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(SNP131) Mrs. Elzie Williams interviewed by Dorothy Noble Smith

Effie G. Williams

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Interview of Mrs. Elzie Williams, ne: Effie Sours, born 1907

Interviewer: Dorothy Noble Smith April 13, 1977

Mrs. Williams, you say that the place where Park Headquarters is now located was your family home. Please tell about it.

"There have been a lot of changes, what with the road and all, but I'll try to make you see it as clearly as I can. The house was built by my great grandfather, George ^{STONBRICK} ~~Strub~~ ~~baugh~~, he's buried over there (Morningstar Churchyard). I don't recollect the year -- guess I never knew. He built it part log and part wood. The kitchen where we did the cooking was in the basement, a big one, and the root cellar was there too.

"My grandfather, Monroe Sours, enlarged the house and moved the kitchen upstairs. There were two chimneys in the house, one was extra large for it went from where the kitchen used to be in the basement, you can't see that rock chimney in the picture because it was in the front of the house. There were nine rooms in the house.

"There was a porch that went all around the front and sides of the house and the porch in the back was square with banisters around it.

"My ^{grandfather} ~~father~~, Jacob Sours, built a Summer House in the back to the left of the house. It was screened in on all sides and was nice and cool.

"My grandfather and father were tanners. There were, I don't know how many, tanning vats but there were three different sizes; they were close to the road in front of the house. They had one separate vat for sheep hides, some people used to want

the wool tanned right on the hides, they'd use that for everything, pads, covers and all. People would bring them their hides to be tanned and some he would buy.

"My father and grandfather made their own leather then made shoes for not only the family but for anyone who wanted them. They also made leather leggings, boots, harness and saddles.

"They got the tan bark off their own trees, they owned a lot of land -- enough land so my grandfather gave land to all his seven children, three boys and four girls.

"The tan bark was put into a big old iron bowl, a pole was fastened to a horse and a chopper went from the horse into the bowl. The horse went round and round that bowl and ground the bark for tanning.

"All the work buildings were near the road. There was a building that was used to make the things out of leather. I wish I had some of those things now. Then there was a building next to that one that he used to work on his hides before he tanned them.

"Pass Run used to go right by our house then, now with the road it has been changed; but that was used in the tanning. Also there was a wonderful Spring close by the house, I reckon that Spring is still there, the water was sweet and we kept our milk and everything in the Spring House.

"Next to the house was a Weave House, we used to call it. You had to have a special place to weave for a spinning wheel and loom were big old things and take up a lot of space. The women spun their own yarn and then made their own material.

So they made all the clothes, mens suits and counterpanes for the family.

"They had an outside oven to bake bread and there was a flower house underneath the house.

"We had cows and horses, raised hay and wheat and had a real big vegetable garden. That garden is about where Headquarters building now stands, that was good soil.

"We had a Bank Barn, that was near the road too. Barn Dances were held there for it had a big floor in it. A Bank Barn means the kind where your horses pull the wagon right into the barn to unload your hay, then the horses and cattle had their stalls in the cellar underneath.

"You ask about neighbors. Well, the nearest families ~~were my uncle~~ ^{were}, Arlis Sours; then the Judds lived where the Park families live now. *

"This picture is of the back of the house and these people are my grandparents, parents, uncles, aunts and cousins. My mother is holding me on her lap there in the front row. They used to take a lot of pictures in those days. The kitchen is right in back of all of us.

"If people had to work now like they did then, I don't know what they'd do!"

*John Shenk married Casper Judd's daughter, both the Judds and the Shenks were farmers and John Shenk lived with his in-laws. That is the house where the Superintendent Robert Jacobsen now lives, that was not torn down.