goods but obviously had hidden in the back stairway - it's the only time I had ever seen my mother do this - my dad had gone over home to Petersburg and had come home on the Interurban with his old shotgun which had been in the family for a long time with a wooden handle and had AR which we assume was Aaron Rule; we never did know an Aaron Rule in the family but there was an AR so it had to be a Rule. Well he came home on the Interurban with that shotgun and

everybody on the Interurban was giving him the eyeball because they didn't know what in the world he was doing carrying that thing that was back in the days when the Interurban leaked and you had to hold an umbrella over you sometime - but he came home with that and we had it in the house and my mother got that shotgun and she knew it was that woman next door just as sure as anything and my mother sat out on the back steps with a polishing cloth and rubbed and rubbed and rubbed that shotgun and said in a loud voice several times "and if I find out who got into our house and took all of our groceries I'll use this so help me I will." It threw me so my mother saying that because she was the dearest, quietest, gentlest person - I couldn't believe she would be quite that silly and do a stunt like that but whatever it was that woman took the label off every one of the canned goods and burned them so we couldn't identify the canned stuff if we caught up with her.

Q. The message got through.

A. The message got through

Q. We have just a couple minutes, Mrs. Lee, and in these last couple minutes and I wonder if I could ask, you've been active in community volunteer work as you said earlier - was there any one thing of all the community volunteer efforts you've been involved in that you could single out as being one that you would find most gratifying and rewarding your your own personal life.

A. Well, I really enjoyed working in the Red Cross very much. That was the earlier part of my life when I was younger and more active. Now in the latter part of my life my time has been going into developing the Governor Oglesby mansion and I can say that the two of them rank together on the local level. On the state and national level I would say the DAR meant an awful lot to me. I still have a lot of wonderful friends from the years I served in that and I went to Washington, D.C. many an April to attend the national convention there. Because of my work in the church I also got to attend an international meeting at Purdue University of all the church women of all the countries and that was a very outstanding mountain top experience because here was all those women in their costumes from their countries and we stood around one night I remember particularly and sang that very very touching Kum-ba-ya which really did something to all of us but those are mountain top deals and of course being state chaplain was quite an honor and I wrote a small book of poems, messages and prayers and things I used when I was state chaplain for the two years - gave them to the DAR women because I knew they would remember. They went to the Indian schools one fall and that was terrific and we got to sit down with the students and eat with them - the Indian people. There was one lad there who was working to be a medicine man for his tribe and he sat at our table and told us of some of the things he had to do - the strenuous physical, scary things he had to do because of his tribe and the way he had to earn his medicine man title, etc. I've always had a soft spot in my heart anyway for the Indians - I do think they're people who we owe a lot

to in many ways and have shamefully neglected them in so many ways. I just had a birthday the 24th and believe it or not, from one of the Indian school, St. Joseph, I had a lovely letter from the father who is in charge there, about my birthday, and the prayers the children and the staff would be putting for me in my name on my birthday and I was so shock.

Q. You have had quite a varied life and your many interests make it very difficult for you to single out any one thing but it certainly is an indication that you have been a very good viewer of the life around you and I appreciate the opportunity to have the data to inquire a little bit about that life and I am sure the folks at the library will be very grateful. This is Robert Williams and I have been with Mrs Jane Lee in her home in Decatur on the 31st day of January, 1990. Thank you again, Mrs. Lee.

A. Thank you very much.