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Mrs. Noel (Justice) Parker Memoir

P226. Parker, Mrs. Noel (Justice) (1886-1974)

Interview and memoir

1 tape, 30 mins., 11 pp.

Parker recalls Farmingdale, Illinois: its depot and post office, first oiled roads and his family history.

Interview by Virginia Bomke, 1972

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Preface

This manuscript is the product of a tape recorded interview conducted by Virginia Bomke for the Oral History Office on November 10, 1972. Linda Jett transcribed the tape and Susan Jones edited the transcript.

Mrs. Noel Parker was born June 27, 1886. In this memoir she discusses her family history, the Farmingdale depot and post office and the first oiled roads. She also briefly talks about World War I and the early days.

Readers of the oral history memoir should bear in mind that it is a transcript of the spoken word, and that the interviewer, narrator and editor sought to preserve the informal, conversational style that is inherent in such historical sources. Sangamon State University is not responsible for the factual accuracy of the memoir, nor for views expressed therein; these are for the reader to judge.

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Mrs. Noel Parker, November 10, 1972, Pleasant Plains, Illinois.

Virginia Bomke, Interviewer.

Q: She'll begin by giving family history. You were born on June 27, 1886, is that right?

A: Yes.

Q: At the residence here on the Farmingdale Road at Beardstown State Road. You were going to give me a resume of your family's early settlement here.

A: Oh, you want the personal?

Q: I thought that would be better to start with that.

A: I was born here a mile north of Farmingdale in 1886, June 27. My grandfather came here, settled here somewhere in the late 1820s or early thirties. And my mother and family were all born here. And I was born here and my daughter.

Q: Where did your family come from originally?

A: Litchfield, Connecticut. They come through in wagons. They came west. They thought they couldn't live there because the cough . . .

Q: Is this your great grand . . .

A: No, my grandfather.

Q: Your grandfather came west.

A: And he came here when he was a little over 21 years old. He was in his early twenties and he lived to be 92.

Q: Helped him, didn't it? This isn't such a mild climate either.

A: Well, he came west. They had five children. My oldest uncle went west and settled in Boise, Idaho. And I had my oldest aunt was living in the west and she was married to a man named Short. And her husband and son were both scalped by the Indians. That was years ago.

Q: Just in the west, what state?

A: In Kansas. And my mother lived here at the place all her life. One sister married and lived in St. Louis. And her son lived on his great

uncle's place he bought and lived there during his lifetime. That's the old place down there.

Q: Yes, the Catlin place.

A: Yes, the Catlin place.

Q: Your father . . .

A: My father came from--he was born I think right close to Springfield. And his family lived on a farm out by the church for a long time. And my father was a school teacher and when his family moved to Kansas, he lived here the rest of his life and he farmed the farm over at my grandfather's house.

Q: You told me he was a tax collector and school director for many years.

A: Yes, he was a tax collector for so many years. And was a school teacher and a school director for years.

Q: Well, first of all I think we should start with World War I because most of these other people that I interviewed didn't know about World War I but you probably have more memories of that. What memories of World War I do you have? What do you remember about World War I? And you told me something about that that during World War I there was a Dr. MacMurray at Farmingdale for a year during World War I.

A: Well, he might have been there but that time Dr. Bane was there was years before.

Q: Before World War I.

A: My younger brother Don went to World War I.

Q: To the service.

A: He was in service. And he was in France all the time. Harold Munson, Russell Parkes, Paul Tolan went to service. And a number of others. And the Braner boys.

Q: Albert Brandt.

A: Yes, Albert Brandt. Quite a few went from around here.

Q: And even before this you remember when the first telephones were installed around Farmingdale, 1901 or 1902 you said.

A: First part of 1900. Because I was about 16. I know we had a telephone when I was sixteen going to school, so I was probably about fourteen I guess.

Q: First houses in Farmingdale were Harpers, Knudsons, Kanes, Harnas, Fogartys, Hawkes.

A: Yes.

Q: You said your great grandfather was a preacher at Farmingdale.

A: He was my great, great grandfather. He was my great grandfather.

Q: Just one great. Was preacher at Farmingdale Presbyterian Church. And you attend church in Farmingdale?

A: Yes.

Q: There was a Methodist Church where the road branches on the southeast corner, first crossroad that branches off south of Farmingdale. It doesn't cross because there's no road there.

A: It's a T-road there. The church is on a crossroad.

Q: Oh, it was farther west.

A: Yes, it was a mile west of the crossroad.

Q: There was a crossroad there.

A: Yes. On the southwest corner.

Q: Now we'll get back to these other questions. Prohibition, what effect did this have on the community do you think? Were there stills in the community?

A: Yes. There were stills.

Q: The depression, how did this affect the community?

A: Very bad.

Q: How did it affect you and your family?

A: Well, in a bad way. Of course I was married then when we had the depression. Had a hard time getting along.

Q: Yes, prices dropped down.

A: Yes.

Q: The people in the community. You've always lived in your house here, have you not?

A: Yes.

Q: And you were born here?

A: Yes.

Q: As for mail service, was there a post office in Farmingdale as long as you can remember, although of course there isn't any post office there now? But I mean as far back as you can remember from the time . . .

A: Yes. I remember. And the depot too.

Q: Where was it?

A: The depot?

Q: Both the depot and the post office.

A: The post office was in the--well, Mr. Knudson had a store, a grocery store, and the post office was in his store. And the depot was on the south side of the railroad track on the west side. As far back as I can remember it years ago Jimmie Peck was the depot agent for years.

Q: When did the depot closed down? Which closed down first, the post office or the depot?

A: I believe the depot did. I'm not so sure but I think it did.

Q: I remember my husband telling about the children went down from the school to get ice cream for a holiday, I can't remember which one. Something they had in school. It was a school holiday. And they got it from the depot. What can you add about the politics in the community? Who were some of the people who were officials and worked in politics?

A: As far back as I can remember I don't know who was the first president.

Q: I mean as far as the local people in politics. Say small county and township jobs.

A: Supervisors, there was . . .

Q: There was supervisors and road commissioners. Do you remember any of their names?

A: Oh, yes. Pete Ernst was a supervisor. Harry Happer was a supervisor.

Q: He also, was it county clerk?

A: Yes.

Q: I believe that was it. For a good many years. And you said your father had been tax assessor or collector?

A: Tax collector.

Q: His name was Kendall. What was his first name?

A: Yes. Daniel Kendall.

Q: He was justice of the peace, did you say?

A: Yes.

Q: Did he ever marry people?

A: No, I don't think he ever did. He was always--somebody breaking in. Mr. Happer was constable at the time. And he was always taking fellows in that broke into churches and places. They'd bring them here at night. And I remember then they'd have to take them to town.

Q: As far as education is concerned, did we bring it up about the school on the corner down here?

A: Oh, yes.

Q: Down State Road. You attended that school.

A: I attended school on my grandfather's farm.

Q: The school was located on your grandfather's farm. He gave the land.

A: He gave the land for the school because the children couldn't go across the creek in those days.

Q: And that's why there was two schools so close together, the Farmingdale and that because there was a creek in between.

A: Yes.

Q: As far as occupations are concerned, do you recall any other doctors than Dr. Lutyens? You said Dr. Bane, Dr. McMurray. And your family had Dr. Halbert of Salisbury.

A: Of Salisbury a whole lot until Dr. Lutyens came.

Q: Besides farming what were some of the other occupations of the people who lived in and around Farmingdale?

A: Well, they didn't go to town do things like they do now, you know.

Q: When did they start having road commissioners?

A: I don't know.

Q: You don't know that. When did they get the first oiled roads?

A: Well, now the first part of the State Road up here must have been along in the twenties, when they first put this hardroad, the State Road through. And I think ours has been down here . . .

Q: This is not oiled roads. These are pavements.

A: I don't know whether they ever oiled this road down here. I don't know.

Q: It was an old road.

A: A dirt road.

Q: Yes, Eugenia said you had a rut. There were holes and that you had one near your home here and your family was always pulling people out.

A: My oldest brother said he was always mending harness.

Q: Houses in Farmingdale, what was the first house or houses in Farmingdale? We hadn't put it on tape. Happer, Knudson, Kanes, Hanna, Bomkes, Hawkes, Fogartys house. I didn't think we did anyhow. You said you attended church.

A: Down here.

Q: Do you know when the old Immanuel Lutheran Church was built?

A: Well, I think it was built about the time of the first . . .

Q: Before the First World War.

A: Yes.

Q: What other churches if any do you remember as being in the Farmingdale area? And that was the Methodist Church which we discussed.

A: The Presbyterian Church down there.

Q: And you told us when the area first got the telephone which was in 1901 or 1902 thereabouts. About when was there a landing field in Farmingdale? It was a private landing field and it was on Malcolm Catlin's.

A: Farm. It was private. And that was along about, it was after the World War I.

Q: Can you think of any more people or events that stand out in your mind?

A: I can't remember. (pause) Can I include my daughter and my granddaughter?

Q: Yes, certainly.

A: My daughter that's . . .

Q: You have a daughter that's a registered nurse.

A: She's a nurse at the state hospital.

Q: Jacksonville State Hospital. Her name is . . .

A: Mary Grace. And granddaughter Catherine.

Q: Can you think of any early day instances? It'll be all right. I just want your recollections. (pause) I would say one recollection you might mention the different kinds of living that you had in the early days from what you have now. How much more convenient is it now?

A: Yes, it is more convenient. But we don't have any more food and things.

Q: You don't have the self sufficiency that you had.

A: No, we don't raise any stock any more. And of course most everybody around still have their gardens. But I don't have a garden. I say that we have more things in a way to make life easier for us but we have to pay for it. Pay plenty for it and we're really not any better fixed than the old days.

Q: You mean you don't think they worked any harder years ago than they do now?

A: No, I don't think so.

Q: Well, it's work in a different way.

A: It's a different way. Yes. And you don't have neighbors like you used to. All people do now is get in cars and go way off.

Q: Yes. There's so much coming and going. I've heard other people comment that way too.

A: Go way off. And stay at home at nights and watch television. They don't visit. We don't visit and have people like we used to. People will come see you of an evening and do things you don't do any more. Go spend Sunday dinners with people.

Q: Yes, I can remember the Sunday dinners my grandfather and aunts used to have company.

A: Holiday dinners. My mother'd have, she never had a holiday dinner of what she would ask two or three if they had any place to go. Like Jimmie Peck down at the Farmingdale School, down at the depot. He was crippled. And she'd always have him come either to Thanksgiving or Christmas dinner. And two or three others, you know. She never belonged to a missionary.

Q: There was more hospitality in a way.

A: Yes.

Q: In the rural areas.

A: But I miss the people now. I'm alone. I mean the neighbors.

Q: They're all too busy.

A: Well, they're dead and gone. I've just got nobody my age any more. Jessie Stone down here, of course she's a good deal older than I am. She's up in her nineties.

Q: Is that Rolland's mother?

A: Yes. All around my age there are not many left.

Q: Well, I think I should have nearly a half hour, don't you think?

A: Seems like it.

Q: I thank you very much for your cooperation in this tape recording.

End of Tape One