

MYRTLE'S AUNT MISTREATED HER AS A CHILD

--and I didn't know nothing about kids, but I had to take care of her kids, and if I don't do anything right, she'd get right on to me. And I couldn't go nowhere. I used to have to just peep at my friends when they go by. When I do go, why, she'd punish me. Maybe I'd be punished for two or three days. That's the way my aunt was. Well, she used to keep me in the tipi all day long. I used to have to stay in the tipi all day long and bead or sew, wash. But after I knew--after I was of age--well, I just went ahead and I learned to make my own clothes. I learned to spend my money after I went to school. And it was different then, after I could take care of myself. But the way I was treated, I used to feel like I was just growing in the weeds. No mother to talk to me, and my grandma had passed away. After my mother died my grandmother took care of me. And she treated me just like she would treat her own kids. After she died, this aunt of mine took me. And she was awful mean. She was mean to me. Have to just get up early in the morning and do the cooking. Go after water. We used to have to go after water down in the creek. Go get some wood. Anything. Then when there's anything going on, I used to have to stay home with her kids. And so after I was of age, then I went to school here at Cantonment. I worked. I was assistant matron. And I'd stay all summer, you know, and just take care of the kids that stayed and worked, too. And that way, just like I got out of her hands. But they marry me off to this man I had.

MYRTLE'S LIFE IN EARLY DAYS OF MARRIAGE

And after we got married I didn't want to live there with them. Got out my tent and got out myself. And that way I got along. And this man was good to me. He was good to me and he worked all the time. When he come home, what he earned, "Well, here's your check. Go ahead and go spend it." Then I knew how a person should be treated. After I had a good man, to treat me the way he did.