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Interview with Linda Plagman

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Linda Plagman

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Researcher's Name: Anne Crosby

Event: Interview with Linda Plagman

Place: The Plagman's home in Millwood.

Co-workers present: N/A

AC: How long have you lived in Millwood?

LP: Um, 12 years, 12, 13 years, yeah 12 years because we moved here when my daughter was 1. And she'll be 13.

AC: And what exactly brought you to Millwood?

LP: Well, we sold our farm we had a 150 acre farm and we moved here temporarily. Till we could find something else, and we just stayed, you know we liked it so we stayed.

AC: ahh hun. Um, so you grew up on a farm?

LP: no, no guess what!? I grew up um about 20 miles south of Cleveland [okay] in a suburb. And we had about 5 acres there, so it wasn't a farm, but it was a rural area then, althought now its pretty much built up.

AC: so then, how long did you farm?

LP: um let's see [pause] probably about 11 or 12 years there before we moved up here.

AC: okay, and um, being this that it was temporary was there anything about Millwood that attracted you?

LP: I guess I just liked all the people and I like the fact that we could live up here and still have, cause I came from when we lived on our farm we lived back on a mile and a half lane, so we never had any neighbors, so when we moved up here I had some really nice neighbors, but but they're dead now, hahahaha, they're they're older older people when I moved up here and I just thought it was pretty lucky to have this house here and then to be able to go down to the river and be able to um it'd be like open country down there. So you could have kind of the best of both.

AC: What exactly do you, what do you like about the river?

LP: Well we canoe down the river, we ube down the river, we swim down the river, hahaha we fish in the river, haha, um I dunno, recreationally speaking it's really really nice to have that down there, we can just take our , walk our canoe down the hill and the

river's right there, and even though we have a pool, we still take the tubes down there and float down, that's a real real lot of fun, have you done that?

AC: Um, no I haven't.

LP: Because I mean you've been to Kenyon for four years.

AC: No, a lot of friends have, but

LP: Yeah right...hahaha...so that's what we like about it.

AC: good, um, and concerning Millwood Bridge, do you have any feelings about the bridge?

LP: Yes, I want it to stay closed, that's not what we're talking about, but I guess I have feelings about the bridge. Um, yeah we have to cross over it to get into the river, there's no way to get into the river on this side, there is, but it's steep. Down hill, actually the other side of the river is where you want to put your canoe in, or walk in and then and um it's always a good I always go down to the bridge and you can tell how high the river's getting you know. You were probably here last Spring, or the Spring before when it rained and rained and everything got flooded, well you could stand on the bridge and watch. Every day we'd go down there and see how high up the water had gotten and it had covered several lower bridges, and I guess in the flood of 58 that water actually did come up over that bridge. [oh wow] Which is a lot of water. But the I guess they put in all kinds of flood controls so that doesn't happen anymore, or it shouldn't happen anymore, but you could stand down there actually and these big huge trees would come down the river and bang into the bridge, and hahaha and so um I like the river, we like the bridge and we're happy that they closed it. They closed it after that Spring rain because parts of it had started to fall into the river and you can still walk across it, there's still holes in the bridge to see right down, but now they're talking about rebuilding it and Knox County Commissioners are really pushing for that they really want to have it open again.

AC: mmmhmmm, Why is it that you don't want to have it open again?

LP: Well, okay I guess the main reason that because I think we all think of it as "our" bridge. Hahaha, and also the increase traffic through the town because when that bridge is open people come from 62 and Millwood Rd. and they come up through here. You know, years ago, they built that, when they bypassed 62 and put it over in back of us, um, the traffic was cut down a whole bunch, but we'd still get people up here accelerating toward the stop sign and with all the kids playing it's now more more quiet, nobody goes up and down except people who live here and there aren't that many, so.

AC: okay, um and how why, I guess what was your original reaction when the bridge was closed? Were you glad it was closed?

LP: It was exciting! Hahaha the bridge was falling into the river, so they came and they pushed a bunch of piles and dirt and rocks in front of both sides of it and that's evidentially how they closed it and so that was a big event.

AC: um have you ever heard of Millwood being called the crossroads of America?

LP: No, oh oh yes yes I have! Because 32, 62 and 36 intersect and 36 will take you all the way to California if you want, I've never tried it but, that's what everybody...I've never even looked on the map, but I remember somebody mentioning that. Maybe it was the lady across the street before she died. Because that's who I, Francis Moyer, that's who owned the Millwood store have you ever? I'm surprised the Millwood Store wasn't on some of your list of your, well of course she closed it. Well and she dies maybe 3 or 4 or 5 years ago. But she knew everything, she'd keep you over there for a good hour?

AC: What did the Millwood store have?

LP: Well when 62 came through here, it used to be a pretty big store, and they had everything a hardware store, a clothing store, a food store, and then when they moved 62, her business gradually went down hill, but when we moved here 12 years ago, she still she was still selling like hardware stuff, you'd buy paint there, or you could buy penny candy, or bread, milk, and stuff like that. And then she died and they just boarded it up and her kids live in California and um they just never did anything with it, it's just standing there empty now.

AC: What did you, in your 12 years here, have you seen much change in Millwood?

LP: No.

AC: No, do you like it that way?

LP: um, well my kids don't that's why they all move to Columbus, ahahahaha, but yeah um I sort of like it that way it's sort of comforting you know I I I don't know what I would want to change, I don't think I would want anything to change.

AC: mmhmm, um, did you feel welcomed into the community when you came?

LP: mmhmm, yeah, well I think it took maybe a while to get to know the people, but I think once you once you get to know people, yeah yeah they were really very very friendly. All my neighbors were, of course they were older people, and I don't know older people generally, they're either real crabby or real friendly.hahahah and they were always really friendly and open and always inviting us over and stuff, they were good neighbors. And so, yeah I always felt welcomed.

AC: Is there anything you think Millwood attracts for outsiders to come visit for the day?

LP: Well you know um, it's um oh I don't know if outsiders come visit for the day, but there's always things to do down by the river and this is a really pretty part of Knox County, Eastern Knox county it's a really pretty part of the county, it's hilly and treed and so, besides being a really beautiful part of the country I don't know what else would bring you to Millwood.

AC: mmhmm, What about Spearman's Restaurant? Is that an attractive spot?

LP: With me? Hahaha Well I guess there's a lot of people going up there, I mean the food isn't um well it's mostly you know fired kindof frozen kinda that kinda stuff, it's always good in a pinch you know? [yeah] hahaha Don't feel like cooking tonight and everybody's hungry and they do have pretty good um specials of the day, that's what you've got to stick to. Have you ever eaten up there?

AC: No, I've had a cup of coffee, but that's it.

LP: Oh did you talk to Betty up there?

AC: I talked to one of the waitresses. [oh] she's the one who originally told me about the Humbert's to go talk to them. [oh yeah yeah, right.]

LP: Of course he's one of the few older people still still left here.

AC: yeah he expressed feeling very alone here,

Talking at the same time, about this. Can't make out words.

And I imagine it's hard.

LP: They're all barred up at the Millwood Cemetary. So oh well.

AC: Are you active in either of the churches in Millwood?

LP: No, uh uhn. We don't go to church, well I used to go to church when I was growing up, Catholic, but I just rejected that. Hahahah My husband went to Catholic school and he just didn't want anything to do with it anymore. And so I feel that way too.

AC: how do you feel the community, are there many kids in the community for your daughter to play with?

LP: Yeah, there's always been lots of kids.

AC: Has the community very focused around kids?

LP: Um, I feel, you know, well I don't know. Well it's a nice community to have, my daughter can you know I don't worry about her, she'd go out at night or walk over to her friends house after dark and I really don't worry about that so, And I guess if you live in a

city, I don't see that, but you really have to be much more careful, so yeah I think it really is a good place for kids. And you know I feel confident that if anyone saw anything in town bad happening to my kid that they would absolutely go out there and stop and I would do the same thing if I saw something strange going on. So, yeah. It is a good place for kids, of course when they get older they think, this is not the place to be because nothing's happening.

AC: Is there anything across the bridge? Is there other houses or is it considered still Millwood?

LP: I don't think so, I think once you cross the bridge. Isn't that something else? I don't know if their addresses down there are Millwood or not. But I guess it's always been a separation, you know one side of the bridge and the other side of the bridge. I don't know why.

AC: So you don't have ...

LP: I don't know anybody down there, across the bridge on Millwood Rd.

AC: Um have you ever been to the Caves?

LP: Yes, I used to go up there a lot. It has a really pretty waterfall up there, have you been up there?

AC: mmhmm,

LP: to the waterfall? [yes] oh! Okay, everybody knows about that. Yeah I've been up there. I've never camped there or anything. You know there's a camp ground up there. But we go up there in the summer sometimes up by the waterfall and down in that area.

AC: Could you tell me a little about the Caves? Just description.

LP: I don't know much about it, I'm trying to even think when we moved here how I knew that was there. I think it was my daughter because she was a teenager at the time and I guess it's a pretty popular hangout for kids to go and drink or whatever. But um and they'd ride their bikes up there, but um, I don't really know how I learned about that but then we'd go up there in the summer or when the water when it's in the Spring when the water's really rushing. You know or when the even in the summer the waterfall still comes over there and it's pretty nice. We go out there and hang out for an hour or two. Have you talked to the people up at the Caves?

AC: No, I'm going to, that's in the plans. Do you feel the Caves are a secret part of Knox County?

LP: I don't know maybe it is. Maybe it is I don't know. I know that there's a history there, I don't know, different people have owned that area, there's some buying, but I've

never paid much attention. And I think you can see that campground as you go down the river. On the right hand side I think that's the Caves.

AC: And you said...um in the mornings you go for your walks. Could you just tell me your daily routine that includes the bridge?

LP: Well, I take the dogs. I go down across the bridge, sometimes I don't sometimes I stay on this side of the bridge and there's um a, there's a a pathways through the woods back there, that go along the river and back to the Kokosing Camp ground, and um so that's always a nice walk, or I could cross the bridge and walk down Millwood Rd. and there's an entrance way to the you know you get down to the river there and I walk down there. But it's a good walk. And then there's a big hill coming back up, on this side of the bridge so that's always a good workout. Now then when they paved the road, not to long ago, we could roller blade down. [oh okay] And I see lots of people cross country skiing which really um, course you don't get snow like this every year. But I'm really thinking about getting some skis because I think it would be you know it's a nice area down there down over and across the bridge to cross country ski in. so,

AC: Do you have any favorite stories or funny stories that concern Millwood, the bridge, the river, the Caves?

LP: Oh gosh I probably should have thought about that before you came, hahaa because that sounds like a question somebody might ask, but no I can't think right off hang of any stories. So, anything like that. A lot of teenagers go there by the bridge and I don't know hang outt here. But I have no funny stories, if I think of one, I'll give you a call. Hahahah and let ya know.

AC: You've mentioned you know the kdis play down there, the teenagers and you go down there, do you think the bridge means something to all ages in this community, is it something that connects everyone?

LP: I don't know. What do you think? You've been doing interviews. Hahahaha

AC: I don't know. I was just wondering.

LP: I don't know. I haven't ever given much thought to the bridge except when you came down here, and when they closed it there was the big to do. A lot of ill feelings and bad words back and forth, you know people from the other side of the bridge wanting the bridge open and people from this side not wanting it open. And I didn't get involved in that because I didn't think it mattered what I said would happen. I figured the Knox county Commissioners would do whatever they thought was, you know, whatever they were going to do, and whatever money they thought could ah spare to fix it up. But I'm beginning to think they're not going to be able to come up with the money to fix it because it's been years now, so that would be good. That would be good.

AC: Do you find it's the people across the bridge, those are the ones petitioning to have it. . .

LP: Yeah and I used to do that too, I'd go, cause when you're coming from 62 from Columbus you can turn by Millwood Rd. And you could come right across the bridge, and you could avoid you know. It's no big deal, I don't know why people are so upset about it, you know instead of coming up this one they have to go out to 62, it's just another 20 ft. haha but um yeah...

AC: I know one of their ideas, at least this is what the County commissioner said, is the reason it's taking so long is because he wants to see it turned into a covered bridge.

LP: Yes there's all kinds of ideas going on. He wants, Stockbereger, wants to see it turned into a covered bridge and McLarnen I think he just wants to get it fixed and opened up. And I think they're all responding from pressure from the fellow who owns the Mill down here. [oh okay] He wants it opened up because videntally it's going to shorten his trip by maybe 2 minutes, [oh] you know if he could come up here and but um, I don't know.

AC: what mill is it that you're talking about?

LP: Oh there's a mill down here, that's why this is Mill Street. And um, the guy who owns it now lives in this house up here right across 36.

AC: Okay, so is that mill still working? [mmhmm] Oh I didn't realize that. I thought that it was closed

LP: No, no it's still working and in the fall when they drive the corn it smells like corn bread outside, it's kind of neat. Yeah it's still open so that's basically why they want to open it. They're talking about \$100,000 that's what they're saying it's going to cost to repair it and they don't, it just seems ridiculous to me that they would spend that amount of money to repair a bridge when there's already a replacement one over 62 here. And ah, I don't know what the push is. It used to be a covered bridge, just like the one in Howard with the metal over on top of it, until a semi track hit, that's all I know.

AC: That's what I hear too. And so is this mill still for timber?

LP: Oh no, it's a grain mill.

AC: Oh, I guess the mill I had heard about was much older from Mr. Humbert. [oh really there used to be a timer mill there?] A timber mill and that's why it was called Mill wood here.

LP: Oh no kidding, I never knew that.

AC: So that's why, so there's a grain mill? How far down is that?

LP: No far you'll see it out the front door. It's been a grain mill for as long as I know. That's why I assumed they called it Mill Street. Oh well this is Bridge Street, so the mill is over on Mill Street one street over.

AC: do you find a lot of people in the community commute to Columbus for work.

LP: I don't know. My husband does. ??? goes to Mansfield. Neil goes all over Fredericktown. I don't know if too many people drive to Columbus. I bet not.

AC: And I'm trying to think of some other things.

LP: You probably had a lot of interesting things from Mr. Humbert he probably had a lot of insight about what was going on.

AC: He's funny. . . [talking, but irrelevant to anything we're studying.]
[814 – 821]

LP: so you ended up talking to Mr. McLarnen?

AC: I actually talked to Allen Stockerberger because he had been talked to earlier in the year about our project. [oh] And since he already knew what was going on, I figured he's be willing again to talk to me. He was a talker.

LP: Oh was he, well good, that's what you want when you're recording people.

AC: So he talked a lot about Millwood Bridge, about Indian Field Run. [irrelevant talk
828 – 835]

LP: I know Mr. McLarnen used to live in this house one door away from me. I mean the last house going out towards the bridge.

[pause]

LP: No the bridge down in Howard that they closed years and years and years ago, it still has the metal part on top of it, that's the one everybody jumps off of. Have you ever done that?

AC; yeah that's the one, no.

LP: I haven't either. My husband did it once and they girls would do it, and I was always ready to go down there and rescue them.

AC: That's another spot on our . . .

LP: and they want to close that and I don't know what they want to do, if they want to knock it down or something.

AC: Do you, could you tell me about the sense of community in Millwood?

LP: Well, you probably should ask someone who is more connected to um, you know someone who goes, I guess the connection to the community would be a lot through the church, just like any other small community. There's two churches. Mary Ellen Boger, have you talked to her? [no] she plays the piano at both. Hahahahah But u, sense of community I don't know, I just know it's a town full of basically nice people who I think you can rely on or you know, who you could trust and who you know. So, and I know a lot of my relatives up in Cleveland they don't even know their neighbors, I mean they know who they are but they don't, they don't know them, they don't say hello to them, they don't, I think that's really odd, so yeah I guess there is a real sense of community. And I know most everybody so.

AC: Do you plan to stay in Millwood?

LP: Um, well, actually ahh, well for a while anyway until my daughter gets a little older but um I think we're going to move back out to the country, some place quieter, that's eventually our plan.

AC: to farm again, or?

LP: I think we're going to build some place, like a small house by the river. Because we don't really need this big house anymore, both my girls are gone, and I just have one daughter left, so. It's a big house and I think we probably will sell it, though not soon.

AC: Do you think you'll stay by the Kokosing River?

LP: Yeah, yeah.

AC: what is it about the Kokosing River that keeps you here.

LP: Well it's um, I guess what's so attractive about it is that it's one of the cleanest rivers around and I don't know it's fun. It's fun to live near by, you know you can fish, you can swim, tube down it, canoe down it, it's fun, it's nice. To have something like that right close, it's like the bikepath, it's fun to have that there too.

AC: Does the bikepath come up here too?

LP: No, no, when they first were building it they talked about it, because when they were first building it there are some railroad tracks that runs across that way, they must go to Coshocton, ofcourse they've been closed for years but apparently they decided to follow the one in Howard, through to Danville, but that's good too, because that's only about 5 minutes away from here. And I rollerblade in the summer, so I like that, and I always stick close to the bike path too.

AC: And the bike path goes by the river too?

LP: Yeah, it's fun.

AC: Okay, I don't know that I have anything else to ask...Is there anything else you'd like to share that I didn't cover? About anything, everything you've said has been really helpful, I know you don't think it's been, but it really has.

LP: No, I can't think of anything else about the river, I mean about the bridge. Right of hand.

AC: Okay, thank you.

LP: your welcome

I bet you Mr. Humbert would know, because they were all friends with Ida, who used to live next door, and she was born in that house lived in that house all her life, but I don't know if the river was high or what was going on, or even what he was doing down there, but apparently he fell out of his boat and hit his head and they didn't find him for about a week and a half or two weeks, . . .that's what she would tell me that her husband died down in the river. And they had two small kids.

AC: Did that seem to scare her?

LP: Well, I'm scared of the river.

AC: Oh, you are!?

LP: Oh yes, I'm afraid of it. You know because we always have to make the decision, um when we go canoeing it's always good to think if it's rain or not, the last, we've had some really scary things happen being down there in the canoe. It's dangerous, it really is dangerous. And so I think you really have to pay attention to that before you go in.

AC: Is it dangerous because the current is going faster?

LP: Yes, yes, yes. It's dangerous because the current is going really fast you know. And it's deep and there's all kinds of rocks, big huge rocks, and so, whereas if it's down, you can avoid all those things. Plus there's a really scary part over here by the Sand Plant, have you ever been down the river on a canoe?

AC: No, I've been swimming, like walking in the river.

LP: Well, they call it the rapids down there because um, the river gets real narrow and there's all kinds of rocks on either side and the Sand Plant's there and there's only a small portion you can go through and the water is literally rushing through it, like roaring through it.

AC: Wow!

LP: Yeah, the river can be scary I think it's really smart to pay attention before you go in. you know if it's rained or what the weather has been like. Of course last summer the water was so low.

AC: Yeah we were supposed to, we've talked to the people at Kokosing Camp and Canoe and we were supposed to go canoeing but he was like, it's just too low, you can't, you'll be dead stopped.

LP: carrying your canoe. Yeah, but it's fun to go, it's fun to go, of course he just takes you up river and then you get off where the livery is. The real pretty part of the river comes from like here down, here east. Because it gets really much much prettier.

AC: Did you find that Ida, was that her name? Was she scared of the river?

LP: Well, I don't think she ever, she never went down to the river, because she was a single parent years and years ago, and she had two small kids, but I do remember her telling me a story that her daughter who's she's my age now, and someone called her at work and said, "you're daughter she's jumping off because there's a place down there, you can jump off rocks into a pool and there used to be a huge rope that you could swing across and there still is one down by the caves, where the river crosses the caves and she went down there to get her because she certainly didn't want her doing that. So, I imagine she was afraid of the river after that.

AC: yeah, that's another side of it that I hadn't thought of. A couple people, Mr. Humbert shared a story of ice skating down the river from Howard.

LP: Wow, it must have been really cold.

AC: yeah, and someone fell through and I don't think the person died, just hypothermia, and he couldn't remember much after that, just that he fell and he couldn't remember.

LP: Well I've thought, you know when it got really cold here this last past week, some of the river was frozen, well if it ever got all frozen, you could skate on it, but it wouldn't be very safe because the water moves pretty pretty quickly. But we, I don't know when it must have been, when my daughter was small maybe 7 or so, it was fourth of July and it had just stormed and it was a nice sunny day and it was early in the morning. And my cousin and his kids were in a canoe and Pete and I were in a canoe and my cousin went through really well, there was a part where a tree had fallen and there was part you had to get through and but when we tried to go through our canoe hit it's sideways and it flipped over. [oh my gosh] and the water was really rushing through this one part and so um it was really really really really scary and we all ended up in the water and the canoe got stuck with the open part facing the current, so the current was rushing into the canoe, it couldn't budge it, it was stuck. It took us like hours. And um, it was pretty scary. My

daughter and I ended up on one side of the river and my husband was on the other and it was a really roaring thing, you couldn't really walk across it. So I guess that's what made me be more in tune with what was going on down there before I got in.

[missing part of story]

LP: well would you like to take a walk down there?

AC: Yeah, I really would.

Sounds of walking along the river.