

shoes.

NO FOOD. MOTHER HELPED TO MAKE RAILROAD TIES FOR \$6.40

And then my stepdad, he went off and left my mother and two boys and two sisters and two of my first cousins and my grandma--all lived in one house.

This house right here. And so, I had to--

(That was a log house wasn't it?)

Yeah. I was fourteen years old. Well, I took--

(Were you the oldest boy or youngest?)

No. Yeah. We was all about the same age. My sisters was older than I was.

And I got tickled. Kinda funny--I enjoyed everything I done. I took my mother out and a crosscut saw and she helped me cut some ties. And so--

(Railroad ties?)

Yeah. And so, I took a broad axe and hewed 'em out. So, I finally got ten of 'em done. And I went over there and old man Joe Blackbird, he had a spann of mules--and I asked him if I could hire his team. He said, "Yes you can--you just take 'em right on." And he went with me. Helped me load those ties. And I said, "How much you goin' charge?" He said, "I tell you what I'm goin' do." He said, "You give my mules a block of oats apiece when you get to town and that'll be it." And so, I hauled 'em to town--about six or seven miles. And we didn't have nothing to eat. And got down there at town, I sold the ties and before I left the house--

(How much did you get for 'em?)

Before I left the house I asked 'em what they needed. And they said, "Oh, you won't get nothin' out of 'em, just get whatever you want, whatever you think you need." But I--really I didn't think I'd get too much out of 'em. When I got 'em to town, I got \$6.40.

(Really.)

And they was all white oak ties. I went down there, and them days you could buy a whole slab of meat for 50 cents or a quarter. And I had never bought