

Speaker 1:

Hello, Julie Christie. I'm going to ask you some questions. And the first question is, how did your family come to live on a farm in Iowa?

Julie Christie:

My great-grandfather on my father's side immigrated from Germany in 1859 and went to Scott County and farmed there for a few years. And the spring of 1874, he relocated to Crawford County.

Speaker 1:

Wow.

Julie Christie:

So we've been here that long.

Speaker 1:

Wow. What's your favorite story about growing up on the farm?

Julie Christie:

I don't really have any stories. I was six years younger than my sister, so I played alone a lot. And well, we did have the railroad running through our farm, so I would go out whenever the train would go by, I think it was quarter after nine. And run out to the front porch and I'd wave to the engineer and he'd toot the horn and wave back. So that was a fun part of my day was to get the man to wave back. So otherwise it was just growing up, nothing special.

Speaker 1:

Nothing in particular that you remember?

Julie Christie:

No. We had neighborhood gatherings on birthdays and anniversaries, so that was always a fun time. They'd have a potluck and the men would play cards at birthdays, well, men and women both. And they'd play till midnight that we'd have lunch and then they'd talk. So we'd get home wee hours of the morning. But it was different then as far as the neighborhoods went.

Speaker 1:

I bet.

Julie Christie:

Yeah, it was good. And then my neighbor right across the road had a niece about my age, and so then I would get to see her and play with her.

Speaker 1:

Fun.

Julie Christie:

Yeah, it was fun.

Speaker 1:

Awesome. Was there a certain game in particular you guys played?

Julie Christie:

No, just whatever.

Speaker 1:

Whatever.

Julie Christie:

Whatever little girls played.

Speaker 1:

Exactly. What kind of crops did your family grow?

Julie Christie:

Corn and oats and alfalfa. The later years, they did do soybeans, but that was just starting to come into this area. At that time it was mostly just corn and oats and hay.

Speaker 1:

Wow. What kind of animals did your family raise?

Julie Christie:

Well, we had milk cows, just mixed breed milk cows, nothing fancy, no pedigree or whatever. We had some beef cattle, not a big herd, but some, they farmed on a small scale, and hogs. And my mother had lots of chickens. At one time she had a Hy-Line test walk of hens, and so we had thousands, I don't know, we had 5,000 chickens or whatever it was.

Speaker 1:

A lot.

Julie Christie:

It was a lot of chickens, yeah. And so you'd gather the eggs. Each chicken had a band on its leg with a number, and then they would go into a nest, the little gate would come down and shut them in the nest. So you'd have to go get the egg, check the number on the hens leg, write the number on the egg, and then we'd record it and send it into this Hy-Line company, and that's how they bred their chickens, which ones were the best layers or the most regular. So part of my chores was doing that.

Speaker 1:

Wow.

Julie Christie:

And then you had all these eggs to clean. And once we had some ducks, not a lot of ducks, but once in a while we'd have a few ducks. We had Muscovies one time until they found out that they liked to fly into the cattle tank. And my dad didn't appreciate the deposit they made in the cattle water tank, so that was the end of the Muscovies. That was just a one-time deal.

Speaker 1:

Wow. So did you raise any of your own food?

Julie Christie:

Yeah, pretty much all. I mean, you still bought food, but I mean mom had a big garden and we had our own meat and milk, so we would make butter and buttermilk and can and freeze. And we had fruit trees, I think we had three apple trees and a plum tree, so there was apples and plums for pies and jellies. She was busy.

Speaker 1:

So did you can stuff too or just mom?

Julie Christie:

Mom, yeah. I helped prepare, she did the actual canning part, but I got to peel the apples.

Speaker 1:

The fun part.

Julie Christie:

The fun part, yeah.

Speaker 1:

So what kind of farm machinery or technology was used?

Julie Christie:

Really no technology, as it's not done today. We did have a mounted corn picker. I remember seeing some pool-type corn pickers, but that had a mounted. It was a four-row, and then you'd pull your wagons behind and another guy would have to switch wagons and haul that corn home and unload that in the corn crib. We had a combine just for oats, maybe a four-row plow and disk. But everything was so small compared to what they have now. I just can't imagine what my father would think now to see these huge, huge machines.

Speaker 1:

I always hear about picking corn, what exactly is that? I don't quite...

Julie Christie:

Picking corn?

Speaker 1:

Yeah.

Julie Christie:

Well, the corn picker, it would go through the rows like it does now, but it just would pick the cobs. The corn would stay on the cob and shoot the cob's ear corn-

Speaker 1:

Behind it.

Julie Christie:

Out the back and into the wagon. Yeah, it was not...

Speaker 1:

Not like it is today.

Julie Christie:

No. Then you had another crew come by to shell the corn when you needed the corn, and there were several men that was their business. They had a corn sheller, and they would feed the ear corn into this corn sheller, and then out would come all the little kernels of corn and the cobs out the other end.

Speaker 1:

Oh, wow.

Julie Christie:

Yeah.

Speaker 1:

It's really different than today.

Julie Christie:

Oh yeah, so different. Yeah.

Speaker 1:

Okay. So how many members of your family are still farming today?

Julie Christie:

None.

Speaker 1:

None.

Julie Christie:

No, I'm the last of my immediate family.

Speaker 1:

Okay.

Julie Christie:

My middle son did have dairy cows. He lives on an acreage and he had dairy cows for a few years, and then that wasn't profitable, because he had to buy all his own hay and didn't have enough acres to grow anything. So he was going deeper in debt, so that was the end of the cows. So he got rid of all that. It's been a few years that those have been gone. Now he has chickens, he has 48 pullets.

Speaker 1:

Oh, wow.

Julie Christie:

So he's just starting to get eggs now. So that's the end of our farming, other than 48 chickens.

Speaker 1:

Well, it's still farming, I guess.

Julie Christie:

Yeah, he's still got his fingers in it a little bit, but yeah.

Speaker 1:

You just can't afford it anymore can you?

Julie Christie:

No, you can't farm on a small scale anymore, not like we did.

Speaker 1:

Wow.

Julie Christie:

Yeah.

Speaker 1:

Is there anything else you want to add, to tell us about farming and growing up? I mean, because I'm sure it was way different than today.

Julie Christie:

Oh, it's so different, yeah. We were home all the time. You went to town on Wednesday and Saturday night. That was to bring the eggs and cream to town and buy your groceries and socialize. And the men and the women would go to the bar and the kids would go to the movie. We had a theater at that time,

so kids could go to the movie or just hang around on the streets and talk and play around. But yeah, there wasn't a lot of other socializing. There was dances once in a while in the community building. The community building was new. And we had Lawrence Welk at the community building one time, so I remember going to the dances with the folks and try to dance.

Speaker 1:

Wow. Close enough.

Julie Christie:

Yeah, it was good. It was good growing up, but it was so different. Yeah.

Speaker 1:

How many siblings are in your family?

Julie Christie:

I had a brother eight years older and a sister, six years older.

Speaker 1:

You said that, didn't you?

Julie Christie:

Yeah.

Speaker 1:

And that was it, that was your friends, basically.

Julie Christie:

Yeah, right. And she was so much older that she didn't play with me, because by the time I was old enough to play, she was out helping dad. And same with my brother, he was protective of me, but as far as playing around, he didn't.

Speaker 1:

Play by yourself.

Julie Christie:

I had to play by myself, yeah.

Speaker 1:

Wow.

Julie Christie:

Make my own fun. I did a lot of reading.

Speaker 1:

That's great.

Julie Christie:

Nancy Drew series, I read the whole thing at the library they had at that time.

Speaker 1:

That's great. Have you ever picked up a Nancy Drew book since?

Julie Christie:

I have. A few years ago, my youngest son gave me a Nancy Drew book and a DVD game to play to solve the mystery. Well, I read the book and I worked on the mystery a little bit, but I gave up, because I wasn't a very good criminal sleuth.

Julie Christie:

No, I didn't do too well on that. I still have it. I still think, "Well, someday I'll try it again and see." But yeah, that's the last book read, I haven't read another one. I'm sure there are more, more newer ones.

Speaker 1:

Yeah. But the kids nowadays, don't read them.

Julie Christie:

Don't read them, yeah.

Speaker 1:

Got them in here. They don't... Our kids, I should say, the kids here. I always promote them even to my daughter. I actually read it to her, she just wasn't that interested, but each and their own, I guess.

Julie Christie:

Yeah. I did get my great-granddaughter, she's 10 now, so the last couple of years for her birthday, I did buy her the first and the second book. And she seemed to enjoy them, but I haven't gone any farther with it. But that's a good series, I think to read.

Speaker 1:

Right, yeah. That was rather quick, it was supposed to take us forever.