

Mabel Kirk

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I said, "I don't want to be in your sewing room. I like where I work."

But she said, "But you're gonna have to come sew, though," she said. And I didn't want to. So, they have details, you know. They change around every month. You change places where you work. But I don't know why they never did put me in that sewing room. And so I got in there and I didn't like it. I had my machine facing toward the laundry all the time. I knew how to sew, so I made that machine go 'aaaaoooooooo!' So she said, "Now here, here, here! Stop it! You're going too fast!"

(Were you making dresses?)

Dresses, yes. We start on pillow slips when you first work there. Pillow slips and sheets. So that's what I was doing. And I was just going down the line. So I finally got to where I could make dresses. Teacher say, "Where'd you learn to sew at?" I told her, "I don't know." I already knew how to sew at home, so I just went on. So, she said, "How long you been here?" Going to school here?" she said. I said, "I been here long enough. I just like to work in the laundry," I told her. I liked it over there 'cause that woman over there was my pet--she didn't let me work hard. I was kinda mean, I guess. So some girls works in the dining room where we eat. Some cooks. Big girls cooks and little girls wash dishes. We have three or four sizes of girls. The real little girls picks up the paper outside. Keeps the yard clean. Next size girls washes dining room--works in the dining room, gather dishes, put the stuff on the table. Big girls works in the kitchen and helps cook.

(Why didn't you start to school before you were ten?)

Oh, my daddy didn't want us to go to school. And my little brother, he just went to school himself. My daddy didn't want him to go to school. See they didn't want you to go to school, but I'm sorry we didn't go to school earlier. There's just lots of things I want to do. And I can't explain things sometimes. And we even learn how to make garden over there. They have a