

MRS. ROBERT O. MILLER MEMOIR

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PREFACE

This transcript is the product of tape-recorded interviews conducted by Margaret M. Klusmeyer for the Oral History Office with Mrs. Robert O. Miller, in October, 1973 at the Washington Street Mission in Springfield, Illinois.

Mary Louisa Brown was born in Springfield, Illinois February 20, 1902. She graduated from Springfield High School and in 1924 married Mr. Robert O. Miller.

The Washington Street Mission was founded in 1910. Mrs. Miller's father, Mr. Robert T. Brown, was a co-founder of the Mission and an active worker there during its early years. In her childhood, Mrs. Miller visited the Mission with her father. Her husband was superintendent of the Mission until his death. Mrs. Miller is presently the superintendent.

Readers of this oral history memoir should bear in mind that it is a transcript of the spoken word, and that the interviewer, narrator and editor sought to preserve the informal, conversational style that is inherent in such historical sources. Sangamon State University is not responsible for the factual accuracy of the memoir, nor for views expressed therein; these are for the reader to judge.

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Mrs. Robert O. Miller, October 2, 1973, Springfield, Illinois.

Margaret M. Klusmeyer, Interviewer.

This interview with Mrs. Robert O. Miller, the director of the Washington Street Mission, in Springfield, Illinois, is being conducted at the Washington Street Mission on October 2, 1973. The interviewer is Margaret M. Klusmeyer for Sangamon State University.

Q. Mrs. Miller, for more than sixty years this Mission has been part of your life, and it's brought the gospel to many of Springfield's people. I understand your father helped found it. Can you tell me a little about your father, where he was born, where he grew up and a bit about his boyhood?

A. I'd love to. He was an only child which would make you think he was a spoiled person, but he was really the reverse, he was a very outgoing person. He was born in 1875 on a farm north of Springfield, just north of the river, the Sangamon river.

Growing up as a farmer's son there were many activities he was compelled to do, and wanted to do, and did willingly. One thing that stands out very prominently is that he desired a watch. Oh, he wanted a watch! He didn't have one; and he didn't want anything ever to be inferior, he wanted it to be the very best. So he worked on the farm with men, shucking corn by hand and he made his own husking peg out of a piece of walnut. *[end of page 1]*

The men weren't aware of his being there, and before they knew it here he was, just a lad, husking corn and throwing it into a wagon over high boards that they had placed there, and he was frail. He was a slender, frail child, and yet he did this, and saved his money and bought an Illinois watch, the best that could be bought. It didn't happen in one year but he saved until he had this watch, and it's now one of the possessions in the family that we enjoy. And his whole life was one of dedication.

In those days you had a difficult time finding food in the winter months, and he could remember going into Carpenter's Park, that we know now as a lovely site, with my grandfather to find food. They were killing wild turkeys and it made him very sad to see these beautiful birds killed, but it meant food so it was accepted--but to think now of wild turkeys being so prevalent that you could just go out and have turkey most any day through the winter season that you would care to have it. Of course [you were] freezing meat as long as you could and then having to store it some other way. Freezing wasn't what was done in those days, other than the frost that God gave you, and you had to pack it away in jars and can it to take care of the meat for the summer.

He worked hard, and learned how to work, and being an only child there was no way for him to learn how to share, but he had the responsibility of doing a lot of things very early in life that gave him stamina to endure great things alone during the years that were ahead.

Q. Where did your father go to school? *[end of page 2]*

A. He went to a country school a few miles from home, the Dunlap school. Later in life they moved to a farm that was larger. It was north of Springfield, now near Grandview, and that was in Converse district so he came into the city school as an older child, perhaps the sixth grade, and graduated from the Converse school, not knowing what the future would be.

An uncle, who was head buyer for Armour's and who was prosperous and had a nice income, loved my father and took him to Chicago to help in the stockyard and to learn the business. It was a lonely life for Father and a different life living among people who were wealthy, when he was accustomed to a farm home and the opposite, doing with very little. It was not his type of life, and he didn't enjoy it so it was not long until he was back with his parents in Springfield, and he went to business college taking every course he could in business administration.

He began his first work with the Peter Vredenburg Lumber Company at the age of 16. He was the youngest person there, but he didn't want them to think he was. He wanted not to be sheltered but he wanted to have responsibilities. Before too long he was doing the collecting on foot, from this place to that place, and he was wanting to hurry back to the office. He was so irritated with them looking through files to find the bill and he said, "Our next bills will be pink. You will find them readily and I won't be detained."

He went to Mr. Vredenburg and he said, "We are going to have bills sent out that are pink, and we are going to be able to find them. When *[end of page 3]* they open the file, I'll say this is it, and I'll pull out the pink bill, and that's the Vredenburg bill and it's going to be paid immediately." So the collections were increased and a financial gain for Vredenburg's because the delays were less and the bills were promptly paid because Father insisted that he be back by a certain time. The pink bill would lay there and be designated as the one that would be paid next to Vredenburg's.

After that he did advance and he was secretary and treasurer of the Vredenburg Lumber Company and accepting a lot of outside responsibilities that the family didn't always perform. They were a member of the firm, yet because they were, they were not always as prompt in accepting those responsibilities; so Father would in turn see that the work that each of the sons were supposed to do was done, even though it kept him at the desk much longer to help those young men see that everything was in order as it should be, and to help Mr. senior Vredenburg who couldn't do the whole thing alone.

Q. Was he married at the time he was working at Vredenburg's?

A. No, they were married in 1896 and he moved to Springfield from the home on the farm, and they remained in Springfield most of their married life.

Q. I have heard that your father was at the Billy Sunday campaign, and joined the church through this movement. Can you tell me something about that? *[end of page 4]*

A. Yes, I can. He was a fine person and respected citizen and well known because of the cares that were forced upon him at Vredenburg's. It was a large business, and he was kept at his desk many, many hours longer than most people stay. Business hours for an executive in those days was from seven o'clock in the morning until six at night, and then overtime always, and you worked Saturdays and vacations were not anything that you needed; you just kept on working.

The Billy Sunday campaign was an enthusiastic, interesting event for Springfield. It was accepted by everyone. It seemed to be a unity that was drawing them through all the churches and all the civic organizations; everyone taking an active part in the planning of it. It wasn't

something that was just done by a few people but it was unanimous, it had great exposure. Father saw that it was an advantage to Springfield in every way, and he wanted it to be a greater one for Vredenburg's and none of them had made any attempt to sell the materials for this tabernacle that was to be erected, so Father went over personally and sold the lumber that built the tabernacle for the Billy Sunday meeting. That created an interest and an obligation, and he felt he--as business etiquette--should be a part of it.

He had gone through most of the campaign before he made this decision. It was to a men's meeting on Sunday afternoon that he went, and at that time the Lord touched his heart, and he was saved. So were a group of men he knew very well who were business men, and who had lunched before occasionally together; but after this they made a certain date, and their timing was all toward that one time and meeting together and looking *[end of page 5]* forward to the time when they would lunch and have devotions around the table, would learn to pray aloud, would pray for something to be done in Springfield that would be of lasting duration as the outcome of the Billy Sunday meeting.

Finally in 1910--the meeting was in 1909--Mr. George Coe, who Was city commissioner, came to the meeting and his first remarks were that the Lord was surely ashamed of their behavior, that they had prayed diligently and had done nothing about doing anything except enjoying each other, and they were parasites, just absorbing and giving out nothing. He said, "We can't continue to be sponges, we must give out; here is \$500, I think Springfield should have a rescue mission." They agreed and this group became the first board, planning for it's opening.

I feel that the Mission was well organized, because it was well established by business men and incorporated and not something that was just done spontaneously, but there was much prayer behind it; and it wasn't until 1910 that it became a reality and the doors opened. The people of Springfield accepted it as a "finger" from the Billy Sunday campaign, and they were thankful for this new adventure, and it was accepted by the people who attended, as well as the people of town who were interested in financing and caring for the responsibilities of it. So it had a double start, and God was blessing it.

It was at 713 East Washington Street; that was their choosing, as that was the levee in those days and that was the place where the most people were who were anxiously needing a place of refuge, and they considered *[end of page 6]* it that. And [the people] came readily, and it grew, so that the duration of the time in the first building was short for they outgrew it.

They moved down to the next block to 812 East Washington, renting this property--one entire building and the second and third floors of the building adjoining--and then cut the doors through on the upper floors. They had dormitories for men, and had a kitchen, and had a clothing room for them to have clothing as people had given it to them; they could keep them until they were able to be self-sustaining and could maybe find employment in Springfield.

In those days there were many advantages for coal mining; it was a center. Some of them went into the mines, and were able to find employment and stayed and they were helped in every way. When they' were helped spiritually in accepting Christ, many of them founded Christian homes. Even today, this long ago, I can think of the first family who were contacted as a family and one of the generations back, now, is a vice president of a bank. We found them in a basement with no

floor, just dirt, in a horrible condition. The mission was able to help them to find a place where the children had room enough to live, and where it was warm and where it was comfortable, and not in a damp cold basement without any floor.

So we are thankful for the opportunities, even in the early days, and we are "Still everlastingly at it", which is the slogan which the Mission carries. There is no job too difficult but we want to see it through to the end and not let children or adults feel that we discard them as soon *[end of page 7]* as they seem to be feeling their way. We want to still stay behind them, and they feel a security in knowing they have a Christian friend who is able, in any emergency, to give them a little help if it is needed.

Q. Did your father preach at the Mission when it was first started?

A. Soon after that, because he immediately started doing everything he could to learn; he would study diligently on any subject that was given to him, and he would look up every reference. He had a dear friend who went every year to Dwight L. Moody's summer camp in Northfield and studied under him. She enjoyed my father; he was a very good student and he wanted to learn, so she tutored him. Any phase of the Bible he didn't understand or couldn't seem to realize what God was wanting him to know from that passage, he would go to Miss Lavinia Smith and she would help him, and she would find references that would help him to understand it. So he became a very good Bible teacher and did, in the years that followed, go wherever there was a call or need to have a meeting of a week's duration in a small community. As far away as Morrisonville, Athens, New Berlin, Ashland, Pawnee, Divernon and Auburn--in those directions which are in most cases twenty miles or more--he would have meetings which would sometimes last two weeks.

There are ministers now who were saved in those communities, and today they are ministers someplace. So we are glad for the outreach of the Mission in other ways than to be in the immediate center which is the building itself. *[end of page 8]*

Q. Did your family immediately begin to live here at the Mission?

A. No, as a family, we didn't live here. I had one sister, and then my family brought in a young girl who had the unfortunate circumstance of losing her mother early in life and didn't have anyone to care for her. so she became a sister. So there were three of us; and three girls, when there were so many men in this building, made my parents feel it was not advisable for us to be here. So we lived near, and we were here in the building helping in every way: teaching and caring for children, sorting clothes, doing anything that could help financially because anything that you didn't have to pay to be done was a help. We all learned to love and to help in every capacity at the Mission.

Q. How about your mother?

A. Mother was just as active as Father, directing the children's work and directing the women, doing anything at home that could be done there and then brought back finished. We had one hundred beds, and we made night shirts out of heavy drilling because we wanted them to be able to be laundered. We wanted one size to fit all, so it had to fit the large men, and the little men

were holding up these night shirts. So they were made, and we would do that often at home. We had one pattern.

We had a stencil and they were stenciled across the back "Washington Street Mission" taking up most of the back of the garment, so that they wouldn't think they could carry them away in the morning and sell them. Every thing that wasn't nailed down could be sold, it seemed, so you *[end of page 9]* were careful to make it so it was not saleable. One night the police found a man on the street; his clothes were locked up in the fumigator. He wanted to leave in the middle of the night, and left in the night shirt and was running around town in nothing but this great big, too large, night shirt, with "Washington Street Mission" stenciled on the back. The police brought him back, and said it was easy to identify him and they knew where he belonged.

Q. How did your family feel about this change in your life?

A. We accepted it and we loved it. We were brought together as a family, and my father said, "Now our mode of living will be different. My salary is not the same and we will all live differently, but we will be doing something that is very important and is also worthwhile." So we accepted it and loved it. We were blessed by having some rich aunts who sent their clothing to us when they were through with it. Mother could sew, so our wardrobe was extensive and elaborate, and it just pleased growing girls immensely because she saw that it was just what we would like and her fingers did it.

Q. Did the transients who came here have some way to earn whatever they got, clothing and so on?

A. Yes, but we never accepted money for anything. The Mission has never sold anything; everything that is given to the Mission is given to someone. We didn't charge for the beds or food; there was no obligation financially, but they worked. "Here is a rag, and here is a bucket; we'll scrub these steps and they will be nice and clean, and *[end of page 10]* when you come back we will have a meal ticket for you." Or, "Here is a mop; that room, the laundry, must be mopped. When you have finished, here is your meal, and here is your bed. You bring the tickets, and they will in turn give you a night's lodging." The work end of it was not always what impressed them most, but we insisted they do something to earn. We would send them out to homes for employment. They could rake yards and they could shovel snow and they could do small tasks in many areas that would give them a little change and they could accumulate enough to get to the next destination.

They didn't have the ways of transportation in those days; it was horse and buggy and not the travel that we know now, so it was difficult and they could go by train. They went by box-car; those were the ones we called the hoboies, or the tramps. He came to your back door and you fed him and that was the way he existed from city to city, always knowing that the grass was greener in the next area. When he was disappointed many times they would return.

I am thinking of two men who, at two different times, jumped off the train just two blocks from here and came to the Mission. One owns at least five pieces of property in Springfield today. The other owned property in Florida and in Springfield and two automobiles. They became self-sustaining and both contributed generously back to the Mission. One was a habitual drunk, he

didn't know what it was to be sober; but he became a fine Christian gentleman and took care of his family well and prospered because he was able to be sober and had employment that was desirable, and he secured it through the Mission. We could verify *[end of page 11]* that he was a man of dedication. We secured employment for both of these men and they kept the employment until they retired.

Some years later when Lake Springfield first became a reality there were lovely trees that were demolished. We paid a lot of money to haul those trees in and rent a lot and put a high fence around it to protect the lumber we brought in, and we made the men saw this wood up into cord wood. In those days they cooked on cook-stoves and heated in the same way. So during the Depression Era, when families were having problems, we could take them a cord of wood. These men had cut the wood and piled it. We had to lock the gate at night because we didn't want it taken, we wanted to give it.

And many times men who wouldn't work would leave. We would allow them to leave if they just refused--"Do you want to peel some potatoes; do you want to clean this room; do you want to dust?"--and rejecting all of them, we just suggested that they better find lodging someplace else. When money was given to us we felt a responsibility; it was the Lord's money, and to just give it without any opportunity to even give them the gospel--to give them just tangible gifts when they needed the most precious gifts, the things that we can't see, and they were rejected--we let them go on. If they want to be lazy, to be parasites, they will just have to do it.

Q. You spoke about the coal miners; did you have a good many people who came in here as coal miners during the problems with the mines?

A. Yes, north of here at Coal City, mines stopped. There was a group *[end of page 12]* of Italians there and they were frantic; there was no income and they were almost at starvation. We brought them to Springfield, about 25 families, and we rented houses and we furnished them--I don't mean lavishly. These people were filled with work and ambition and the desire to help. Oh, they were so grateful. We were able to get them employment immediately here in the mines. They were anxious, wanting to work, and they did and then were able to sustain their families in a partial way. But any way we could contribute by giving them used clothing or by giving them food that had been given to the Mission, [we did]. Many of them would then work at night as a janitor some place; do something else. When they had large families, it was very difficult and expensive, but the Mission would help in every way. We started classes here in the building--they couldn't speak English, they were all Italians--so they learned English. Many school teachers came nights to help them. I personally remember--I was a child--teaching an old man to write "Joe"; I thought I could never do it. He was so tired sometimes he would lay his head down and go to sleep, laboring to be able to write his name.

Father then went on through, and every adult we brought had Americanization papers. We wanted to be sure they saw the need of being truly Americans--Christian Americans--and we employed men who spoke in Italian, who were fine Christian men, and we fixed a chapel and we made it for the Italian services and no one was allowed except the ones who wanted to come and hear the message in their own mother tongue. They enjoyed that and had not had it in the area they had come from so it was a new experience *[end of page 13]* and they enjoyed it. Many of them are prominent people today and many of the homes of Springfield are owned by those

people we brought here in the years back.

Q. I think that I saw in the booklet that one of the ministers at Clementine Presbyterian Church had been trained here.

A. Yes.

Q. I understand you worked with young girls too; that you had Washington Hall.

A. Yes, we did. That came later. We had a fine Christian man who was chief of police. It was the time transportation was beginning to be a little easier; Henry Ford had made the "Tin Lizzie" and it was something that made it easier for people to come into Springfield. These girls were enjoying this luxury of city life; then before you knew it, they were in dire trouble, and had problems that the police knew about. So whenever they would find a lonely girl that needed motherly love, they would call us and we would go and do all we could and bring her here to the Mission. Because of the work with the men, we tried to put them in another area of the building and tried to care for them and keep them as long as we could, and get them to the point where we knew they would go back home and be able to accept the life they left and do it graciously.

This work got larger and we didn't have room for it, so we bought this piece of property across from Bergen Park [on Clear Lake Avenue] and it was from the old Colby estate. We made it possible for it to be remodeled *[end of page 14]* to make lovely dormitories and nice rooms for them to work in and to relax in, and plenty of area for them to learn to work in.

And, too, with them we expected them to work. We had a sewing room and they had to spend so many hours in the sewing room, and they had to spend so many hours in the kitchen and so many hours having other domestic responsibilities, dusting and cleaning, picking vegetables out of the garden. Each was rotated so it was a teaching process, and each would have experience in the various areas. Some of them were most difficult to teach to do the things they weren't pleased with. But you had to use an approach that would make it interesting enough to them to attempt it, to show them how attractive the completed garment was; then the bolt of goods they were making it from didn't look like a burden, it began to look like something they liked and wanted.

We made the dresses as pretty as we could, that they wore. They were beginning to wear dresses very short, and these girls were looking for ways to run away. We didn't have a window locked; we didn't have a door locked; there was not a lock on anything. They could go when they wanted to, but the police would bring them right back because they had sentenced them and they had to stay during that duration. But we made the dresses very long and they looked very conspicuous by their dress. They would prefer to have something else. So wherever they were, a policeman knew where there was a dress like that, they belonged where they weren't, so they would come back home very quickly in these dresses that were marked by their length.

The same helped us with the golf course across the street. The men would *[end of page 15]* shoot golf balls and they would come into our yard and then they could take them back over there and earn money, but they would whistle at the men and it was an inconvenience. But they were dressed do absolutely conspicuously by the length of those dresses that they weren't anxious to be out in the yard gathering up golf balls to take back to the owners, and we kept them

within the bounds of the area where they were supposed to be.

They were not aware of why they wore the dresses as they did, but we were; it made a very fine discipline that didn't have to be enacted with the firm discipline that did come sometimes: making them remain in their rooms and the door shut so that the communication on the outside couldn't be told. All the cookies that were baked and the pop-corn that was eaten and the taffy that was pulled and the roast beef for dinner on Sunday--the odors went in and the noise of the fun, but they were not participating, so it relieved them to be up and back and they were anxious to do their share of work. Maybe that was the reason, maybe they had been negligent; maybe they had said they had done the ironing that was left for them, but maybe you would find it behind that box someplace, mildewed and not done, so that would be the reason they were being disciplined.

Today there are fine women who were girls there, and have raised fine families. They come back occasionally from distances to tell us that they are so thankful that we had Washington Hall, that it meant a new life for them, and meant a life with families and friends. Where they were excluded before, they were a part of it now, and it was all God's hand that delivered them. *[end of page 16]*

Q. It was a wonderful work. I guess girls haven't changed much.

A. No. They are pretty much the same. They spent lots of time on their hair, and we encouraged it--[attention to] their appearance. We wanted them to dress for the evening meal. There were lots of rigid rules; they had to eat carefully and properly, and the tables were set absolutely perfectly. They had to be done--linen tablecloths had to be laundered and they had to be ironed, and the napkins had to be laundered and ironed. They were not paper tablecloths and place mats, but they were tablecloths; and they knew that if they spilled something then that was more laundry, so that made them more cautious that their table manners were right. They were seated at the same chair, and they stood at the table before prayer.

There were lots of regulations that had to be obeyed. They couldn't play sick and not attend devotions; we had devotions morning and evening, and they had to be at devotions. Even if they felt bad, they could tie a rag around their head, if it ached, and get to devotions, because it would be such an easy thing to feel badly. If they felt too badly, they could just rest for three days. They ate Jello, and they had tea; they had a light diet. This made them feel well fast.(laughter) When you took that tray in you could hardly do it without smiling!

Q. Did any of the girls go to school?

A. No, they were drop outs and until they had had this time, they didn't care to go. Many of them had venereal diseases, and they had to go to the doctor every day. We had to take them; we had to see that the medication *[end of page 17]* was taken as prescribed by the doctor. We met those expenses--not the doctor, that was gratis. But the medicine and any other illness we had to accept, and dental bills too: so it was expensive.

Q. Did most of them go back to their own homes, eventually?

A. Not all of them, no, not 100 per cent; but many of them, yes. Many of them, we didn't want

them to. We sent them to an aunt or to a more desirable place than where they came from where there might be a larger community where they could find the right kind of employment, and not be back in a shiftless home where things were done carelessly and the training they had had would have not lasted over. We wanted them to know they had to have clean sheets, and windows washed. Their own clothing they wore just on certain days: they wore this in the morning, they wore this in the afternoon, they dressed in the evening; and Sunday was another day and they wore different dresses on Sunday. They had to keep their lockers, and their lockers were inspected and it had to be done properly; so there was a lot of supervising and I did a lot of that myself.

I went into a room where a girl was there because she was still ill; she had been there a couple of days with nothing really wrong with her. She had to memorize a chapter of Scripture. I went in and said, "Gladys, how are you getting along? What chapter are you learning?" She told me, and I said, "Let's try it and see how you are getting along." She said, "But I haven't started on that yet, Mrs. Miller; I'm just learning little bits here and there." (laughter) Meaning that she had done nothing about *[end of page 18]* anything. But when Jello came about the third day for her meal—Jello and crackers and toast and tea and soup--and the odors were just the opposite, pies and cakes We wanted them to bake lovely cakes and decorate them and did everything just as elaborately--to consume time and to teach them at the same time. All the cobwebs were out, and the flower gardens--we had nice flower gardens--were weeded and the flowers were picked and arrangements made in the house. It was time consuming, and they thought it was, too.

There were lots of open fireplaces and we had fires, and the ashes had to be taken out, and firewood brought in; then they could enjoy them every night. We popped corn; every evening there was some activity. Cookies were made or taffy or something that allowed all of them to do it as a unit and they enjoyed it and looked forward to these evenings around the fire, the checkers they played and the things they did. They could sew, and many of them did. They liked to embroider and many of them made things that they could send home, little aprons or some minor thing they could send home to a younger child; they enjoyed that.

Q. I suppose you celebrated all the holidays, too.

A. Yes, of course we did. All of the decorations were put away properly, and they all knew where they were, and they were out for each occasion. Everyone anticipated them.

Not every Sunday, but as a special treat, if there was transportation that would allow it, they came to the Mission for the evening service on Sunday. They sat in a group and were excused before the end of the *[end of page 19]* service so they wouldn't have contact with anybody to say, "Now I'll meet you at so and so." They didn't have any communication with someone else that would endanger them of having a way to get away. We had to watch carefully so that they were shielded from that temptation, not ever saying, "It [the trip to the Mission] will be on this date," because then they could meet someone here that would carry a communication to the one who had gotten them into trouble. Most times that was who they would [contact]; "If you will meet me so and so, I'll try to be there." We tried to shield them from this.

Q. About how many girls did you have on an average?

A. About 24 at a time. The reason for it's closing was that this chief of police who was a fine person, when his office was vacated and when the new chief came in, automatically there were no girls in Springfield who needed any help. They all immediately just dropped off.

We would warn them of a girl we knew who was in a certain location, but they could never find her; and when we found her and brought her to them, they said, "No, she has done nothing worthy of spending time at the home. You are going to be a good girl; now go on back to your parents." So they didn't co-operate. Maybe this shouldn't be told, but somebody was paying them to cover up this house of prostitution, and leave them alone--"Just go next door and don't find these little girls who have found refuge in this place."

Q. Do you remember anyone in particular who helped in the early days getting the Mission started? *[end of page 20]*

A. Mr. George Wright was interested in every phase of the work, and was until his death. He was a fine influence on children and they loved him. He wasn't confined in an office. His interests were growing cotton in some of the southern states, so he only had to see over that occasionally; so he had more free time than most Christian men have and he spent a lot of that free time here at the Mission, teaching Bible classes. We had Bible classes that were well attended; two and three hundred would come to a Bible class. People in the city knew Mr. Wright and would come for these Bible classes he conducted. We brought in Bible teachers to help in other areas when he wasn't available.

Mrs. Billington played our piano, and she was a fine pianist and she was a teacher that taught music. She played for years and was dedicated, you would never even know she was crippled; it was never too hot or too cold, and she was always here. She encouraged young children to take an instrument to try, and she would help them with the piano in any way she could. She was a strong influence for the children to better themselves and to have some other interest rather than just waste their time idly.

Q. Is there anyone else you can think of that you would like to speak about?

A. Miss Florence Robertson was a school teacher, and she would help the slow ones. We would co-operate; she would tell me we could do more for a certain family, and she saw what they were getting at school, and knew where they were lacking. She helped a lot with the Italian work among the immigrants. *[end of page 21]*

Q. When your father was working with the Mission, did you have a Sunday school?

A. Yes, we did; then there was transportation. Now with no transportation on Sunday, if you don't have your own transportation you have to be dependent on someone. We did try to pick people up in different areas for a good many years, but it has been just six or seven years ago that we finally just had to dismiss the Sunday school, which was on Sunday afternoon because we didn't want it in the morning when it would interfere with Sunday schools. We didn't want to interfere with the church, we wanted to feed into the church; we didn't want to be apart from it, we wanted to be a part of it. To secure teachers was getting increasingly hard; people were not as dedicated as they were, and to find adequate teaching staff for the Sunday school was so hard. To

get all of the ones who had to be taken home, home--we had Sunday school at three o'clock for an hour, then the evening service came so close that by the time you got back, you had to start the trip after them again as they had no transportation. We couldn't do it any longer without additional help, which we didn't have.

Q. When your father was living, was most of the work with adults?

A. Yes, with adults. Not always though; we had Sunday school with 300 children. We had families, we always had the families, but not the great emphasis that we do now for children. It was a family mission.

There were two families that lived probably a mile and a half and they walked; it would take one solid block, there were so many children in *[end of page 22]* both families, and both mothers, and with a neighbor or two who came with them. People would wait for these families to come by and they asked my father who it was, and where they went, if all of those children belonged to one person. One woman had had 19 children. Not all of them the same age at the same time, but she had a great big family. There were ten in another family, and when they picked up a few neighbor children it was really a parade of a whole block's length to get them all here, and they came. They walked miles to come during the Depression Era, they were so eager to come.

I can think of three children and a mother, who was mentally unbalanced, who came every Sunday for years. They lived at least three miles from the Mission, and they started in the morning to get here in the afternoon and it was dark in the evening when they would get home. They came for years. We clothed them; they lived so meagerly. The husband was many years older than the wife and he was a fine person, but he wasn't able physically to work; and she, because of her mental capacity, couldn't find employment, so their resources were just practically nothing. We helped sustain them, giving them all of the things that we could to keep the family together. They had a little two-room house. They were here with love and devotion; it was a joy to see them and to know what a terribly hard thing it was, but how faithfully they came.

Then, from the south, from Cornell and out in that area in those early days, they walked and walked home and came to Sunday school and to the evening services. But it was a different era; there was not radio, there was not television and the things that keep people interested in other things than joining together in worship. We can see a difference in children since *[end of page 23]* then; and I can see a difference in children since prayer has been taken out of the schools. I see the lack of it in their lives, making it harder for them, and giving us more of a privilege to help to make those things a part of their lives that they lost.

So we have been anxious to do it in every avenue of their living and make them aware of what they don't have that they can have that is God given. They need to look to the Source and look to God for the comfort that they need, and for the material needs as well. To know little children who pray for a pair of shoes isn't as frequent now as it was years ago; and I liked the way it was, rather than the way it is. The things that we work for are the things we enjoy. We need to work.

Walking as we did years ago was something that gave a family communication, they could visit and walk, and play; the children had the exercise, and they were confined within seeing and hearing distance of the parents, and it was splendid. It is too bad they don't have these

opportunities, but the cars race by, and you have to wait for a stop light at every corner and you are detained. And there are dangers; children need protection on the streets, they're not safe alone.

For that reason we have had to see that they are brought and taken home, and taken to the door. A number of children you have to take to the door. We have seen older children knock them down, hit them, kick them and injure them, showing their supremacy, and so the little ones we take right to the door and see that they get into the house and they are safe and secure. We didn't have this problem even twenty years ago; we have more problems and they are more critical.

[end of page 24]

Q. Do you have any more stories you want to tell me?

A. I am thinking back to the time when we had men. Not all of them were undesirable. You might think they would be able to only do menial labor, and that they had no education that would allow them to be more aggressive; but that wasn't true.

We had a young boy who came and we knew he had had a background that was different than where he was--of course, he wasn't truthful as to allowing us to know very much about his background--because he was so self-sufficient. It was a little while before it was very evident as to what it was, and we were able to contact the home.

It was a case of the father dying, and the mother didn't know how to cope with the children. He was younger than teen-age, probably twelve I would imagine, maybe thirteen. He was a boy who had real determination and he was aggressive, and he felt manly enough to fill all the vacancies created by his father's death; when he wasn't allowed to, there was no place in that home for him, so he just ran away. He found the Mission, and then we got in touch with the mother and she came immediately. It was a lovely home. She wept. Oh, she was so sorry that this had occurred; how could she ever repay? There was no repayment about it; we were just happy that she found the son.

They were making plans to go back to the Chicago area when he said, "But, Mother, I can't. I have an organization that meets every Tuesday." He was in high school by this time, and was going to school from the Mission. He had Springfield High School organized to the very last degree, and *[end of page 25]* this group met on this day, and this group on this day; and he said, "Why, I couldn't." She was so embarrassed she didn't know what to do, and she said, "Well, is it possible to leave him?" We said, "Of course."

So he stayed, and now he has the eighth largest Presbyterian church in the United States. He is a fine, fine Christian pastor, and his mother can never be grateful enough for the fatherly influence the Mission gave to her son and the joy that he had in living here. He could have had a beautiful home and the surroundings were nothing like he was accustomed to, but he loved every minute of it and used every minute of it to advantage.

Then after high school, he went on to college and did all these things. He did have a small church out a distance from Springfield, and he went there and commuted to a small school. He took care of that church on Sunday and was their pastor for years. Mr. Miller closed the church a few years before his death. It was a community where all the farmers had moved away, and there were not

the same ones who cared; there were so few they could not maintain the expenses of the building, even. So Mr. Miller went out and they had a very sweet final service and then dismantled the church.

It was a sad time, yet it was a time they saw the results of many things that had been accomplished and they were being satisfied by that. Because of communication being different they could go to a church in another vicinity and had transportation that was adequate to do it. But the little home church had to be taken down and demolished, and they would rather do that than to have a vacant building not properly cared for. *[end of page 26]*

Today he is in a position to do much, and does much financially. Many of the people who have been saved in the Mission in the past are a financial help to the Mission now, and want to be a part of it, and don't want to discontinue feeling that they are sharing in what the Mission has.

There is a nurse today that is a fine R. N., and I can remember her as a tiny little child, two years old, coming with the older children and loving every minute of it, and not having a clean dress unless we supplied it. At night it would be time for them to go, and she would go to the door, rattle it and hold it; and she would say, "It won't open, I can't get out; I'll have to stay," wanting me to say, "Don't go home, Dorothy. Stay." Then I would say, "But we must, dear." Then she would say, "I'm a grandma. I'm too old, I can't even walk." She would think of every reason why there was no way for her to ever leave, she had to make this her home; it was so important to her. Now because of the love the Mission had, and had showed to her, she is an R. N. today, practicing and doing a fine piece of work for her community.

We had another family that had difficulties and we kept the children, and then the father and mother reunited and things changed. They have brought the family back to show me that things are not like they were--they are living in another part of the state--and that things are as they should be, and as we desired for them then. They have accepted Christ and joined a church, and united the family in the right way and saw that things could be changed; and they are changed.

This goes on to another time a little boy came and of course lied about his age, he was not nearly as old as he said he was, yet he was a large child. We knew that he didn't belong where he was. One of our directors *[end of page 27]* had interests in Texas, and he was there on business and he went to church. When he came home he called his wife and said he had been so happy to go to the church, but there was a family that was in the deepest sorrow because of a son who had run away from home, and we were praying for that child. He asked his wife to call the Mission and tell them to pray, and to tell anyone they know about it and to describe the child.

I was talking to his wife on the phone and she was telling me this, and I said, "I'll call you back." I went into the other room and called her back and said, "We have the boy." That was on Sunday. The next day the mother was here from Texas to pick up the boy. Now that didn't just happen that boy was here; it happened that that director knew it and called on Sunday, and by the scar on his face I knew there couldn't be another boy, this had to be her son, and it was. We located him, and he was back with his parents and they were happy and he was happy. The Mission has been used in so many ways and so many times that you can't enumerate the times.

Another time I can remember a family coming in after the service was probably half way

through, and they were seated; and we knew they were strangers. After the service we greeted them, and they said, "May we talk to you awhile?" We said, "Surely." They said, "We just went by and saw the lighted building and heard them singing, and we had just come from a little town in the southern part of the state to bury a child here in this area. It was such a sad occasion, and we were going back home; we are so thankful we stopped, for the encouragement it gave us, and the spiritual strength, to go the rest of the way home without that baby." *[end of page 28]*

We were just as happy. You have this occasion to think, "This is the night that maybe no one will really need." But because of the need, the Mission has been open every night never has it closed since 1910, since it's founding. Until the Lord comes, we pray the word will go out with the same dedication that it has in these years. We never know.

Another time someone called us from the bus depot--from the hospital, first; it was a friend of mine who was there. She said, "Oh, Mrs. Miller, get over to the bus depot. Something terrible has happened; you will see. There is a family there with a child--get over there; I won't talk to you now." So I went; and here was a father and mother and several children, and a child in her arms. I greeted them, and I saw that this child was ill.

They had come from the southern part of the state to see the child who had been brought here in an ambulance because of respiratory diseases and a heart ailment. The state had brought this little child here for treatment; there were no hospitals near that could do for her what she needed to have done, so they brought her. It had been some weeks before, so the family knew that was the length of time it would take for recovery; no one could be ill longer than that--they were slow mentally. They had saved their money and had enough to come to Springfield to see the child.

When they went to the hospital and saw that she was so much worse than she was when she left, they were angered and hurt and saddened and confused, and didn't know what to do but pick the baby up with the blanket that was in the bed and bring her back to the bus depot to take her home. They had their return tickets, but they didn't have enough to take *[end of page 29]* the child; so there they were, sitting there.

We sent them to a cheap hotel, and put them all to bed. I called the doctor first; he said, "Oh, Mrs. Miller, do whatever you can for them. It's only a matter of a short time. I think that child would be better; she grieves so for the rest of the family that her recovery was made harder, and she can't live. Don't feel that you are doing anything that is a hazard, and that you are not complying with the rules of the hospital in them getting the child out of the hospital and to the bus depot. You do whatever you feel is best." So we bought clothing for the child--I didn't have anything that would fit her--because she was just in pajamas and a blanket from the hospital. So we bought clothing and got them the ticket and sent them back home.

In a short time they wrote and said that the Lord had taken her, and thanking us for what we had done. I had explained to her, I think to both of them--they were kindly people, they were Christian people; I am sure I made them understand that it was no fault of anyone. God knew; He gave us life and He knew the time that that child might face things that were harder, and He was taking her to Glory. [I explained] there was no lack of medication or the doctors had not been negligent. I said that truthfully, because I knew the doctor and knew he was a fine physician, and he would not have been lax in his dedication to care for that child, that he had

done his best.

We were glad we were here, and we have had other occasions that were just as sad. Another time they called us very late at night from the bus station, and they said, "There is somebody over here, and we don't know what to do with them." My husband and I dressed and went over. *[end of page 30]*

It was a young couple and they had a little child, and they were just weeping. The wife had a father who was very ill in one of the northern states, Wisconsin or Michigan, I'm not sure which; he had been corresponding and saying how very ill he was. Neighbors had come in, and had written, and they had advised them to come immediately because of the seriousness of his illness. They didn't have the money, so they waited until they had an entire paycheck. I can see her yet, "We took all we had; we knew we could get to Papa." It wasn't sufficient; it got them to Springfield and that was a long way from Michigan or Wisconsin, and they just couldn't believe that this was as far as they could get.

We put them to bed, and the Traveler's Aid had the ticket ready the next morning and they were able to get to their destination. Oh, [they were] so thankful. They said, "Oh, we won't go back home for a long time; we'll stay," because they were afraid. There would be somebody there who would help them to know that they couldn't take ten cents and go a million miles with it; they were going to have to rely on somebody else at the other end to see that they were able to get back when the time came.

I didn't hear from them, so I lost contact with them. But we were so glad to be able to be there, and find shelter for them and get milk for that child. The child was hungry and hadn't had any supper; they hadn't eaten since they left home, and it was a baby. So we were able to get the proper food and take care of the child and get things arranged so that the child was comfortable, and the parents slept and started early the next morning.

One time over at Ninth and Adams there was a terrible fire. A lot of *[end of page 31]* people were living in one room--a family with two beds and a stove in a "community" room; it was a poverty area in every respect. It was in the middle of the night, and here they were in their night clothes over here trying to get clothing. It was not cold, it was in the fall; but they needed sweaters or some clothing and shoes. So we went over and got them and brought them over and found everything we could find to get them warm enough, and took them to someone they knew to remain the rest of the night. Some of them stayed here for a number of days. We've had fire victims here in the building on several occasions when they didn't have a place to go, and we made a way for them to stay until the family could find a relative that could take care of them or some other group that might help them. Now, I've gone rambling!

Q. You just go ahead and ramble; we want the memories you have of the things you have done.

A. There are twenty who are in full-time Christian work in some part of the world who wouldn't be had it not been for the Mission. We encouraged them to study and go to school. They would say, "Well, my parents didn't have a college education," or "my parents didn't have a high school education." I said "That doesn't mean that you can't." And, "Well, I don't look like the other kids." And I said, "I know, but you can, and let's see that you can. You don't have to wear this

dress as it is, we can alter it until it is attractive. You want to look your very best; the Lord expects you to."

We kept giving them this encouragement so they have gone on and they have finished school, and now are doing something that couldn't have *[end of page 32]* been done had it not been for the encouragement of the Mission and for what it has meant to them. Being able to be dressed adequately for the type of place that they were [was important]. When they were in school everyone was able to have a sweater but them unless the Mission found one that someone had given the Mission, and we could be able to send boxes of clothes to help to make them feel comfortable.

One day--this happened back in Father's era--someone called and said, "There is a dear little boy that can't speak English; he's in the Post Office, and he is crying." So we went to find this little child, and he was a little Mexican. We brought him to the Mission, and he sat down and went sound asleep, which was natural for a little boy to do.

We were bewildered; he couldn't speak English. We didn't know what nationality he was, but we knew we couldn't understand a word that he said. Finally he woke up, and we consoled him, and then we were able to get--through a friend--some idea what he was saying.

He had followed relatives--uncles and cousins--from Mexico. They had planned this expedition to the States for some time, and he had overheard all of the planning. He knew money grew on trees, that America was just a land of plenty. He didn't want to be poor; he didn't admire anybody that didn't work, in his family he hadn't been taught to do that. So he thought he would just follow these people, and he was lost here in Springfield--purposely, I presume.

This poor little Mexican! So we fathered him and we mothered him and we babied him; and then we found he was a Mexican and we found ways of *[end of page 33]* translation and communication. He was finding most of them. He was growing faster in English than we were in speaking Spanish.

We got him into school as soon as we could; at that time one of our directors was principal of a school in this area. First we sent him to a school that was closer, because we thought he could get back and forth with greater ease; but the rooms were overcrowded, and they had so many problem children that Manuel was not getting any attention, and he needed so much. So we sent him to another school where this principal was giving him lots of attention, and the caliber of children was different, and they were helping him. They didn't need help; they were able to help Manuel.

He was just blooming! He had a personality that was a magnet; you were drawn to him. His whole attitude in life was marvelous. Then it happened that this principal was changed to another area. We knew that he wouldn't do so well without him; so there was a lady living in that area, who we knew, that was glad to have Manuel. By this time he was older, and he was an ambitious, vivacious person. He was able to move into her home. She lived alone. You couldn't be alone if Manuel was in the house. He was singing, he was whistling, he was talking! He was a companion all of the time, and he could do all of her errands, he could take care of her yard. He was a master of every situation.

Then he graduated from the eighth grade with honors. I was there; and the applause--I never heard applause like that! It was a standing ovation if there ever was one when that diploma was handed to him, because everyone in the city by this time--I don't mean that literally--but he had made so *[end of page 34]* many friends that everyone was so happy for him that he had this diploma. He worked for everybody.

The thing that he had done that was the most prosperous: my parents knew someone who wanted to travel abroad and they wanted to brush up on their Spanish before they went; so Manuel tutored them and they reimbursed him extravagantly. It was wonderful for Manuel, and Manuel was good for them. So he had a little income then, and was working besides.

Another friend owned the nicest confectionary in town, and they employed him. He had coal black eyes and coal black hair, and they had a beautiful soda fountain that was white marble and marble behind and had a mirror; and he was dressed in white with a little black bow tie. In this white uniform, he brought business! He was an attraction to the business. They were fine people who were wanting to help him, and he was helping them. He worked for them diligently. He really was a hard working young boy.

By fall my father said, "Oh, I can't think of sending him to high school; he needs too much attention with his English, and he needs to be trained." So he said, "Manuel, how about spending some of your money for an education? I think you will do better to go to Wheaton, and go to the Academy." "Fine, that's fine." Our family had always leaned toward Wheaton; my sister had lived there and she married a Wheaton man, and we knew people in Wheaton and we knew some of the professors.

So Manuel went to the Academy and that was splendid. Everybody took an interest in him, everybody had a job for him, and he was making money *[end of page 35]* and he practically paid all of his expenses. Because of his ingenuity and his ability, he studied and he worked. He would find somebody who was going in to Chicago and he would go with them and do work in Chicago, and he would do this to get his food over a week-end. He planned more ways! It was a joy to have a conversation with him.

So he managed, and he met a young lady. Then it came time for college. Of course, he wanted to go to Wheaton to college, and he did. Then he would come here for the summers to the Mission. We would give him a room and he lived here for the summer, and we would take him back to Wheaton in the fall.

Then he came to the last year. All through the summer we heard about "my Julia". He talked with his hands, and he would say, "Oh, my Julia, my Julia"; he would sing songs about Julia. We practically knew Julia from Manuel. When fall came the last year he said, "I'm not going back. If I finish my education in the States, I will never be able to minister properly to my people. What God has given me, I must give back. I will go back to my people, and finish there, and get my diploma." He did that very thing.

Then he was ordained a Methodist minister, and had a fine church in Mexico. He said he kept before him constantly, "I hated poor people; I didn't like them. I came to the States only for money. I didn't see why people were poor." And he didn't, he thought you could work and get

money. And he said, "But what would I have done if the Mission had not been there?" He was so ashamed. *[end of page 36]*

He married Julia. She was so charming! She is a jewel! Right after graduation he married Julia. She is, I think, a Puerto Rican, not a Mexican, but dark skinned and lovely.

He remembered in college one of his friends had a business that he investigated; so he became an agent for this business in Mexico, and it paid a handsome salary. He bought a piece of land and erected a building, and painted across the front is "The Washington Street Mission." It is in Monterey. He was ministering to the area around the Mission; he had a day nursery, and he had evening services. He supports it--not now, this is what he had done--he supported this Mission.

My sister's name was Margaret Brown, and she was in college at the same time a Marguerite Brown was there. Their mail was confused, their classes were confused, their grades were confused; everything was confused for the two. She went to Mexico to join her father who was a missionary in Mexico.

Of course, when Manuel [heard] "Brown"--that all went together. When Manuel bought this property, he said, "Oh, I'll hunt up Marguerite Brown." Her father had died, and she was an old maid--a typical old maid--so Manuel got her. He is just a dear boy; he said, "I'll build on a room for Marguerite." So he built a room on the Mission for Miss Brown.

She then became the missionary, and she did a wonderful work among those children. She was a frail, delicate person and she needed Manuel, after her father's death, to watch after her, and Julia to feed her and Julia would see that she ate properly. She ministered to these children, and *[end of page 37]* lived with them. They opened their home to her, but she had her own bedroom and an office in the Mission.

Manuel just died about two years ago of cancer. But at the time of my husband's death, which was three years ago, he wrote a letter, and it was sweet. He was telling all about the children; he said, "Now, Mrs. Miller, Manuel is The Captain of the United States Army!" And I thought, "You've gotten back to your Spanish. You are in Mexico, and you are really confused, Manuel!" Then he went on. The next son is a fine physician, and he is a surgeon, and he is a urinologist, and has a wonderful practice. The daughter was studying then for dentistry, and since his death has opened her office and is a licensed dentist. So the three children are doing splendidly.

Then he passed away. "My Julia" writes to me; I don't correspond as often as I should. She is carrying on the work at the Mission, and the children are helping to support it. I imagine her salary would recompense. He commanded a salary of some sum through his business, so I imagine she would be taken care of financially, and not have to skimp.

A year or so ago, a young girl bounced into the office one day. I had met her once before, and she said, "You know where I was last night?" I had no idea. She said, "I was in the Washington Street Mission in Mexico." I said, "Were you?" She said, "I really was."

She had been in the armed service, and had met "The Captain of the United States Army". He had told her so much about his family, and they had come to visit him--he was in the hospital for awhile--and the family had *[end of page 38]* come, and they extended such a gracious invitation

for her to visit them that she had done it. She lived here in Springfield; this was her home. So when she flew back, she said, "I'm coming to the Mission tonight, because I want to say that I was at the Washington Street Mission last night in Mexico, and I'm at the Washington Street Mission tonight in Springfield."

She did that very thing; and she gave a word of testimony at the meeting, saying she had been there and what a good time she'd had. She said, "They sing just like you, only I do not know what they are singing because it is all in Spanish. But it is with the same enthusiasm and the same interest."

So we have a branch in Monterey, Mexico, and Father's influence has reached a long, long way.

END OF TAPE

Q. Mrs. Miller, were you born here in Springfield?

A. I was born here in 1902. It was a far different era than we are now living in. Things moved very slowly, and my childhood was very interesting and I am grateful for every day of it. I had parents who were concerned, vitally, in their children, and I am thankful I was one of them. I have a sister who made life just as pleasant as could be and we shared every experience together, and with a family, and we enjoyed each other in that way.

It was the days when you lived in a house that had a sitting room. *[end of page 39]*

The parlor was for very special occasions but the sitting room was where the family gathered; in the center was a table and on that table was always a Bible, the paper of the day, and a pretty lamp. These were all important parts.

The lamp was a coal oil lamp. We lived out at the edge of town part of my early childhood, and electricity wasn't as prevalent as it is now; you had to bring it a long distance to get it to any area that was not right in the center of Springfield.

Springfield was not the city that it is now. It was small enough that had many, many friends and you knew so many people and their business and where they went to school. You had friends that you could have communication with that didn't live such distances that you didn't call them your immediate friends. The schools in the area were the same; everyone in school knew each other. We knew the children in the younger classes, and the older ones; and the teachers had time to come by and visit your parents, and knew your parents personally. It made life so simple and so much more intimate.

I am glad and thankful for the childhood that I did have, because of this closeness. I like people, and the closeness that you had with so many people made it very interesting and very simple. You weren't competing in the way that it seems you do today. You were happy with whatever situation you were in, and you had friends who were equally as interested so you could do things in common. There were taffy pulls and popcorn parties, and things that now are far from popular were very festive in those days. We had lots of them. *[end of page 40]*

My mother enjoyed cooking, and did cook and she was an exceptionally good one; and her food

was not only palatable, but it was attractive. If she knew friends were coming in, we had ribbon sandwiches. We had cake that was decorated; she could make swirls and she wanted the swirls to be just right, and, of course, everyone enjoyed it. She wanted perfection, so she would exhibit things at the fair. She always had first ribbons on fancy foods. We enjoyed all of that, and I think we had more friends because of it; they enjoyed it with us.

We had a garden and we were expected to help in that garden as we grew older. There were so many weeds; it seemed they would just grow. Roses take lots of cultivating that we had to learn how to do, and did--not always with a smile, but we didn't do it reluctantly. It was a necessity, and we accepted it as that and the play time came after it.

We had enough originality to make a game of things. Whatever our task was, we did something that was a little extra that made it a little more fun. That would help, too; if we invited a few friends in to have the luxury of the foods that mother had in the cupboard, they would pull weeds, too. We had a large garden, we had berries, we had many things and they all were seasonable; we had to be sure they were all taken care of. The strawberries and the cherries and the raspberries and currants—they are so tiny and you have to watch and pick and pick--and gooseberries, black and red raspberries. There was lots of fruit, and lots of care to be put into it.

Then you didn't freeze and you didn't can everything, but you dried fruits. Sun-dried was a very popular way. We had marble slabs *[end of page 41]* that we put out in the yard, and these were covered and protected with mosquito netting. The fruit was sugared at intervals; you knew how many days it was until you put more sugar on it. Then you would bring it in--not stopping it--into a screened-in porch every night and covering it, and then taking it back into the sun the next day.

But when winter came and hot biscuits and hot rolls, all of the things we had been preparing were luscious, and we forgot how many times we had carried the marble slabs in and how many times we had taken them out. It was really a delicacy and over ice cream it was extra luscious and we enjoyed it.

We had chickens; they were thoroughbred, registered and pedigreed. And those, too, went to the fair for the prize that they would receive, and most of them did. We had to take such good care of those chickens. We had to watch and if ever they looked like they didn't feel well, they had to come and have special medication and be taken care of. In winter you watched them and their combs couldn't be frosted, and they had to have the right kind of protection and you watched to see that they had it. You gathered the eggs because if you didn't they would freeze.

So we learned as much through our early childhood, I think, as we did as students in high school and any education that we had that was formal education, because I think that the things you learn the hard way with the effort--you have to put real dedication into it to do it.

Then the horse required care and we loved her and she was a part of the family, practically, and she loved us. We put as many children on the *[end of page 42]* horse as we could, starting right at her neck and down; when the last one was sliding off her tail, she would move and move very slowly so that no one would get hurt. She took us wherever we wanted to go, and when one would fall off she would stop and wait and we would put them back on and go farther. All of these things are very vivid in my mind: the joys we had as children and learning to work.

Mother never forgot anything that needed to be done. We were a part of that new experience; it was an enterprise that we all indulged in. We had practically an acre in the front yard, and not a motor driven lawn mower; it [the motive-power] was ours.

We put a pitcher of lemonade at one end of the yard and empty glasses at the other, and then we would take a glass down and fill it with lemonade and bring it back. We took turns back and forth, moving the lemonade pitcher farther down as we progressed with the lawn. (laughter) If we ran out of lemonade, we could go into the house and get any other thing that we wanted to drink to keep from getting too hot. It was a coffee break, I think, only it was never coffee. It was lemonade and milk and ice tea and a cherry drink that we made with cherry juice that was a delicacy. We got the yard cut a little faster that way.

Q. What was the location of your home?

A. West of Springfield. It was really at the edge of town; it was about three and a half miles, but now that is all city. We owned three acres and a half. It was only a small area of land, but it was all taken care of properly. It was never allowed to have anything that needed to be done. It was all cared for and it was an attractive yard. *[end of page 43]*

We had a formal flower garden, and the paths had to be padded with a spade to make them very firm and very hard. If you pulled a weed up then you had to get something and get that ground really back in position so it was nice and flat. The beds were all elevated in this, and you had to keep these padded with a little trowel that we had. The weeds were out of this little formal flower garden. It was very attractive and it kept us real busy. We learned how to work and how to enjoy work. It was all a pleasure--lots of fun.

We had swings and roller skates, and we had bicycles and that horse and everything that went with it that was a pleasure. We could skip off and have a break and come right back and do some more things that had to be done--carefully. No flower could be injured; we were taught to handle them carefully. They were all started on the back porch, a glassed-in back porch. The seedlings were started there and then transplanted into the gardens in the early spring, all done by the hands of the family. It was pleasant.

We had lots of friends; it was far enough away from some places that it was really a treat for them to ride a bicycle or to come that distance to the area.

Q. Mrs. Miller, you spoke about the raised flower beds. Is this typical of this area?

A. I don't know, but this was formal. The path went to the center, and there was a bricked-in area in the center of the circle up about--well, we sat on the top brick. Then, that [center] space was all flowers and *[end of page 44]* it went up and I think cannas were in the top beds. As you went on the paths around the circle, all four corners were identical.

Q. Did you children do most of the garden work then?

A. Yes, with mother's help. There was never a weed; and those roses had to be taken such good care of. We would have to go out in the pasture and get the cow manure with a spade, and put it in buckets and bring it in a little wagon we had, and put it behind the barn. (laughter) Then every

day, with a certain little dipper, we had to put so many dippers of water on each one of those buckets. Then we had a cover that went over it. Then we had to measure that out and put just so much on every rose every so often. Mother took those to the fair, and her hand work. Everything she did she wanted to excel; she didn't want anything done carelessly.

The chickens were White Leghorns and the eggs were all washed and put in boxes and sold. Every soda fountain had a beautiful glass dish on the soda fountain, and it was filled with beautiful eggs. Egg-nogs seemed to be popular. They put them [the eggs] in what we would call milkshake mixers. They put milk and sugar and ice cream in, too, and poured them back and forth to mix them in this mixer made with a lid on it. They wanted nice fresh eggs for this.

We had to cook all the food that went to the chickens on the stove in the kitchen, and we had a stove in the basement, a cook stove. We had these wash boilers, that I have around here for wastebaskets, filled with chicken scraps and a certain kind of mash, cooked in water, and the chickens ate that hot food. *[end of page 45]*

When the chickens were washed to go to the fair--to show them, you know--you would take them down to the basement to wash tubs full of soapy water, and you washed those awful stinky chickens. We washed those chickens and we put blueing in the last water so they would be real white, and vaseline on their combs and lobes and their feet and their nails. It was quite an experience.

Then a calf would get loose, and we would call all the neighbor children and everybody would try to catch the calf. If you've ever tried that, it's almost an impossibility. They just go between your legs, and they go everywhere. (laughter) The chickens got out every time it rained and a chicken in the rain will drown. As soon as you see a cloud in the sky, if you have little chickens, you're out trying to get them all in and lock the little chicken house so they can't get out in it and drown. We were taught a lot, and loved it; we just loved it.

Q. Did your mother have a wood stove in her kitchen?

A. No. It was coal. We had a base burner in the other rooms; we filled a hopper, and you only had to put it in daily and it fed into the grates. They were just radiantly red, and the isinglass on all four sides of this and the reflection was pretty. It was as attractive as a fireplace. Base burners I believe they called them. You used coke or hard coal to reduce the amount of ashes that you had to take out.

Q. Do you recall when you got electricity in your home, or the telephone?

A. We always had a telephone. We were never without a telephone. We moved back into the city before we ever had electricity. These were *[end of page 46]* earlier days that we lived at the edge of town.

Q. Do you have any memory of your father starting this Mission?

A. Oh, yes: He was co-founder.

Q. I wondered how it seemed to a child.

A. Oh, it was the most wonderful place I had ever known. I was young, and I wanted to go with him every time he went to the Mission. At first he was not the superintendent, they had a superintendent who became ill. Father was president of the directors, so it was necessary for him to absorb the responsibility because the superintendent was really very ill, and left and didn't live too long after that.

We tried frantically to find someone to replace him, so Father, being the president, took the responsibility of doing everything he could at lunch hour and after the time at Vredenburg's; and I remember, then, he would come home and go back for the evening service. If we had behaved properly and our conduct was just perfect, we would get to come with him. At least I would. My sister wasn't as anxious; but I was just amazed at these people that didn't have all of the training that was being forced on me. They could just sort of do what they pleased and I thought they were mighty fortunate! (laughter)

I can see myself sitting there, watching them and thinking, I couldn't do that, and I didn't know why. But I loved them. They were friendly, and oh, I enjoyed them. A dear pianist, who had beautiful gray hair and was gorgeously groomed with about three little tiny curls at the top, *[end of page 47]* played an organ and those curls bobbed as she played. The people sang so lustily. In our church services there was such dignity, quiet dignity, and it was all so foreign to me and so different, and I loved everything about it.

I think the enthusiasm of Father rubbed off; the conversation at home was so much about the Mission that we heard it first hand--"How will we manage?" and "What will we do?"--so that it became a part of my life, too. And then Mother entered into it, equally as interested in anything she could participate in, and would come during the daytime hours to relieve in any way that was possible. It was a family project. Anything that our family did, we did as a unit; it was pleasant to have that kind of a childhood because it was so interesting.

In later years, a young girl's mother was killed who lived in the area and went to our school. Her step-father murdered her mother and it was a terrible, terrible experience for everyone, and we were all so saddened because she had walked to school with us. She hadn't lived in that area very long, but we were so saddened. She called up one day just after school was out in the summer. My mother said, "Is that that little girl?" I said, "Yes." She said, "Tell her to come over and play with you. We'll go and get her."

So we hitched the horse up and we went into the city and brought her out to play that afternoon, and she didn't go home until she was twenty-four years old (laughter) and was married; so she had a long play. It made our life happier; we loved her, and she was accepted as one of us. If anyone in her family would mention coming for her or to see her or to *[end of page 48]* have any part of her life, she would say, "Mother, no, no! Tell them no." She called my mother "Mother." "Mother, no, please don't."

Mother said, "I can't tell your own family!" And she'd say, "Oh yes you can!" She said, "I've seen both ways of life, and I like it where I am. I love it." So she played from eleven years to twenty-four, and we loved her, and I count her a sister. She is just as near to me as my own sister was. And she took as much interest and she taught Sunday school; she taught at the Mission. She did just as many things as she could to make everything as happy for the family as she could. She

cooperated beautifully, and was a member of the family, really.

Q. How old were you when your father took over on a full-time basis?

A. Probably about nine or ten.

Q. Did you move into Springfield then?

A. No, we didn't. He still came back and forth; he used the horse and buggy and came in. He was at Vredenburg's a good while [along] with the responsibilities of the Mission, and had some help here; and then he gave that up later and came here full-time. It was the period of doing both that made it even more difficult. The family rallied around and helped in every way, as I say, in teaching and sorting clothing, doing everything we could to make it easier. We started early.

Q. In those days we did so many more things for ourselves, like raising everything for the winter.

A. Yes, and canning was a must; you had to take care of everything and *[end of page 49]* prepare to take care of the winter. We didn't butcher and do those things. Nary people did, but we didn't have that large an acreage that we raised enough to really make it worthwhile.

Q. No, we didn't either, but we always had chickens.

A. Yes, poultry, and all the vegetables and the fruit.

Q. In those days if you didn't raise it, you couldn't have it.

A. No, you couldn't have it.

Q. Tell me about your girlhood days.

A. They were happy days. Even walking that distance to high school . . .

Q. You walked in to town?

A. Yes; not always, but with one conveyance and everyone's hours different, it wasn't always possible for us to not do it, and we didn't mind. I can remember cold days of walking to high school. As we would go out the back door, mother always had a pan of hard-boiled eggs on the stove, and she gave us each a hot egg and put it in each one of our pockets as we went out the back door, and we held the hot eggs to keep our hands warm as we walked to school, and it was a good distance—maybe two miles. That was not every day, but when there were emergencies and we couldn't all go at the same time--and you didn't want a horse to stand out in the severe weather, you couldn't do that--so if there wasn't someone to assist you, you just did the best you could and walked. Then it wasn't convenient to go to a bus; you were a mile and a half, probably, to the bus--it was a streetcar in those days--and children and young people *[end of page 50]* didn't mind. You were bundled well, and you hurried. It wasn't inconvenient, you didn't think of inconveniences as you do today. Now things are so electrified and everything is done for you, but you didn't expect that then. You managed without them.

Q. I guess maybe we had more time.

A. The hours must have been longer. (laughter)

Q. Where was the high school at that time?

A. It was the Springfield High School that we know now. It was the old one that was torn down that I went to the first year; and I went into the high school that is now standing in my sophomore year and finished there, and I didn't go to college.

My heart was here at the Mission, and I was here a lot. My friends would say, "Well, I guess you want me to help you now," so I always had someone to help. As I knew my husband, he would help; he wasn't my husband then. Anyone who knew me--everything had to be circled around the Mission. We would meet here, and my friends would help. They would do the things that had to be done here just so willingly and counted it just about as exciting as I did. If they liked me, if I was their friend, they had to like the Mission, too.

Mr. Miller learned early to enjoy the Mission. I had known him through school, we were friends for four years before we were married. He taught Sunday school here, and he did everything that he could to assist in the work at the Mission. The family were so engrossed that we didn't have any outside activities. We did have--that isn't true—but our *[end of page 51]* heart had to be here, and this came first.

Q. Did Mr. Miller live in Springfield, too?

A. Yes, he was from Springfield, and I knew him in grade school. Springfield was small, and most Christian families knew other Christian families. It was not the city we know now. So your friends were all of the same neighborhood and lived in the same section of the city, and if there were parties or anything that happened you knew most of the people who were there.

Q. What was Mr. Miller's life like as a young man here in Springfield?

A. Well, he worked for the streetcar--Illinois Power is what it was called--and then went to work for the state later, and he was working for the state when we were married. Through depression days it was hard and we were having a hard time financially. The state was laying people off rather than employing them; even among state jobs it was difficult.

Then, he was always here. We were always helping at the Mission, even though we were living in our own home for awhile, we were always here; wherever there was a need, one of us would go fulfill that need. So he grew up loving the Mission. Someone said that he married me, and married the Washington Street Mission at the same time. (laughter) That was true. He did it because he loved the Mission, too, and they loved him.

He had a wonderful sense of humor that was so pleasant for the children, and they enjoyed it. He had a big boys' class; when he was still in his teens, he had a class of boys. He usually did have a class of either *[end of page 52]* younger or older boys. He was always teaching them and helping in every phase of the work as it was needed.

Then, as men came, he would help with that work. During the time of first accepting W. P. A. and relief--that was unknown before that--but there were C. C. C. camps established for younger men and then there was W. P. A. established. They were trying to get the man we called the "hobo" or "tramp" from migrating from place to place. It hasn't succeeded, but that was their effort in those days.

They came to the Mission and asked that we not--we had a hundred beds--not use any facilities here. They were starting a transient center, and they wanted us to discontinue and all were to be sent to this center. [They were] attempting to find some employment, but not doing it--just attempting. Really, they coddled them to the extent that it was just one more day and not putting any definite program out to make them be self-sustaining.

Through the time we had the Mission, we had a woodyard a lot of that time down two blocks from the Mission, and they had to cut an hour of wood or they had to scrub a floor or they had to sweep a walk; they had to do something. Then they were given meal tickets and given lodging. We felt that the people of Springfield were supporting this work, and for them to idly come and accept, without any responsibility whatever, was not encouraging them to do anything but just live in that manner and to not be self-sustaining.

This transient center was struggling and finally they came to the Mission, *[end of page 53]* asking that someone from here come over and give them some help. So Mr. Miller worked over there and helped them get that organized and worked there during the day--he would be here in the evening for the services--and did all he could to help those men, to encourage them to get over here and get to a gospel service because they had nothing there. The program wasn't set up for that; it was just a time of giving out--a big dining room and food--and it was spending a lot of money with not a lot shown for it. So he operated that for some time; I am not sure as to the length of time that he did.

It was time-consuming and not producing much; so he said some of the men who had worked under him were qualified to operate that and go on with the work, and he left and came back here and was here all the time. He was needed here and it was more profitable than what they were doing. It soon closed after that. We retained a small dormitory, and we would send them to an inexpensive hotel and give them a meal ticket if we felt they had a genuine need. We supplied that need until then the community chest absorbed that need through the Salvation Army. It is their responsibility, because they are in the chest and are supervised by them.

We only do what we feel we can do to help a man find employment for the next day. If someone has called and needs a man to do a certain type of work and we feel he is qualified and is responsible and will really do a commendable job, we send him to a hotel and pay for his lodging until he is able to be self-sustaining. This has occurred so many, many times through the life of the Mission, that now there are many who *[end of page 54]* came in just for a night's lodging, and have been here thirty and forty years.

Q. Did lots of transients come through Springfield during the Depression?

A. Yes, many. We had college professors, we had men of great ability and men who were genuinely sincere in not being able to find employment. It was not something they were

conceiving. They reluctantly took anything. They wanted to find some way to sustain themselves. We would do everything we could to give them small jobs--odd jobs were prevalent. They would go some place and work for an hour, if that was as long as the employment would last; they would walk a distance to work an hour, and do it gladly. Now they would just frown and want an exorbitant price and they don't want to cut your grass, they don't want to shovel your snow.

During those years we were given yardages of material--bolts and bolts of material—and we would give it to the families to make clothing for the children and make bedding for the children. We were most interested, and they wanted it to be given out where the families were the largest and were having the most difficult time. We accounted for every yard that was given and every bolt. Then we would go to the supply and they would give us more yardage to supplement what had been used.

We had flour that we would give out--bags of flour--to those who needed it and they could make bread. Dry milk and dry eggs were given to the families who needed it, and they were delighted to have it. They were struggling. We would bring many of the families here and feed them *[end of page 55]* because we could do it more reasonably; we could make a good stew. The children would come; sometimes on Sunday they would come during the day because their food wouldn't last for two or three meals, so we would supply one meal for the family.

Those were hard days, but the Lord saw fit to supply enough that we could manage, and help them to learn to manage. It was gratifying to see them rally to it, and they made far finer citizens than many of the ones we know today who are interested in receiving and not giving or making any attempt to work for it.

Q. What has made the difference? Why was it that way then and it isn't now?

A. It is encouraged now. It takes effort to compel people to do anything with their hands if they don't have to. If they're languid and lazy by nature, it takes a lot out of the person who is compelling them to do the work. You could do it quickly yourself, but to supervise them doing it is difficult; so I think the people who are supervising say, "Well, it is easier to just let it go," and they'll not look into it, not see whether they are really in earnest and really truthful about what they are doing.

It is creating a dishonesty in them. They say that this is the way it is, but if you could just get to the bottom of it, it isn't true, so it is making them dishonest. And how to solve it--it's going the other way to fast to stop, I'm afraid.

I don't like for the children to feel this way, and they're being *[end of page 56]* encouraged to. Children will start to tell me something in conversation, and, "Oh, Mom told you not to tell her that. Don't tell Mrs. Miller." So I don't get to hear it.

Q. Did you have a good many breadlines and things of that sort in Springfield?

A. Oh, yes. We have pictures of men lined single-file to the corner, and around the corner, waiting for a meal.

Q. Were there other places where they were fed in Springfield?

A. Yes, I think at St. John's Hospital. And they gave baskets of food left over—good food, wonderful food--and they still maintain a fine work. The breadline up on Sixth and Madison is still operating and it's really doing a fine work.

Q. I didn't suppose there was a breadline anywhere around, now.

A. Yes, there is. In our's there would be a block of people, single-file, waiting, because we couldn't feed enough at once. We fed them in the basement, and we had counters that would come up above their arm pits, and they would pass by cafeteria style, getting a bowl of stew. Stew was the main dish, and lots of vegetables in it, and meat, and made in large, large quantities. They would get a nice hot bowl of stew, and get bread, and milk or coffee, and sometimes doughnuts or a roll for a meal, and oatmeal for breakfast. We only fed twice a day.

Q. How about the Italian immigrants who came here?

A. They are a thrifty, hard-working, earnest people that were mistreated *[end of page 57]* in being without any source of income. This whole community, Coal City, dissolved at one time. We brought these numbers of families--twenty or thirty, probably--to Springfield. They were hungry, they were without everything, they had nothing. We rented houses, and the Mission paid the rent and found employment for them, which was easy. Immediately we put them into the mines in this area; they were all flourishing.

Every man went to work and wanted to; it was not compulsion, it was through dedication that every available man in the area was working. Then at night, they came here for school to learn to speak English and to be able to get their Americanization papers. Everyone of them became American citizens and they have positions of prominence today.

I am ashamed to say they can pass me on the street and not even speak to me. (laughter) But one, not too long ago, grabbed me and hugged me and kissed me. And others are ashamed--I don't know, I think they had a Catholic background, and then to leave the church--but they are fine Christians, and belong to churches of various denominations, now, in Springfield. There are three generations since then that have grown up. They're working people and they're still working, and own property, and are self-sustaining and are contributing in every way to the city.

Q. Was this at the period of the Depression?

A. No, it was before the Depression.

Q. Where was Coal City in relation to Springfield?

A. North. North of Joliet. South of Chicago, between here and Chicago.

Q. I didn't realize they did mining there. *[end of page 58]*

A. It was surface mining; in this area it is underground. There were huge mines and the whole area is undermined. The coal is all gone in most of this area now, but it was a large area.

Q. I've wondered if Springfield is just going to collapse someday.

A. I'd think so, too, and fall into the bottomless pit. (laughter) But we have interesting men, too, to talk about. One man was a prominent man in the East and disappeared. He had been drinking; he had a serious drinking problem. The family couldn't find him, they were people of some prominence. They found clothing on the bank of the Potomac River, making them think he had taken his life. So they lived under that fear and thought; there was no other way, he hadn't been located.

He came into the Mission one night; he heard the music and came in, and he was saved. He was a very brilliant man. He didn't tell of his past immediately, but the Lord convicted him and then he did reveal that his family weren't aware of his being alive.

My father insisted, immediately I imagine, that he [Father] call, not even trusting him to do it--to notify the wife and the daughters. You can never imagine finding someone you thought was dead and had been dead for years--it was a most emotional time. By that time he was working and had a salary that was--I don't mean flourishing, but he was employed. They came immediately and set up their residence here in Springfield and lived here, and he held an office in one of the prominent churches and taught Sunday school and was a part of the church in every way, and worked for the state in placing children in different areas. *[end of page 59]*

He has one living daughter in Chicago who I don't hear from, but one who is in Evanston in a retirement home that I do hear from. His wife has passed on, as has he. The letters of praise and joy that come from this daughter, and have through the years, are remarkable. She can't be thankful enough for a father that was dead, and yet is alive, and only to God the glory is given. It was a reunion that was the sweetest and happiest that any of us ever experienced, when that wife and those daughters came to meet that man--their husband and father that was dead, and was alive--only God had made this possible, and his change of life.

Q. How long was he missing before he came?

A. I imagine close to a year, perhaps. I am not positive.

Q. Do you suppose it was amnesia, or something like that?

A. Alcohol. The horrors of it is terrific.

Another incident that is bright in my mind: a family thought they were building and buying a piece of property out in what we call the "Hollywood area." Oh, it is a terrible area, they're just shacks. But it was a large family and the husband was older and could do very little, but they were buying this. He had ability, and he wanted to do better than he could--because of physical ailments he was not able to do all that he wanted--but he had built on to this little house and it was comfortable enough for the family. It was a large family, there were ten in the family. It was a small house, but they were making it.

And here they came crying, almost, to Mr. Miller and saying, "What will we do? We've only so many days, and here are the papers that were served." *[end of page 60]*

They had been paying for the house but the papers were not legitimate, and that landlord was only taking their money and putting them out. That was his method of livelihood, was to use these people who couldn't think fast enough to know that they were being taken in for nothing.

It was impossible to find a place for that many children. We looked and we scoured and we tried. One day he came into the office and he said, "Mr. Miller, I know where I can buy a barn and it is fifty dollars. Out of that lumber I can build something, if I only had the fifty dollars. Mr. Miller looked at the barn. It was a large barn with a large hay loft, and covered the entire area across the back of a forty foot lot; so there was a lot of material in it. Mr. Miller said, "Are you sure you can get it for fifty dollars?" Yes, he was.

So Mr. Miller went to a friend of his at the bank and told him the plight. And he said, "I don't want to give him the fifty dollars, or I'll be giving fifty dollars to everybody and they'll all have the same idea." There were too many people who were watching that family, and where they knew there was money it would just produce more problems. They laughed, and Mr. Miller said, "This is ridiculous for me to ask you to do this, but will you loan him fifty dollars?" I guess they had never done anything like this before, (laughter) but because it was for the Mission they said, "Yes."

He dressed up. We had never seen him dressed up before; he had always had overalls on, and working. We found old clothes here that people had given us--discarded clothes--and he put on clothes and a necktie that was just fit for an executive, and he felt so elated! Oh, he was just inflated, too. Mr. Miller went with him and they went to the bank, and he borrowed that fifty dollars. He was the happiest man, I think that *[end of page 61]* anyone could be when he walked out of that bank. He had never even been in a bank before, and they were so kind and considerate of him and gave him the fifty dollars, and told him how it was to be paid back. He understood, and everyone understood and it was made a very important transaction.

He bought the barn, and he moved the barn on an old automobile--not a truck. He tore the barn down and moved it, boards by boards, from way up on North Fourth Street, to out on Cornell, and way to the dump--it's probably five miles in all--trip by trip by trip by trip--and he built the house. The only thing that we supplied were some nails, and occasionally, if he would run out of some roofing, we would buy a roll of roofing paper. Nails, and lots of encouragement, and anything that we had that would help for insulating, and he built a home with the fifty dollar barn.

It was a terrible lot, and he was paying for that, and he paid back every cent to the bank on the day or before it was due. The fifty dollars all went back. Then he was paying fifty cents at a time on this lot that no one else would buy and you couldn't have sold it to anyone, but he did. They lived there for a short period of time and then, from this same person, bought a lot on higher ground because every time it rained you had to get a sailboat to get to the front door, almost, and it was a most undesirable place.

But he sold it at a profit, and then found a lot higher, and better, and built another house which was much nicer and was really a credit to anyone; it was really very well done. Then someone offered him a nice price for *[end of page 62]* that, and he started a house next door and died before that house was really completed. But it took care of the family and the family was all

raised there, and it gave them a home through all those years because of the advantages that the Mission afforded, and with his effort and determination. And he was given God-given ability--he knew how to do it and it wasn't done carelessly.

He had to splice the two by fours to make them long enough, but they were spliced and it didn't lack support. It was dry and warm, but it wasn't all finished on the inside as choice as he'd like it. He found other places--on the dump he found a lot of material that he used for flooring. Somebody had taken out some maple flooring someplace and it was fine lumber and he used a lot of that. We were so glad we could help him through that hard time because with ten children it would have been impossible to have found a place to live.

In that same area--it's a blighted area, is yet and has been for years--there was a child whose mother, as soon as she could leave after birth, disappeared. The neighbors raised that little boy with a soda-pop bottle with anything in it that could be found, they would stick it in that baby's mouth. The next older child was nine--there was nine years between them; it was the sister. She mothered the baby and the father loved the child and there were some older brothers that didn't care much, they had no part in it. But [there were] this little nine year old girl and the father, and the Mission came into the picture.

We did everything we could to help with Jack. He was so bashful; he had had such a strange childhood and didn't know where or why--he was *[end of page 63]* so bashful. I can see him now: nothing ever fitted, he had to hold his little trousers on to keep them from falling off him, and hold the shirt--no buttons, you know. I was always trying to keep Jack together.

Then he started to school. The teacher would call me up frequently. She said, "Oh, Mrs. Miller, get Jack." So I would go out and get Jack and bring him home and give him a bath and scrub him up and wash his hair and cut his hair and get him clean clothes and get him started again, and he did fine and went all through school and then when he was in his early teens was killed on a motorcycle.

But I took him from an infant to that age and I loved him and he loved me and loved the Mission, and he was here more than he was at home and so was his sister. We were glad the Mission could help with that tragic problem. It was most difficult for the neighbors. They didn't have the right interest in him and they couldn't train him and the Mission did and it was a blessing for Jack.

Q. Have you some other stories for us, Mrs. Miller?

A. Yes, I do. We have tried to minister to the Chinese people and haven't done much with them, except one family that lived near this area. They are reluctant to trust people until they are certain--they are positive--you are a friend.

This family did begin to trust, and they came occasionally. We made our greatest friendship at Christmastime; I had taken some little tokens over for the children. There were three children: a pair of twins and a younger boy. The twins were Jim and Jean. At Christmastime, every *[end of page 64]* Christmas, hanging on the front door on the knob was a Christmas present for me. Only the Lord saved that there because all the pedestrian traffic and every bit of traffic by vehicle

would see this hanging there, and it was attractive with a red ribbon on the knob and this present hanging on this.

When I would find out what it was, why, it was tea. I am very fond of tea and they knew it, so this lovely box of Chinese tea, the box attractive and the tea delicious, would be hanging there. Instead of knocking or opening the door and bringing it to me, they would always hang it outdoors. It must be a Chinese custom. Then I would go to this little restaurant they owned around the corner, and thank them for it and we would have some conversation, and they saw that I was their friend.

Then she began to consult with me about things and ask me how to do. The husband wasn't American in any way; he had been in this country far longer than she had, but he couldn't make me understand and I couldn't make him understand. He could not understand the English language, and she did. So we would have conversations and she would tell me, "My husband said to tell you," and she then would tell me what "my husband" said, thanking me, usually, for something that was very trivial that I had done. So we were friends in that way.

One day she sent for me and said for me to come quick, I went and she was in bed. She was such an ambitious person that she wasn't languid, she was ill. She said, "What will I do, what will I do?" I was able to get the city nurses for her to find out what they thought about the extent of her illness, whether she needed a doctor or not, and they *[end of page 65]* thought not. They made her comfortable, and I found ways to help her and to assure her that she was improving and doing all right. This went on for maybe a week or ten days.

Then she sent over again--I had been going on intervals--she sent for me and I went, and she said, "The State Fair, it ends and they can't go. How can they go?" Meaning, would I take them. I said, "Yes, I'll take them to the fair; I'll take the three children." Just prior to this the little boy, Jim, had had polio severely and he had braces. They had done everything, they had not skimmed any way in any fashion. He had had the best of care from the best of doctors and he was able to get around very well with the assistance of these casts that he was wearing. I said, "Would it tire Jimmy too much to walk?" "No, he will go with you."

So I took the little Chinese to the fair but before we said, "I give you money, I give you money." And I said, "No." When we returned, she said, "You open the drawer, open the drawer." So I did. It was a dresser drawer, large, like this. (Mrs. Miller indicates the drawer was as wide as the arms could reach) It was level-full of money--paper money. I closed that drawer so fast; I was so afraid. I said, "No, No. She wanted me to take as much money out of that drawer as I had spent for the trip to the fair.

She was hurt because I had slammed that drawer shut so rapidly. I was afraid; I never had seen so much money in my life and it was over there in a terrible area, oh! This was upstairs; they lived above in a beautifully furnished apartment. The restaurant was far from anything *[end of page 66]* desirable in appearance, it was just mediocre. But the apartment was spotlessly clean and attractively decorated--a piano and carpeting and drapes and the furnishings were all in such good taste. They had three bedrooms and living room and I would think a den, but they ate downstairs so they had no kitchen or dining room facilities upstairs. And all of this was so well cared for, even through this illness that she had.

So I closed the drawer and I said, "No, I can't. It is all right, you don't owe me anything." So then they wanted to do more for me--more gifts and more tea, and do everything they could--and we became better friends.

Harry, the younger one, was handsome; he was just handsome. By this time he was in middle school and the twins were in high school. He said, "Do you have any work you want me to do?" I said, "Oh sure, Harry." So he would come over after school and on Saturday, but he would watch that clock. He knew what time to get back home to put the coffee on, to put the spaghetti here, and to put this and to do that to manage that restaurant. He would help me, but he would stop just like that to get home to do the things that were his responsibility. He was jovial, happy, a pleasant child and it was just a joy to have him, and anything he did, he did perfectly.

The girls at high school were just swooning over him. He didn't have Chinese ways; his customs and his clothing were not. His clothing was in excellent taste. But he just looked the other way. He didn't want anything to do with any of them, but he would say, "I've got to go help Mrs. Miller." He would rather come over here and do something for me *[end of page 67]* than to do anything with anybody. They stayed right there with their mother and father--the children did--never leaving them. They didn't have friends. They would come here, but they wouldn't come to the services--it was only rarely and the mother never came. They wouldn't come into the service, but they came to visit me and came to see me, and the children did come, occasionally.

Jim, the one who had had polio, had a scholarship to the U. of I.[University of Illinois] Mr. Miller made all of the arrangements; he had his doctor's certificate, he had everything in order to go, and they had made trips before and the planning was all completed.. It was a wonderful scholarship; he [Jim] was pleased and we were pleased for him.

Then on the evening before they were to go--Mr. Miller was going to take him--Harry, the younger boy, came over. He looked like he had had a spell of sickness. We said, "Are you sick, Harry? What's the matter?"

He said, "No," and he sat down which was not his custom, and he sat silently. I said, "What's wrong? Is Mother all right?"

Finally he had the courage to say, "Jim isn't going." I said, "Jim isn't going to school?" "No. He didn't want to hurt you, so he couldn't come. He cried and he can't come." I said, "Is he sick?" "No." I said, "Well, what's he going to do? He's going to school."

Well, the twin [Jean] had gone to California after school was out. It was Jim's twin, and she was very precious to him and he was to her and they were very close. This younger boy, Harry, said, "He's going on the train." I said, "Where?" "Out to Jean." I said, "Why is he going out there?" Jean was taking some graduate work in nursing. He said, "Well, *[end of page 68]* he can go to school out there. It'll be all right."

We talked to his mother, and I said, "You better get on out there and see what they're doing." She thought she had better get out there, too. Jean had gone with an American lady that I know and I didn't trust much, and I didn't want to tell her that. I knew that she knew maybe she had looked in that drawer, and I wanted that mother to get out there and find out what Jean was doing and how

she was getting along, and then Jim was out there and it wouldn't work. So she got on the train-- Mr. Miller got the ticket--and she went to California and found out.

By that time she wasn't satisfied with what she was doing and with this person and they had cut the strings, so that left her hunting something else to do. So they found her a secretarial job; she had had high school typing. Harry was anxious for the older brother to get into school and he did, so the twins stayed out there in the fall, he going to college and the sister working in an office, and the mother came back. She said, "They're all fine; they have a good place to sleep, they have everything they need and they have found Chinese friends." They were established in a Chinese area and they were just doing beautifully.

She was worried; her mind was there, and so was the father's, and he was worried. But they had the restaurant, and they owned the building; they owned everything and how could they get to California? So Mr. Miller undertook the job of selling the building, and selling the restaurant, and getting them packed up and getting them to California.

It was a long hard deal, because Mr. Miller could make her understand and comprehend, but he didn't--it was just blank. So when they negotiated with *[end of page 69]* the bank the last time to transfer the money and the title and everything, it took an hour or so and Mr. Miller was just worn out when they came out of the bank with the money.

They were along on the north side of the square, and he [Mr. Chin] was a few paces ahead of Mrs. Chin and Mr. Miller, and Mr. Miller was making Mrs. Chin understand they were not going home with this much more money. He knew how much I had seen in the drawer, and they weren't going home and put ten or twelve more thousand dollars in that drawer. They weren't going immediately, they had more to do before they left for California; so he was explaining all along that block that it had to go in the bank.

They could get their money out; Mr. Miller would go with them to get it out. He was talking baby talk to them and explaining; so by the time they came to the corner she understood, and got him [her husband] by the arm and tried to tell him. He was negative to everything. So Mr. Miller made them stop across the street by the Marine Bank. He said, "This is where we're going. I won't let you; I will not. I was nice enough to do all this."

She said [to Mr. Chin], "It could be his money, Mr. Miller's; he could take our money' He's giving it to you. He did all the work, you know." She was giving him that angle--"He was nice to you, now do something that he wants you to do and don't be so stubborn. Be a little bit considerate." Only Mr. Miller was not understanding; this was in Chinese, all of the conversation between them.

Finally they turned the corner and they found themselves in the bank. Mr. Miller, of course, was relieved and he found the right person and they *[end of page 70]* started for the elevator. And it went down. And Mr. Chin started; oh, he was furious, "Nobody is going to put any of my money in anybody's cellar." (laughter)

Mr. Miller was going to put it into a safety deposit vault because he didn't know how long it would be and this was his transaction. He had a terrible time convincing them; but when the box

appeared and the money went in the box and they went in and saw where it was and the key was turned and everything was final, he said, "That's all right, that's all right." So then it was all taken out and properly taken care of and they went to California and they have been there ever since.

Q. Did they ever get the rest of their money into the bank?

A. No. No! They took that in suitcases to California. There was no way to convince them; you could not do anything else. They didn't know how they would get it out when they got there, they didn't know what they would do. Harry, the younger son, had gone ahead of them and the children were all there by the time the mother and father went.

All of their correspondence has been sweet, the letters are real sweet, and all filled with gratitude and what a pleasant time it is. The father doesn't work and doesn't have to work. Harry says, "He just sits on the bench and talks Chinese all day long to everybody." The mother isn't working, either.

The children have had college educations. I think Harry is going to be a civil engineer; and the older boy wanted to be a physician, but I don't think that that materialized because of his polio. The daughter is *[end of page 71]* married and has a baby and lives near--they bought an apartment--and she lives within a few blocks. Things are fine. I wish I could keep my correspondence with them because they were such a nice family and they tried so hard and they earned it the hard way. They didn't employ anybody.

I asked Harry one day, I said, "Now Harry, I've paid you a lot of money this summer, and before you go to school you ought to be very careful how you take care of it." I said, "You ought to spend some, you ought to save some, you ought to give some to the Lord, and you must take care of money right. What do you think of taking it down to Citizens Saving and Loan?" He was letting me do all of the conversing. I said, "Harry) what are you going to do with it?" I wasn't accomplishing anything.

He said, "I didn't do anything with it." I said, "What do you mean?" "Well, I just gave it to my mother; she takes care of all the money." Anything he wanted--oh, his clothes: a suede jacket and always the right color, and she would buy him a new shirt--everything. His grooming was just magnificent; he never needed for anything, or wanted for anything.

He would run over here real quick, and he would say, "Mom says does that shirt look all right on me?" It would be a beautiful new shirt. "She thinks it makes me look kind of yellow. Do I look yellow in this shirt?" They didn't want the Chinese blood to be predominant, but wanted to get American ideas. I would say, "Why, it is just handsome!" He would look in the mirror and ask, "Do I look all right?" I'd say, "Yes, you look fine." Then usually if the mother didn't agree, she would discard it and he wouldn't wear it. *[end of page 72]*

One night during prayer meeting she came into the chapel, saying, "I have to see Mrs. Miller. I have to see her now; I have to see her!" someone directed her, and I saw she was almost in hysterics. I said, "What is wrong, Mrs. Chin?" She said, "Come with me, come with me, come with me!" It was difficult for me to leave everything, but I did. I saw she was needing me.

She ran home ahead of me, which was a block and a half, and I followed her and when she got

over to the restaurant she said, "He's dead! He's dead! He's dead!" I said, "Mr. Chin?" She said, "Oh no, no!" I was insulting her!

There had been a Chinese friend who had come from Texas to visit them about two weeks before, and she was worried with this man. He had not come for a visit, he had come for a permanent residence; and she did not know what to do to limit it and she was beside herself. I was helping her, and Mr. Miller had written and re-instated him and reassured him that he would have the same room that he had occupied in Texas, and that his relief and all of his checks that he got would come to this address, and everything was ready.

We had bought him some new clothes--he didn't bring anything with him, he left everything down there--and found a suitcase and had him packed and ready to go back to Texas and had all of these arrangements made for him and everything; seemingly, he was pleased with it. She had just heard a noise upstairs and went up and he had shot himself. That's what she had come for and why she was so hysterical. She said, "Come see, come see," and I went up and there was that man lying on the bed, bleeding. He was dead then when I got there, and a bullet hole in the wall where it *[end of page 73]* had gone through.

Oh! Mr. Miller was broken-hearted to push him to that extremity. He couldn't live with these people; they were going to California, they didn't have room for a boarder. He came uninvited, they hadn't seen him for twenty years or more and here he arrived to be their guest until death. She didn't know what to do, so we got the coroner and the police and did all the necessary things. The undertaker did everything for them.

I went over again that evening, later, and I saw in the corner--her house was so well cared for--a pile of everything. I said, "What are you going to do with this, Mrs. Chin?" "Oh, death, death!" She threw the mattress away, she threw away everything that was in that room practically, all her lovely bedding, beautiful blankets! She said, "Take it, take it. Death."

I [tried to] persuade her that if there was a little blood on something I would launder it for her, but she sent her things to the laundry, she could afford it. "No." So I went home and got the carryall and we carried all of this nice material down and gave it to families that needed it, and so she was relieved. She just patted me on the back and thanked me for getting it out of her house. Oh, she was so glad to get it out. It was so foreign to me. My eyes were opened wide at all of the extravagance that this meant to her. And then she was trying to console me.

She thought they [the police] would blame them for killing him. But they *[end of page 74]* could see how it was done, and with us telling them--we had the packed suitcase for him to go to Texas, and all those letters, and they could see he was despondent and he didn't want to go to Texas and he didn't want his plans interrupted. It was a tragedy that was sad for all of us but couldn't be avoided. We just did everything we could to make it a pleasant time. He couldn't be left here alone; their plans for leaving for California had to be terminated. So there was just no way.

So we buried him, and it was during icy, icy weather. They wanted him to be buried at a certain time--I don't know what their limit was but they wanted Chinese customs, but they couldn't make us understand—but it was longer. They couldn't dig the grave; it was a terrible, frozen icy time.

So we finally explained to them, and it was almost a week before the burial after his death. They kept wanting to know if he was still there. And I said, "Yes, Yes!" It was at Smith's Funeral Chapel. They were friends of ours. We buried him at Oak Hill Cemetery, which is cheaper, on the road to Decatur. Three or four Mission people went to the funeral, Mr. Miller preached and we buried him.

Then they left \$100 with Mr. Miller when they went, to get a tombstone, "Be sure and get a tombstone." So we got the tombstone and took a picture of it and sent it back to them to let them know that the grave was marked. I think there might have been a few dollars left, but they wanted us to have the dollar or two for the Mission. They were pleased and wrote back, "We like it." I think they gave them a very special price because it was a very nice looking marker. They said they could always remember him, and always look back and think of the good things that the Mission meant to them. "All nice, all nice, all nice!" *[end of page 75]*

I would try to make her know that I was understanding her, but not always did I. She would come over, "Want? Want?" and hand me some of their discarded clothing, and I'd say, "Yes, yes," because it was always nice quality and had been well taken care of--nothing was ever shabby. So I'd say, "Why yes, other boys and girls can wear this. Yes, I do."

When they were finished with their little tricycles they were sent to the Mission. They were so obedient to their parents. When they were little, three years old, they were allowed to ride to a certain mark on the sidewalk from the restaurant and turn around and go back. They wouldn't have deviated a half inch from that mark. It was to that mark. It wasn't that--the mother never was looking for them. She would watch the clock and know when they came home from school, it was always exactly the same. Our American children aren't raised that way.

And love! This boy who was old enough to take care of his own money, not even thinking of it. He was amazed at me; he thought it was stupid for me to ask why it was in Mother's purse. It was such a ridiculous thing for me to even think of trying to advise him to put his money in the bank to make interest and to learn to care for money, because it was in his mother's purse and that was where their money was kept.

And the father, too--she was the manager and he would ask her what to do and what to buy. He didn't know. He spoke very little English. He always let you know he liked you by a wave or a smile or a nod, and he would hand me a cup of coffee as soon as I opened the door and I don't drink coffee. (laughs) Then he would hand me soda pop. He had to do something to show his friendship, and to be courteous and to let me know *[end of page 76]* he wasn't offended in anything that happened.

After this death, he would sit so quietly when I would come in. I think he was afraid of me. When the police were there he was way back in the corner and so afraid. I would pat him and say, "Now, everything is all right." And he'd look at me and if I kept nodding, then he'd nod, meaning that he understood that things were moving as they should be and he was perfectly contented. So it was convenient then for him to move around and get back to his work, fixing the things for the restaurant and watching the stove, putting the things in the oven that had to go in, and so forth. They did all their cooking and made all of their own meals; some of them Chinese.

I might tell you about a large family. There were many large families, but one family was a family of twenty-one. Nineteen were her own. She made all of their clothing, this mother. She made the boys' pants and made their overcoats in the winter. I would take her bundles of material that was salvaged--I mean, a lady's coat that the fur collar had been removed before they gave it to us and the pockets were out and it was shabby. She would, out of that coat, make a pair of pants for the boys, or make a jacket for one of the children and they were not made shabbily; they were made well and warm.

She made all of the bedding. I would take enormous bundles of used garments that were not usable as a garment any longer, and she would make bedding. She would cut the blocks probably eight or ten inches square, and sew those on the machine and put two of them together--not putting anything between them, but two together--and then sew them around and make their comforts. Some of them slept on the floor, wrapped up in these. *[end of page 77]*

The house was clean as it could be, just as clean. All of them were not at home at the same time; some of them were married and gone. But she had provided for them and kept those children in school. The older boys would get up early and come through the alleys downtown, picking up all the wood--furniture and appliances came crated in wood--and they had a wagon and they would fill that wagon to the top with all the wood that they could find to make fuel for the cook stove, and then buy just a little coal to go with it and make enough that they weren't ever freezing, but they were never very comfortable in the winter.

But that mother did that, and did it with a smile; and those children walked at least a mile and a half to get down here almost every night. We would take them home, and they would walk down. They were all easily handled children, and today they are fine men. This occurred that many years ago.

I have seen five generations through the life of the Mission, and it is interesting to see the improvement in the way this family lived and how they were raised, and to watch the fifth generation and their methods. Those boys have grown into fine men; and I expect I can think of five of them that own their own business and are doing so well, and if they're not, they are managing something. One is managing a supermarket, one owns a barber shop, one makes cast-iron castings. All of them have made fine men.

The girls are equally as nice; their homes are well cared for, and they are raising their families to have the same respect and the respect for their grandmother that they should have, and they have done a commendable *[end of page 78]* job. She did that the hardest way there was: with a father that drank and contributed nothing and the older boys having paper routes and doing odd jobs, bringing in--this was before relief--bringing what little bit they could.

The assistance of the Mission, and helping in clothing the children, and anything that came that could be used for them in the future she would can and take care of and make it last and do.

There was another family of thirteen we took care of. When I'd go there, the mother always had a large pot of food on the stove, and those children would go and dip something out of that and put it into a small dish and they ate constantly. They never had meals like we would have--three meals a day--they ate whenever they came through the kitchen. They'd go into this kettle; it was

always on the stove--always something cooking. They would get this, get a piece of bread and sit down and eat whatever it was and then go out and play or go on an errand or whatever it was and come back, and there would be another one eating.

They were Swiss. I don't know whether that is a Swiss custom. But as long as I knew them that was the way that family lived. They, too, were just as grateful. That dear mother raised those thirteen, and she had grandchildren to raise and did that with just as much zeal as she did the raising of her own family.

END OF TAPE

[This part of the interview was conducted on a walking tour of the Mission.] *[end of page 79]*

Q. We are in the Freeman Room on the second floor of the Mission. Mrs. Miller, would you like to tell me about this room?

A. Yes. This is an interesting room. Some years back a dear friend lost her mother; she thought she would like something in memory of her because she was a fine Christian woman. She saw this room and said, "Oh, I would like this named in memory of my mother!" So we call it the Freeman Room. It is a room that isn't used as much as we would like for it to be. Being on the second floor seems to be a real tragedy. People don't want to climb a stairway. They are just so accustomed to being free on one floor, and to get to the second floor--they always say, "Oh, let's just stay down here."

We do like it for meetings with mothers and for board meetings, and sometimes youth. It isn't as frequent as I would like it. They want more freedom and want to be able to dress casually; I would like to have them dress more dignifiedly and to be able to have a tea, and do those sort of things that seem obsolete now. I think they need the exposure and need the training in being young ladies and being gentlemen. It isn't used as often as I should like it. The directors--the Mission is controlled by fourteen directors--they, too, can occupy this room and it is a pleasant place to meet for many, many occasions.

All the furnishings are from the attics, the basements, the junk yard, the dump and any conceivable place that something has been discarded. They have been made useful and usable with elbow grease and some extra varnish, perhaps, to make it able to survive the work load that it has to have in being used even as infrequently as it is. *[end of page 80]*

Q. This is a beautiful room. Tell me about that unusual loveseat, Mrs. Miller?

A. A friend of mine asked me if we would want it for the Mission.

She said she had tried to encourage some of the family to have it repaired and to use it and to keep it. "It has been in our living room for so many, many years, but I can't interest one of the family in it and if you'd like it, I'd like for it to be at the Mission." It had one leg off, it was soiled; the leg has been repaired properly, so it is not a fragile piece. It is durable and usable and has been here for many, many years and it is attractive; and we enjoy it, besides the sentiment that goes with it.

The same with most everything: the little history that goes with it, the way it was acquired by other loving hands that had used it before the Mission, and their being so fond of the Mission that they in turn would like for it to have the privilege of being a part of this room and this work. We have enjoyed it, and we have wanted others to enjoy it and I am sure they have. We all like it. We call it the Freeman Room.

Q. Is that magnificent mirror back there a pier mirror?

A. Yes, it is. It was at an auction sale of a relative of mine, and was about the last piece to be sold and no one wanted it. I paid ten dollars for it, and my husband and son and I walked at night down the middle of the street, carrying that home. It is a heavy, heavy piece of glass and we didn't want it broken, or the piece of marble; so the three of us managed to walk and carry that perhaps a mile, and it has been in this building ever since. *[end of page 81]*

Q. That table is a magnificent piece!

A. It is! The owner had attempted to mend it. The pedestal was broken and with the weight of the marble top, they just didn't know how to reinforce it to make it strong enough; so out of a basement it became a part of the Mission--the Freeman Room. We did reinforce it and put a metal rod through the center and made it strong and durable, and now it is a very usable, attractive table.

Q. Is the wood in this lovely table what they call curly maple?

A. No, it is mahogany with mahogany beading and octagonal shape.

Q. I was thinking of the light color.

A. It's the sun which has faded it. It has been in light and it isn't as deep as it was when it was new.

Q. I see you have a little child's chair over there, too.

A. Yes, that keeps children from wanting to sit on something that they might injure themselves in falling off of, and not being contented. If you give them a book and put them in a small chair so that their feet can touch the floor, it's an easier way to make them happy and keep you happy while they are a part of an adult conversation. (laughter)

Q. The daybed is another antique.

A. Many people who haven't felt well. . . I had, for a good, long time, the responsibility of a girl who was in this city alone so I acquired the responsibility of taking care of her. She was fragile, she was lonely *[end of page 82]* and homesick, and she frequently had times that she had severe headaches and she had lots of days that were not comfortable, so she has spent a lot of hours on that daybed. It was an easy way to watch her and to take care of her and see that she was comfortable while she was away from her family.

Q. Is that interesting little table in front of it an antique?

A. No, it isn't. Seemingly, the Mission has a lot of friends! That belonged to a friend and the room was crowded and she felt that she couldn't use it any longer. She knew about the Mission and knew about this room, and placed it here to have a home that she knew was a home away from home for the table.

Q. Two coffee grinders on it!

A. Yes. We don't use those, but they just show people the way we used to [do things]. The children want to turn the handles; really, when you say "coffee grinder", I think they think it will come out a liquid like it does [from] the electrical equipment we know so much about. We know so little about the old time way of grinding the beans and making the coffee from the coffee beans.

Q. Is it your Bible on the table, or some of your family's?

A. No, I think not. It's one that I want here for anyone who comes. It has no particular sentiment, other than that it is the word of God.

Q. That's a big one on the other table.

A. That is magnificent, and it had real etchings in it--genuine etchings. *[end of page 83]*

I've never seen one so well preserved and so large. It is most elaborate, and I want it preserved and want it to always be a part of the Mission. I wish that the leather could even be cared for more frequently than I do to preserve the leather, because leather does dry out and you don't have the service out of it if you do not put a lot of effort into it. I'm afraid I've some days been neglectful in taking care of it properly. It just must be preserved.

Q. It looks like it might be a family Bible on the other table.

A. Yes, I think so. It is not as expensive a Bible. It's a family that I know nothing of; it was just brought in here and I have kept it for sentiment's sake thinking perhaps some member of the family in years to come might want to know something about it; but no one has ever claimed it, so it is one that we can show children what they used to have--a relic.

Q. Does it have family records in it?

A. One of our board members looked into it; I don't remember now the amount of family history in it.

The room was done over inexpensively with material that we could use ourselves, in four by eight sheets of paneling. It takes no maintenance; you never have to paper and you never have to paint. All you have to do is wipe it down with the vacuum cleaner brush and it cleans and freshens it and takes good care of it. It insulates and is fireproof so it does a double job with little expenditure of work and expense. It, too, can be a part of it; it has a definite look of yesteryears. It blends with the type of living being shown in this room. Shall we go to another room? *[end of page 84]*

This room is small but is very usable; we use it in connection with that room for light refreshments, and for just a snack for young people after the evening service. It is not built to take care of many, but it is necessary to be able to make soup or coffee, or to take care of the refrigeration that is needed for a cookie party. Cookies and Jello are a favorite in refreshments for the different events that we have.

I was pleased when the Lord let me find this cupboard. It couldn't be a half inch wider or shorter or longer, and it was the last thing that came into this room. We needed space for dishes and it does it so adequately.

Q. Beside being a beautiful piece!

A. Yes it is; it had never been too expensive, but it is most serviceable.

This pretty piece belonged to a friend of mine. It was in a basement. She called and said, "Don't you want Grace's old dresser?" I said, "Yes." She said, "It is just down in the basement; we're redding out the basement. Come get it if you want it."

Q. Is it mahogany?

A. Yes, it is. The pharmaceutical bottles are from a drug store. As a baby, I had to have all my feedings from a drug store, and when they dismantled their drug department, they said, "We think you really deserve to have these bottles. Would you like them?" So that collection came from my being a baby that couldn't take milk and had to have the drug store. (laughter) My parents learned to know the druggist well, and so did I; so I have that collection. *end of page 85]*

This room, too, can be used in connection with the kitchen that I showed you. We had a family of three who had been without a home and no place to live; they used that kitchen, and this as a dining room, and this as a living room and slept on the other side of the building.

It gave them a home when they were absolutely without anyplace else. They had to be cared for. It has been used in that capacity several times that I can remember in the last fifteen years.

Q. That is a paisley shawl, isn't it?

A. Yes it is. It blends in with everything and anything; you don't have to find what goes with paisley because paisley is attractive and goes with things so well. It is a part of the other generation that has lasted over, and I am glad.

The wooden hall tree is another thing that is durable and lasting, and is very practical. You can hang a garment on that and see it and it won't get out of your sight. (laughter) I find I get them behind something in the closet and you don't know that it is there, and you are searching and can't find it.

Q. This is a pleasant room, too.

A. This room has a parquet ceiling. It is so attractive, I think! It was made by using up all the

ends of the lath; I hated it when I saw the pile that was not going to be used, and I said, "Oh, that's a wasteful thing."

There was an older man who had a small plot of ground down in Tennessee. He did beautifully through the summer. He was aged and terribly crippled and winters were so difficult, and he found the Mission. When we saw *[end of page 86]* how desperately he needed help, we were glad to supply it; but he didn't want anything without something done on his part to feel that he was earning it. He was constantly saying, "What can I do? How can I earn it? Where is the work that I can do that will make me feel self-sufficient?" We would find him a few odd jobs with friends, and we would keep him until it was warmer weather.

We also found he had no birth certificate, so he had no way of obtaining any kind of aid, either state or nationally. He was just without any way to have a livelihood. So my husband wrote and corresponded with everyone, trying to find some way. He had no relatives, he had no one to turn to; there was no way, seemingly, that we could find assistance for him. But after digging for months and months, we began to get some answers that were more favorable.

For several years he came and wintered here. He would hitchhike and get here, and then we would see that he had some sort of employment and a place to live and take care of himself, and then in the spring he would go back.

We kept corresponding, and Mr. Miller finally was able to secure an adequate amount for him to live on comfortably enough down on this little plot of ground. He owned it, and he would cut hedge posts and he would cut mine props, and all of the timber he would cut with an axe and a saw. He was older and perfectly eligible in every way for relief; so then after we were able to get it for him, he was able to winter in the South.

But he was so grateful to us that he would always try to have something sent to me for Christmas. Most frequently it was a gunnysack full of pine *[end of page 87]* cones, and that, coming that distance not packed or shielded--they would have been wonderful in a fireplace if I had had a fireplace--but out of the whole sack I would find some that were still attractive enough that. I could use them, and I am fond of them. I was just touched by the loving hands that did it and the thoughtfulness, so it pleased me and we always saw that he had something for Christmas.

When he was here I sent some friends with a small gift for him. I couldn't get all the gifts delivered, and they came in and said, "What can we do?" and I said, "Here are these packages that have to be out for Christmas." So they were glad to do it and they took them, but they came back almost in tears and they said, "Don't ever do this to us again." I said, "What happened?" They said, "When we went to see Mr. Stevens, oh, he cried. He said, 'I've never had a gift before in my life. Why did you good people do this for me?'"

They came back practically in tears, and were so touched by his gratitude that it was rewarding to them and to him to think that a friend came and brought him a gift. So he wanted to do the same for me, so after he was able to stay in this little shack on this small plot of ground, he always saw that I had a sack of something for Christmas. Another time it was just little ends of hickory it looked like--hickory bark. They were only about two inches long; it was just clippings and shavings, practically, but he had sent it, and I appreciated it.

He did the greatest part of this [parquet ceiling] while he was here. We put a ladder up here with a platform on it, and he could get on a smaller ladder and get up there. He would work on this and he enjoyed it. He could use a hammer and he knew what equipment was used for, and he did it *[end of page 88]* with skill and enjoyed it. He had been taught to work all his life, so he did a loving job of doing it, and we were grateful.

Q. It is very, very pretty, and different; I've never seen anything like that.

A. It just used up my ends of lath, and showed a way to economize. It wasn't economy of skill, but it gave him a method of doing something. He could see that each one had to be straight, and each one had to be measured. It was painstaking and he put lots of love into it.

Q. You have family pictures in this room. Are they your family?

A. Yes, they are. My mother was ill in this room for five years with a broken hip and she wanted the family pictures. After her death I enjoyed them myself, so we have just left them.

Q. What do you call the little bed?

A. It's a sleigh bed.

Q. I thought it was a sleigh bed, but I've never seen one this size.

A. This is a sleigh daybed and a friend gave me that. People know I enjoy things, and they have been very kind to send me things. It is rather short; you can't be very tall. Many older beds are short, they are not long. Tall people were not predominant in those days. This is quite short; but it's comfortable, and it's a nice piece of furniture.

This is an inside room, and it isn't very comfortable the whole year around because of the heat in the summer. *[end of page 89]*

Q. Mrs. Miller, what is in the little bags your helper is filling out here in the hall?

A. We are getting ready for a little party we are having and every bag contains a nice rosy apple, and a nice sack of popcorn that is just freshly popped by a friend of mine. There will be close to a hundred bags, so she popped a lot of popcorn last night. It is nice and fresh and they'll enjoy it. Ed is doing a good job. He has washed and shined the apples, and the popcorn's in little individual bags so it won't get crushed. That's fine, Ed!

Q. It looks like Ed has quite a little job here.

A. Yes, but he'll get through; he'll get it whipped.

Q. Are you getting ready for Halloween?

A. Trick or treating.

People give us their discarded clothing, and [in this room] we sort and get it in the area that we want it--all of a kind together--and then give it to families. We put it in brown paper bags, and

wrap it with somebody's old necktie to make it nice and secure; and then as the children come to the evening service they have a bag to take home, all of it for that particular family. We know what they need and we know the number in the family and as these garments come we are placing them where they are needed.

Our storage is inadequate. We get, so many times, so many garments the same size; they forget that some people are short, some are tall, some *[end of page 90]* are thin, some are fat. So we have to wait until we find the right spot for the garment; it takes storage room in order to do it. We store through the winter for the summer, and summer for the winter.

Q. I see you have blankets and quilts.

A. Yes, I do; if there is an emergency--a fire or a new family moves into town, many times they are without funds and they haven't even brought all their clothing with them.. They've moved hastily from being evicted someplace, and have left things and come to another state.

This is the shop; whenever anything is out of order we bring it here and repair it ourselves. It is too expensive to hire it done; so when a chair has had an accident and needs a new leg or needs the back repaired, we do it and touch up the place with fresh paint and put it back into action, and don't have any great big bill coming that we owe. We put it in as part of the day's work.

This is the laundry, and there is a shower in here. When men come in tired and dirty and I give them clean clothing, they can have a bath and discard their dirty things and start off fresh again. It is surprising how many people forget to wash garments before they give them to us. I can put them in a washing machine--they're too good to throw away. I give them a bath, and they are nice and fresh.

Q. It looks like Christmas back here, doesn't it?

A. Yes, it does, and this room is the store room for the year. Whenever we find bargains in merchandise, we buy it because if we had to buy all of it at the one season it would be a fabulous figure financially that we couldn't meet, and the time consumed in purchasing it. So we try to *[end of page 91]* overstock each year so that we will have a surplus, and the next year we start with that and add to it. Through the year there are people who think of the same thing we do, and when they see something on sale they think we can use, why, they buy it and we are able to have it.

We don't think of only the children; I do not want any forgotten person in Springfield. This guest list will be sometimes between 250 and 300 gifts. They will all be properly wrapped with pretty Christmas wrappings; and people send us beautiful Christmas cards, and we use them on top as a decoration, plus their name. It's personal and with their name on it; it is for them and they feel very elated to have the prestige of receiving a gift that is purchased for them and is theirs. It is very satisfying. They need it.

We know whether Johnny needs socks worse than he needs gloves or whether it is reversed, and we try to supply that--with a toy. They are gauged on their faithfulness in attendance at the Mission; so the more frequently they come, the happier they are because perhaps there will be with that cap or little sweater, a doll. We try to have some little toy with a gift. If it is a pair of

socks I have a little truck or a little tiny doll, and if it is a pair of mittens, the same thing. I want a tiny toy and a practical gift.

There are more Christmas boxes [in the hall]. Tomorrow we will be wrapping those.

Q. You will be starting to wrap your Christmas gifts tomorrow?

A. Tomorrow. There are probably 75 or 80 ready to wrap. We keep a file card, and we know what they had last year. Then I store them high on this *[end of page 92]* [shelf]. One year I had eighteen gifts stolen. Somebody came up wanting somethin^g and saw the gifts, and while my back was turned they went off with eighteen of them; they were in a bag. We had checked the list, and it was all right; then we didn't check it again before we gave them out, and here Christmas Eve I was short. I cried; I was just heartsick for those children. So we went that night and got up early the next morning and every child had a gift by noon on Christmas day.

This is the Prophet's Chamber. It is used by guests--missionaries that might be coming through and anyone. I had a lady in this room for over a year who had lost everything financially, had absolutely nothing. The relief was sure that there was a hidden treasure someplace because the family had been financially equal to most everything that could be purchased, but she hadn't. So until they were satisfied, she did not have a home; so we took care of her until we did get her relief.

Then [we] moved her frequently because the style of living was so absolutely different than she had been accustomed to with servants and with that type of living, then to go into inexpensive apartments and try to do your own work--it was very hard for her. So she would become dissatisfied and we would find another place and she would move again. She has just recently passed away; that is a memory I have regarding this room.

Another time it was used by a lady who lived alone and a fire swept her apartment and she was left with only the clothes on her back. She didn't have any way to manage. The insurance company was so long in adjusting it and keeping her out of trying to go in and clean it and salvage what was there and get things ready to put new furniture in and start over, so *[end of page 93]* she was here a long time. For those tragedies that meet people's lives, we try to take care of them.

Q. It is wonderful that there is someone that does! This is a very interesting room.

A. The carpet on the floor I bought for rags at the junk yard and we sewed them together and made wall to wall carpet. I had the assistance of an old lady who lived in a room with no outside ventilation. She had a tiny skylight and she couldn't reach it to get ventilation; it brought light but it was so hot, so she spent her days over here. She lived close and she would come early in the morning and say, "Isn't there something I can do?" and I would try to create and find work because she liked to keep her fingers busy and she needed to be. She helped me sew the pieces together and we covered the floor with this.

The ceiling fell, and we didn't know what we could do; but not being carpenters we could manage with shingles and I sprayed them with the vacuum cleaner in reverse and sprayed them with shellac and varnish and the maintenance is nil. It seasoned them and made them look very

warm. Wood is beautiful, I think; I am very fond of it.

This is the pantry. I try to always keep it stocked with things for emergencies. People give us food; and then when I see things that are inexpensive, I buy them. Frequently a check is stolen or the father gets drunk and there's nothing left. And then older people--their pension is so small or their relief order is so small if there's a double holiday or the check is delayed, they are without food. We see that when this occurs there is something sent to them that they can rely on to have a proper diet. *[end of page 94]*

Q. Well I can truly say I don't know how Springfield could do without the Mission.

A. Thank you. These are more Christmas gifts that are ready to be wrapped. They will be wrapped in this room up here that I will show you, and stored on that high shelf.

This is the same kind of material that we had in the Freeman Room, only rather than using wooden strips, I stripped it with tin and used a ball peen hammer, then varnished it. It doesn't rust and it is flat with the wall so that furniture doesn't have to be out into the room, it can be flush with the wall. It, too, has serviced lots of people.

I can think of an older lady who really needed the love and warmth of her family that she had raised, but I could see there was neither from them and she had not enough funds in any way to take care of herself and the waiting period was going to be rather long, so she occupied this room. The first night she said, "I didn't know sleeping was like it is. I have slept in a bed--across the bed--with four children, five of us. To sleep alone, quietly, in a bed is something I don't know when I've ever experienced and I'm glad." So until things were adjusted, why, she made this her home.

There was another lady who was not too old, who was so crippled. She could only use two of her fingers; arthritis had just crippled her so terribly. They wanted her to do this and that, and they weren't going to take care of her adequately; so until we were assured that she could be put into a proper place, we managed to take care of her. The last of a family is most unfortunate. They have so many, many obstacles that, *[end of page 95]* without a friend, their plight is very sad. We were able to see that she was taken care of, and I'm thankful we could. She lived fourteen years with so little and yet she was so happy and such a fine Christian person.

Q. What type of work is done in this room, Mrs. Miller?

A. This is an office area where we can work and watch the stairway where guests come and go. The traffic of the day has to be within view of us; we can bring the large amount of work that is the commitment of the day here, and do both the work and know who comes and what they need and take care of whatever service the public needs. Many things are done here in this area where we see and hear, There is no seclusion, it is out in the open.

This is the study; it was my husband's study. He loved books, and all of these drawers contain messages that have been used, and thoughts for preparation of a message. His library is here where he could have quiet, away from the traffic of the building. Now it is being used by two friends who come and do volunteer work for me. One takes care of the mailing, and one takes care of letters and correspondence.

The files are here and all of the working facilities of the Mission. There are so many things other than the spiritual part of the work that consume so much time that it is really distressing. You would rather be working with people, but it happens that you have to work with pen and ink, keeping records and keeping them accurately, and that is all done in here. *[end of page 96]*

Q. You keep a file on everyone?

A. On everything, yes.

This room is a chapel that is named in memory of my father. We dedicated it at the time of his death in 1940; it is called the Robert T. Brown Chapel. It is the chapel that is used every night of every year and has been every night since 1910 when it was opened; the doors have never been closed. There has been a gospel service every night, and many have found the Lord through this ministry and are now serving in some capacity in some part of the world, and giving out God's word. We're thankful for every one of them, and we're thankful for the ones that are here now and the little ones that come.

Emphasis on children is the important part of today's living, I feel. They are so important and are not welcome in many ways; and their home environment is not what would produce the fine young men and women that we need for the future, so we're doing everything we can to make them fine American citizens.

The unwanted in another area are the senior citizens, and they are here frequently, participating in some way. We have one adult who is mentally, I don't believe, above the average of a four year old; he is 39 years old. He comes in and sits on the little chairs in the fun room with the children, and plays the games and is so pleased. His mother said that he starts to get ready right after lunch to come to the evening service at 6:30. He's never had such attention; he's just moved here recently from Nevada. We do everything we can and the children accept him so well; I was frightened, thinking they would reject his being an adult and entering into their type *[end of page 97]* of play and their games, but he does and it's good for him.

Q. Maybe they just think he's an adult that is playing with them.

A. Yes, they've accepted him and he is a very happy person, he isn't depressed; he is happy and smiling, it's just great.

Q. I notice some of the chairs have a little metal plaque on the back.

A. Yes, they are in memory of someone. We bought these chairs, chair by chair; they were not a gift.

The sign, "Now is the day of Salvation", was over a bar down at the corner; they dismantled the building, and it was leaning up against the building. It was a disgraceful old place and a lot of men hung around there so I didn't feel free to go by myself. So I said to Mr. Miller, "Won't you go with me?" He said, "You see too much. Let's don't. . .", and he teased me. (laughter)

Then after my son was out of school he came by, and I said, "Your father doesn't want to go down there. Will you go with your mother?" "Yes, come on." So I saw it and I said, "Do you

want to sell this?" They said, "Yes." I said, "How much do you want?" They said, "A quarter." (laughter) Then I think that finally they said, "No, seventy-five cents."

Then when we came home--it was about eight inches larger than this and dilapidated and much of the filigree had disappeared, so we cut off the outer edge. Then his idea was to put little tiny staples in to reinforce, and drop hot sealing wax in there and then take pieces of the dilapidated area and plant in to make the moulding as ornate as it was originally. *[end of page 98]* And he did a very good job.

It has been there for years now and carried this message of salvation. We enjoy it and it's meaningful and can be seen clear from the street.

Q. You mean to tell me that sign said, "Now is the day of Salvation?"

A. No. It was a picture of a nude, like a typical bar picture! We kicked that out and left it down on the corner. Then we had this lettered, and put into this frame.

The podium--this area above--I saw at an auction sale and bid on it against Mrs. Dr. Broadwell. When I stopped bidding at three dollars she owned it. It was a register cover, is what it really is. We only had one pulpit, and we were bringing it from one chapel to the other. It was heavy and difficult, so I said, "Oh, if we have that we can make another pulpit." But I didn't have it. Then in six months or more she came in and she said, "You bid against me at that sale, didn't you?" I said, "Yes." She said, "I didn't want anything but the figure on top. Don't you want it? Come and get it."

So the Lord had a hand in it, and we put this top on out of an old piece of cherry that we had, and it makes a lovely podium. Then I found the mate several years later at an old auction sale near where some children lived that came to the Mission. Mr. Miller was taking them home and I stopped in there and I found that one for a few dollars and bought it and we have the matched pair now.

The small chairs came from the Governor's mansion, the large chair is from Albert Meyer's home at 811 South 7th Street. The organ--a lady came *[end of page 99]* visiting from Decatur and she said, "You should have an organ." So she sent the organ from Decatur.

Q. Do you play the organ?

A. I don't play. But it has a beautiful tone; and a friend of mine in high school electrified it with an old vacuum sweeper down in the basement, so it doesn't have to be pumped and it can be used without any effort.

Q. This looks like a children's room.

A. This is the fun room. This area has dolls and all of the things that they enjoy. The rocking horses are always rocking, they are never silent. The cabinets are filled with toys and checkers and dominoes and things that can be used on the table--crayons and paper--and books for them to read and Bible stories.

They play competitively in this corner. Everyone knows who it was that had the high score; and if they didn't get it last night, they will tonight. The little people have a clown that opens his mouth and they throw bean bags through to have a competitive game that gives them the same glory that their older brothers and sisters have in the other area of the room.

We want good discipline, and we want to try to treat them fairly and teach them good sportsmanship and the things that are neglected. We have candy cans and cookie cans. They don't receive candy until it's, "Please", and then they are supposed to remember a "Thank you." They've never been taught that, those are new words to them; so we're trying to instill that gratitude in them. *[end of page 100]*

Before they leave we have silent time and prayer. Then only with permission are they allowed to go home. We get them in the carryall, and we take them home. We want to see that they are taken to their home, because many times the families are not there and they have to be taken to an aunt or grandmother or to someone who will give them adequate care. We can't let them enjoy the fun room and not come to the service, so they have to march out of here and come and participate in the evening service.

This room is used in connection with the other. We have a nice freezer and two churches make homemade cookies, so we have fun night once a week and that means refreshments. We have Jello, or we have popcorn, ice cream, pudding and cookies and various things that children. . . It appeals to everyone; everyone likes things that are pretty and things that taste good. So we have it. The dishes are stored in this cupboard.

Q. So the children are not only having fun; they're seeing all of the things that I'm sure many of them don't have at home.

A. No. And it lets them know that we can take care of them. I've heard them say, "I told my mother to fix things like they do at the Mission." I hope that it takes, because they really exist in a different environment.

I encourage them to bring their homework; they don't have silent places, they live in such noise and confusion. I have encyclopedias and this desk and it's quiet in this room. We close the double doors from the fun room, and they can be alone in here and can get their homework done. And then we want them to bring their report cards and they do, and we *[end of page 101]* can "Oh" and "Ah", and then we can say, "Let's do better next time" or whatever it is.

This next room is versatile in the fact that we can use it for adults or young people and we use it, too, for tiny tots. I can just quickly take these chairs out and store them for an emergency time in this garage. The garage is so convenient. We can load and unload in here in bad weather. It reduces the work load, because there is no snow carried in.

Q. Do you take the children, yourself? Do you drive?

A. No, I have two drivers--I have more than that, but two that are very dedicated--and they know where to pick them up and take them back. We try to find transportation for the older people, too. They can't have buses or transportation, and walking distance is too far.

This next room is a chapel that we don't use every day. We have to have it several times a year, but we don't have to have it every night.

Q. Do you use it at Christmas, or when you have a large group?

A. Yes. Now tonight there will be a group of youngsters in here having their class--having refreshments. It's the older ones who will be in here; the little people will be in the other chapel.

Everything in here, too. . . . These are the chairs we started with; they're now in the sixty-fourth year. Most of them are the same; the only ones that have been replaced are the ones in the other chapel. But most of the other furnishings are from the night we started in 1910.

Q. You have a lot of interesting pictures and things in your windows. *[end of page 102]*

A. Scri¹ptures. I try to put the Scripture before them in every way that I can and to instill within them the necessity of learning the Scriptures, and they do very well. They don't have encouragement at home to do it; all the training has to be done here. If you send things home they're lost, and they don't get back. So we type a card and say, "Now you learn this." And if we send a Bible home, sometimes it's misplaced and they don't know where it is and it's covered up with some soiled clothing or something.

It's a long hard way for these children to climb to elevate themselves from their environment. But when you see the end results of men, who were one time children that I held, who are now owning their own businesses and contributing financially to the support of this work, it's gratifying.

Twenty people are now in full-time Christian work who were saved here at the Mission. So the outreach is going farther than we anticipated ever. We have the little Washington Street Mission in Mexico and that is still bringing much fruit; every day they're busy doing the same things there--in a different way than we are, and in a different language--to the Mexican with their Spanish dialect.

Q. What is your average attendance?

A. We were up to 65 a night, but now it is probably 35 to 45. The hot weather, and all of the activities that other people have had, have divided the attention of the children so it's down right now. There's been lots of illnesses. We had 22 move to another area, some moving out of town. When school started, we were short 22 who had been faithful over the years who had moved to an area where we can't get to them. *[end of page 103]*

We will have to find new ones to take their places.

Q. Mrs. Miller, tell me a little bit about the history of the building, now that we've been through it.

A. This building is not one unit as it appears; it is two. We think of it as the north building and the south building, yet they're joined by an eighteen-inch wall. The building to the south is very old. Anyone who is more than a senior citizen--was a senior citizen fifteen years ago--remembers

about it, remembers what it was and how it was used. Back in my father's era--he would be a senior-senior citizen because he soon would be reaching his hundredth birthday just next year--he remembered as a lad that my grandfather brought him here to a carriage shop where carriages were made and repaired. My grandfather was a farmer, and he came here to buy a large wagon. Father sat on the seat of the wagon and drove a team of horses out of the south chapel into a muddy street.

That now seems impossible with all of the improvements, and all of the black topping and brick and cement that is everywhere on either side of you. As you look you don't see soil even, much less a muddy street. That [incident] was a delight to him that he always reminded us of, saying it didn't look like it did when he was a lad.

My grandmother remembered well being in this area, and remembering pigs in the street with mud through a two or three block area of this area because this is an older part of the city and it was improved more slowly than the areas south were. She remembered it with great interest.

The windows were from a planing mill; they were made here. I'm not *[end of page 104]* sure, but I think the planing mill and the carriage shop were probably. I don't know whether they were using them simultaneously or whether one was before another, but it was a planing mill. The windows for the state house were made in this building, I have been told by many people through the years, so it is a historic spot; and it's still a strong sturdy structure that is so usable and it seems a real disappointment to think of it being destroyed.

Q. Did you say your grandmother had met Abraham Lincoln?

A. Grandmother remembered, and would talk at length, about torch light parades around the city square. The school children from different areas--she would have had to have come from Curran because she went to school as a child in Curran and her father was a doctor there--she came in with her teacher on this hay rack. They had learned cute little songs that they sang as their teacher had taught them, and had a torch light parade.

This was done several times for his publicity for President of the United States. Lincoln was overjoyed with the sight of all of the children and mentioned it, then came off the platform and came down to the wagons and helped lift the children off so that they could walk and get exercise before they had to go back. They sang and marched and each had little flags.

Grandmother, too, would repeat frequently to me the joy of a circus passing through this area. They were living in the country and they always knew what was going to occur, so grandfather always saw to it that they saw everything. They watched Grant go by their house *[end of page 105]* with the soldiers; he had a flag for every one of the children, and they came out to the road and waved the flags and sang political songs to the soldiers encouraging them as they were leaving Springfield. Grant camped overnight here in the city and then was walking on west out of Springfield, so Grandmother told about that and any event--they were always out ready to welcome some new adventure.

That was the method of the circus as traveling from place to place: the elephants were pulling the equipment and the horses were; everyone had a double duty, they were performing and they were pulling equipment. They forded the little creeks and the rivers--they just forded through them.

Someone in the area would tell them where the shallow water was, and they would ford the areas and go on without bridges because the equipment was so heavy you couldn't use the inadequate bridges that were supplied. So circuses and things of interest, the children always saw and my great grandparents saw they did . . .

END OF TAPE

Q. What have been some of the rewards and satisfactions you have had in your work, Mrs. Miller?

A. To see our people be able to say yes or no, to make decisions for themselves, is most gratifying. To see the plans that they are laying out for their families, far different from any they had had as children; wanting for their children the things that are better and best and letting them think that they want to rise above the situation their parents had. *[end of page 106]*

This is making for a better community in every way. It is keeping them off relief rolls indefinitely. The tremendous expense that the government has met will be met because these people feel qualified-- and are qualified--to keep employment and to treasure that employment, and know that it is their means of livelihood and that they have to have that in order to sustain the family, making them able to feel comfortable with friends that they have and choosing friends that are the right kind. It's most gratifying to see that.

Then thinking of it in another way, older people who have great problems--just enormous--some of them self-created, others inflicted. I am thinking of an older lady who is ninety-four. She called me from the hospital just last week, frantic because she was still there and she was well, and why were they detaining her? She said, "You call that doctor and let him know that I'm leaving, that I'm perfectly well and able to take care of myself. I can't stay another day; it is making me very nervous. I have things I want to see about, and must be released."

I said, "If he said he would [release you] today, I'm sure he will." It was evening--getting toward five o'clock--and it was dark and she was going to walk the distance back to the nursing home. I couldn't get her, I didn't have a vehicle or a way to do it; so I said, "Please let me be assured that you're staying over night, then in the morning we'll see the doctor with you and we'll get you home." Her answer was, "I don't know; I'll let you know."

They came by ambulance shortly after this telephone conversation and took her back to the nursing home. By nine o'clock she was at the Mission door wanting me to do something about that long stay in the *[end of page 107]* hospital; they had been so careless as to say that she had diabetes, and she knew she didn't have diabetes. She was having to eat things that were not palatable, and there was no necessity for all this change in her habits. We are having quite a time educating this dear old 94 year old who has diabetes but won't accept it or recognize it or do anything about it. I try to comfort her, but I have been in vain.

Being the last of a family is a sad plight, and we have taken so many through these last days and last years that we are allowed. It is saddening, but I am thankful that the Mission is here to be their friend. It was only two weeks ago that a voice on the phone said, "She's dead." This was a dear soul--perhaps I have mentioned her--she has been bedfast for at least four years. She has had three operations: a gall bladder surgery, a cataract removed, and three broken hips. The Lord

took her, and it was a relief to know that she was no longer suffering, because she did and she had no one to look to.

She had made arrangements for my husband to preach the funeral and his being gone made a difficulty, so we consulted with the undertaker and made arrangements. She had things just as near as [possible] the way she wanted; she told me many times how she wanted things, and we were able to do it to the best of our ability. The young man who is assisting me and who works at the City Water Light and Power brought the message, and did a commendable, commendable job and had a very fine well-conducted service and I know she would have been more than pleased.

She enjoyed the man who conducted the service; he stopped to talk with her, and she had saved little clippings that she thought he could use *[end of page 108]* and things that would interest him she would always save and have in an envelope to give him when he stopped to see her. She has now gone to be with the Lord and it's a blessing that her suffering has been relieved, but now there is a vacancy that can't be filled in my life. The hours I took to take care of her cares that have ceased can now go to someone else.

The moving that families do saddens me, too. They migrate, they know that the pasture is greener someplace else; they can't get along with the school or the teachers or the neighbors. Everything is wrong, but if they just lived on this street it would all be perfect.

You try to tell them that there are neighbors and there are teachers and schools anyplace that we move, and we must do some of the adjusting ourselves. But they can't listen to it and then after they're there a short time [they will say], "I didn't think it would be like this, Mrs. Miller. Johnny isn't getting along any better, and it's just repeating itself. We are sorry we moved because we didn't have to pay as much rent." My advice to them is all in vain until they found out and experienced the difference. They didn't have transportation, a way to get to the grocery, or ways of communication with any of their family; they were isolated to the point that they were lonely. So [they say], "Just as soon as there is a vacancy back near the Mission we'll be moving back." And they do.

This continues and it is something they don't seem to be able to comprehend--that things that are disagreeable can't be solved by someone else. You have to be the aggressor, you have to be the one that makes the decisions and changes the situation. *[end of page 109]*

Helping the children is a method I have used--"You do like the teacher, don't you?" giving them a positive attitude and approach to things. "You did a good job at school today and things were more pleasant; you're not going to hit John; you won't fight." Then the children do listen to me--"Mrs. Miller says" and "my mom says"—and finally they see that maybe their mother is mistaken, and things are not as black. So to work to the parents through the children is a better method for me than to approach the adults.

We do the same spiritually; we never get the adults, and then the children. We get the children and they accept the Lord, and then it may be years before we can get those parents to see that they have a need, and they have an example to set and they have a responsibility and they're their children. It means a changed life for them, and they don't want to change the pattern of living. They do the same things and some of them are very harmful to them. These drinking parties

occur while the children are out of the home; then when we want to return the children after the evening service, there is no one there. We have to wait for them to see their need for a different type of living.

Police interfering sometimes awakens them and they think maybe they should go with the children; then for them to make a decision for Christ and change a life means a changed home and that is permanent. We are striving for that. The greatest gift that they have is for them to give their hearts to the Lord and we stress that every evening service. Having a gospel service every night--sometimes others who look on, think don't they tire of it? But we vary it enough that it isn't; the Gospel is never tiring, it is endless. We change the methods; sometimes *[end of page 110]* we can separate and have classes, sometimes we can't. That depends on the competence of the people who assist us and whether they could handle the children or whether they couldn't.

We want to have more personal contact; the more personal contact we have, the faster the child grows. They need constant care from you. They need to discuss the things that were unpleasant during the day, and they don't have a mother at home to discuss that with them. They want us to know, without their mothers' knowing, the problems at home. They often say, "Mom told me not to tell you, but the police were there today about one of the older children, and Mom said, 'Don't tell.'" But the children can't resist, knowing that if something else occurs, that the Mission ought to know, and that we could interfere in a way that would protect them. Maybe if it's just a bit personal, the child feels the danger and they want to have some assurance there is somebody could do something that would help them.

One altercation that occurred some months ago has placed a little girl in a foster home. I don't want to interfere in the home; I believe it's a good home. I don't know the people that she's living with, but she calls me so frequently, and she'll say, "Who do you think will be at the Mission tonight?" I say, "I don't know, Kathy." She says, "If so and so is there, tell them I called you, will you? And tell them I wish I was going to be there. Ask them if they know Miss So and So. She's my teacher and she used to be over there at Palmer School, and she came to our school today." Then she'll call up again and say, "Did you see my friend? Did they come? Did they ask how I was?" *[end of page 111]*

She's lonely; her conversation tells you that she is lonely. I hear a baby crying in the background, and I ask about it, and she calls the baby by name and tells me, "The baby doesn't walk very well, so we have to help the baby." So I can see she has responsibilities that are great that she is supposed to take care of. But she never asks where her parents are or never mentions them.

Q. How old a child is she?

A. Perhaps ten or eleven; she is very, very small. You'd say eight or nine according to her stature; she is small-boned, she is a tiny child. But she is bright, kind, she has been neglected until she is accustomed to it--more accustomed to neglect than she is to having proper care. How I wish that I could take care of her, but there isn't any way that I can do it personally, and being a ward of the court I can't interfere. It's impossible, but I can make things more pleasant with those telephone conversations.

Q. It is too bad she can't be closer, so she can come.

A. She is in the west end of the city, and there is no one that could bring her and take her. I did say, "When your foster parents come to shop, they could bring you to the Mission and they could pick you up; even if it is later, you could visit with me." This doesn't seem to occur, so maybe they want to sever connections, thinking it might relate back to taking messages to the parents. I can see reasons why they would not want her to be where she would have any connections with the parents.

Another sad situation occurred just this last week; a young mother who is *[end of page 112]* in her late twenties called and I didn't know who it was, her voice was so strange. She said, "I'm in the hospital." I said, "What is it? [no new paragraph here] Have you flu?" Then with tears she said, "No, I have multiple sclerosis and it came on very suddenly." I couldn't believe it; I'm not familiar with it, I haven't had any contact with it. She said, "I was just getting my daughter ready for school, brushing her hair and buttoning her blouse, when the brush fell out of my hands and I couldn't find the buttonhole. She moved and I said, 'Hold still, I haven't buttoned your blouse.'" Then she fell in a slump on the floor.

They had to carry her, she couldn't walk. The doctor said it was influenza, and treated her for several days before they had a neurologist and they gave her a spinal tap and found out. Her whole body is just as if it was made of stone except her arms; with much discomfort she can use her arms, and her head. Her brains are working beautifully.

There is no place for these children--a little boy, eight, and a little girl, five, I would say. She has raised them beautifully; she herself was an orphan and she has no one. She looks to me as a mother and an aunt to the children. She has a husband that drinks continuously and she takes care of all the problems in the family and takes care of him and adores the children. If anything, they are over-loved. I have never seen more mother-love than she has put into that family, and she has done everything that is humanly possible with him.

I can't advise her; I want to. But now she thinks that maybe this will make him cautious and that he will find a housekeeper and keep the children at home and in school. She is just thinking that because there is no other way to think. I try to call her daily; they haven't found a way and she has no relatives, being an orphan. *[end of page 113]*

She was raised in a small community where she was only sort of farmed out to this person who needed somebody. She slept in the basement and if there was enough pie left, she had a piece, but if there wasn't, she didn't have any. She wore some of their old clothes, regardless of whether they fit or whether they didn't. This was the way she was raised.

Now she is a marvelous housekeeper and takes wonderful care of her children. To supplement when there isn't enough money to pay the rent she'll sell Avon products, or she'll get some sort of work that will bring in some money and meet the needs that are to be met and take care of the indebtedness. But now she is lying there in the hospital without any way to take care of herself, and my heart is filled with compassion for her.

He has not allowed the family to come to the Mission for the last few months; he said, "It's too much Mission." And he won't come. He doesn't want us to know how little time he is at home and how much more time he is spending in a bar some place, gone several days at a time. If the

children come they say, "My daddy isn't home." She calls and says, "We move more smoothly if we all listen to his wants and try to say yes to him--we all get along better. It's not that the children don't want to come; they want to come but we suffer because we do come." So everything is just in reverse, but we're praying about the problem and praying that there will be a solution and that we can help that family. It can make a man out of him if he will allow the Lord to supervise his life. These things occur so often that you tremble for the children.

Q. Mrs. Miller, you said to me one time, "Have I told you the story of *[end of page 114]* the baby that died in my bathtub?" Do you want to tell it to me?

A. Yes, I do. As we took children home, a mother came rushing out with a tiny child in her arms and she said, "Mrs. Miller, how am I going to take care of the baby tonight?" They lived in such congested circumstances that some pallets were on the floor and they were sleeping crossways of the bed to have enough. There were nine children, and we had several of them and we brought these home so that they might get to bed. She said, "The baby is so ill, and I don't know how I'll manage through the night."

I said, "I do. Get all of the children to bed, and get in the car and come on back to the Mission. Helen is there"--that's the older daughter--"and things will be all right at home. You come on back to the Mission." She did that very thing. She came, and I called a doctor but was not able to get him, other than *[his]* giving me things that could be done and should be done--trying to diagnose over the telephone what was wrong with the child, and the doctor giving us advice.

I did not realize how long the child had been ill and didn't know much about it, but I could see how desperately ill and in a semi-conscious condition she was. We did everything we could and made it warm and comfortable. They had stove-heat--their house was cold--and the comforts that were here were most pleasant for both the mother and the child. So we made the bed and made things comfortable for the child and called the doctor and got the drugs that he had prescribed. I thought it was pneumonia because of the labored breathing. I didn't know whether it was the heart or the lungs, but the child was so very ill. We did all that the doctor said, and I could see the child slipping and then it went into terrible convulsions. So I immersed the little thing in water in *[end of page 115]* my bathtub and the child died in my arms in the bathtub.

The mother said, "Oh, thank the Lord." My sympathy was brimming over so for her, I was feeling so dreadful; but I looked at her and she was not. She said, "Just think, if I'd been at home and hadn't done what we've done for the baby since the baby's been here, how terrible I would feel--that I had just been careless, and that I hadn't done my best. To have had this medication, and to have done all that we have done in the last few hours, I feel so much better. It's such a relief, it's such a release to think I did what I could. I am so grateful."

We decided to leave the children alone and she would stay here the rest of the night; to go home with that news would disrupt the whole household and she would have so many other things to do. So I said, "We'll take care of everything here and I'll call the undertaker and you just stay here and rest. Then as soon as it's daylight and we feel that it's time for the children to be getting up for school, we'll go home."

I said that the Lord really interceded because, with many of them, their answer would have been,

"If you had only done more . . .", and criticizing what we had done. But instead of that, it was in thanksgiving for what we had done, and she realized she was here with the child and she knew we had both worked as frantically and as fast as we could to do everything that could be done to help to make that child more comfortable and to bring consciousness back after it was in that coma and then went into convulsions. She was just so grateful! Then there was another child born soon, and she named that child for me; and then there was another one so she named this one for my husband. And she always expressed her gratitude. *[end of page 116]*

She, too, had the curse of a drunken husband; and it seemed that every time he would become terribly intoxicated, he would come here. It was strange. He knew what I would do; I would take all of his money. He knew that, and he would resist it. If there wasn't someone to assist me, sometimes it was difficult to get all of it. But here he would come.

There was an occasion or two that I wasn't able to get the money, and he went away and got out on the street. I thought we could get him in a car--sometimes I did--but this particular time I couldn't do anything with him. So I drove home fast and got her and brought her back and she tried, and he sat down out in the middle of the street and wouldn't let us get into those pockets. There was no way that we could get that money from that man, and we tried and tried. So I said, "Stay here with him, and I will go and get more help." So I came back to the Mission and got someone who was strong enough to lift him off the sidewalk (laughter) and feel the money and get it out of his pockets and give it to the wife.

How thankful she was to have that money to buy food for those children. It didn't cause resentment in his mind. He would repeat this; he would come up here again (laughter) wanting me--really asking me—to do it, and then unhappy when he found that he had nothing and his wife had all of it. She said, "How many times we would have been hungry if we hadn't had some way to find those pockets, and get the money." Whenever he would cash a paycheck, this was the normal occurrence. He would have spent some, but we would get the rest of it and get that back into the family pocketbook.

There are so many ways that the Mission has had a personal relationship *[end of page 117]* that has borne fruit. We don't have to go through red tape to do things. We act at the moment when the occasion arises and meet the necessities.

There was a young man who came in, and he said he was sixteen years old and he was en route to another relative. It didn't sound good, and we detained him and said he was too tired to travel--he was hitch-hiking. We found ways, keeping him doing things. He wasn't here but about three days and the telephone rang one Sunday morning. A friend of mine was on the phone and she said, "my husband had to be in Texas on business and he went to church this morning and the pastor asked for special prayer for a family who didn't know where their son was and hadn't been able to locate him. And they described him, so I told this mother that I knew the Washington Street Mission well in Springfield, and I would contact them." So she said, "I am contacting you and I'm giving you a thorough description of this boy, so if he ever comes in, contact me."

I said, "May I call you back?" She said, "Yes." The boy was within three feet of me while the telephone conversation was going on, and the scar on his face was all you needed, to know that he was the boy. I went to another telephone and called her back and said, "The boy is here. You

tell the mother." So the mother called in a little while, and I was able to talk to her privately.

So I was watching the boy--she gave me the train schedule when she would be here--and close to the time of her arrival, which was the next day as she started immediately from Texas, I told the boy, "You know, you're going to have the nicest surprise today." He thought I had some special work that was going to pay him a hundred dollars an hour or something-- *[end of page 118]* money was the thing he was the most anxious about. I said, "No, it's better than that."

I was sure that we were going right from the end of this conversation to the station, because I didn't want any lag in time that he would have time to move without us knowing where he was. So we went to the station. He was so glad to see her and she was so glad to see him, and they went back on the next train to Texas.

He didn't have a real destination--he was just going from place to place. He was just running away from nothing, because I'm sure he had a fine Christian mother. He was just avoiding something. I am sure that was God's hand that placed that boy [here] and friends of mine in the church when the Mother asked for prayer for the child. It just had to be.

We've detained other boys the same way and found the parents, and were able to supply their needs until they were able to get back into that home. Then to have them come back and tell you, "It was so many years ago that I was a foolish child and you reunited me with my parents."

Q. Mrs. Miller, were you going to tell me another story?

A. Yes, I do have something that is most extraordinary and interesting, and one that is very fruitful. This family came from down in one of the southern states--Arkansas. They came because relatives had come and found resources that had made their lives so much simpler that they felt they would like to have the same advantages. So they saved enough money to meet their traveling expenses and when they arrived things were difficult.

They found the Mission and we were able to keep them for a few days and *[end of page 119]* then find employment for both of the parents; there was a young child that I kept personally while the mother worked for a few days doing housework. The husband was able to keep on working and she could go back to taking care of the child--trying to find a school and getting him started in school. The husband was able to be a janitor out at the Memorial Hospital, and did a good job. Because we had recommended him, we wanted to be sure that he did do all of the things that were expected of him, and he did.

They were having a hard time; it was a financial strain but they were making things go. Then a friend called and said that there was an apartment building that needed someone to collect the rent and see that things were conducted properly in this building. I said, "I think I know someone that could do that." So they were able to have rent free in order to collect the rent from the other tenants. They were doing beautifully and the son was doing very well in school.

Both father and mother were illiterate, and the child just starting in the first grade was able to know more than the parents in some cases, but they were getting along fine. They were able to buy groceries and not get the wrong change, and they were living comfortably in comparison with their condition back in Arkansas.

One day the landlord said, "We have had no rent from this certain room." She said, "I can't get in there. He is always drunk or he is gone. He has it locked, and I can't get it." She was trying and wishing she could, and wanting to, but he would come in so late at night she would not hear him. She wanted to try to get him out or get the rent, and she could do neither. *[end of page 120]*

One day it did hap^pen that he came during the daytime and she heard him. She ran down to his room and said, "I'll help you; I'll help you." He was unlocking the door, and she said, "I'll help you." He put the key in the door; she fumbled the key and dropped it on the floor and stepped on it, and helped him look for it. He couldn't imagine what had happened to that key, and neither could she. (laughter) It was under her foot, but they looked for the key and they looked for the key.

Finally she said, "Well, there's only one thing. You'll just have to go and find another room. If you can't get in here, there is no way for you to sleep tonight. You'll just have to find another room. There's no way, I don't know what we're going to do." In his drunken stupor he went on out and found a room someplace else and she lifted her foot and found the key and called the landlord and had the room available for a new tenant.

I thought how skillfully she did that, and how I could never have thought of anything to equal that--to knock the key out of his hands, then step on it, and look for it for a half an hour. (laughter) Then he was gone, and she was able to appease the landlord and get the room cleaned up and rent it again.

This went on and on. The husband worked when he wasn't able to--he was a frail man--but they did fine in taking care of everything and it was pleasant enough. He was on unemployment; he had fallen and broken two limbs and he wasn't able to do anything, and was unemployed. So then they decided they better go back home and live with some of the relatives *[end of page 121]* that could help take care of them--not financially, but live with some of the family. So they did, and they always remembered us with something at Christmastime, and we would do the same. When I found clothing that I thought would fit them, I mailed it to them.

Then it was not too long afterward that he dⁱed; she has since died. They both lived such a short life; they were in their late forties and both were taken. But they had not had sufficient food, they had not been able to take care of their bodies properly. They were not in any way harming them with liquor, or doing anything that was detrimental other than to have missed too many meals, too many years. So they died young and left the boy, but there were others then--he was probably 18 years old and he could take care of himself--and there were other members of the family down there who could enter into his life and help him.

We were able to help them through a tragic part of their life, coming to a place where they had no friends, except these relatives who had no money. There were a few occasions when things were hard and we would lend them a few dollars, but every dollar we ever loaned them came back right on the day they said it would and their bills were always met. I was thankful to be able to help that kind that are truthful and anxiously wanting to do more. Even their limitations did not keep them from knowing they owed a dollar, and they paid it back exactly when they were supposed to.

We never know from day to day what the next responsibility might be for us to enter into the life of someone who is inadequate in making the decisions and taking the responsibilities of an adult life. *[end of page 122]*

Q. Mrs. Miller, your boy was raised here, wasn't he?

A. Yes.

Q. Did this influence his life, do you think?

A. Yes, I think it did. He often said he wanted to preach like his grandfather, but not all of the time. He wanted to work in a garage in the daytime, and just preach at night. That was when he was three or four years old.

He loved these people--he loved people--and he loved the Lord; and he has loved the Navajos and has worked with them since he was out of college. He has some knowledge of the language, not able to talk fluently, but he has taught some in Navajo. Now since his accident he may study and be able to teach seated, because it might not be that he will be able to get around other than in a wheel chair.

Q. Now where is he located?

A. Out in Farmington, New Mexico. He ministers to the Navajo Indians. They are a very docile Indian. They are not quick to learn; they learn slowly, but when they do attain the knowledge that they have, they retain it. The children are learning and wanting American ways more than they did back a few years ago even, so we are glad for that.

Living here did have its disadvantages in not having a play area; but my parents lived just a few blocks away and had a lovely back yard and had everything, all the tricycles and all the things a child needs for exercise and outside living. So he was able to have that. It would have not been good if he had not been able to have that free time, and *[end of page 123]* running and playing on the grass and on the soil, and not on bricks. Playing on bricks 24 hours a day is not living for a child. And [he was] without playmates here, and there was that there; he could have playmates and have the things that children enjoy, and enjoying each other.

I am glad that he is able to witness in that capacity to another type of people who need the Lord just as much as the underprivileged do in Springfield.

Q. I think it is remarkable that there have been three generations of your family that are and have done this work.

A. It's sort of contagious. I noticed in the paper yesterday that my mother is going to speak at a meeting and she has been gone a number of years, so the name Brown has been retained for a good long while. My name happens to be Miller, and I am the one that is going to speak.
(laughter)

Q. Was your mother's name Mary also?

A. Yes it was. It was wonderful to have the opportunities and privileges. Everything that has been connected with the Mission, to me, has been a privilege—and it has been since my early childhood.

I can't be thankful enough for the privilege of being able to do the • things that need to be done here and doing them in the name of the Lord. It has been most gratifying.

Q. You have done so many things for so many people. .

A. It's just that it's the next thing to do; and they need you, and *[end of page 124]* you feel the need. They can't make important decisions. Just now an older lady fell and injured herself. I said, "She's had one fall, now you better look into this. It could be something that's serious. She has just recovered from a broken hip. Perhaps that's fragile, and maybe she should have some attention." "Oh, she is all right, it just bruised her up." But there is a cracked hip. The daughter finally listened to me, and the mother is in the hospital.

They are not able to know danger or to be cautious. It makes them more expense and more discomfort because they don't do things properly. Procrastinating is what they do about everything. It's the easiest way, they feel. Now she is in the hospital, and we are going to have to pay taxes to keep her there. They don't understand this.

We want to be able to help them. She kept calling me, wanting me to do something. What she wanted was for me to come there and relieve her of the responsibility of carrying meals to her bedside and doing those things. That wasn't necessary, the daughter could do it. [The daughter said that] the mother didn't want it. I said, "You must restrict her, and tell her she must." But she didn't do it, and it's a hospital case now.

There is a colored family where two cousins were playing together. This boy is probably six years old, and he was hit in the head with a soda pop bottle and had to have five stitches across the top of his skull. They're not taking care of it, and there's an infection. I would keep saying, "Keep the bandages on, don't take them off; be very careful." Now they can't understand why there is infection, and why he is having pain. I'm trying to get them back to the doctor; but now they know they didn't follow the doctor's instructions, so the child is suffering. The *[end of page 125]* outcome is yet to be known, how serious it will be.

Those things are frustrating and you want to do things, but to an extent you can't just compel a parent. You take them just as far as you can, then you have to let them make a decision for themselves. I am prayerfully anxious about him, and pray they will get enough antibiotics in him some way and will get the infection cleared up, and then some of the incision will heal right. It is clear across the skull, it isn't anything trivial at all.

One night he came; and because the carryall is crowded, they said it wasn't good to ride home with the children. I said, "It certainly isn't, and you are not." They said, "We are supposed to call Mom." So we called Mom. Younger children answered the phone, and I said, "Now waken your mother"--they said she was asleep--I said, "Waken your mother and tell her your brother is ready to come home." They went and were gone some time, and came back and said, "We can't, she won't wake up." I called again and said I wanted to talk to another child. I made three different attempts on the mother, so you know she was drunk.

Finally they said, "Call my father. He is at the tavern. I had called him there before and gotten him, but this time I didn't get him. So we took the children home--him and his brother--and took him to the door, and got him home with that head.

This carelessness continually occurs. There was a little girl with a mental problem; we take her home and the door is locked, and nobody is there. Sometimes the door is locked and they are there, but they do not want to be bothered with her--the mother is entertaining. We know the people she knows and we know the relatives, so we take her someplace for the night. *[end of page 126]*

You do this many times. I took a child home in my arms, sound asleep—probably eighteen months old--and I whispered, "He's sound asleep," and exchanged him from my arms to the mother's arms. I did it just as carefully as I could, and he woke up and he screamed and grabbed my neck and hit his mother in the face with his little fist saying, "I don't want you, I don't want you. I want you," holding to me, just holding so tight! I thought, "I'll test her," so I turned around and walked toward the door. She had the most relieved look on her face; I went out on the porch and there was no So I just brought him on home.

There was no attempt whatever to reproach in anyway. She was just happy that she didn't have that responsibility. I went by a store that was open and bought a tee shirt, and put it on him for a night shirt, and put him to bed and took care of him; I had him a day or two. The mother didn't call to find out where he was, but he finally ended up back in the home. Now he is a man, and he comes to see me. He is glad to see me, and I am him. I know the life he went through and how difficult it was.

The children live such unnatural lives that you are amazed that they mature into adulthood with the right attitude on life in any way. It's only God's hand that gives them the abilities that they have, and the ability to use that ability. We want to, in every way, help boys and girls and adults that need it, when they need it.

Q. I am sure this is true. Now you are at the place where you are going to have to move your Mission. How are you getting along in your plans? Have you located a place?

A. We've known this and known we were dangling for eight years, and *[end of page 127]* have looked at various properties. But not having the money to use when we found the property presented a problem, and we were not assured that this would become a reality. There were rumors, but when Horace Mann purchased this ground at such a ridiculously low price and then built this twelve million dollar building, we knew it would demand a beautiful front yard and that we wouldn't be considered a beauty spot, although we considered it that and an important place.

We need to be in the hub to service south clear to the dump, and as far as Pillsbury Mills to the east and north, and to the John Hay area and to the Brandon Court, south, when we can. We have to have a staff that is large to make all of them, so Brandon Court we have done through the summer months; but we are not able to take care of that now because we get them and we take them home because of the danger to a child. There are so many busy streets and two railroads to cross in most cases for a child to get here; so we feel it is necessary to take them and to see that they are in their right homes and they don't stop off--Joe go to Mary's and Mary go to Pete's. We get them in their own door. It does mean we must be in the hub and be where we can service the

areas that need us.

We're looking at a piece of property now that isn't adequate, but will have to be made into what we can with the limited amount of money. They are giving us such a small amount of the value of the property, and the increase of the value of the property that we are buying and the labor it will take to make it into a usable building will be atrocious. When we make the move, we will do it with Christian dignity. We want it to be where the Lord wants it. There has been much prayer about this. We are controlled by fourteen directors; the Mission is blessed to have *[end of page 128]* the advantage of their abilities.

We will do this without this work being interrupted, because now in its sixty-fourth year, there has been a gospel service every night. The doors have never closed, we have been here with the Gospel, and we do not intend to have it interrupted, even though we make this move. It will be for the same purpose of making Christ known and being everlastingly at it. Every night, every day, every week, every month and every year.

Q. Yes, and that is the way it should be. How long do you think it will be before you have to move?

A. They are giving us dates they want us cleared out--this spring. We don't know whether we can, there could be strikes and other things that would make it even more difficult.

We are working on some plans now on how to arrange a building that could be used. There is no parking, and that is a terrible drawback because when you have a building that is for an auditorium, you are forced to have so much parking, and there isn't parking for this building. They are going to have to change the code for us, I am afraid. Because our people don't have automobiles, there isn't the need for parking that there is for a congregation or for an auditorium. If they will listen and change the code for our purpose, it will be . . . We did find property we might buy that would cost sixty thousand dollars just to park a few cars, and we don't have the money.

Q. It would seem to me they should make a variance in that for you, considering that they are taking the property that you have.

A. Yes, they have been rude, really, rather than cooperative in all of *[end of page 129]* the negotiations. They have not called us by our name, because they want to keep it hidden that it is the Mission. They want the public not to realize that they are disturbing this work, because of its importance and because of the friendship that we have created in these years. They call us the "tender spot", "the pathetic area", "the sympathetic zone"; they never say Washington Street Mission. I meet friends and they say, "They aren't going to take the Mission, they're just going to take . . ." I say, "No, the Mission is included." But they have been very silent about this location. So, it's in the future.

Q. I hope it all works out. I think surely it will.

A. The Lord's hand is all gracious, and he doeth all things well and with his Divine guidance it can be done. Even though we have to crawl, so to speak, and fix a portion of it that we are financially able rather than to go into a great indebtedness, we would prefer to do it and have a

chapel that is adequate and have an office and all the essentials. Then to have class rooms and the things that we would prefer and storage areas for clothing that people give us, we'll have to improvise, I'm afraid because of expense.

We don't want to have a campaign, urging people and pressuring people to give; we want gifts that are given because people want to give the gift to the Mission. That has been the principle of the Mission all the years that we have operated.

Q. I have been very interested in what was going to happen; it seems you have had a real rough time here.

A. Some of it hasn't been necessary; I think that we could have had more *[end of page 130]* co-operation. And to have been offered the ridiculous low price that they have offered us and expect intelligent people to be They have treated us no differently than the others in the area. It's all a half to a third of the value. It isn't that they are treating us in a different manner; we are treated all equally. But they're all resenting it and trying to get an adequate amount for their property, because they, too, are losing a business and losing an address and losing their identity, and it's just as harmful to them.

Our people will find the Mission where it is, and we'll be able to serve, even though it isn't where we would prefer.. Although, we do have to be centrally located to work in any capacity that is equal to our service of past years.

Q. Will you be able to move all of your things?

A. We will move all we can. We don't know what we will have; we just can't make that decision yet until we are more assured of the money and the plan of the building. It isn't usable as it is. It has been a garage, and there is a lot of work to make over a garage. This was a planing mill and a second hand store and a feed store; it was a lot of things before it was the Mission. We're doing the same to renovate this building into something that is attractive and usable at a price that is nominal.

Q. I am sure everyone wishes you the best of luck with this, and that it comes on. Springfield needs the Mission, I am sure.

A. We will function as usual during the move. We'll do both. *[end of page 131]*

Q. I don't think we have a great deal more time. Do you have anything else you want to tell me?

A. Our bedroom is on the alley, and at night--it isn't something that occurs every night--but nights we have heard voices in the alley, calling us. Children's voices. We would answer of course, and there had been no one at home and they were afraid and they would come to the Mission for shelter; so we would bring them in and take care of them through the night and take them to school in the morning.

One night we had taken this child home and we thought someone was there, but it was about two o'clock in the morning and he called and called, and he said, "They ain't nobody come yet." So we went for him and took care of him. He said, "I'm not going home. I'm going to stay, then go

to school." We asked why, and he said, "If I go home, I can't go to school." We asked why, and he said, "Because I have to go with my dad. He makes me."

The father was going through the alleys, collecting people's leftovers that he found in the alley, then knocking on the door and asking if they didn't have something more. The appeal of this little child was what he was using. He was forcing the child to go with him in order to beg. This boy had a wonderful personality, and you would give him anything he wanted. He didn't want to do it; but the father was stronger than the child, so the father was compelling him to do it, and of course drinking up all the money that was received.

He said, "Why don't you take me to school?" So Mr. Miller took him to school, and that night when he came again, he said--the same arrangements *[end of page 132]* would have pleased him, to stay all night here and be taken to school. We asked, "Do you want us to take you to school every morning?" Oh, that was a blessing, "Yes." So for months we went every day and took that boy to school, because the father wouldn't resist us. He would compel the child, but he couldn't us. So we would honk and get the child and take him to school, and he was able to go to school because we were able to go and get him and he didn't have to go with that father to make a livelihood for more liquor. That lasted through the school year.

END OF TAPE *[end of page 133]*