This is an interview with Mrs. Jennie Horton of Boone, North Carolina, done for the Appalachian Oral History Project by Mabel L. Brooks.

Mrs. Horton: My name is Jennie Horton. I'm sixty-seven years old. I'm retired. I used to cook, mostly I have always cooked. I worked pretty hard in my younger days. I worked in Monroe, Michigan seven, six years, I left there and worked in Pennsylvania up in the Pokenoles for four years. And when I worked up there, I was working with my son-in-law, and that work was a little too heavy for me so I quit and got a lighter job at a camp where they have young people come in on week-ends. And I stayed there six years. And then it was time for me to retire, so I came back home. This is my home, Boone. I signed up for social security. Then I worked four years down here at the hospital, down here at Watauga, I got arthritis and that really threw me, so I haven't worked anywhere in three years. I have two children, a boy and a girl. My son is married and he lives here on 8 North Street. My daughter lives in Strausburg, Pennsylvania.

Interviewer: Could you tell us about life during the depression and how you made a living?

Mrs. Horton: My children were small then. I worked at a hotel. I didn't make very much, we didn't make very much in those days. We got by, but it was close and very hard. I always had a garden. I had a pretty good little garden, and I would can different things that I could get, and what I could buy.

Interviewer: What food was most scarce at the time? Like now we are having a beef shortage. What was in shortage during the depression?

Mrs. Horton: Just about everything. I tell you, seems like I don't recall, any beef being in shortage, just meat. Just pork meat. Sugar, it was rationed also flour and coffee, and stuff like that, just about everything. You could only get a certain amount.

Interviewer: Was it per week or per month or what?

Mrs. Horton: Per week. And I sold, let me see what else. I believe thats all. Most of the food was rationed. They allowed you to have so much a week. I don't remember about the beef, I guess it was too, but... you had such a little money to buy things like that. If we could really do without it we would.

Interviewer: My grandparents said they couldn't get much meat so they had to eat horse meat on the table.

Mrs. Horton: Oh there wasn't anything like that here. Two, Three months ago, I heard some say they have been eating horse meat. And you know I said if it ever comes here to North Carolina especially here in Boone, I'll never but it. I'll never eat it. Cause if you read the Bible you aren't going to find where Christ ate horse meat, nor any of his Disciples, why should I eat it? When it gets down that low, I just hope the Lord will take me on out of the way. Horse meat? Ughh.
Interviewer: Well Mrs. Horton could you tell us about getting medicines and visiting the doctors and things?

Mrs. Horton: Well it seems like it wasn't too hard to get a doctor. Seems like there weren't as many prescriptions filled. They didn't write you prescriptions as quickly as they do now for medication. But mostly, if you weren't too awfully sick, just with a cold and had to have something like that, the doctor generally gave you a medication, something you didn't do yourself.

Interviewer: Were home remedies more of usage then?

Mrs. Horton: Yeah, home remedies were pretty useful then.

Interviewer: What do you think works best, home remedies, or that you recieve from the doctors?

Mrs. Horton: I don't know. Sometimes that old time stuff is pretty good, yes it is. It really is. Of course the doctors make light of it and all. I have heard in my younger days where people would have pneumonia fever and they'd make onion polysis and put on the patient, and give them some kind of tea, and it would break up the fever. If you put onion polysis on you, on somebody now, I guess the doctor would throw you out of the house.

Interviewer: You said you had a garden before, what kind of tools did you use?

Mrs. Horton: I had hoes, shovels, madigans, what I got now. I raked in the garden last year. This summer I had a pretty good garden, but last year, I didn't do any good. I was on crutches with my knees. I had arthritis so bad and I was on crutches just about all summer last summer, but by the help of the Lord, I got better and I put out a pretty good little garden this year. I think I raised enough potatoes to do me all winter. And I raised corn and beans. I canned corn and I canned beans. I canned tomatoes, and I canned apples and I made apple jelly.

Interviewer: Sounds like you're pretty well stocked. When your mother was raising her garden, can you remember any methods that she used that you don't have to use today?

Mrs. Horton: No, I don't. I was born and raised on a farm. My father farmed and there's not much difference now. The only difference in it now and back then, people would have to use a horse and a plow. But now they can take one of these little tillers and go through and maybe dig a few weeds out and you've got your stuff made. But then they would have to have a horse and a small plow, a one horse plow and plow through the rows. But all of that's done away with now. You just get you a tiller and go on through and plow up your garden without horses. And we had cows, we had chickens, my daddy raised pigs, raised hogs and we got along pretty good. Money wasn't plentiful, but we did have plenty to eat.

Interviewer: Would you think that your family got along better than some of the other families during this time?
Mrs. Horton: Well yes I do because now-a-days my grandchildren, they have two and three pairs of shoes, which we didn't get but one pair of shoes a year when we were growing up. Now my little grand-daughter, she's got two or three pairs of shoes. My nieces little daughter's has two or three pair. I say if you all had to survive what I came through, I say you'll be thankful that you have just what you have. But I don't know, they still aren't satisfied.

Interviewer: I guess people had to make a lot of their clothes and things?

Mrs. Horton: Yes, way back then they did.

Interviewer: Did you ever have to go to the grits mill?

Mrs. Horton: Yes, I went to the mill. We'd take wheat to the mill and get it ground into flour. And we'd take corn and get it ground into meal. I couldn't carry but a peck or about a half a bushel. It wasn't too far from where we lived, where we took our meal to. But the mill we took our flour to was about four miles from our home.

Interviewer: Did you have to walk?

Mrs. Horton: Yes pretty much, and that's a long way. But generally, my father would always get our neighbors. they had a team of mules and when they would go to the mill, they would all go in and go together. That made it a little easier.

Interviewer: Do you know any little funny acts or incidents that happened on the way to the mill?

Mrs. Horton: No, I don't know any.

Interviewer: What about the educational situation?

Mrs. Horton: Among the children, there weren't but two of us that went to school. There weren't but three of us. We had to walk three miles going and three miles coming. Six miles a day to school.

Interviewer: Were the whites and blacks going to school together?

Mrs. Horton: No. No way.

Interviewer: Was there a lot of tension between the whites and blacks during this time?

Mrs. Horton: Not a bit. I've been here in Boone. I've been living in Boone. I was born and raised in Tennessee, but my mother and father moved here about forty or fifty years ago and I never heard anything about segregation till I came to Boone, North Carolina, that's the truth. We didn't go to school together nor to church together, but sometimes the whites would come and visit our church and they would invite the Colored to come and visit their church. I didn't
know anything about it until I came to North Carolina and seems like it got worse and worse and worse so I hope it's better now. Some places it will never be any better. That's right.

Interviewer: Do you think it was a good thing for the schools to intergrate like they have?

Mrs. Horton: Yes I do. Especially in a little place like this. This is no city, you know that, but the Colored weren't situated to teach some of the children. Especially when they got to high school, at first they didn't have any high school teachers here and they would have to send their children off. My son and my daughter, when they finished elementary school here, I had to send them to Kings Mountain, North Carolina. I sent them to Kings Mountain, North Carolina to finish high school. And then, as I remember, some of the children went to Tennessee and some went to Greensboro these that wanted to. You know, so many will and so many won't. And so many can and so many can't. But I am thankful to the Lord that everything has turned out like it has. Everything seems to be a whole lot different from what it used to be when I was growing up. If they'd get a job, people would get more money than they did back when I was a kid. I have worked for as little as three and four dollars a week and you know that isn't any money. Now just let somebody ask you to work for them for three or four dollars a week. Some people would get rather violent. You'd better believe it. Yes sir.

Interviewer: When you were going to school, how were the schools set up, did they have everybody in one room?

Mrs. Horton: No, we had two rooms. I got as far as the sixth grade. I went about two of three weeks in the sixth grade and I had to quit. My father and my mother weren't too well and my brother, there weren't but four of us, and three girls and my brother. He lives out on up above us. That little white house that sits down there, he lives up above there in a yellow house. He married and we had to be the girls and the boys too so we just quit going to school. Stay at home and help with the house work.

Interviewer: Did people tend to marry younger back then they do now?

Mrs. Horton: No I don't think so. I don't think they did. It don't seem to me like they did. They jump up and marry, I wouldn't be surprised if some little ten, twelve year old children don't get married, it wouldn't surprise me a bit. They didn't marry as young, as early as the young people do this day and time.

Interviewer: Would you say there was a difference in the races getting married? The whites tend to marry younger than the blacks?

Mrs. Horton: Well I don't know, I don't know how old they would be, but seems that they'd be pretty old when they would get married, no older than eighteen or nineteen. But now they marry younger than that don't they? Some of them do.
Well Mrs. Horton, I see that you have company coming and I won't hold you any longer. Thank you very much for your cooperation.